

Youth Radicalism in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville, 1958–1974

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# **ABSTRACT**

## **Youth Radicalism in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville, 1958–1974**

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This work argues that youth and student organizations in Senegal and Congo became the primary catalysts for mass social struggles that challenged new national governments between 1958 and 1974. From the mid-1950s, young activists in both countries (along with many trade union leaders) debated emerging African political leaders over what constituted “independence.” These debates sharpened after the control of political institutions was devolved from French to African authorities between 1958 and 1960. As I show, rather than celebrating formal independence, many youth, student, and trade union organizations claimed that new African state leaders were complicit in the ongoing foreign domination of politics, education, and their national economies. Young activists contrasted formal independence with their demands for “real independence,” which included criteria such as the expulsion of French troops, an end to French and missionary influence over the education system, and the nationalization of foreign-owned businesses. In the context of this conflict, a subset of activists in each country became known as “radicals” due to their demands for “real independence” and their call to reorganize the state along Marxist principles.

This work is based on archival research in Senegal, Congo, and France, as well as fifty-six interviews with Senegalese and Congolese militants of the period. The new presidents of Senegal and Congo, Léopold Senghor and Fulbert Youlou, both moved to consolidate control of their respective states after 1958. They attempted to isolate rival political organizations and young critics through a combination of repression and cooptation. “Youth Radicalism” explores how student, youth, and trade union organizations defended their autonomy from the new regimes and became centers of political opposition. I show that these organizations sparked urban rebellions in the capital cities of Brazzaville

and Dakar, most notably in 1963 and 1968, respectively. In Congo, the protests in 1963 overthrew the government of Fulbert Youlou and allowed radical youth and student activists to declare themselves the leaders of a “revolution.” By building mass youth organizations, they were able to assume positions of authority and to successfully push for elements of “real independence” and “scientific socialism.” In Senegal, the strike in 1968 did not overturn Senghor’s government, but prompted a myriad of labor, educational, and democratic reforms in the years that followed. This work ends by looking at how the independent youth and student organizations of the 1960s were eliminated in both countries in the early 1970s due to internal divisions and state repression.

Considering Congo and Senegal in the same study illustrates that youth and student leaders’ political strategies intersected through shared connections within the Francophone world, as well as Third World and Communist networks. The demands raised by young radicals emerged in response to specific local and national political conflicts, but this work argues that they were also fundamentally shaped by their links abroad. Finally, “Youth Radicalism” assesses how young radicals’ ability to create lasting structural change in Senegal and Congo was affected by the common political frameworks that guided their actions.



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## LIST OF COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

AEC	Association des étudiants congolais (France)
AESF	Association des étudiants sénégalais en France
AGED	Association générale des étudiants de Dakar
ASCO	Association scolaire du Congo
BDS	Bloc démocratique sénégalais
BMS	Bloc des masses sénégalaises
BPS	Bloc populaire sénégalais
CASL	Confédération africaine des syndicats libres
CATC	Confédération africaine des travailleurs croyants
CCSL	Confédération congolaise des syndicats libres
CESB	Centre d'enseignement supérieur de Brazzaville
CFTC	Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens
CGAT	Confédération générale africaine du travail
CGT	Confédération générale du travail
CGT-FO	Confédération générale du travail–Force ouvrière
CJA	Conseils de jeunesse d’Afrique
CJS	Conseil de la jeunesse du Sénégal
CNJ	Conseil national de la jeunesse (Congo-Brazzaville)
CNL	Conseil national de libération (Congo-Léopoldville/Kinshasa)
CNR	Conseil national de la révolution (Congo-Brazzaville)
CNTS	Confédération nationale des travailleurs du Sénégal
COUD	Centre des œuvres universitaire de Dakar
CSC	Confédération syndicale congolaise
FEANF	Fédération des étudiants d’Afrique noire en France
FELD	Fédération des étudiants libres de Dakar
FENAPES	Fédération nationale des parents d’élèves (Senegal)
FNS	Front national sénégalais
IFI	Institut de formation idéologique (Congo-Brazzaville)
ISU	International Student Union
JEC	Jeunesse étudiante catholique (Congo-Brazzaville)
JEP	Jeunesse étudiante protestante (Congo-Brazzaville)
JMNR	Jeunesse du mouvement national de la révolution (Congo-Brazzaville)
MEEP	Mouvement des étudiants (et élèves) du Parti africain de l'indépendance
MEOCAM	Mouvement des étudiants de l'organisation commune africaine et malgache
MJBPS	Mouvement des jeunes du bloc progressiste sénégalaise
MJUPS	Mouvement des jeunes de l'union progressiste sénégalaise
MNR	Mouvement national de la révolution (Congo-Brazzaville)
MPLA	Movimento popular de libertação de Angola
MPS	Mouvement populaire sénégalais
MSA	Mouvement socialist africain
MSUS	Mouvement socialiste d'union sénégalaise
PAI	Parti africain de l'indépendance
PCF	Parti communiste français
PCS	Parti communiste sénégalais

PCT	Parti congolais du travail
PPC	Parti progressiste congolais
PRA	Parti de regroupement africaine
PRA-Sénégal	Parti de regroupement africaine–Sénégal
PS	Parti socialiste (Senegal)
PSAS	Parti sénégalais d'action socialiste
PSS	Parti de la solidarité sénégalaise
RDA	Rassemblement démocratique africain
RJDA	Rassemblement de la jeunesse démocratique africain
SFIO	Section française de l'internationale ouvrière
SUEL	Syndicat unique de l'enseignement laïc (Senegal)
SYNELS	Syndicat national de l'enseignement laïc du Sénégal (Senegal)
UAM	Union africaine et malgache
UDDIA	Union démocratique pour la défense des intérêts africains (Congo-Brazzaville)
UDES	Union démocratique des étudiants sénégalais
UDS	Union démocratique sénégalaise
UED	Union des étudiants de Dakar
UGEAO	Union générale des étudiants d’Afrique occidentale
UGEEC	Union générale des élèves et étudiants congolais
UGES	Union générale des étudiants sénégalais
UGTAN	Union générale des travailleurs d’Afrique noire
UJC	Union de la jeunesse congolaise
UJSC	Union de la jeunesse socialiste congolaise
UNEF	Union nationale des étudiants de France
UNES	Union nationale des étudiants Sénégalais
UNTS	Union nationale des travailleurs Sénégalais
UPC	Union des populations du Cameroun
UPS	Union progressiste sénégalaise
UPTC	Union panafricaine des travailleurs croyants
URFC	Union révolutionnaire des femmes du Congo
UTS	Union des travailleurs du Sénégal
WFDY	World Federation of Democratic Youth
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions

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*In memory of Grandpa Paul Swagler, Uncle Pete, and Grandma Kitty*

# INTRODUCTION

## I. Moments of Crisis

Congo-Brazzaville's first president, Fulbert Youlou, was overthrown on August 15, 1963, exactly three years after the country gained formal independence from France. A few months earlier, Youlou had tried to inaugurate a single-party state under his leadership, with the collaboration of leaders from former rival parties. But in the capital city African residents accused Youlou and his ministers of pandering to European business leaders and living lives of extravagance, while doing little to alleviate problems of overcrowding and unemployment in African neighborhoods. Responding to these popular grievances, the three national labor union federations called for mass demonstrations against the proposed single-party state. While the initial rally drew workers of all ages, by the end of the first day, the most dynamic force in the streets of Brazzaville were groups of young men—a combination of students, workers, and unemployed youth—who battled with the Congolese police and military. On the third day of protests Youlou resigned as thousands of demonstrators surrounded the presidential palace. The uprising not only cast aside Youlou, but also ousted nearly the entire Congolese political establishment. The three days of protests, known as “les Trois Glorieuses,” became the first popular rebellion to topple a newly independent government in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> A group of Congolese student leaders and recent university graduates moved quickly to organize the young protesters into independent youth organizations. Between 1963 and 1968, in the name of advancing a “revolution” in

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<sup>1</sup> *Les Trois Glorieuses* was a double historical reference: First, to the common moniker for the three day French revolution of 1830, and second, to the three days in August 1940 when the French colonies of Equatorial Africa (AEF) and Cameroon declared their allegiance to the Free French forces led by Charles de Gaulle, making Brazzaville the capital of Free France. The most detailed accounting of the events of 1963 remains Rémy Boutet's *Les "Trois glorieuses", ou, La chute de Fulbert Youlou* (Dakar: Editions Chaka, 1990). Boutet is the pseudonym of Congolese scholar Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga.

Congo, these youth organizations successfully pressured the new government to nationalize the education system, expel French troops, and adopt “scientific socialism” as official state policy.<sup>2</sup>

In 1968, a similar urban revolt occurred in Senegal. Students at the University of Dakar launched a strike of classes and exams in May to protest the government’s proposal to reduce their scholarships. Throughout the 1960s, university students had frequently protested conditions at the university as well as the general policies of Senegalese president Léopold Senghor, who, like Youlou, had consolidated his authority after independence. But the 1968 university strike soon spread to secondary and primary schools across the country, and triggered demonstrations in neighborhoods in the capital city of Dakar. After police besieged the campus, the national trade union federation launched a general strike. With the government in a precarious position, Senghor declared a state of emergency and only regained control after calling in both Senegalese and French military forces to break the strike. Although the government managed to recover, the strike exposed the depth of social discontent in Dakar, and prompted a series of educational, political, and economic reforms in the years that followed—leading to the reopening of multiparty politics.<sup>3</sup>

This work seeks to address a series of questions arising from the popular struggles in Senegal and Congo in the 1960s. The explosiveness of the uprisings in 1963 and 1968 caught Youlou and Senghor

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<sup>2</sup> This period has been documented by Matt Swagler and Héloïse Kiriakou, “Autonomous Youth Organizations’ Conquest of Political Power in Congo-Brazzaville, 1963-1968,” in *Etudiants africains en mouvement: contribution à une histoire des années 68*, ed. Françoise Blum et al. (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2016), 57-76; Jérôme Ollandet, *L’expérience congolaise du socialisme de Massamba-Débat à Marien N’Gouabi* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2012); Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Les voies du politique au Congo: essai de sociologie historique* (Paris: Karthala, 1997); René Gauze, Virginia Thompson, and Richard Adloff, *The Politics of Congo-Brazzaville* (Stanford, C.A.: Hoover Institution Press, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> The key studies of the 1968 general strike are Abdoulaye Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar : ou, La révolte universitaire et le démocratie* (Paris: Editions Chaka, 1992); Françoise Blum, “Sénégal 1968 : Révolte étudiante et grève générale,” *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* (Paris, France : 1954) 59, no. 2 (2012); Omar Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal, Senghor face au mouvement syndical” (PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2012), Burleigh Hendrickson, “Imperial Fragments and Transnational Activism: 1968(s) in Tunisia, France, and Senegal” (PhD dissertation, Northeastern University, 2013; Ibrahima Thioub, “Le mouvement étudiant de Dakar et la vie politique sénégalaise: la marche vers la crise de mai-juin 1968,” in *Les Jeunes En Afrique*, ed. Hélène d. Almeida-Topor, et al. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1992).

off guard, as well as many of the strikes' leaders. Both took place at a time when the regimes appeared to have eliminated any serious threat from opposition parties or organizations. Why, then, did these rebellions take place and how did they come about? Given the formal suppression of opposition groups, who led these movements and what did they aspire to? Answering these questions demands a study of the student, youth and trade union organizations that were the catalysts and organizing centers in 1963 and 1968. These groups mounted *sustained* challenges to African state leaders throughout the late 1950s and 1960s but were not always able to connect with the wider population. Thus, this study also investigates the conditions that allowed the leadership of these organizations to attract a mass audience and produce powerful urban upheavals.

Senghor and Youlou's aspirations to create single-party states were not anomalous in the 1960s. Across much of Africa, the democratic possibilities created by anti-colonial movements in the 1940s and 1950s remained unrealized. New African leaders quickly adopted colonial forms of political control as they tried to move toward single-party rule. Many increasingly restricted democratic rights and silenced their opposition—including ostensibly "progressive" governments in Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania, and Mali. Yet across the continent these changes provoked resistance. Were expressions of mass discontent in the 1960s simply brief interludes in the consolidation of single-party regimes? Or did they show that mass struggle could reorient the politics of new states? This work revisits Frederick Cooper's argument that scholars should carefully examine the "moments of divergent possibilities, or different configurations of power, that open[ed] up and shut down" around the time of political independence.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Frederick Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective," *Journal of African History* 49(2008). Cooper's article challenged arguments previously raised by Achille Mbembe, Mahmood Mamdani, and Jean-François Bayart that have emphasized the direct continuities between colonial and postcolonial political and legal structures. See Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Polity, 2009).

I argue that between 1958 and 1974, leaders of trade union, student, and youth organizations profoundly altered the practices and policies of governments in Senegal and Congo. Not only did these activists challenge the actions of state leaders, they also projected an alternate vision for their new nations. Many of the decisions made in the presidential palaces and national assemblies of both countries can only be understood as the product of struggles between state leaders and their young critics.<sup>5</sup>

## II. Radicalism in Context

The following chapters focus on how young radicals in Senegal and Congo organized themselves and moved out of the margins of politics at different moments during the 1960s. But who were these activists and what made them “radical” in their particular historical context? In this work, I define radicals by two central perspectives that they shared: First, the necessity of a decisive break with foreign (specifically, French) influence over the cultural, economic, and political institutions of the new countries—something they called “real” independence. Second, the need to restructure former colonial societies by turning the state toward the principles of revolutionary Marxism. The leaders of radical currents in Senegal and Congo were generally students or civil servants in their twenties. They sought to build a base of supporters both at home and abroad: in Dakar and Brazzaville they articulated the grievances of young urban residents, while internationally they fostered alliances with Third World and

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<sup>5</sup> This claim has been developed in collaboration with other scholars of Africa currently researching the history of radical movements in Congo-Brazzaville, Senegal, Tunisia, and Congo-Kinshasa. See Françoise Blum, *Révolutions africaines: Congo-Brazzaville, Sénégal, Madagascar, années 1960-1970* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014); Pedro Monaville, “Decolonizing the University: Postal Politics, The Student Movement, and Global 1968 in the Congo” (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2013); Hendrickson, “Imperial Fragments”; Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal”; Héloïse Kiriakou, “La “génération JMNR” à la conquête du pouvoir politique au Congo-Brazzaville, entre août 1963 et octobre 1969” (Mémoire 2<sup>ème</sup> année, Université de Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2011). See also the essays in Blum, et al., in *Etudiants africains en mouvement*.



Communist patrons. Their perspectives developed out of this particular combination of local and global influences.

### **The Debate Over Independence**

The first position shared by radical leaders—the need for immediate and “real” independence—emerged from the ever-shifting debates within anti-colonial movements in the 1940s and 1950s. I argue that struggles over the meaning of “independence” not only flourished prior to 1958, but continued into the decade that followed. The official end of French rule, as negotiated between 1958 and 1960, did not resolve these conflicts, but only sharpened them. As a result, many of the demands raised by youth and student leaders in the 1960s were reiterations of those raised by anti-colonial activists during the preceding two decades. As I demonstrate, young radicals did not believe that the new statuses accorded to Senegal and Congo in 1958 and 1960 marked a significant departure from the conditions of late colonialism.

Following World War II, French authorities responded to African boycotts, strikes, and campaigns for colonial reforms by allowing a small group of African political leaders to participate in French political bodies—notably the Constituent Assemblies for the Fourth Republic (1945 and 1946), and the Assembly of the French Union. Through the 1940s and 1950s, these African leaders pushed for reforms inside metropolitan institutions and believed that the path to self-governance was best achieved by remaining *within* a greater restructured French polity—albeit on more equal terms.<sup>6</sup>

However, as movements for national independence swept across much of the colonized world, small groups of students, youth organizations, and trade unionists in the AOF and AEF began to embrace a different perspective. Many were inspired in the early 1950s by the Vietnamese war to expel the

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<sup>6</sup> For an in-depth recent account see Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014.) On the centrality of the “metropolitan axis” for francophone African political parties see also Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 75-124.

French, and calls by activists in Cameroon for a path to independence.<sup>7</sup> But it was the war in Algeria that became a serious point of contention between African politicians and new youth and student organizations. Between 1955 and 1957, students in France and Dakar repeatedly called for Algeria's independence, backed by youth organizations in AOF (the *Conseils de la jeunesse*) and some trade unionists.<sup>8</sup> During some of the worst repression against Algerian Muslims, Ivorian leader Félix Houphouët-Boigny was a minister in the French government, and other African deputies were conspicuously quiet. Young radicals harshly criticized the French government, Houphouët-Boigny and Senghor for their complicity. In response, the French government banned African student publications in France and restricted the travels of student leaders in Dakar, while Houphouët-Boigny prohibited the *Conseils de la jeunesse* from meeting in Abidjan.<sup>9</sup>

The youth, student, and trade union leaders who supported immediate independence for Algeria soon began to call for the independence of AOF and AEF as well.<sup>10</sup> In Senegal and Congo, many of these activists saw political leaders like Senghor and Youlou, who favored a closer ongoing relationship with France, as unable or unwilling to break definitively from colonial relationships.

Tensions came to a head in 1958. In May, the French Fourth Republic collapsed in the wake of an attempted coup d'état led by sections of the military who backed the Algerian settler community. In the ensuing disorder, Charles de Gaulle returned as head of state and the coup was blocked. With the

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<sup>7</sup> In French Cameroon, the leading territorial party was the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC). But unlike their counterparts in AOF and AEF, UPC leaders operated under United Nations trusteeship. In 1952, they pressed in the UN for greater self-rule and a path toward independence. French antagonism toward the UPC eventually pushed the party toward armed struggle in 1954, unleashing a long and ferocious campaign of repression. In Congo-Brazzaville, the legacy of the UPC continued to inspire young radicals into the 1960s, when they worked closely with the next generation of UPC leaders in exile, notably Ossende Afana (see chapter 4). See Terretta, *Nation of Outlaws*.

<sup>8</sup> Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 128-29, 133-36, 197.

<sup>9</sup> See Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 136, 203-06.

<sup>10</sup> This history has been explored in detail by Tony Chafer in *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?* (New York: Berg, 2002).

dissolution of the Fourth Republic, its imperial structure, the French Union, also disappeared. As de Gaulle and his associates set about drafting a constitution for a new republic, African leaders attempted to renegotiate the relationship of the colonies to each other and to the metropole.<sup>11</sup> In September, residents of French colonial territories participated in a referendum on the proposed constitution. If the majority of voters in a territory voted “yes,” they would remain within a reformed French federation, the *Communauté française* (French Community). A “no” vote would result in immediate independence for the territory, but also the abrupt severing of relations with France—a threat issued by French President Charles de Gaulle in the lead up to the referendum.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to 1958, Senghor and Youlou had already faced criticism from student and trade union leaders who called for immediate independence *outside* of a federation with France. The terms of the referendum simply polarized the debate. Senghor and Youlou, like most Francophone African politicians, wished to remain in a federation with France.<sup>13</sup> In this context, those groups who advocated a “no” vote in Senegal and Congo marked themselves as the radical wing of the anti-colonial movement. Many agreed with Senghor that the territories of the French empire in Africa needed to remain united. Like Senghor, they resisted the French decision to grant autonomy at the territorial level, while weakening

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<sup>11</sup> Unlike in 1946, there would be no constituent assembly to draft the constitution, instead, the drafting lay in the hands of a small group chosen by de Gaulle. Included were African deputies like Houphouët-Boigny, a *ministre d'état* in de Gaulle's new government, as well as Senghor and Gabriel Lisette from Chad, who served on the Consultative Committee in the National Assembly. Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 295.

<sup>12</sup> De Gaulle's ultimatum is documented in Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 301, 303. The referendum was held in metropolitan France, all French overseas departments, and most overseas territories, with the notable exceptions of French Togoland and French Cameroon in Africa, both of which were administered under UN trusteeship.

<sup>13</sup> In the face of mounting pressure from his critics, Senghor and other African politicians helped to secure the option for territories to join the Community with the option to seek formal independence at a later date. Senghor also sought a guarantee that African territories remaining within the Community could establish federal relations on the basis of the former AOF and AEF. With these provisions in place—some gained only on the verge of election day—nearly all political leaders in Senegal and Congo eventually called for a “yes” vote, rather than risk a sharp break with France and the other territories. See Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 312-13, 24; Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 42-49.

the federal institutions of AOF and AEF, a process in place since the 1956 loi-cadre Defferre. Young radicals believed that such “balkanization” (as Senghor described it), would leave each territory economically vulnerable and easily manipulated by the metropole. But young radicals nevertheless argued that the only realistic path to a future pan-African federation free of interference from France first required immediate independence *outside* of the French Community—even if it was initially gained on a territorial basis.<sup>14</sup>

The “no” camp was led largely by student, youth, and trade union organizations. The demand for immediate independence was raised in 1955 and 1956 by African students studying in France involved in the Fédération des étudiants d’Afrique noire en France (FEANF). As they returned to Africa during academic breaks, these students connected with African students from across AOF studying at the University of Dakar (created in 1957), who soon joined the call for immediate independence.<sup>15</sup> In parallel, youth associations in Senegal and Congo (largely led by young workers) developed criticisms of political leaders like Senghor and Youlou and also called for independence. In late 1957, a new political party was formed in Senegal, the Parti Africain de l’Indépendance (PAI), with the goal of uniting the emerging pro-independence activists across AOF and AEF.

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<sup>14</sup> See Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 133, 193-215; Omar Gueye, “Léopold Sédar Senghor et le mouvement syndical,” *Cahier Senghor*, no. 2 (2011).14,16; Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa*, 114; Adimado Messan Aduayom, “Le Fédération des étudiants de l’Afrique noire en France (FEANF) dans la lutte anti-coloniale (1950-1960),” in *Les jeunes en Afrique*, vol. 2, ed. Hélène d. Almeida-Topor et al. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> The FEANF has its own leadership body and publications, yet was actually the umbrella group for organizations representing students who hailed from the various colonial territories of AOF and AEF. Members of the organization of Senegalese students in France, the *Association des étudiants sénégalais* (AES), and the Congolese equivalent, the *Association des étudiants congolais* (AEC) then became the conduits for connecting with advocates of independence back in their countries of origin. In Senegal, the young student movement, organized in the *Union générale des étudiants d’Afrique occidentale* (UGEAO) brought together students from across AOF studying in secondary and tertiary institutions in Senegal. On the history of the FEANF, see Aduayom, “FEANF dans la lutte anti-coloniale”; Amady Aly Dieng, *Les grands combats de la Fédération des étudiants d’Afrique noire: de Bandung aux indépendances, 1955-1960* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2009); Sekou Traore, *La Fédération des étudiants d’Afrique noire en France: (F.E.A.N.F.)* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1985); Charles Diané, *Les grandes heures de la F.E.A.N.F* (Paris: Editions Chaka, 1990); Fabienne Guimont, *Les étudiants africains en France, 1950-1965* (Paris, France: L’Harmattan, 1997); Françoise Blum, *Révolutions africaines*, 107-129.

With the referendum approaching in 1958, these organizations became the backbone of the campaign for the “no” vote and gained new adherents: trade union leaders from the Union générale des travailleurs d’Afrique noire (UGTAN) in Senegal and the Confédération générale africaine du travail (CGAT) in Congo. And finally, just weeks before the vote, a minority in Senghor’s ruling party split off to call for a rejection of the Community.<sup>16</sup> When de Gaulle visited Brazzaville and Dakar to campaign for the constitution in the lead up to the vote, activists from these groups greeted him with placards spurning the proposed Community and demanding independence.<sup>17</sup>

However, Senghor still commanded the respect of the majority of Senegal’s dominant party, which called for a “yes” vote, as did all three of Congo’s national political parties. Voters in Guinea famously opted for immediate independence in 1958, but the referendum passed in all of the other territories of AOF and AEF.<sup>18</sup> Yet in spite of a resounding victory at the polls across most of French Africa, the Community proved to be short-lived. Facing ongoing pressure from radical organizations and within their own parties, some African politicians soon began negotiating for increased autonomy, and in 1960, the African territories of the Community became formally independent.

However, the debates over independence continued. Beginning around the time of the 1958 referendum radicals not only demanded *immediate* independence, but also “real,” (or “true” or “total”) independence. This differentiation began as a critique of the incomplete sovereignty offered by joining

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<sup>16</sup> The Senegalese section of the Parti de regroupement africaine (PRA), split over the referendum, and a minority of the party, which called itself PRA-Sénégal—joined the “no” camp.

<sup>17</sup> Claude-Ernest Ndalla (participant and former Congolese youth leader), interview with author, 18 October 2012; Atondi Lecas Momondjo (former Congolese student activist), interview with author, July 2010, Brazzaville.

<sup>18</sup> As de Gaulle promised, Guinea faced serious consequences: an immediate exodus of French administrators and their records, the systematic destruction of equipment and medicine, the withdrawal of all French financial assistance, and even attempts to flood the Guinean economy with counterfeit currency. For Senegalese and Congolese political leaders who had called for a “yes” vote, Guinea’s predicament validated their support for joining the Community. But for young Senegalese and Congolese radicals, Guinea’s voters, and their new president, Sékou Touré, became anti-colonial heroes.

the French Community.<sup>19</sup> Radicals defined “real” independence through various criteria: withdrawal from federative governing structures with France, complete command of diplomatic relations, the expulsion of French military bases from African soil, the end of French and missionary control over educational institutions, the Africanization of the public and private sector, and the nationalization of the economy.<sup>20</sup>

Even the independence accords of 1960 did not meet most of these criteria, and political authorities in Senegal and Congo did not believe that quickly adopting these reforms would be beneficial to their newly-formed states. Most hoped to remain in a close alliance with the French government and foreign businesses—at least for the foreseeable future—in order to make claims to the economic, cultural, and military resources that the former metropole could provide. Notably, Senegalese Prime Minister Mamadou Dia adopted the goal of “real” independence, but admonished young radicals for their impatience. Radicals instead believed that continuing to rely on “support” from France simply ensured the ongoing foreign domination of politics, education, and their national economies. In their eyes, Senghor and Youlou’s governments had accepted—or even embraced—a neocolonial relationship.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Notably, radicals rarely used the term “sovereignty,” preferring instead to speak in terms of a meaningful “independence.”

<sup>20</sup> Leaders of the Union-Soudanaise/Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (US-RDA), the dominant party in the French Sudan in the late 1950s also included the creation of an independent national currency in their own conception of independence. Interestingly, this did not become part of the definition of “real” independence advanced by activists in Senegal or Congo-Brazzaville in the late 1950s or 1960s. See Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 7; Abdoulaye Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar : ou, La révolte universitaire et le démocratie* (Paris: Editions Chaka, 1992); Aminata Diaw and Mamadou Diouf, “The Senegalese Opposition and its Quest for Power,” in *The Politics of Opposition in Contemporary Africa*, ed. Adebayo O. Olukoshi (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1998), 123; Abdoulaye Bathily, Mamadou Diouf, and Mohamed Mbodj, “Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais, des origines à 1989,” in *Les jeunes en Afrique*, ed. Hélène d. Almeida-Topor, et al. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), 299. Among primary sources, see “La Fédération

Thus, the conflicts that pitted Senegalese and Congolese political leaders against young oppositionists in the 1960s had deep roots in the previous two decades. Youth and student leaders saw their actions *both* as a continuation of anti-colonial struggles and as part of a new global movement against all forms of neocolonialism.<sup>22</sup> They did believe that they faced distinctly post-colonial challenges separate from those faced by their predecessors.

Recently, scholars have framed African experiences through the lens of the “global 1960s” or “les années 68.”<sup>23</sup> Young radicals in Senegal and Congo shared the extensive transnational connections and tactical boldness that was characteristic of their contemporaries across the globe during this period. But in this work, I argue that the goals of Senegalese and Congolese radicals are better understood as the transformation of the demands of their predecessors. Similarly, as noted in the next section, their links to international student and leftist networks grew organically out of those established in the 1950s.

While these continuities were paramount in the minds of young activists in Senegal and Congo, they nevertheless organized under new conditions in the 1960s. The inauguration of African self-rule brought heightened expectations, especially among young urban residents who anticipated better access to jobs, education, and housing. When Youlou and Senghor’s governments proved unable to meet these hopes, radicals found new audiences for their longstanding arguments about the need for “real” independence.

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des Etudiants d’Afrique Noire en France (F.E.A.N.F.) et les travailleurs noirs,” in carton 537, F.E.A.N.F. 1960-1963, 5 AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>22</sup> Other recent histories have studied similar radical organizations in the 1960s. See for example, Klaas van Walraven, *The Yearning for Relief: A History of the Sawaba Movement in Niger* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013); Meredith Terretta, *Nation of Outlaws, State of Violence: Nationalism, Grassfields Tradition, and State Building in Cameroon* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> In addition to works by Monaville, Blum, and Hendrickson noted above, see also Andy Stafford, “Senegal: May 1968, Africa’s Revolt,” in *1968: Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt*, ed. Philipp Gassert and Martin Klimke (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2009), 129-35; Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Manthia Diawara, “The 1960s in Bamako,” *Politics and Culture* 1(2002).

## The Third World and Cold War Marxism

The radicals of the 1960s also built on their forerunners' engagement with Marxist ideas and Communist networks. Their commitment to Marxist revolution was the second characteristic that made them "radical" in the context of Senghor's Senegal and Youlou's Congo. While young activists focused most of their efforts on making changes at the local and national levels, they drew heavily from their links to international organizations. Through these relationships, they gained access to resources for their own organizations at home while simultaneously attempting to support anti-colonial and Marxist organizations across Africa, Asia and among African-Americans.

Anti-colonial activists in Francophone Africa were influenced by the Third World project and particularly by its pan-African manifestations.<sup>24</sup> In the 1950s, trade union, student, and youth organization leaders from Senegal and Congo attempted to create umbrella groups to bring together their constituencies from across the AOF, AEF and sometimes Anglophone Africa as well. In 1958, PAI and FEANF leaders joined political representatives from the continent and the African diaspora at the 1958 All-African People's Congress in Accra. As Vijay Prashad notes, the Third World framework—emphasized by speakers in Accra—promoted national independence as a *necessary precursor* to international unity between recently decolonized states.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the demand for immediate independence raised by young radicals in AOF and AEF in the late 1950s (and particularly their call for a "no" vote in 1958) was inspired by their Third World interactions. Senghor and Youlou believed that remaining under French patronage was the best strategy to insulate their new governments from the Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. But young radicals countered

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<sup>24</sup> The 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia was a direct influence on the founding of the PAI, and remained a touchstone in the publications of student radicals in Senegal and Congo, well into the 1960s. See the reference in the Prologue of the founding manifesto of the PAI, reprinted in Majhemout Diop, *Mémoires de lutttes: textes pour servir à l'histoire du Parti africain de l'indépendance* (Paris: Présence africaine, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> Vijay Prashad defines this as "internationalist nationalism," See *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007), 12.



that the Third World offered a better solution: Africans could claim immediate independence and orient directly toward cooperation agreements with other former colonies across the globe.

By the late 1950s, however, the Third World aspiration to build alliances outside of Cold War spheres of influence had begun to flounder. As leaders of newly independent states sought urgently needed resources, many were pulled into the orbit of competing superpowers. In this polarized period, most young Senegalese and Congolese activists chose to strengthen their relationships to Communist networks.

These organizational connections can be traced back to the alliances formed during and after World War II between the French Communist Party (PCF) and the emerging leadership of new African political associations, youth organizations, and trade unions. As African political leaders sought out allies, they began working with Communists in the Constituent Assemblies of the Fourth Republic in Paris, but also on African soil through the multiracial Groupes d'études communistes (GECs) formed in African cities, including Dakar (1943) and Brazzville (1946). In these spaces in France and Africa, PCF members formalized relations with the leadership of French Africa's most influential party, the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA). However, as the Cold War intensified in France, Communists were expelled from the government in 1947.<sup>26</sup> Attempts by Gaullist and socialist parties to sideline the PCF in the metropole corresponded with increased harassment of African political parties by colonial authorities. Many African political leaders sought a reprieve by distancing themselves from PCF.<sup>27</sup> In

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<sup>26</sup> In France, workers' strikes and the PCF's increased strength after the war raised the specter of a Communist "takeover" —particularly for the United States' State Department, which used financial pressure to compel French and Italian heads of state to expel Communists from their governments. See Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 64-65.

<sup>27</sup> While GEC chapters never grew beyond a few dozen African participants in each city, they often drew in emerging African political leaders—including Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Madeira Keita, and Sékou Touré—and were central to the distribution of left-wing literature and the forging of connections to Communist networks. On the making and breaking of these relationships, see Jean Suret-Canale, *Les groupes d'études communistes (G.E.C) en Afrique noire* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994); Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*; Mann, *From Empire to NGOs*, 17; Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 70; Elizabeth Schmidt,

some territories African party leaders continued to relate to the PCF, and many African students and young trade unionists still saw their future bound up in the fate of the world Communist movement. When Houphouët-Boigny broke the RDA's parliamentary alliance with the PCF in 1950, activists in the party accused RDA leaders of abandoning their principles in order to reach a detente with French colonial authorities.<sup>28</sup>

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Senegalese and Congolese studying abroad, predominantly those in France, sustained links with Communist organizations. The FEANF provided numerous fora for students to engage with Marxists from France as well as Martinique, Guadeloupe, Vietnam, and Algeria. As former Senegalese student activist Amady Aly Dieng's memoirs make clear, for African students in France, PCF intellectuals and publications dominated their perspectives on Marxism up to 1968.<sup>29</sup> While most African students were critical of the party and never joined—especially due to the party's support for granting Prime Minister Guy Mollet emergency powers to repress the Algerian uprising in 1956—they still drew heavily from PCF writings to develop their own political ideas. Further, many used relationships forged in the metropole to move beyond the space of the French empire. Third World and Communist organizations sponsored African students' travel to international gatherings of the Soviet-oriented International Student Union (ISU), visits to China and Vietnam, and scholarships to study in the Eastern Bloc or the Soviet Union.<sup>30</sup> One such student was Majhemout Diop, from Senegal, who spent

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"Cold War in Guinea: The Rassemblement Démocratique Africain and the Struggle over Communism, 1950-1958," *The Journal of African History* 48, no. 1 (2007): 100; Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 171.

<sup>28</sup> Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 107, 28, 32-33; Elizabeth Schmidt, "Cold War in Guinea," 108-09, 11, 14-15; Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa*, 157.

<sup>29</sup> Amady Aly Dieng, *Mémoires d'un étudiant africaine*, 2 vols., (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> Françoise Blum, *Révolutions africaines*; Aduayom, "FEANF dans la lutte anti-coloniale." This was also true of trade unionists, for example, in the Congolese CGT/CGAT, see Jean-Michel Wagret, *Histoire et sociologie politiques de la République du Congo (Brazzaville)* (Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1963).

three years in Romania in the mid-1950s, learned Romanian, and read Marxist and Soviet writers in study groups.<sup>31</sup> Upon returning to Senegal, Diop went on to lead the PAI.

Interviews reveal that by the early 1960s, short facsimiled packets of excerpts by Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao were the most common texts that made their way through youth and student organizations in Congo and Senegal.<sup>32</sup> These packets, compiled by the French, Soviet, and Chinese communist parties, were made readily available to African students at reduced or no cost. Glosses of these texts were then presented in student and youth newspapers in Dakar and Brazzaville alongside interviews with Afro-American leader Malcolm X, reports from anti-colonial warfare in Angola, and perspectives from African students studying in Moscow.

For these radicals, “real” independence from colonialism included throwing off its twin—capitalism—and replacing it with a more egalitarian socialist society. Martin Mberi, a Congolese student in 1960, recounted that most of his classmates had internalized the lesson that “[capitalist competition] was the origin of colonial exploitation. The capitalist could not liberate us.”<sup>33</sup> But what did the alternative look like? Youth and student leaders in Senegal and Congo generally believed that socialism could be put into place through a planned state-led economy that would promote industrialization while also increasing agricultural output. Revenues, rather than heading abroad to foreign companies and banks, could be brought into the state budget and used for investment in further technological advances and improvements in living conditions. This, they believed, would allow their

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<sup>31</sup> Diop, *Mémoires de luttes*, 29.

<sup>32</sup> Thus many people discovered Marx’s pre-*Capital* essays on capitalism (“Wage Labor and Capital” and “Value, Price, and Profit”), the Communist Manifesto, and Lenin’s works from 1904-1905 including “Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution” and “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back.” Ibou Diallo, interview; Moussa Kane, interview with author 5 and 17 July 2012, Dakar; Birahim Ba, interview with author, 3 July 2012, Dakar; and Moktar Diack, interview with author, 12 July 2012, Dakar.

<sup>33</sup> Mberi Martin, interview with author, 15 October 2012, Brazzaville.

countries to “catch up” with the dominant economies of Western Europe and the United States—much as the Soviet Union appeared to have done.

Young radicals counterposed this vision of state-driven socialism with doctrines of “African Socialism” that appeared in Senegal and Congo.<sup>34</sup> Senghor had been influenced by Marxism since the 1930s and developed his theory of “African Socialism” after World War II. He argued that the liberation of the oppressed envisioned by Marx could be realized in the ideals of collective rural life, and the practices of African Christianity and Islam.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, after the revolution of 1963 in Congo the new government was led by Alphonse Massamba-Débat, who developed a variant of African Socialism that he called the “philosophie bantou”—a similar amalgam of idealized Bantu social practices, European social democracy, and his Protestant faith.<sup>36</sup> In Senegal, student leaders dismissed Senghor’s African Socialism as, in the words of one tract, “neither socialism nor African,”<sup>37</sup> while in Congo youth leaders considered “Bantu Philosophy” to be a form of “mystification.”<sup>38</sup> They argued that socialism was a *universal* model of scientific, state-led development that could be adapted to local conditions. In contrast, they viewed theories of African socialism as idealist and backward-looking. Young radicals criticized state leaders’ timidity, or outright resistance, to implementing their vision of socialism.

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<sup>34</sup> There were echoes of this across much of Africa. See Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 36-38.

<sup>35</sup> See Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), ch. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Massamba-Débat likely borrowed the term from the 1945 work of Placide Tempels, a Franciscan missionary who worked in the Belgian controlled part of the Congo, “La Philosophie Bantu.” Massamba-Débat seems to have adapted some of Tempels conclusions in Chapters 5 and 6 about “Bantu Ethics” and “Restitution”—but amalgamated them with other frameworks.

<sup>37</sup> “Communiqué à Propos du M.E.O.C.A.M.,” 3 January 1967, UDES Comité Directeur, carton 23, Série 5D, RAD.

<sup>38</sup> *Dipanda* (Brazzaville), n. 39, 1 August 1964.

Senghor and Youlou, however, found their radical opponents' critiques far less threatening than their links to Communist states. Both presidents worried that young radicals could facilitate foreign Communist intervention, and accused them of taking orders from abroad. But before 1968, most young radicals in Senegal and Congo were reticent to embrace the theories or practices of any one particular Communist regime—or to even identify as Communists. Congolese and Senegalese activists developed varied strategies drew upon aspects of Soviet, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban models, as well as Trotskyist and anarchist critiques that they encountered in the late 1960s within francophone student networks. As a result, they approached a variety of *competing* Communist governments and organizations with requests for assistance in providing scholarships, funding for travel, legal and diplomatic aid, and even military assistance. Far from being manipulated by foreigners, young radicals protected their autonomy by developing direct links to a variety of potential allies. This work thereby builds on recent scholarship that has examined Africa's role in the Cold War.<sup>39</sup> But rather than focusing the strategic perspectives of intervening powers like the Soviet Union, Cuba and the US, this project changes the perspective, to show how young African radicals tapped into Cold War resources in order to support their local organizing.

### III. Defining the Youth

In Senegal and Congo, the “radical” positions described above were closely associated with young male intellectuals and their organizations.<sup>40</sup> As Mamadou Diouf and Remy Bazenguissa-Ganga have argued,

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<sup>39</sup> See for example, Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) and *Visions of Freedom : Havana, Washington, Pretoria and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third world Interventions and the Making of our Times*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); S. V. Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> In both Congo and Senegal, young men occupied the ranks of the leadership of youth and student organizations and were the most publicly visible members. Although women's equality was touted by many

following the end of colonial rule new African political leaders sought to harness the energies of young men to propel the economic development of new nations, while still insisting that they respect “the frontier between elders and juniors that characterized traditional African values.”<sup>41</sup> Growing urban areas were often seen by government officials as sites of anti-social and individualistic behavior that needed to be redirected toward national development projects.<sup>42</sup> Across Africa, new ruling parties attempted to create organizations—largely directed at young men—that would channel the energies of both urban and rural youth. Although state-sponsored youth organizations often took their own initiatives, most became extensions of ruling parties and helped party leaders consolidate their general political control and build networks of patronage.<sup>43</sup>

But in Senegal and Congo such efforts at controlled mobilization were abysmal failures. Both new governments included ministers responsible for “*la jeunesse*” in the 1960s, and attempted to mobilize

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African heads of state, most young women were ultimately expected to focus their efforts on childbearing and social reproduction. Nevertheless, women played key roles in student and youth organizations—particularly in Congo—even if they have remained nearly invisible in scholarly writing on Senegal and Congo in the 1960s. See examples in chapter 2, 4, and conclusion.

<sup>41</sup> Diouf argues that this was a change from previous modes of delineating youth from adulthood through initiation rites or marriage. Mamadou Diouf, "Engaging Postcolonial Cultures: African Youth and Public Space," *African Studies Review* 46, no. 2 (2003), 3-4; Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 60, 71, 80, 86, 92, 97. See also, Georges Balandier, *Sociologie des Brazzavilles noires* (Paris: A. Colin, 1955); Elikia M'Bokolo, "Comparisons and Contrasts in Equatorial Africa: Gabon, Congo and the Central African Republic," in *History of Central Africa: The Contemporary Years since 1960*, ed. David Birmingham and Phyllis Martin (New York: Longman, 1998), 80.

<sup>42</sup> See for example, on Tanzania, Ivaska, *Cultured States*. On French Soudan/Mali, Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 35.

<sup>43</sup> These efforts proved to be the most successful—although quite volatile—in countries where political leaders paired single-party rule with a more radical agenda for social change after independence that captured some of the aspirations of young people; Guinea, Mali, Zanzibar, and Tanzania developed youth organizations that served as a source of labor, and a means of policing social behavior. Jay Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009); James R. Brennan, "Youth, the TANU Youth League and Managed Vigilantism in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1925-73," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 76, no. 2 (2006); G. Thomas Burgess, "To Differentiate Rice from Grass: Youth Labor Camps in Revolutionary Zanzibar," in *Generations Past: Youth in East African History*, ed. Andrew Burton and Hélène Charton-Bigot (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010); Ivaska, *Cultured States*; Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 36-38.

young men as supporters of Senghor's and Youlou's respective governments in various forums: the scouting movement, agricultural and infrastructure projects, and party youth organizations.<sup>44</sup> Yet all of these initiatives faltered as the new regimes proved unable to compete with radical students and recent graduates who developed competing organizations for young men and women.

The line between these student leaders, with their particular concerns, and the broader category of "youth" was often blurred. Students had an ambiguous relationship to the "nation-building" role assigned to the youth in postcolonial Africa. On the one hand, students, whether abroad or in new institutions of higher education in Africa, were part of the national development project—being trained to become the technical and administrative cadres of the new state. But as a relatively small and select group (of mostly men), they were also confident to expound their own ideas about development and governance, and frequently criticized post-independence regimes.

This was true of Senegalese and Congolese students in the 1960s, but differences in the two countries' education systems led to very distinct relationships between students and the broader population of "youth." In Senegal, university student unions became the cornerstone of radical politics whereas in Congo, that role was filled by urban youth organizations that included a mix of students, non-students, the unemployed, and young workers.

After decades of African campaigns for greater educational opportunities, by 1960, institutions in Africa were expanding rapidly. But this growth was uneven: the bulk of resources went toward primary school while secondary education lagged behind. In 1960, roughly 8,500 students studied at secondary schools in Senegal, and 3,300 in Congo.<sup>45</sup> However, advancement to *upper* secondary schools was rare. Dakar had a longer history of upper secondary education than in Congo, where the first *lycée* (high

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<sup>44</sup> On Youlou's failed efforts in Congo, see Florence Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës en Afrique centrale: Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, 1940-1965* (Paris: Karthala, 1996).

<sup>45</sup> "International Yearbook of Education, vol. XXIII 1961," (Geneva; Paris: International Bureau of Education and UNESCO, 1962).

school) was only established in 1959. In Congo, just eighteen students passed the *baccalauréat* in 1960, allowing them to pursue university-level studies.<sup>46</sup> In Senegal, the numbers were nominally higher: in 1964, 141 students passed the exam.<sup>47</sup>

While the number of students allowed to advance into secondary and tertiary education remained extremely limited, students in Senegal and Congo still faced better conditions than in most former French African territories. Because Dakar and Brazzaville had been the federal capitals of AOF and AEF respectively, they were already centers of secondary education, intellectual life and political debate on the eve of formal independence. It was in the realm of post-secondary education that Senegalese and Congolese students held the greatest advantages over students from other former French territories. In 1950, an institute of higher education was created in Dakar to service students from across AOF, and in 1957, it was moved to a new campus and re-established as a French university, under the name of the University of Dakar. By the 1959–60 school year, a little over one thousand students enrolled in the University, drawn from former AOF territories, France, and North Africa. After independence it remained part of the official French university system, and although an increasing number of Senegalese students enrolled, they still only composed about a third of the student body until 1968–69.<sup>48</sup>

In Brazzaville, a center for higher education (the Centre d'enseignement supérieur de Brazzaville, or CESB) only enrolled its first students in 1959–60—about three hundred, from across former AEF territories.<sup>49</sup> Young men and women from both countries pursued university education abroad as well,

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<sup>46</sup> "Nombre de diplômés qui sortiront chaque année jusqu'en 1960 des établissements secondaires et primaires de la Fédération," carton 30(1), PR, ANCB.

<sup>47</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," VIII, 31.

<sup>48</sup> "Statistiques Universitaires 1975-1976, Bulletin #1," Rectorat de l'Université de Dakar, Bureau des Statistiques, UCAD.

<sup>49</sup> "International Yearbook of Education, vol. XXIII 1961."



particularly in France, but these numbers also remained small, especially for AEF students: In 1958, there were only sixty-five Africans from all of AEF studying in French universities.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, the number of students who had completed some higher education, or graduated, was small in both countries, allowing groups of students to exert a strong influence over the intellectual and political life of the new nations. But this prestige had a disadvantage: students could become isolated in the confines of their campuses, *internats* (boarding schools), and international student networks. In many parts of Africa, when students tried to challenge post-independence governments, they found themselves lacking a base of popular support. Isolated, they were often thrown into prison and/or co-opted into the governments that they had formerly opposed.

In Senegal, students faced this challenge. As opposition parties and organizations were repressed, the campus of the University of Dakar became a refuge for radical politics. But student organizations often struggled to reach allies beyond the university—both because most student leaders lived on or near campus, and because of the repeated harassment they faced from Senegalese authorities. Throughout the 1960s, the government characterized protesting African university students in Dakar as a privileged group, who believed they were entitled to a living standard that far exceeded most of the country's population. Students rebutted this by arguing that the government could not, on the one hand, expect them to become well-trained intellectuals who would develop the country, and on the other hand, condemn them to impoverished living conditions on campus. But as discussed in chapter 2, the 1968 general strike showed that university students in Dakar were not as isolated as they appeared to be. They were part of the social life of the city and played a critical role in training and coordinating

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<sup>50</sup> Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960). For more general numbers of African students in France, see Blum, *Révolutions africaines*, 108; Note n. 7, "La journée anticolonialiste du 21 février," 16 March 1966, Direction des Renseignements Généraux, 8ème section, dossier 3, carton 531, 5 AG/FPU, ANF.

the actions of secondary school students and trade unionists, who then brought the strike into the streets of urban neighborhoods.<sup>51</sup>

In Congo, where secondary and tertiary education was more limited, the situation evolved very differently. The country's first university was only established in 1971 and thus, there was no large campus where students could organize apart from the general population. Although a national student union was formed in 1961 at the impetus of high school students, it operated in the shadow of the independent youth organization (the Union de la jeunesse congolaise, or UJC), which became the primary engine of opposition to Youlou after the trade unions. Following the fall of Youlou in 1963, a group of secondary and tertiary students, dropouts, and recent graduates—many returning to Congo from abroad—built on the tradition of the UJC by creating mixed organizations of students and non-students from their late teens through age thirty. These organizations attracted thousands of predominantly urban residents and gave young radicals the social power necessary to successfully push forward their demands.

As students transformed themselves into “youth” leaders embedded in urban neighborhoods, they asserted control over the political definition of who was—and *who was not*—part of the “youth.” At the same time, they maintained autonomy vis-à-vis the new government established after the revolution. As shown in chapter 4, between 1963 and 1968, Congolese youth organizations grew in size, influence, and military strength, and increasingly set the tone of national politics.

The association between youth and radical demands was promoted by student leaders, but also adopted by government authorities in both countries. Thus, when Senghor called the demand for independence in 1957 a “sin of youth,” he drew a distinction between himself and his young challengers

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<sup>51</sup> However, the government's ability to split the students from young people outside the campus, and from striking workers in the weeks and months that followed was indicative of the university students still-tenuous relationship to other young people.

that combined aspects of both age and political difference.<sup>52</sup> The “youth” could encompass a very broad age group, and the leadership of youth, student, and trade union organizations often overlapped. Thus, trade union militants in their twenties and thirties also became the face of the “youth”—such as Aimé Matsika, one of the leaders of the 1963 demonstrations in Congo.

Historians have often described the clashes between “youth” and their political “elders” in the 1960s in Senegal and Congo in terms of “generational” differences. But I argue that the cause and effect were actually reversed: the creation of a generational line between “youth” and “elders” was largely a construct articulated by youth leaders that had less to do with age than with political positioning. As noted above, these conflicts should be seen primarily as a continuation of the unresolved debates within the anti-colonial movements of the 1950s that often pitting people of the same age against one another. Moreover, many young radicals in the 1960s looked for inspiration from older militants who had been outspoken critics of politicians like Senghor and Youlou during the previous decade.

## **IV. Examining Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville in the Same Framework**

The experiences of young radicals in Senegal and Congo exhibited striking parallels in the aftermath of the 1958 referendum, differed starkly in the 1960s, but again moved in parallel directions by the early 1970s. The following four chapters are arranged in pairs: the first two chronicle the experiences of radical youth activists in Senegal between 1958 and 1968, the second two look at the same time period in Congo. Although this work is not primarily comparative, exploring the experiences of radical youth in both countries offers insights into each national history that would otherwise be missed. The similarities in their histories allow us to assess their divergences in the 1960s more clearly. Moreover, as noted above, this approach shows how activists from Senegal and Congo often had shared connections

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<sup>52</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 258.

through the FEANF, Third World networks, and international Communist organizations. They shared similar political perspectives, which they then attempted to test in practice under increasingly different local conditions.

### **Parallels: From French Rule to Single-Party States, 1958-1963**

The setting for this work is predominantly urban, and largely unfolds in Dakar and Brazzaville. Until 1958, these cities were the capitals of France's two major colonial federations in Africa (AOF and AEF, respectively.)<sup>53</sup> Because of this "privileged" status, they were home to the first French-language secondary schools in their respective federations, and concentrated a disproportionate number of African waged-workers, civil servants, and young intellectuals from French Africa. Although decisions about the restructuring of the French empire were ultimately made in Paris, the colonial administrations in Dakar and Brazzaville influenced policy and implementation. Because these cities were also centers of French power, they became sites of charged contestations over colonial rule. Activists in the two capitals thus engaged each other, their elected representatives, and colonial authorities in debates over many of the shared milestones of the 1950s: the ending of the *indigénat*, the new 1952 labor code, the *loi-cadre Defferre* of 1956, the referendum on the constitution of the Fifth Republic in 1958, and the negotiation of independence accords in 1960.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> As Frederick Cooper points out, the term "federation" is misleading; AOF and AEF are more accurately described as colonial "administrative units." Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 21. AOF was created in 1895 and initially comprised of the territories of Senegal, Soudan (currently, Mali), Guinea, and Côte-d'Ivoire. By 1904, Niger, Mauritania, and Dahomey (currently, Benin) had been added to AOF. AEF was constituted in 1910 and consisted of the Moyen-Congo (currently, Republic of Congo), Gabon, Ubangi-Shari (currently, Central African Republic), and Chad. Both administrative units lasted until 1958.

<sup>54</sup> See Danielle Sanchez, "Free(ing) France in Colonial Brazzaville: Race, Urban Space, and the Making of Afrique Française Libre" (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2015); Eric T. Jennings, *Free French Africa in World War II: The African Resistance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*; Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*; Gueye, "Léopold Sédar Senghor et le mouvement syndical"; Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Elikia M'Bokolo, "French Colonial Policy in

In 1958, Senghor and Youlou each asserted their growing authority by moving the territorial capitals from their previous sites—Saint-Louis in Senegal and Pointe-Noire in Congo—to Dakar and Brazzaville, respectively. Although these moves were meant to solidify their dominance in territorial politics, they were also a symbolic claiming of the former federal capitals.<sup>55</sup> The new arrangement guaranteed that these cities would remain the primary political and educational centers in the newly established states. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, both cities grew rapidly, due to an influx of young people seeking educational and employment opportunities, which provided a growing base for trade unions, student groups, and youth organizations.<sup>56</sup>

Even as the Community fell apart after 1958 and specific struggles over political power became increasingly specific to each new republic, radical organizations in Congo and Senegal continued to face similar circumstances. I trace these developments in chapters 1 and 3 for Senegal and Congo, respectively. As I show, both Senghor and Youlou moved quickly to consolidate their power by moving toward single-party states led by a *parti unique*—or a *parti unifié*, as Senghor deemed his own party, the Union progressiste Sénégalaise (UPS). They did this through a combination of repression and co-optation of their electoral opponents.<sup>57</sup> In Senegal, Senghor went so far as to jail his longtime collaborator, Prime Minister Mamadou Dia, in 1962. Space for electoral opposition to emerge was soon extinguished in both countries. Instead, organizations outside of the realm of electoral politics

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Equatorial Africa in the 1940s and 1950s,” in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization 1940-1960*, ed. Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 173-210.

<sup>55</sup> See Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 255.

<sup>56</sup> On the young median age in Brazzaville, see Gauze, Thompson and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 217; Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 28.

<sup>57</sup> Often repression—the jailing of opposition party leaders, for example—paved the way for their “integration” into the ruling party. On Senegal see Aminata Diaw and Mamadou Diouf, “The Senegalese Opposition and its Quest for Power,” in *The Politics of Opposition in Contemporary Africa*, ed. Adebayo O. Olukoshi (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1998), 113-43. On Congo see Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*.

increasingly became the vehicles for grievances that found no expression under both Senghor and Youlou's regimes.

But ironically, the student, youth, and trade union leaders who had most adamantly called for independence in the late 1950s faced some of the most debilitating repression after independence. Youlou jailed student and trade union activists for a fabricated "communist plot" in 1960, and Senghor similarly invoked an ambiguous "red imperialism" to justify long campaigns to suppress the PAI and student unions at University of Dakar. By 1963, Senghor presided over a single-party state in practice, if not constitutionally. In Congo, Youlou had lined up the support of nearly the entire Congolese political elite behind his proposal for a single-party state.

Young radicals nevertheless persisted in their opposition either by moving their activities underground or seeking opportunities to live abroad. I argue that, even under conditions of illegality, they trained and laid the groundwork for new militants who would continue to contest the political status quo throughout 1960s. In both Senegal and Congo, this underground activity ebbed and flowed, sometimes persisting through the efforts of a just a few individuals.

As Senghor and Youlou increasingly shut down democratic venues for debate, legal dissent continued only *within* dominant parties—but in both countries these parties became increasingly cut off from large sections of the urban population. As political leaders became more entrenched, their growing material comfort (which often took the form of visible public extravagance) increasingly contrasted with the living conditions of most urban residents. The growth of Dakar and Brazzaville resulted in overcrowded schools, diminishing scholarships, and limits on the number of school-age children allowed to enroll or advance. Urban housing became overtaxed and unemployment affected both those without French-language schooling and those with school certificates. Even secondary school and university graduates found their access to skilled jobs limited, as many posts were still held by foreign advisors and

technical assistants.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, secondary students chafed under the continued dominance of French administrators, professors and curricula at their schools. The leaders of student and youth organizations were able to tap into grievances over these conditions, arguing that Senghor, Youlou, their ministers, and the deputies of the ruling parties had failed to pursue “real” independence from foreign rule.<sup>59</sup>

But the outcome in each case was different. As I argue in chapter 1, Senghor was better able to manage his opponents and contain urban frustrations through the mid-1960s. In contrast, chapter 3 shows how trade unionists and young radicals in Congo were able to overcome their marginalization and topple Youlou’s government when he attempted to create a single-party state in 1963.

### **Divergences: Revolutionary Congo and Resilient Senghor, 1963-1968**

Chapters 2 and 4 explore the increasingly different experiences of young radicals in Senegal and Congo through 1968. During the mid-1960s, Senegalese oppositionists largely languished underground. But in chapter 2, I trace the revival of independent student unions beginning in 1966, and their links to trade

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<sup>58</sup> While much of the unemployed population was not literate, Brazzaville and Dakar had particularly large unemployed literate populations, which had been growing in both Brazzaville and Dakar since the 1950s. On Brazzaville see Gérard Althabe and Roland Devauges, *Le Chômage à Brazzaville* (Paris: Cahiers ORSTOM, 1963); Georges Balandier, *Sociologie des Brazzavilles noires*; Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*. On Dakar, see chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>59</sup> Both Youlou and Senghor agreed to allow the French military to continue operating bases in their countries and mutual defense accords signed in 1960 also allowed new African governments to call in French troops to defend their regimes. Youlou (in 1963) and Senghor (in 1968) would each exercise this option when faced with a popular revolt. The French decision to employ troops to defend Senghor’s government, but not Youlou’s, is part of why the former survived while the latter fell. See chapters 2 and 3. On the ongoing importance of French economic and political influence, see Samir Amin and Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Histoire économique du Congo, 1880-1968 : du Congo français à l’Union douanière et économique d’Afrique centrale* (Dakar: IFAN, 1970); Samir Amin, *Neo-colonialism in West Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974); Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*; Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, “The Transfer of Economic Power in French-Speaking West Africa,” in *Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfers of Power, 1960-1980*, ed. Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Robert Fatton, *The Making of a Liberal Democracy : Senegal's Passive Revolution, 1975-1985* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987); Elikia M'Bokolo, “Comparisons and Contrasts in Equatorial Africa”; Catherine Boone, *Merchant Capital and the Roots of State Power in Senegal, 1930-1985* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Blum, *Révolutions africaines*; Jean-Pierre Bat, *Le syndrome Foccart: la politique française en Afrique, de 1959 à nos jours* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012).

unionists and the outlawed PAI. This chapter also documents how political and material grievances against Senghor's government began to grow not only among university students, but also among secondary students, unemployed youth, urban workers, residents of the Medina quarter of Dakar, and even the youth section of the ruling party. With spaces for electoral opposition closed down, student dissidents became the catalyst for the widespread urban revolt of May-June 1968. A series of student and worker strikes through 1972 secured significant reforms, including raises and new benefits for waged workers, a restoration of student scholarships, the end of French management of the University of Dakar, and the opening of multi-party elections. But unlike in Congo, the demonstrations did not topple Senghor's government, which emerged weakened, but still entrenched.

In Congo, however, a group of radical intellectuals were able to step into the political vacuum created by the collapse of the government in 1963 and declare themselves to be the leaders of a "revolution." Chapter 4 documents how they mobilized thousands of Congolese under the age of thirty into youth organizations and militias, and pushed for the creation of a new state based on "scientific socialism." In Congo between 1963 and 1968, youth organization leaders set the political direction of the country as they became civil servants, parliamentary deputies, and even ministers. I argue that they secured their influence by establishing an "insider-outsider" relationship with the new government led by President Alphonse Massamba-Débat: while officially part of the government, they maintained their autonomy as youth organization leaders. In the process, they achieved some of their criteria for "real" independence: national control over the education system (previously dominated by missionary schools), the expulsion of the French military, and nationalization of foreign owned utilities. Unlike in Senegal, radical youth leaders in Congo had moved into the center of national politics.

#### **Parallels: The Fracturing of the Radical Youth, 1968-1974**

The struggles of young activists led politics in each country in varied directions, but the history of these independent radicals converged again in the early 1970s. The epilogue examines events in both



countries after 1968: in Congo, the rise of a new “Marxist-Leninist” government and in Senegal, the stabilization of Senghor’s regime. During this time, the radical trade union, student, and youth activists of the previous decade struggled to maintain their autonomy and influence in both countries. I argue that while Congolese and Senegalese youth leaders had strengthened their organizations by drawing on resources from Third World and Communist allies up to 1968, they became increasingly entangled in the ideological conflicts within these international networks after 1968. In Senegal, the student movement split between proponents of Stalinism, Maoism, Trotskyism, and anarchism; in Congo, conflict emerged over whether the new regime was truly “Marxist-Leninist” or not. Governments in Congo and Senegal, although on opposite sides of the Cold War ideological divide, both took advantage of these divisions. Between 1972 and 1974, they succeeded in repressing and/or co-opting the independent trade union, student, and youth organizations of the previous decade.

# PART I: Senegal, 1958–68



[Fig. 1: Map of Senegal. Source: [www.geographicguide.com](http://www.geographicguide.com)]



[Fig. 2: Map of Cap-Vert, including Dakar. Source: <http://matthieu.monceaux.free.fr/nangadef/regions/plancarte.html>]

## PREFACE

The following two chapters focus on the history of trade unions, student organizations, and the Parti africain de l'indépendance (PAI) between 1958 and 1968 in Senegal. Throughout this period, these organizations challenged the government of Senghor and Dia's Union progressiste sénégalaise (UPS) from outside the electoral arena. I show that there were two surges in popular challenges to the UPS regime: the first from 1958 to 1960 (chapter 1) and the second from 1966 to 1971 (chapter 2 and the epilogue). Each was followed by a wave of state repression that drove most independent opposition

organizations underground. I contend that these two periods of increased activity were driven by many of the same groups and activists, or their direct successors. These chapters show how changing political and social conditions caused the ebb and flow of popular protest; and locate the connections between the first and second periods of increased activity. Throughout, I explain why the UPS regime remained entrenched, but also how political life was altered by the tenacity of radical opposition leaders.

This preface sketches a brief history of Léopold Senghor and Mamadou Dia's rise to power in Senegal after World War II. The party they created, the UPS (later renamed the Parti Socialiste), dominated Senegalese politics from 1958 until the end of the century. Throughout the 1960s, the politics of young radicals in Senegal were defined largely through their opposition to the actions and philosophies of the party and its leaders.

### **Post-War Politics in Senegal 1944-1958**

Even before World War II, African involvement in French political institutions had a long history in Senegal. Between 1840 and 1893, some of the rights of French citizenship had been extended to Africans living in the oldest colonial municipalities in Senegal—Gorée, Saint-Louis Rufisque, and Dakar—known as the *quatre communes* (four communes).<sup>1</sup> Beginning in 1848, these adult male *originaires* (those born to families residing in the four communes) and metropolitan French citizens in Senegal were granted the right to elect a delegate to the national assembly in Paris.<sup>2</sup> Due to this unique status, many

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<sup>1</sup> These citizens retained a local Muslim "personal status" (juridical personal issues), unless they decided to renounce it. See Mamadou Diouf, "Assimilation coloniale et identités religieuses de la civilité des originaires des Quatre Communes (Sénégal)," *Canadian Journal of African studies* 34, no. 2 (2000); G. Wesley Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Senegal: The Struggle for Power in the Four Communes, 1900-1920* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971); Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1965 [1928]).

<sup>2</sup> There were periods after 1848 when the seat was abolished. Also the voting rights of the *originaires* were challenged and restricted on many occasions before finally (re)established clearly by the 1916 law sponsored by Senegal's representative in the national assembly, Blaise Diagne. See Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, 948-52; Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Senegal*.

Africans and *métis* in the four communes, particularly among a small group of elites, had experience building political organizations and engaging with French political structures in the decades preceding World War II.<sup>3</sup> By 1941, there were eighty-thousand African citizens in the four communes, but only five thousand in the rest of the entire AOF.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, since 1904, Dakar served as the capital for the administration of AOF making it a particularly important site of regular political upheaval in the years immediately following the war. In 1944, voting rights were extended to women in France and the French Antilles, but not to African women in the Four Communes, prompting immediate protests, mass meetings, petitions, and calls for boycott of the next elections. Lamine Gueye, the elected deputy from the Four Communes after the war, saw the successful campaign as a chance to mobilize greater numbers for his party, the Bloc Africaine, as well as push for the extension of citizenship rights to colonial subjects, which he had first agitated for in the 1930s.<sup>5</sup>

Both Gueye and his young protégé, Léopold Sedar Senghor, were elected in 1945 and 1946 to take part in drafting of the French Union's constitution, and both remained intimately involved in French political life for the next decade. Although Lamine Gueye was one of the original signatories to the letter calling for the creation of the RDA, he and Senghor were affiliates of the French Socialist Party, and were quickly dissuaded by French party leaders from participating in what they feared would become a radical grouping. Ironically, the hostility of the Socialist Party pushed RDA leaders into an

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<sup>3</sup> Such electoral rights were suspended under Vichy rule.

<sup>4</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 45. It is worth noting that Senegal as a whole was often seen by metropolitan authorities as more deserving of colonial reform than other territories in AOF and AEF—whether in the form of exemptions to the indigénat or the creation of a single college. See, for example, Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 52.

<sup>5</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 45-51; Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 34-35, 70. Gueye had led the Senegalese section of the French Socialist Party since the 1930s, and the *Comités d'Etudes Franco-Africaines* during the war. On the "africanization" of the SFIO in Senegal, Suret-Canale, *Groupes d'études communistes* 19-20.

alliance with the only other major party that would support their demands for reform: the French Communist Party.<sup>6</sup>

Within a few years Senghor broke from the Socialists and started his own political party, the Bloc démocratique sénégalais (BDS). As voting rights were slowly extended, Senghor successfully fostered allies across Senegal and the BDS was able to surpass Gueye's Parti sénégalais d'action socialiste (PSAS), which remained rooted in the Four Communes. Senghor developed alliances with key trade union leaders like Ibrahima Sarr (who headed the national railway workers union), and most crucially, with Muslim religious leaders and other local elites throughout the interior of the country.<sup>7</sup> Particularly important to Senghor's influence the support from leaders of the Murid sufi tariqa, who dominated the groundnut economy through access to the labor of their *talibés* (students) and mobilized their followers to support the BDS.<sup>8</sup>

While developing the BDS in Senegal, Senghor remained in the French National Assembly from 1946 until 1959. As Gary Wilder has recently documented, during this time, he drew upon Marx's philosophical writings and the cultural theories of negritude to develop a more general political framework of "African Socialism."<sup>9</sup> He argued that the liberation of the oppressed envisioned by Marx could be realized in the ideals of collective rural life, and the practices of African Christianity and Islam. But such socialism could be best achieved through a closer relationship with France, not a break. As

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<sup>6</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 167; Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 72, 104.

<sup>7</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 189. A significant victory for Senghor, who was Catholic in a country that was predominantly Muslim.

<sup>8</sup> See Mamadou Diouf, "Le clientélisme, la "technocratie" et après?," in *Sénégal: trajectoires d'un état*, ed. Momar Coumba Diop (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1992); Donal Brian Cruise O'Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Boone, *Merchant Capital* See also Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 214. Notable that in Soudan and Côte d'Ivoire, new political parties first sought to undermine the authority of local canton chiefs, see Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 171; Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*.

<sup>9</sup> See Wilder, *Freedom Time*, ch. 8.

Senghor wrote in 1947, “We want less to rid ourselves of the tutelage of the metropole than of the tyranny of international capitalism.” He claimed that an alternative could be built “taking inspiration from European socialism and the old African collectivism. We will thus reconcile modern technique and African humanism.”<sup>10</sup>

For Senghor, this synthesis of political traditions could only be achieved through a “federal French Republic,” a voluntary political federation that linked France and its African colonies, yet without the inequities of colonial rule.<sup>11</sup> In hailing the need for federation, he simultaneously rejected a demand for independence from France: “We say that assimilation is an illusion in a world where people have become conscious of their personality; and we affirm that independence is a dream in a world where the interdependence of people affirms itself so manifestly.”<sup>12</sup>

Senghor insisted on the need for what he called “horizontal solidarity” among the territories of AOF.<sup>13</sup> He believed that the individual territories that composed the AOF, with their small populations and limited economies, could never succeed as individual countries. But even when united, he argued, AOF territories would be resigned to impoverishment without the “vertical solidarity” of France and

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 187, 262.

<sup>11</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 196, 201.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 187. In the French National Assembly Senghor organized the Indépendants d’Outre-Mer (IOM) as an alternative to the RDA. IOM’s position from 1948-53 rejected national independence in favor of federalism between colonial territories and France. When Senghor founded the paper “La condition humaine” in 1948, the first editorial similarly called for the “liberation of Africa in the framework of the French Union.” See Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 190. As Chafer points out, this position was nearly identical to that of the RDA’s. Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 72-73.

<sup>13</sup> As Cooper notes, in the context of discussions about European unity after the war, Senghor responded by calling for a United States of Africa in 1950. While Senghor quickly dropped the concept, possibly in response to the objection of the French overseas ministry, it was famously later taken up by Kwame Nkrumah to speak of a federation of independent African states. Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 203-04.



other European states in the form of aid for economic development.<sup>14</sup> Thus, throughout the 1950s, Senghor and Mamadou Dia, called for a multinational state which retained the federal organization of the AOF, within a larger confederation that preserved West Africa's integration with the French state.<sup>15</sup>

Senghor and Dia's party, after merging with a handful of smaller parties in early 1957, easily swept the elections for the new loi-cadre assembly. Senghor continued to lead the party, which by 1958 had absorbed two other smaller parties, including Lamine Gueye's Socialists, to become the UPS. Through these mergers, party leaders gained access to larger patronage networks, building on those they had built among Muslim clerics and other local authorities in the countryside. Dia, meanwhile, was elected by the territorial assembly and became the vice-president of the *Conseil de gouvernement*, the highest ranking African executive in the territory.

Senghor and Dia were initially ambivalent about the proposed constitution for the French Community in 1958, and pushed for member states to have the right to enter into a federation with each other, and to eventually negotiate their independence—if they so chose. After securing these provisions in the lead up to the referendum, Senghor and Dia belatedly came out in favor of joining the Community. A UPS party conference backed this position, although one-third of delegates abstained or called for a “no” vote.<sup>16</sup> A section of the UPS, led by Abdoulaye Ly and former student activist Amadou Mahtar Mbow, broke away to form a new party, the PRA-Sénégal, and called for a vote against joining the Community.<sup>17</sup> Senghor and Dia, however, still controlled the party apparatus and the loi-cadre government, and used it to their advantage. They called upon the support of Muslim religious leaders

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<sup>14</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 180, 88.

<sup>15</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 215.

<sup>16</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 320. It was not a unanimous vote in the UPS party conference in September 1958: 160 representatives voted for the “yes,” 29 voted for the “no,” and 47 abstained.

<sup>17</sup> They argued that the UPS, by calling for a “yes” vote, failed to adhere to the PRA's position of “immediate independence.”



and pushed for a “yes” vote among peanut growers by warning them about the dangers of losing French trade subsidies.<sup>18</sup> The combined opposition of the PRA-Sénégal, the PAI, the UGTAN trade union leaders, and the student and youth organizations ultimately only resulted in a tiny minority of “no” votes in Senegal.<sup>19</sup> Senghor, Dia and the majority section of the UPS emerged victorious from the referendum and immediately set about negotiating the terms of their new political authority with the metropole. The following chapter explores how this negotiation unfolded, and how UPS leaders attempted to establish unrivaled authority within Senegal.

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<sup>18</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 320.

<sup>19</sup> As Chafer notes, their disadvantage also stemmed from their urban location, largely lacking allies outside of the city—a dynamic that would remain in 1968. Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 196.

# CHAPTER 1

## Senegal 1958–1966: The UPS’s Consolidation of Power and the Retreat of Political Opposition

### Introduction

After the referendum of 1958, the UPS moved aggressively to consolidate its control over the new Senegalese republic. Mamadou Dia, as the president of the *Conseil de gouvernement* and then prime minister, led an aggressive campaign to centralize government planning and reorganize the agricultural economy. At the same time, Dia’s government dealt harshly with political parties, student organizations, and worker’s unions who challenged the UPS’s dominance.<sup>1</sup> As occurred simultaneously in Congo-Brazzaville, the new Senegalese government used a process of repression and rehabilitation: opponents were often first thrown into jail in order to make them more tractable, then brought into the UPS on Dia and Senghor’s terms. UPS leaders carried this out through their newfound control of the electoral process, civil service employees, the police and—after 1960—the military. The UPS underwent an internal crisis in 1962, resulting in Senghor ordering the arrest of Dia and his supporters. The crisis accelerated Senghor’s drive to centralize state authority: he eliminated the post of prime minister and established a presidential regime through a new constitution in 1963. Although the new constitution did not enshrine the UPS as the country’s sole legal party, by the mid-1960s, Senegal *had* become a single-party state in practice.

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<sup>1</sup> As Chiekh Faty Faye points out, Dia later accepted the responsibility of the UPS in implementing unpopular measures for the purposed of political repression—all the while remaining silent on his own role in putting them into place. Cheikh Faty Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar (1945-1960) : au jour le jour* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000).

This chapter looks at three types of organizations that attempted to remain independent of the UPS's expanding political dominion: political parties, trade unions, and student organizations. In many cases, these organizations presented themselves as opponents of the UPS government—although in some cases, they simply wished to retain their autonomy from the regime. In each example, I explore how they articulated their opposition, the types of organizing they engaged in, and how the government responded.

Four patterns emerge from this period of Senegal's political history. The first is the fierce but murky debate over the meaning of Senegal's "independence"—and the closely related dispute over socialism. Young radicals—particularly those in the Parti africain de l'indépendance (PAI) and the student unions at the University of Dakar—developed an extensive list of changes that were necessary to achieve "genuine" or "total" independence. Following the 1958 referendum, Dia claimed to agree with many of these conditions, but his young critics believed that the UPS was too dependent on the support of the French government to take the necessary steps—for example, the expulsion of French troops—to achieve "genuine" independence. Most crucially, the UPS government remained committed to remaining in the French Community, while young radicals believed that doing so inherently restricted the sovereignty of the new republic. But as noted in the introduction, from 1958 to 1960, the terms of membership in the French Community were rapidly changing, constantly shifting the debate over "independence" in Senegal.

Second, those organizations with links to Communist governments and networks abroad were often the most resistant to collaboration with the UPS government and suffered from the most relentless state repression. The PAI, and its associated student and trade union allies, were accused of working on behalf of "foreigners," and the PAI was banned outright in 1960. Its dissolution was followed over the next five years by the banning of a series of youth, student, trade union, and women's organizations that were closely connected to the PAI, including the Conseil de la jeunesse du Sénégal

(CJS), the Union des femmes du Sénégal (UFS), the Union générale des étudiants d’Afrique occidentale (UGEAO), and the Union générale des étudiants sénégalais (UGES).

Third, organizations were targeted by the UPS government for refusing to collapse their activities into new state-sponsored initiatives. Dia cracked down hard on striking workers in 1959, whose indiscipline he saw as a barrier to the government’s national development plans. During this time, autonomous trade unions and student organizations increasingly had to compete with well-funded rivals created by the UPS in order to undermine the opposition of autonomous activists.

Finally, the details of this period reveal both the extensiveness of state repression as well as the resiliency of opposition organizations. By 1963, Senghor controlled most of his opponents both inside and outside of the ruling party. However, by 1968, young radicals in student and trade union organizations began challenging Senghor’s regime with a renewed vigor. Scholarship by Abdoulaye Bathily, Omar Gueye, Françoise Blum, Burleigh Hendrickson and others have offered detailed accounts of the strikes and protests that destabilized the government between 1968 to 1972.<sup>2</sup> However, scholars of Senegalese political history have paid much less attention to the history of radical opposition during the dark years—1960 to 1966— that preceded this revival. Work by Abdoulaye Ly and Donal Cruise O’Brien, and recent memoirs by former PAI militants help to fill this lacuna. In this chapter and the one that follows, I build on their scholarship to trace the continuities that connected the radical opposition of the late 1950s to the upsurge in opposition at the end of the 1960s. Many of the new opposition leaders of the late 1960s were trained by those who had borne the brunt of the repression in the early 1960s. Thus, the challenge to Senghor’s regime in 1968 (and after) came out of many of the demands that had guided the early radicals: an end to foreign dominance over the economy and the education system; the right to form organizations independent of the government; and an end to the UPS’s political hegemony.

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter 2.

# I. Independence, Socialism, and the Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, 1958-1960

## The UPS's Orientation After the 1958 Referendum

Five days after the 1958 referendum, Mamadou Dia, now president of the *Conseil de gouvernement*, released a lengthy set of directives for the UPS.<sup>3</sup> In it, Dia defined the UPS leadership's positions on three related issues: independence, socialism, and the Africanization of the territorial administration.

Dia objected to critics in the youth section of the UPS, trade unions, and opposition parties like the PAI and PRA-Sénégal who demanded "immediate" independence and the acceleration of Africanization in the public and private sectors.

Dia called for fewer "manifestos and proclamations" and rejected immediate independence saying that "beyond words and illusions" "an abrupt abandonment of the current system would have left us stuck with our present weakness." Instead, he argued that the conquest of "autonomy" had been completed by voting to join the Community, and the major task was now to prepare the territory for a peaceful and gradual transition to independence. He believed that "preparing for real independence" required training African technicians, securing capital (from private and public sources), a reorganization of the colonial administration, the creation of rural cooperatives, and the commercialization of groundnut production.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Position de l'Union Progressiste Sénégalaise (U.P.S.) au lendemain du referendum du 28 Septembre 1958." rapport 1958, Sous-Dossier 3, carton 130, SVP, ANS; "L'U.P.S. au lendemain du referendum," Rufisque, 4 October 1958, Mamadou Dia, Sous-Dossier 3, carton 130, SVP, ANS.

<sup>4</sup> Dia made clear that the government "will take private investments, if they are given conscientiously and honestly...we will make sure all investments are secure. Our socialism is an open socialism...in this spirit, we have already made contacts with European funders, and negotiations are underway with foreign sources of capital." "L'U.P.S. au lendemain du referendum" Rufisque, 4 October 1958, Mamadou Dia, Sous-Dossier 3, carton 130, SVP, ANS. Senghor too, shortly after the referendum, saw a long road ahead, and argued that it was not yet wise to talk about "total independence." Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 328.

Dia also argued that the civil service (*fonction publique*) was being Africanized too quickly. Over the course of 1959, the administrative apparatus of the AOF was dismantled and the former federal employees were re-distributed among the different territories. The Senegalese government, like most in AOF, struggled to absorb thousands of new civil servants on its payroll.<sup>5</sup> In 1973, the World Bank noted that

for political and social reasons, a large number of civil servants formerly working for AOF were incorporated in Senegal's national civil service between 1958 and 1960 and have remained there ever since. Unfortunately, most of the inherited "excess" civil servants were not those that Senegal desperately needed after independence (planners, engineers, teachers, extension service agents, etc.) and were difficult to be retrained.<sup>6</sup>

Faced with this influx, Dia claimed that the public sector workforce was inflated, of uneven value, and had become a burden on the territory. He ended his report on a note of ambiguity, stating that "[i]t is our intention to set a timetable for achieving real independence."<sup>7</sup>

### **The Mali Federation**

Like Dia, Senghor cautioned that it was best to avoid talking about "total independence"<sup>8</sup> when there remained so many steps ahead. Senghor declared that any meaningful independence was only possible when a nation "consents freely to abandonments of sovereignty" and abandons "the absolute fiction of independence in order to enjoy real independence."<sup>9</sup> For Dia and Senghor, "real" or "total"

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<sup>5</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 338-40.

<sup>6</sup> International Development Association, West Africa Regional Office, *The Economy of Senegal*, 5 vols., vol. 1 (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [World Bank], 1973), 30.

<sup>7</sup> "L'U.P.S. au lendemain du referendum" Rufisque, 4 October 1958, Mamadou Dia. Sous-Dossier 3, carton 130, SVP, ANS.

<sup>8</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 328.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 350.

independence required not only an ongoing partnership with France, but the construction of “*la Communauté africaine*” (the African Community).<sup>10</sup> This new body would attempt to first bring back together the former AOF territories, but now as member states within the French Community. However, the centrifugal forces that had been pulling apart the AOF since the 1956 loi-cadre reforms had only grown stronger following the referendum.<sup>11</sup> Dia and Senghor’s efforts to create an African federation in early 1959 ended with just one other willing participant, the government of Soudan.<sup>12</sup> Yet even this alliance was quickly strained over the question of independence. Over the course of 1959, Senghor and Dia attempted to hold back their Senegalese and Soudanese counterparts who called for a referendum on independence from the French Community.<sup>13</sup> Dia emphasized that a community of African nations needed to be formed before declaring independence. To declare independence first would make it harder for new African states to come together in a federation, and risked a break with France.<sup>14</sup> Yet Dia and Senghor were in a minority now. In July, at a congress for the Parti de la fédération africaine (PFA)—an amalgam of the ruling parties in Senegal and Soudan, Abdoulaye Ly reports that most of the delegates disagreed with Senghor’s position and called for independence “as soon as possible.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 337.

<sup>11</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, ch. 7.

<sup>12</sup> See Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, ch. 7 and 8; Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, ch. 2. The *Conseil de l’Entente*, initiated by Houphouët-Boigny in 1959 and consisting of the ruling parties of Côte d’Ivoire, Upper Volta, Niger, and Dahomey, was created as a response to the Mali Federation. The Conseil focused on the centrality of their alliance with France, whereas, Dia and Senghor hoped to use the French Community to establish greater links between African territories (while still maintaining close ties to France.)

<sup>13</sup> On the pro-independence advocates pushing for a second referendum, see Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 80-81.

<sup>14</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 341.

<sup>15</sup> Abdoulaye Ly, *Les regroupements politiques au Sénégal (1956-1970)* (Paris: Karthala, 1992), 256.

In the first year of the Community's existence, a number of tensions had arisen in domains where member states in Africa had limited sovereignty: international diplomacy, justice, and the creation of a nationality for the residents of each member state. Although various compromises were reached over the course of 1959, by the end of the year, representatives of the Mali Federation, pushed particularly by the Soudanese leadership, requested independence *within* the Community.<sup>16</sup> Effectively, this would entail international recognition of the Mali Federation as a sovereign entity, but it would remain in a confederal relationship with France.<sup>17</sup> Dia and Senghor held fast to the goal of remaining within the Community, as a necessity for the achievement of "real independence."<sup>18</sup>

In the negotiations with France that began in January 1960, the Malian delegation, under the Soudanese leader Madeira Keita, resisted any concession of Mali's sovereignty to the institutions of the metropole or the French Community. Negotiations over the terms of Mali's continued membership in the French Community soon looked more like bilateral agreements between France and an independent entity.<sup>19</sup> The celebration of the Mali Federation's formal independence in June 1960 proved to be short-lived; conflicts between Senegalese and Soudanese leaders over issues of policy and authority reached a dramatic climax on August 20 when the Soudanese representatives were unceremoniously expelled from Dakar.<sup>20</sup> That same day, the Senegalese national assembly voted to declare the independence of

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<sup>16</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 257-58. Ly claims that based on this opening, the PRA-Sénégal began to call for the complete independence of the Mali Federation. Mann notes that Dia, Senghor and Modibo Keita took two months to agree on what they were asking of de Gaulle: "independence within the framework of a multinational confederation with France." Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 82.

<sup>17</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 249, 360.

<sup>18</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 369.

<sup>19</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 380-82. As Cooper points out, in reality France had ceded all competencies to Mali, and Mali had ceded some back, as an independent state. Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 394.

<sup>20</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 388-409 Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 83-84.



Senegal—no longer as part of the Mali Federation—and simultaneously the government sought a closer relationship with France.<sup>21</sup> Cooper argues that despite Senghor’s long entreaties for an African federation, when he felt that the Soudanese leadership threatened to impinge on his own “political base,” he fell back to the safety of his territorial authority. The Soudanese did the same. In the meantime, the Mali Federation’s move toward independence had prompted other African leaders in the former AOF to do the same.<sup>22</sup> Dia still pleaded for the importance of the French Community, but as new states negotiated their formal independence from France, the Community—like the Mali Federation—became a dead letter by the end of August 1960.<sup>23</sup>

### **The UPS and “African Socialism”**

The rise and fall of the Mali Federation shows that in the years following the referendum of 1958, UPS leaders’ conceptions of independence were ambiguous, evolving, and frequently debated within the party. The same was true of their vision of African socialism. At the conference of Francophone African party leaders in Paris in February 1958, Senghor had called for the creation of a “a unified party of the left, a party inspired by socialism, but integrating the spiritual values of black Africa.”<sup>24</sup> According to Senghor, class divisions were foreign to African societies, and thus did not need to be overcome once the more flagrant abuses of colonial rule had been expunged. This was a view shared by many advocates of African socialism, like Madeira Keita of the Union Soudanaise (US-RDA) and Sékou Touré of Guinea.

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<sup>21</sup> Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 84-85 Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 408.

<sup>22</sup> See Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 395.

<sup>23</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 398, 409, 29.

<sup>24</sup> “[U]n parti unifié de gauche, un parti d’inspiration socialiste mais intégrant les valeurs spirituelles de l’Afrique Noire.” Quoted in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 106.

In Senghor's view, Africans' customary concern for collective well-being melded with the spiritual values of Islam and Christianity on the continent to provide the basis for socialism.<sup>25</sup>

But what did this philosophy mean in practice? The export of groundnuts, namely peanuts, was the backbone of the Senegalese economy during the 1950s and 1960s. The UPS drew its strength from "rural power brokers, regional notables, and politicians with personal power bases"—most importantly the Murid and Tidjiani leaders who dominated groundnut production.<sup>26</sup> Uninterested in upsetting these important allies, Senghor tried to square his vision of socialism to the relations between local religious authorities and the farmers who worked for them as *talibés* (students). At the time of the Murid's annual pilgrimage (*magal*) in 1963, Senghor asked, "what is Socialism if not essentially the economic-social system which gives primality and priority to work? Who has done this better than Ahmad Bamba [founder of the Murid tariqa] and his successors?"<sup>27</sup> As in much of Africa, "socialism" became an entreaty for greater labor productivity without disrupting the inequities of the status quo.

The UPS also sought to appease the foreign-owned companies that controlled Senegal's international trade, industry, and resource extraction. Much to the consternation of Senegalese merchants, French businessmen continued to administer the Dakar Chamber of Commerce, which decided who would (or would not) receive import and export licenses.<sup>28</sup> However, as the UPS increasingly took control of the territorial administration after 1958, it attracted recent university graduates and other young intellectuals, who were drawn to Dia's outspoken commitment to restructuring the national economy through state intervention. After 1960, many were brought into the

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<sup>25</sup> See Wilder, *Freedom Time*, ch. 8; Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 330. The Social Catholicism of Father Joseph Lebret, who was asked to Senegal to study the economic relations of the country was also an important element of Senghor's conception of socialism.

<sup>26</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 90-91.

<sup>27</sup> Lucy C. Behrman, *Muslim Brotherhoods and Politics in Senegal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) Quoted in Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 88.

<sup>28</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 124.

government in order to work alongside French planners, where they sought to implement programs that would bypass power brokers in rural areas by increasing state control over groundnut commerce and controlling the import of consumer commodities. However, these proposed interventions immediately provoked the ire of the UPS's rural affiliates and French business owners. The government backed down—but only after the tense conflict in 1962 between Senghor and Dia that resulted in the latter's imprisonment.

The period of 1958-1962 was marked by conflicts *within* the UPS over issues of federation, independence, Africanization, and economic intervention. Yet simultaneously, the party and its attendant government was being shaped by its engagement with organizations outside the party. Young radical intellectuals and workers sought to contest the UPS's hegemony and advance their own demands around these same issues. The rest of the chapter turns to struggles of the PAI, trade unions, and students as they contested Senghor, Dia and other UPS leaders.

### **The PAI's Political Orientation After the 1958 Referendum**

Only two national political parties in Senegal rejected joining the French Community in 1958 and called for a “no” vote: the Parti africain d'indépendance (PAI) and a faction of the UPS that broke off to create the Parti de regroupement africain-Sénégal (PRA-Sénégal). The PAI was the first to form, in September 1957 in Thiès, and was founded on the demand for immediate political independence from France. The founders of the PAI saw the party as an expression of the demands which had, at that point, only been raised by student groups (the Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France (FEANF) and the Union générale des étudiants d'Afrique occidentale (UGEAO); youth organizations (the Conseil de la jeunesse du Sénégal (CJA) and the Rassemblement de la Jeunesse Démocratique Africain (RJDA); and trade

unionists, especially those in the Union générale des travailleurs d'Afrique noire (UGTAN).<sup>29</sup> The PAI, like these organizations, rejected plans for limited autonomy within the new frameworks laid out by the 1956 *loi-cadre* and the plans for the French Community. At the same time, they spurned the fracturing of the AOF under the *loi-cadre* and aimed to create a pro-independence party that could traverse both AOF and AEF, with the aim of creating a trans-territorial polity. While Senghor and Dia shared this latter goal, they sought to remain inside the French Community—a strategy the young radicals repudiated on principle.

When the party was founded in 1957, the PAI's leaders believed that the drive toward "unity" among Senegalese politicians had resulted in a retreat from the demand for independence, as parties were pushed to limited their program to points of common agreement. The PAI's manifesto was largely a response to the merger that had created the UPS's forerunner, the Bloc Populaire Sénégalais (BPS) in 1956. It called to "break with a 'fusion' that is a pure and simple integration, and a party where it is only permitted to have your say by being issued a certificate of assimilation and submission to the reactionary right."<sup>30</sup>

When Lamine Gueye called on the main Senegalese parties to meet and discuss possible measures for unity at the end of 1957, the PAI was invited.<sup>31</sup> The talks laid the foundation for the creation of the UPS, through the merger of Senghor's BPS, Gueye's *Parti sénégalais d'action socialiste* (PSAS), and the Senegalese RDA affiliate, the Mouvement populaire sénégalais. However, the PAI ultimately rejected the

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<sup>29</sup> "Sur une conférence tenue par le P.A.I. au Casino Dolmys à Thiès le 23 Octobre 1957," 25 October 1957, Renseignements n. 2685, carton 487, SVP, ANS; Renseignements. N. 26 C-BM.3, "A/s Conférence tenue à Kaolack par M. Baro Youssoupha membre du P.A.I.," sent to Surété du Sénégal (in Kaolack), 26 August 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>30</sup> "[R]ompre avec une 'fusion' qui est une intégration pure et simple et un parti où il n'est permis d'avoir voix au chapitre qu'en se faisant délivrer un certificat d'assimilation et de soumission à la droite réactionnaire." From the PAI's founding manifesto, in Diop, *Mémoires de luttés*, 57.

<sup>31</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 125-29. The other parties involved were the BPS, the Parti sénégalais d'action socialiste (PSAS), and the Mouvement Populaire Sénégalais (MPS).

terms of the agreement because the proposed “minimum program” focused on the “conquest of internal autonomy.”<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, PAI leaders asked to attend the February 1958 Conférence de regroupement des partis africains in Paris as observers. The party, represented by general secretary Majhemout Diop and Ossendé Afana (a leader of the UPC), refused to participate fully unless the other parties accepted a platform that included a clear position in favor of independence *and* a rejection of the “la communauté franco-africaine.”<sup>33</sup> Their demands were not accepted and the party was excluded from the deliberations that resulted in the creation of the trans-territorial Parti du Regroupement Africain (PRA).<sup>34</sup> Abdoulaye Ly notes that while the PAI called for unity in 1957 and 1958, party leaders refused to compromise on their demand for the “immediate option for the conquest of independence.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The BPS called for a “unified” party “d’inspiration socialiste” with a minimum program “pour la conquête de l’AUTONOMIE INTERNE réalisé dans le cadre des Fédérations des Territoires de l’AOF et de l’AEF unies à la France par des liens fédéraux fondés sur la libre coopération, l’égalité et le droit à l’indépendance.” The PAI called for a “Front Unique de de Lutte Anticolonialiste pour la Conquête de l’Indépendance Nationale. Dans la réalisation de ce programme, ils s’engagent à lutter dans l’immédiat pour l’autonomie pleine et entière des fédérations AEF-AOF, étape vers l’Indépendance. Tout en gardé leur personnalité propre dans ce Front...” Notably, the PAI proposal wasn’t so clearly different from the final position adopted by the other parties. Abdoulaye Ly sees the PAI’s openness toward including “autonomy” as a “step” as a gesture toward compromise, but one the party’s leaders were never serious about. See *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 133-34.

<sup>33</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 111, 34-35. Ly says the decision not to sign prefigured the PAI’s decision not to participate in the Paris regroupment meeting 15 February. Though the PAI wanted to be observers “une fois refusé le préalable sur l’indépendance, condition déclarée de son entière participation éventuelle.”

<sup>34</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 110-11. Ly lists Majhemout Diop and Ossendé Afana (UPC) as PAI representatives “...j’ai combattu énergiquement, le 15 février après-midi, la présence de la délégation du PAI aux travaux de la commission, une fois que, en séance plénière, son porte-parole, attaché à faire triompher le mot d’ordre de l’indépendance, eût refusé clairement, de s’engager dans la discussion sùr la thème finalement retenu par cette séance : la recherche d’un programme minimum susceptible de permettre de réaliser une unité organique considérée comme première hypothèse à examiner avant d’envisager éventuellement, en cas d’échec, l’unité d’action, comme le faisait le RDA dans son invitation aux partis, en tant qu’alternative à l’unité organique pour réaliser une entente...”

<sup>35</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 134-35. “option sans délai pour la conquête de l’indépendance.”

The PAI's intransigence, however, gained the attention of members of the youth section of the BPS, the Mouvement des jeunes du BPS (MJBPS), ages eighteen to twenty-five. When the MJBPS was founded in March 1958, it was obligated by its statutes to adopt the political line of the BPS. Instead, at the congress, party leaders faced

strong pressure from the most impatient supporters of the conquest of independence, spurred on more or less directly by the PAI, and whose numbers were increasing daily among African youth at the organization level (the FEANF, the CJA and the UGTAN becoming their allies), as well as among the unorganized [youth]...<sup>36</sup>

The youth congress lurched away from the BPS's official position and toward the demand for immediate independence. A report presented at the congress claimed that the "masses" in Senegal were largely in favor of independence, and that the youth of the BPS needed to shift the rest of the party to adopt this demand. MJBPS leaders concluded that the experience of the *loi-cadre* had convinced them "more and more" that "only political independence allows people to build their society on the objectives and the interests of the vast majority of those who live by the strength of their muscles."<sup>37</sup> At the time, the leadership of the BPS decided to intervene to stop the MJBPS from adopting the call for independence. But the PAI's position resonated with young people in the dominant party, who would, in 1958, greet General de Gaulle with placards calling for a "no" vote.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 137-38. "...la forte pression des partisans les plus impatientes de la conquête de l'indépendance animés plus ou moins directement par le PAI et dont nombre augmentait de jour en jour dans la jeunesse africaine, au niveau des organisations (FEANF, CJA et UGTAN devenue leur alliée), comme parmi les inorganisés..."

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Ly Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 138-39. "seule l'indépendance politique permet à un peuple de construire sa société selon les objectifs et dans l'intérêt de la grande majorité de ceux qui vivent de la force de leur muscles."

<sup>38</sup> Of course, they would be joined by other "elder" party leaders, like Abdoulaye Ly, who formed PRA-Sénégal and called for a "no" vote. The PAI's call for the "no" also resonated with attendees at Le Festival de la Jeunesse d'Afrique in Bamako in 1958. There Madeira Keita and Majhemout Diop debated at the referendum on the French Community. Madeira Keita, who was personally for the no, had to defend the yes against Diop, and was shouted down by the young delegates. Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 80.

Following their defeat in the 1958 referendum, and the creation of the Mali Federation the following year, the PAI developed a new set of demands, which they raised in multiple tracts. First, they intervened in the public debate over whether the status of the Mali Federation should be decided by negotiation with France, or through a second referendum on independence from the French Community. While Senghor, Dia, and Modibo Keita, preferred the first option, the PAI sided with many Soudanese US-RDA leaders—and Senegalese UPS dissidents—who called for a second referendum.<sup>39</sup> Confident that such a referendum for secession would pass in Senegal and Soudan, PAI militants in Senegal demanded new elections for a truly “representative” national assembly that would include seats for representatives of women’s, peasants’, and workers’ organizations. Further, they called for the creation of a new political body, a “national union,” which would include leaders in society who were not part of any political party.<sup>40</sup> PAI leaders declared that these changes, along with the rapid replacement of French administrators and technicians by young African cadres, could begin to move Senegal toward the underlying goal of “*indépendance totale*.”<sup>41</sup>

The PAI’s demands began to show up in the daubing of slogans (*faire du gribouillage*) that party militants regularly engaged in on walls in cities like Dakar, Saint-Louis, and Rufisque.<sup>42</sup> The PAI raised a number of linked slogans in Wolof: *momsarev* (own/possess your country—the party’s official slogan), *boksarev* (share your country), *defarsarev* (make your country). They also painted, in French, slogans

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<sup>39</sup> Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 80-81.

<sup>40</sup> “Pour que ça change,” Parti Africain de l’Indépendance, late 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. See also “Alerte à la population,” P.A.I. Section de Saint-Louis, 3 December 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS; “Procès-Verbal réunion du 20/11/59,” carton 487, SVP, ANS; “Untitled Tract,” Le Secrétariat Exécutif de la Section (du PAI de Rufisque), between 21 and 26 November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>41</sup> “Untitled Tract,” Le Secrétariat Exécutif de la Section (du PAI de Rufisque), between 21 and 26 November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, “Réunion du 24 - 9 - 1959 à 21h,” Noyau Béhanzin, carton 487, SVP, ANS. The painting of graffiti was regularly invoked by authorities who banned PAI meetings.

related to their 1959 program: “*union des forces*,” “*référendum*,” “*nouvelles élections*,” “*gouvernement d’union nationale*.”<sup>43</sup>

As the Mali Federation took form, the terms of the debate around independence shifted quickly. Senghor, Dia, and the PAI all invoked “total,” “real,” and “true,” independence. These terms acknowledged that formal political independence would leave elements of the new nation’s economic, diplomatic, financial, technical, and military sovereignty incomplete—and still tied to the French government and economy. At times, Dia’s and the PAI’s conception of “real independence” meshed—over the state intervention into the rural economy, for example. But whereas Dia and Senghor believed that only membership in the Community could provide the resources that allowed for the eventual realization of “real” independence, the young radicals around the PAI disagreed. They argued that so long as Africans were locked in a relationship with France, the terms would never be just. As Cooper notes, within the the Community, limited sovereignty was explicit: “France had the army, ministries, and the purse strings, so absolute equality was not in the cards.”<sup>44</sup> Further, while the PAI and its associated activists agreed with the principle of creating a new African federation, they rejected Dia’s argument that it had to be created *within* the French Community before declaring independence. Instead, PAI leaders argued that political sovereignty had to be acquired first before elements of it could be conceded back to a larger African federation.<sup>45</sup> As noted earlier, they drew on the Third World

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<sup>43</sup> These rather modest demands were considered, by a writer in *Paris-Dakar* to be “plus ou moins fantaisistes.” Common places for graffiti in December 1959 in Dakar were the officer’s lodgings on Avenue Ponty, the corner around the Poste of the Médina, and Univeristy. “P.A.I. - Arrestation de DIOP Majhemout,” 7 December 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. The PAI also had an anthem entitled “Momsarev.” See “Réunion du 4 Septembre 1959,” Noyau Béhanzin, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>44</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 327

<sup>45</sup> Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 85. Mann notes that he term *yéréta*, “self-determination” in Bambara became the preferred term over independence, for the US-RDA and PAI in Soudan/Mali.



framework of “internationalist nationalism”—wherein only a break from France, (and the claim of formal independence,) could be the basis for the creation of new pan-African polities.

But perhaps just as important as the debates over independence, the PAI also saw the UPS administration as corrupt and self-serving. After the referendum, PAI writers launched an increasing number of critiques of the UPS-controlled administration after the referendum. In Saint-Louis, after having one of their meetings banned by local authorities, the PAI put out a tract that accused local UPS politicians of using their authority to distribute lodging and land to their supporters. They complained that neighborhoods were not well lit, trash was not picked up, water was dirty, and that a lack of adequate drainage left the city mosquito-ridden during the rainy season. Furthermore, they accused local politicians of charging vendors high taxes without maintaining the markets, and created a legal controversy by charging a local French businessman with exploiting Senegalese fishermen. The tract argued that local and national UPS politicians had the resources to solve these problems, but squandered public funds on their own luxurious lifestyles, cars, and homes.<sup>46</sup>

When a PAI meeting in Rufisque was banned in November 1959, the PAI responded with a tract accusing UPS leaders of corruption, nepotism, and pursuing their personal interests over much needed public services. The inadequacy of health care and pre-natal care was particularly decried, while the authors blamed political figures for accepting inflated salaries, and accused Mamadou Dia and interior minister Valdiodio Ndiaye of harboring millions of CFA francs skimmed from public money in personal slush funds. The new police chief in Rufisque, Lamine Ndoye, was noted among those UPS-affiliated

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<sup>46</sup> What the party called “une gabedie dégradante.” “A propos du meeting du P.A.I interdit à Saint-Louis, le Samedi 8 Août,” Tract, Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, Section de St-Louis, 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. In one meeting, members complained that parliamentarians received 200,000 CFA francs and instituteurs were paid 20,000 to 30,000 CFA francs per month. See “Réunion du 4 Septembre 1959,” Noyau Béhanzin, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

authorities who used their newfound power to purchase the best land along the roads in and out of Dakar.<sup>47</sup>

The PAI also advanced its own positions on the issues of Africanization and socialism. The PAI's unequivocal call for independence in 1957 allowed it find its earliest members and sympathizers among the students and trade unionists who had first raised that demand. As Donal Cruise O'Brien argues, the PAI (and PRA-Sénégal) also attracted members largely among the university and secondary school students and graduates because of their demands for rapid Africanization in the public and private sectors.<sup>48</sup> Cooper has noted that discussions of increasing the number of African *cadres* in the civil service had begun in 1951, and that by 1955, 85 percent of civil *cadres*, and 23 percent of top administrators were African.<sup>49</sup> But as noted earlier, in the wake of the 1958, referendum, Dia proposed slowing down the rate of Africanization, especially as the territory administration absorbed reassigned civil servants from the AOF administration. Moreover, the private sector remained largely untouched by this transition, so much so that a decade later, in 1969, Africans still only made up 65 percent of all *cadres*, and held just 9 percent of upper administrative positions.<sup>50</sup> As Cruise O'Brien noted, Senghor was reluctant to orchestrate the replacement French *cadres* with Senegalese in the 1960s, and "the higher and middle levels of employment were at this time almost monopolized by the resident French population."<sup>51</sup> In response to this situation, the PAI wrote in their newspaper, *La Lutte*, in July 1959:

The country cannot be content with a partial, token Africanization. It needs rapid and total Africanization. It is not enough to have a few promotions, from time to time. Rather we must

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<sup>47</sup> Untitled Tract, Le Secrétariat Exécutif de la Section (du PAI de Rufisque), between 21 and 26 November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>48</sup> See Donal Cruise O'Brien, "Political Opposition in Senegal: 1960–67," *Government and Opposition* (London) 2, no. 4 (1967).

<sup>49</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 185, 223.

<sup>50</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 15-16.

<sup>51</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 558.

replace those French agents who can be replaced immediately, very rapidly and at all levels, from foreman to director.<sup>52</sup>

As early as 1955, there was a growth in the number of young secondary- and university-level graduates who were unable to secure the administrative or skilled technical jobs that they had expected. Their number expanded in the years that followed and, resentful of large population of French managers, many welcomed the PAI's call for rapid Africanization. Some ultimately joined the UPS in the hopes of gaining access to civil service posts through connections with the ruling party, but others remained in the PAI's orbit.

For party leaders, "indépendance totale" required not only Africanization, but also a wholesale attack on colonial capitalism. PAI leaders aspired to construct "the first workers party of Black Africa"—one that would also recruit "the disadvantaged (*déshérités*) who have no means to subsist and to support their family."<sup>53</sup> Colonial administrators claimed that the party was "impregnated with Marxism-Leninism" and a desired to recruit young people into a vanguard party that aimed to take political power.<sup>54</sup> But party militants and documents only spoke in very general terms about what kind of socialism they envisioned.<sup>55</sup> Majhemout Diop did not shy away from showing his admiration for the Soviet Union's state-controlled economy, and the party manifesto called for for workers to control their

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<sup>52</sup> From *La Lutte*, July 1959, quoted in Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 558. In January 1959, the PRA-Sénégal, in *Indépendance africaine* 5, 5 September 1959 made a similar demand and warned against "the poisoned cake of French Technical Assistance." See also "A propos du meeting du P.A.I interdit à Saint-Louis, le Samedi 8 Août," Tract, Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, Section de St-Louis, 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from Magona, pour le Secrétariat Exécutif du Territoire (du PAI) de la RDA, to Mamadou Dia, President du Conseil de Gouvernement du Sénégal, 14 December 1959, arrived 20 Dec 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. Elsewhere "des déshérités qui ne disposent pas d'aucune ressource pour subsister et faire subsister sa famille." "Réunion du 4 Septembre 1959," Noyau Béhanzin, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>54</sup> "Note a/s du "Parti Africain de l'Indépendance," 18 September 1957, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>55</sup> Diop, *Mémoires de luttes*; Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*. See also Charles Gueye, interview with author, 17 July and 26 July 2012, Dakar, Senegal; Moussa Kane, interview with author, 5 July and 17 July 2012, Dakar, Senegal.

workplaces and for peasants to control the land that they worked.<sup>56</sup> This socialism was countered to the “state capitalism” that they accused Senghor of promoting through his version of African socialism.<sup>57</sup> But these were general proclamations; the PAI’s manifesto states that the question of what kind of socialism was appropriate for Africa could only be answered once independence had been acquired. The PAI’s relationship to Marxism was thus boldly announced, but like the UPS’s, murky in content. Nonetheless, the party’s avid engagement with Third World and Communist networks distinguished it from the UPS, and attracted many student and youth leaders.



*[Fig. 3: W. E. B. Du Bois, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Majhemout Diop, Zhou Yang and Mao Dun at the Afro-Asian Writers Conference in Tashkent, October 1958. Source: W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, 1802-1999, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.]*

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<sup>56</sup> 25 October 1957, "Sur une conférence tenue par le P.A.I. au Casino Dolmys à Thiès le 23 Octobre 1957," renseignements n. 2685, carton 487, SVP, ANS. The PAI’s relationship to Marxism managed to be both upfront and muffled. Though in the PAI manifesto he avoided any use of the word Communism and was careful to adopt a broad definition of socialism, there was little secret among other young radicals that Majhemout Diop’s vision for the PAI was tied up in his admiration for the Soviet Union.

<sup>57</sup> Communiqué à Propos du M.E.O.C.A.M.,” 3 January 1967, UDES Comité Directeur, carton 23, Série 5D, RAD. Students saw Senghor’s vision of socialism as akin to the social democratic parties of Europe, particularly that of the French Parti Socialiste with which he had once been aligned.

## The Organization of the PAI

As noted in the introduction, the PAI, PRA-Sénégal, and the student, youth, and worker organizations who called for a “no” vote in 1958 only mustered about 22,000 votes—less than 3 percent of the total votes cast. But with “independence” increasingly becoming the dominant political framework being negotiated across Africa—and particularly in negotiations over the Mali Federation, the PAI’s political positions became less marginal. During this time, police records show that new neighborhood sections of the PAI began to grow in spite of the party’s ostensible “loss” in the referendum.

Students and other youth activists played a critical role in the promotion of the party from the start, both among Africans in French schools and within the student unions at the University of Dakar. At the time, the University of Dakar was the only university in the French colonies of Sub-Saharan Africa, and it not only enrolled African students from Senegal, but from across the former AOF. Abdoulaye Bathily, Mohamed Mbodj, and Mamadou Diouf argue that it was the organization of student radicals that led to the formation of the PAI—and that the party’s student section, the Mouvement des Etudiants du PAI (MEPAI), was the most dynamic force in the party from the start.<sup>58</sup> New student members were trained rigorously in a Stalinized version of Marxism: in his memoir, Amady Aly Dieng, an early member of the PAI, recounts a list of about twenty books that members were expected to have read.<sup>59</sup> After being trained in France and Dakar, students often returned to their villages, towns, and territories of origin across West Africa and tried to establish new PAI chapters. In the process, Senegalese youth organizations like the CJS and RJDA were drawn into the PAI, alongside young leaders from the Muslim Cultural Union, and trade unionists from five major unions, particularly the teachers’ union. With most of its leading members drawn from unions and student organizations, the party encouraged its members to organize around the concrete demands of their fellow workers and

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<sup>58</sup> Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, “Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais,” 297.

<sup>59</sup> Dieng, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 2, 121-22. Largely works by Russian and Chinese Communists, with a focus on the Soviet experience.

classmates. While stopping short of calling for a more generalized revolt, they encouraged their militants “to create a situation that makes the rule of the clique in place impossible.”<sup>60</sup>

In March 1958, the PAI began to focus on building neighborhood *noyaux* (cores) in the cities where they had developed a base—particularly Thiès, Dakar, Rufisque, and Saint-Louis. These *noyaux* were tasked with recruiting new party members with multiple means, including going door-to-door in cities and nearby villages. The PAI also focused on political education for members, distribution of the party newspaper and tracts, and involvement in student and worker organizations.<sup>61</sup> Educational programs to train party cadres were first established in Dakar, and were to be extended to Thiès and Saint-Louis. In August 1959, a course was launched in the capital that met twice a week for discussions in Wolof on Marxist-inspired topics that included “The Structure of African Society,” “The Revolution,” “The State,” “Imperialism,” “The Party,” and “Socialism.”<sup>62</sup>

The PAI committed itself to a demanding publishing routine, putting out two newspapers in its early years: *La Lutte*, which addressed imperial politics across AOF and AEF, and *Momsareew* (sometimes spelled *Momsarev*), the party’s organ in Senegal.<sup>63</sup> In addition, a litany of irregular publications were produced by student chapters in France and local chapters in Senegal, while PAI leaders initiated additional journals for airing internal debate and discussion. The circulation of PAI

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<sup>60</sup> “...pour créer une situation qui rendre impossible le gouvernement de la clique en place.” “Procès-Verbal réunion [PAI] du 20/11/59,” 20 November 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>61</sup> “Sur une réunion du parti africaine de l’indépendance à Thies le 9 Mars 1958,” 12 March 1958, n. 241, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>62</sup> “PAI, Cours du Parti, O.D.C.,” July or Aug 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. The instructors and classes: Thioune Bachirou, “Le théorie et le politique (question pratique: Education politique),” “Les lois de l’Evolution Sociale” & “La Révolution;” Fall Abdoulaye, “Structure des la Société Africaine,” “La Propagande;” Diouf M’Bagne Faly (editor in chief of *Momsarev*), “L’Etat” & “L’Exploitation;” Dernville Mariane, “L’Impérialisme;” Niang Cheikh, “Le Parti,” “Le Socialisme.”

<sup>63</sup> On the PAI’s publications, see Diop, *Mémoires de luttés*. According to Diop, *La Lutte* was intended to be a bi-monthly publication. It first ran from October 1957 to April/May 1960. Following the banning of the PAI, no new issues were released until a single issue came out in 1963. It was only in 1977 that the paper began to appear regularly (following a section of the PAI’s return to legality.)



newspapers seems to indicate that the party found a significant readership for their publications: A party leader in Thiès reported to local members that they sold four hundred copies of *La Lutte* “easily” in the city in March 1958 and planned to increase their order to five hundred copies.<sup>64</sup> Majhemout Diop claims that *La Lutte* reached a circulation of five thousand copies in the lead up to the 1958 referendum.<sup>65</sup>



[Fig. 4: Copy of *La Lutte* from February 1958. Photo: Matthew Swagler, 2012]

<sup>64</sup> See "Sur une réunion du parti africaine de l'indépendance à Thies le 9 Mars 1958," 12 March 1958, n. 241, [Renseignements généraux], carton 487, SVP, ANS. Fifty people attended this particular PAI meeting.

<sup>65</sup> Diop, *Mémoires de luttés*, 66.

The results of early recruitment attempts are rarely noted in available archival records: the section in Thiès had grown from ten to 116 dues-paying members by March 1958, and in the Colobane neighborhood of Dakar formed in August 1959 with thirty-six members.<sup>66</sup> While there are no known records of the PAI's membership on city-wide or national levels, the numbers were undoubtedly small compared to the networks that the UPS and its component parties had built through the course of the 1950s. While some critics of the PAI viewed their small size as a product of their "unrealistic" demands, the party faced a much more serious barrier almost immediately after they formed: unrelenting state repression.<sup>67</sup>

## II. The Repression of Opposition Parties: The Parti de la Solidarité Sénégalaise (PSS) and the PAI

### Establishing the Legal Basis for the Repression of the Opposition

While the UPS was rife with internal debate between 1958 and 1962, its leaders showed little tolerance for organizations that tried to remain independent of the ruling party. After the referendum, Dia and Senghor left no doubt that they saw the UPS and the Senegalese government as one and the same. In this framework, opposition to the party was tantamount to an attack on the state itself. In his "Rapport de Politique Générale" at the UPS's constitutive congress in 1959, Dia stated:

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<sup>66</sup> Monthly, dues were set at 1/100 of their income, or a set rate of 1000 CFA francs per month for the "bourgeois" members. See "Sur une réunion du parti africain de l'indépendance à Thies le 9 Mars 1958," 12 March 1958, n. 241, [Renseignements généraux], carton 487, SVP, ANS; "Parti Africain de l'Indépendance. Section de Dakar. Noyau Béhanzin. Siège Social: Rues 41/40. Quartier Colobane - Dakar. Procès Verbaux," 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>67</sup> "Communauté: Position du Mouvement Populaire Sénégalais (M.P.S) - R.D.A. sur le problème de la construction de la Communauté et les perspectives d'évolution de l'Afrique. Résolution du Congrès," 1959, sub-dossier 1, carton 130, SVP, ANS; "Resolution," Mouvement Populaire Sénégalais. R.D.A., 6 Jan 1959, sub-dossier 1, carton 130, SVP, ANS. MPS leaders claimed that "la politique militant a peu de chances de succès dans un pays comme le Senegal, ou les masses et les hommes sont réalistes." On repression, see "Procès-Verbal réunion [PAI] du 20/11/59," November 20 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS.



We have reacted vigorously against left-wing extremists, we will react just as forcefully against those on the right. And we are equipped [lit: armed] to do so, to victoriously resist every assault. Let us do not forget that we are now autonomous and in control of our legislation, and we will defend ourselves with the necessary efficiency.<sup>68</sup>

In the following months, the UPS government used the creation of the Mali Federation as an opportunity to put in place a number of repressive measures targeting outside opposition. Though passed as part of creating the Mali Federation, these new laws were applicable only in Senegal. The first allowed the government to requisition civil servants when they were on strike—a direct response to the public workers strike organized by UGTAN in January 1959. A series of ordinances passed on June 5, 1959, criminalized any actions deemed dangerous to “public order.” These included forms of expression such as speeches, writings, posters, and personal statements if they did any of the following: encouraged the disobedience of laws, regulations, or public authorities; encouraged others to disturb the “public order”; made statements deemed “offensive” to the prime minister or president; “insulted” any public servant in the exercise of their job, from ministers to police officers.<sup>69</sup>

These crimes were punishable by up to a year in prison and fines of up to 100,000 CFA francs. Additionally, an ordinance passed later in June 1959 added that “anyone whose actions prove dangerous for public order and undermine public authority or harm the credit of the state” could be placed under house arrest, banned from certain regions of the federation, or—if not a native (*originnaire*) of the Mali Federation territory—expelled. The laws were written such that even the most mild criticisms of the UPS government provided the grounds for various forms of legal repression. Beginning

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<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 279. “[N]ous avons réagi vigoureusement contre les extrémistes de gauche, nous réagirons avec autant de force contres ceux de droite. Et nous sommes armés pour le faire, pour résister victorieusement à tous les assauts. Que l’on oublie pas que nous sommes maintenant autonomes et maîtres de notre législation, et que nous saurons nous défendre avec l’efficacité nécessaire.” The Congress was set to take place in 1958, but had to be postponed due to the referendum, and was finally held at the Dakar Cinéma Star Fass 21–22 February 1959.

<sup>69</sup> Text of the laws can be found in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 280-82.

immediately, and continuing throughout the 1960s, these ordinances allowed the UPS government to justify the arrest of opposition activists and the expulsion of students from neighboring territories.<sup>70</sup>

The government did not hesitate to use these new laws to suppress the activity of opposition parties. However, in most cases, UPS leaders did not seek to drive their adversaries underground. Rather, state repression was used to make opponents more tractable and amenable to joining the UPS. The first opposition party to take this path was the *Parti de la solidarité sénégalaise* (PSS), formed in early 1959 by Ibrahima Seydou N'Daw, a UPS member and former head of the National Assembly, along with two influential leaders of the Tijaniyya sufi order: Chiekh Ahmed Tidiane Sy and El Hadj Ibrahima Niassé.<sup>71</sup> The PSS was an amalgam of forces that opposed the creation of the Mali Federation and feared a rancorous path to independence, instead calling for a closer direct relationship between Senegal and France.<sup>72</sup> The alliance between the Senegalese government and the ruling party in Soudan, the US-RDA, likely worried some religious authorities because of the the Soudanese party's militant challenges to chiefly authority and traditional power structures in rural areas.<sup>73</sup> The PSS instead called for "the flourishing of traditional and spiritual values" and the increased inclusion of Islamic organizations in Senegalese politics.<sup>74</sup> The PSS took a conservative position vis-à-vis those organizations that called for independence *outside* of the Community, but it still faced repression at the hands of the UPS

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<sup>70</sup> Ly also implies that the declaration of a State of Emergency on 20 August 1960 in the wake of the collapse of the Mali Federation also made it easier for the government to go after opposition organizations. Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 280.

<sup>71</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 267.

<sup>72</sup> Gerti Hesselning claims that the PSS called for Senegal to become an overseas "département" of France. Gerti Hesselning, *Histoire politique du Sénégal: institutions, droit et société* (Paris; Leiden: Karthala; Afrika-Studiecentrum, 1985) Ly seems to indicate that it was for some sort of autonomy within the *Communauté*, but prioritized that relationship with France, right down to the party's flag, which shared the blue, white and red of the French *tricolore*. Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 268-69.

<sup>73</sup> See Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, ch. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted from the PSS founding Manifesto, reproduced in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 268-69.

government. When authorities banned a demonstration led by Sy in June of 1959 in Tivaouane, demonstrators still gathered and were attacked by Senegalese soldiers, who killed two and injuring thirty-two others.<sup>75</sup> In the aftermath, Sy was blamed for the violence and arrested. The PSS faced increased harassment, until the party agreed to join the UPS in June of 1960 in the run up to the municipal elections.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, Sy surely did not forget the ruling party's belligerence, and years later, when Senghor asked for his support during the 1968 uprising, the Tijani leader remained conspicuously silent.<sup>77</sup>

### **A Closer Look at the Methods of Repression: the PAI in Rufisque**

In the years that followed, other opposition parties would follow the PSS's course, but the PAI did not. Characterized by the French embassy as a "procommunist party whose influence extends throughout Africa," the PAI was viewed as the foremost threat of Communist incursion into Senegal.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the small PAI found itself on the receiving end of repressive measures from both colonial authorities and the BPS/UPS-led administrations during the period of transition from 1957 to 1960. This was particularly true in the cities where the PAI was most organized: Dakar, Rufisque, Saint-Louis and Thiès. The PAI's

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<sup>75</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 270. Ly says the demonstrators "turned" on the troops.

<sup>76</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 271. These were the same elections that resulted in the banning of the PAI. Christian Roche claims the PSS was banned after the events. See Christian Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance, 1939-1960 : chronique de la vie politique et syndicale, de l'Empire français à l'indépendance* (Paris: Karthala, 2001). They joined just as the independence of the Mali Federation was on the table. Sy was negotiating while still in prison. The PSS has a notable base among the Lebou of Cap-Vert. The PSS were part of a meeting at the Thiaroye Gare of 1500 people, where the main PSS speaker was Ndoye Momar. Ndoye emphasized that Dakar was Lebou land, that there was a "Republique Lébou" in Cap-Vert before the French came and that it was time for the Lebou to reassert their place. He also criticized UPS leaders for leading luxurious lives. See "P.A.I. - Arrestation de DIOP Majhemout," report 7 December 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>77</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>78</sup> "'Parti procommuniste dont l'influence s'étend à toute l'Afrique Noire...' Mai 1961. Destinaire n. 111, Sénégal. Orientation Communiste du Groupement des Etudiants Progressistes Français à Dakar," (French security report), May 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

experience in Rufisque was typical of party sections across Senegal between 1958 and 1960. European authorities and local Senegalese administrators used legalized forms of repression—both colonial-era laws and new ordinances put in place by the UPS in 1959—to actively disorganize local PAI militants. This pattern of repression began almost immediately after the party was established in Rufisque, still many months before the 1958 referendum. The PAI was first given permission to use the municipal park (*jardin municipal*) for a public assembly on March 8, 1958. However, when PAI activists put up posters around the city announcing the meeting and the party's goals, police reports show that the longtime BPS mayor of Rufisque, Maurice Gueye, responded by banning the meeting. The PAI accused the local police commissioner, André Passagne, of "using blackmail, threats, and subversive acts" against local members.<sup>79</sup> After being denied a request to hold the meeting in one of Rufisque's residential neighborhoods, PAI militants decided to put up a loudspeaker near the Pont de Mérina, where they began playing music, inviting the public to learn about the goals of the party and the causes of the country's "economic slump." When Passagne, along with two other police officers, confronted the meeting organizers, the police commissioner claimed to have been subjected to "insults" (*outrages*) by Majhemout Diop, the PAI's national general secretary. After being told to shut down the meeting, Diop supposedly told Passagne: "We refuse categorically. We are the masters. I do not care. Foreigners are nothing. Foreigners have nothing to do with the affairs of Africans."<sup>80</sup> Following the confrontation, Diop was said to have spoken to the crowd briefly about the increase in the cost of living before then quickly

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<sup>79</sup> "...en usant de chantages, de menaces et d'actes subversifs (poursuite judiciaire, l'acérage de nos affiches, tentatives orales d'intimidation)." "Déclaration," Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, Section de Rufisque, 13 March 1958, dossier 1, 5D, RAD; "Bulletin de Renseignements. Activités du Parti Africain de l'Indépendance." Le Commissaire Principal de Police, Rufisque, 8 March 1958, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>80</sup> "Nous refusons catégoriquement. Nous sommes les maîtres. Je m'en fous. Les étrangers ne sont rien. Les étrangers n'ont rien à voir dans les affaires des Africains." "Report from André Passagne, Le Commissaire de Police à Rufisque," 8 March 1958, dossier 1, 5D, RAD. Note that Diop does not mention this in his personal history of the PAI. He says that the meeting took place without a permit but also without incident. Diop, *Mémoires de luttes*, 65.

wrapping up the meeting. Mamadou Mansour Seck, the local PAI head, was promptly charged with the use of a loudspeaker without authorization and a causing “scandal” on a public street.<sup>81</sup>

A few days later, Diop was arrested while leaving his house and accused of insulting the police commissioner and his companions—a charge Diop immediately denied.<sup>82</sup> On March 18, PAI leaders secured a meeting with Mamadou Dia, who offered to resolve the situation, but only on the condition that the PAI remain silent and cease agitation. In response, the PAI accused the government of evading the question of whether they would overturn an arbitrary arrest, or side with the French police chief—a representative of the “imperialists” On the twenty-first, Diop was offered provisional freedom on a bail of 50,000 CFA francs, which the PAI rejected as “inadmissible”: Diop was a militant for African independence, not a thief or criminal.<sup>83</sup>

PAI members responded by putting up posters proclaiming a meeting at the Pont de Thiokho the next day to protest Diop’s arrest. Unable to secure an authorized location, the meeting was held in an ad-hoc fashion, with police reporting a crowd of just thirty people. PAI militants from Dakar came to denounce a colonial “divide and conquer” strategy, and even local PSAS leaders spoke out against Diop’s incarceration. In a tract, the PAI accused the government of creating a “police state” (*régime policier*)—which the authors saw as the logical course of action for a ruling party that had chosen to remain within the French Community. They called for “a large anti-imperialist front”—particularly of unions and youth organizations—to combat a rising “fascist” danger in Senegal.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> "Bulletin de Renseignements. Activités du Parti Africain de l'Indépendance," Le Commissaire Principal de Police, Rufisque, (Passagne), 8 March 1958, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>82</sup> "Report from André Passagne, Le Commissaire de Police à Rufisque," 8 March 1958, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>83</sup> Tract, Le Comité Central du Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, Dakar, 21 March 1958, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>84</sup> "Alerte," Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, Mid-March 1958, dossier 1, 5D, RAD. The accusation of “fascism” began to be raised by the PAI as repression intensified in 1959 and 1960. See "Alerte à la population. Arrestation arbitraire de dirigeants P.A.I. à Saint-Louis," Secrétariat Exécutif Territorial, le Premier Secrétaire, Kader Fall, 8 Aug 1959, [Copy sent from Thiès 13 Aug 1959, from the Commandant de Cercle, p.i.

Throughout the rest of 1958, Mamadou Mansour Seck regularly disputed local and regional authorities, especially Jean Cuille, the *Sous-Délégué du Chef du Territoire du Sénégal* in Rufisque, as he tried to gain approval to hold PAI meetings. After the events of March 1958, Cuille invoked a colonial-era law that required the names of three meeting organizers along with their addresses—information that Seck was reluctant to supply at a time when PAI members were being arrested in Rufisque and elsewhere in Senegal.<sup>85</sup> Among other limitations, authorities also cited colonial-era laws that banned any meetings on the “*voie publique*,” i.e. streets, shoulders, or sidewalks.<sup>86</sup> In response, the PAI in Rufisque tried to move their meetings to private land, but as Passagne noted, this was rarely possible: the owners of private lots in Rufisque were affiliated to parties that were hostile to the PAI.<sup>87</sup> Thus, Seck, and his successor, Bassirou Sarr, continued to request meetings in public spaces, even those these requests were regularly denied.<sup>88</sup> When the PAI attempted to move ahead with a planned gathering in spite of

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Ph. Grasset”], carton 487, SVP, ANS; “A propos du meeting du P.A.I interdit à Saint-Louis, le Samedi 8 Août,” Tract, Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, Section de St-Louis, 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS; Letter SEF/ORG/21 from DIOP Majhemout, Prem Sec Fédéral du PAI to Le Président du Conseil de la Jeunesse du Sénégal, Dakar, 10 August 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS; “Pour la libération des détenus politiques,” Tract, Comité Central du PAI, Dakar, 14 Feb 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>85</sup> “Letter from Jean Cuille (Sous-délégué, Rufisque) to Seck Amadou Mansour (Prem Sec du PAI de Rufisque),” 1 April 1958; “Letter from Jean Cuille (Sous-délégué, Rufisque) to Seck Amadou Mansour (Prem Sec du PAI de Rufisque),” 1 April 1958, both in dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>86</sup> See “Letter from Jean Cuille, the Sous-Délégué de la Commune de Rufisque to Seck Mamadou Mansour Premier Secrétaire of the Rufisque section of the PAI,” 17 March 1958; “Letter from Jean Cuille to Seck Amadou Mansour,” 29 March 1958; “Communiqué de Monsieur le Ministre de l'Intérieur; 31 March 1958,” response to above letter from the Commissaire de Police (Passagne), 29 March 1958; “Letter from the Chef de Territoire (Jean Collin?) to M. le Président du Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, 108 Rue de Bayeux, Dakar,” 31 March 1958, 4610/AG; “A declaration from the Commissaire de la Police de la ville de Rufisque, Ndoye Abdoulaye,” 13 March 1959. All in dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>87</sup> “Letter from SARR (Prem Sec PAI Rufisque) to Collin (Admin of Subdivision de Rufisque),” 23 April 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD; “Bulletin de Renseignements. Activités du Parti Africain de l'Indépendance - Meetings du 22 Mars,” from Le Commissaire Principal de Police, Rufisque (Passagne), 23 March 1958, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>88</sup> “Letter from SARR Bachirou, the Sec Gen de la section du PAI de Rufisque to the Délégué de la Commune de Rufisque,” 13 March 1959; “Letter from SARR informing the admin that they plan to have a meeting on 25 April 1959 at the Pont de Thiokho at 16h30,” 21 April 1959. Sarr was thirty-two years old in 1959. Both in dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

their lack of a permit, authorities responded with force: gendarmes and troops from the *gardes territoriaux* based in Thiès and Dakar were called into Rufisque on March 30 to be ready to put down a PAI meeting scheduled for that day.<sup>89</sup>

After the creation of the Mali Federation and the passing of the new ordinances limiting criticism of the government in Senegal, the situation became yet more dire for the PAI. The party was finally approved to host a meet in the municipal park in June 1959, but on the day of the meeting, the PAI was accused of covering public and private walls in the city with graffiti in Wolof, French, and Arabic. The graffiti reiterating their basic slogans: “Indépendance en 1960,” “Référendum en 1960,” “Union des Forces,” “Africanisation totale des cadres,” “Momserew.” Thirty minutes before the meeting was to start, the mayor revoked approval to use the park and fifty people showed up only to find the gates locked.<sup>90</sup>

Even meetings held on private land were not safe from harassment. When PAI activists found a private lot near the Pont de Thiokho where they could hold an informational meeting, it was initially approved by the top colonial administrator in Rufisque, Jean Collin.<sup>91</sup> But just before the meeting was set to take place on November 21, 1959, the party was accused of distributing tracts attacking

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<sup>89</sup> 23/Cab/M. "Message Radio." Origine: Délégué Dakar. Destinaire: Capitaine Commandant Garde Territoriale Thiès, dossier 1, 5D, RAD; 30/Cab/M. 29 March 1958. "Note. Pour le Capitain Commandant l'Escadron de Gendarmerie de Dakar," from Gouvernement Générale de l'Afrique Occidentale Française. Colonie du Sénégal, Délégation de Dakar, dossier 1, 5D, RAD. In the face of this intimidation, PAI leaders subsequently called off their meeting. See "Bulletin de Renseignements. Activités du P.A.I.," 31 March 1958, From the Commissaire Principal de Police, Rufisque (Passagne), dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>90</sup> "Letter from the Administrateur de la Subdivision de Rufisque [Collin] to the Administrateur de la Region du Cap-Vert, Dakar," 15 June 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>91</sup> From 1964 to 1980, Collin enjoyed a long tenure in Senghor's governments, first as a finance minister and then as minister of the interior.

Mamadou Dia, Maurice Gueye (the mayor of Rufisque), and other regional politicians.<sup>92</sup> They were also accused of writing graffiti on walls in the city and even on the cars of two Europeans: a managing accountant at the national printing press, and the director of a biscuit factory in Rufisque.<sup>93</sup> Authorities banned the meeting at the last minute, and PAI leaders called it off.<sup>94</sup> Five days later, the PAI attempted to hold another meeting on the private land, but this request was rejected from the outset.<sup>95</sup> When a crowd gathered anyway, police raided the assembly, and arrested twelve PAI activists.<sup>96</sup> The detained party members were between the ages of twenty and thirty-three; most were civil servants in their early or mid-twenties, joined a few young factory workers, radio employees, a typesetter, and a student.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> "Message from Jean Collin, L'Administrateur de la région du Cap-Vert, forwarded to the Sec Gen du PAI in Rufisque by the Adm Chef de la Subdivision de Rufisque," 20 November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD. Collin was the *Chef de la Subdivision de Rufisque*.

<sup>93</sup> The noted graffiti: "MOM SAREV - BOKSAREV - DEFAR SAREV - UNION DES FORCES - REFERENDUM - NOUVELLES ELECTIONS - GOUVERNEMENT D'UNION NATIONALE" See: "Bulletin de Renseignements. Activités du P.A.I. (Section de Rufisque) from the Commissaire de Police, Rufisque, to the Administrateur Chef de la Subdivision de Rufisque and the Chef des Services de Polices de la Région du Cap-Vert," 21 November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>94</sup> "Bulletin de Renseignements. Activités du P.A.I. (Section de Rufisque) from the Commissaire de Police, Rufisque, to the Administrateur Chef de la Subdivision de Rufisque and the Chef des Services de Polices de la Région du Cap-Vert," 21 November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>95</sup> "Decision from Jean Collin, banning the planned PAI meeting "réunion" 26 Nov 1959 at the Pont de Thioko at 4pm in Rufisque," 25 November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD. See also from same carton: "A Procès-Verbal de notification ou de remise d'actes from N'DOYE Abdoulaye, the Commissaire de la Police de la ville de Rufisque to the Administrateur Chef de la Subdivision de Rufisque," 26 November 1959, carton 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>96</sup> "Les Incidents de Rufisque. Les 12 personnes arrêtées connaîtrons leur sort demain," reprint of article from *Paris-Dakar*, 30 November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD. *Paris-Dakar*, a paper very hostile to the PAI (and favorable to the UPS), claimed the PAI militants confronted the police with sticks and pebbles. "Douze Arrestations à Rufisque. Les membres du P.A.I. ayant voulu tenir une manifestation interdite et attaqué les forces de police," reprint of article from *Paris-Dakar*, 28 November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>97</sup> A handwritten note, no date, with a list of names and short biography of PAI members arrested in Rufisque, dossier 1, 5D, RAD. One of those convicted, a young primary school teacher named Diedhiou Landing, was suspended from his job in Rufisque by the minister of education. "Decision n. 14309 from the Minister of Education and Culture, Dr. Dieng Francois, on the 'Suspension d'un fonctionnaire,'" 3 December 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD. On December 8, the PAI in Rufisque planned a march to coincide with the announcement of the verdict in their comrades' cases - a march that they planned to end at the *Maison des Jeunes*. They were convinced that their comrades would be kept in jail, as the announcement was set to



PAI members were most often imprisoned because of their supposedly role in writing or distributing tracts. Reports from their arrests show that their “attacks” on government officials were, in fact, often rather mild critiques of the social situation in Rufisque. Two PAI leaders, Bassirou Sarr and Nourou Coulibaly, were arrested for distributing a tract that criticized the shortfall of teachers and available classrooms for students in city at the start of the school year. The tract claimed that out of 2,500 to 3,000 eligible students (*élèves*), there were only enough places for 700 to 800 to enroll. Many students were simply turned away and spent their days on the street. Three classes still lacked teachers, and in those classes that were running, parents were responsible for buying furniture. The tract argued that in the midst of this crisis, the UPS government was subsidizing private Catholic schools with fifty million CFA francs, to the detriment of public education. Furthermore, at a time when the city was in need of teachers, UPS politicians had organized the firing of a PAI teacher, Alioune Ndoye.<sup>98</sup>

Sarr and Coulibaly likely had first hand knowledge of the problems in schools and the problems faced by young people—Sarr was the director of the *Maison des jeunes de Rufisque*, and Coulibaly, who worked for the Senegalese government printing press, was the president of the *Conseil d'Administration* of the *Maison des jeunes*.<sup>99</sup> Shortly after they were arrested, the government secretary of youth and sports, Alioune Tall, fired Sarr as director of the youth center. Though he acknowledged that Sarr engaged in the PAI on a strictly personal level, and did not act as a representative of the youth center,

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coincide with a state visit from French president de Gaulle. "P.A.I. - Arrestation de DIOP Majhemout," 7 December 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. Held in jail during the trial, nine PAI members were eventually convicted, spending between ten and fifteen days in jail, despite the *procureur* asking the judge to give them month-long sentences. "L'Affaire du P.A.I. de Rufisque," *Paris-Dakar*, 2 December 1959, reprinted in dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>98</sup> "Alarmante situation scolaire à rufisque," Le Secrétariat Exécutif de la Section, Parti Africain de l'Indépendance (Section de Rufisque), November 1959, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>99</sup> "Douze Arrestations à Rufisque. Les membres du P.A.I. ayant voulu tenir une manifestation interdite et attaqué les forces de police," *Paris-Dakar*, 28 November 1959, reprinted in dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

Tall felt that Sarr had encouraged a “bad attitude” among the city’s youth.<sup>100</sup> Tall was right to be suspicious: Young PAI cadres made a concerted effort, in Rufisque and other cities, to speak at *maisons des jeunes*, using their talks to criticize the government and promote the party’s positions. Not surprisingly, the leadership of the CJS regularly spoke out against repression of the PAI.

### **General Patterns in the Repression of the PAI**

Reports from events in Saint-Louis and Dakar during this time suggest that government officials coordinated their attempts to suppress the PAI and deny their access to public space on a territory-wide level during the latter half of 1959. Authorities in Saint-Louis took a similar approach to the PAI as those in Rufisque. After the UPS mayor of the city banned the local PAI section from gathering in the Place Saint Germain, a public square, PAI members protested, noting that the UPS had previously held a meeting there without controversy. Authorities ignored this inconsistency and again invoked laws banning meetings on *les voies publiques*, much to the frustration of PAI militants. Feeling that they had made every effort to secure the space legally, PAI leaders in Saint-Louis decided to go ahead with a meeting on August 8 in the public square. They were met by police and a detachment of *gendarmes*, who beat and arrested ten PAI activists, including three members of the party’s central committee.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Incoming Letter n. 1330 to the Président du Conseil d'Administration de la Maison des Jeunes à Rufisque "concernant les incident et manifestaions P.A.I. à Rufisque, from Alioune TALL, le Secrétaire d'Etat à la Jeunesse et aux Sports," 7 December 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>101</sup> For all the above account of what happened in Saint Louis, see "Alerte à la population. Arrestation arbitraire de dirigeants P.A.I. à Saint-Louis," from the Secrétariat Exécutif Territorial, le Prem Sec: Kader Fall, (copy sent from Thiès 13 Aug 1959, from the Commandant de Cercle, p.i. Ph. Grasset), 8 Aug 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. See also "Pour la libération des détenus politiques," Tract, Comité Central du PAI, Dakar, 14 February 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; "Letter SEF/ORG/21 from DIOP Majhemout, Prem Sec Fédéral du PAI to Le Président du Conseil de la Jeunesse du Sénégal, Dakar," 10 August 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS; "A propos du meeting du P.A.I interdit à Saint-Louis, le Samedi 8 Août," Tract, Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, Section de St-Louis, 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. The professions of those arrested were listed as: two instituteurs, a tailor, an administrateur of the FOM, un relieur, un étudiant en sciences, un comptable, un élève en philo, un menuisier, et un professeur. The PAI claimed that the police planted a rusty revolver on one of the members and used that the pretext for the attack.

The following month, police raided a PAI meeting in Diourbel and local party activists were put on trial.<sup>102</sup> Almost simultaneous to the arrests in Rufisque in November 1959, five PAI members were arrested in Saint-Louis, including most of the local leaders. Like their comrades elsewhere, they were accused of distributing of tracts “injurious to the government” (*“injurieux à l’égard du Gouvernement”*).<sup>103</sup> Ironically, the tracts in question had largely criticized the government’s repression of its opponents.

The PAI’s protest of repression seemed to simply breed more repression, and the government put in place special security measures for General de Gaulle’s visit to Saint-Louis for the sixth session of the *Conseil exécutif* of the Community on December 11 and 12. At the time of his visit, the situation was rather bleak for the PAI: The five PAI leaders recently arrested in Saint-Louis were to be put under house arrest, with some to be deported to the far eastern edge of Senegal; those arrested in Rufisque at the end of November were awaiting their trial; thirteen militants in Dakar and Diourbel were still in prison; a member’s house in Dakar was raided by the police; and Seydou Cissoko, a national leader from Saint-Louis, had just been sentenced to six months in prison and a 10,000 CFA franc fine.

In the lead up to de Gaulle’s arrival, Majhemout Diop was arrested again, this time with Mané Boubacar, an assistant primary school teacher in Dakar, for the “distribution of anti-governmental tracts.”<sup>104</sup> As in previous cases, the tract that triggered the arrests was actually rather tame: it criticized

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<sup>102</sup> “Pour la libération des detenus politiques,” Tract, Comité Central du PAI, Dakar, 14 February 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>103</sup> “Alerte à la population,” P.A.I. Section de Saint-Louis, 3 December 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. This tract was apparently found on the table at in the Salle des Professeurs at Lycée Faidherbe (in S-L). It’s worth noting that a French business owere jumped into the fray - A. Touzard, owner of a fish shipping and processing plant filed a defamation suite against the PAI after he was mentioned in passing as an exploiter of local fisherman in a PAI tract. See Letter from A Touzard to the Président du Conseil du Gouvernement de la République du Sénégal, Dakar (Dia), 13 August 1959, a copy of the “plainte” against the PAI filed with the Procureur Général that day, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>104</sup> “Alerte à la population,” P.A.I. Section de Saint-Louis, 3 December 1959. See also “Parti Africaine de l’Indépendance,” 10 December 1959, both carton 487, SVP, ANS. DIOUF M’Bagne Faly had his house searched

the UPS government for its collaboration with Ahmadou Ahidjo, the new president of Cameroon, a French ally who waged a violent campaign against the UPC.<sup>105</sup> Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s the PAI called UPS leaders “lackeys” (*valets*), and “puppets” (*fantoches*) and “facades” (*paravents*) of imperialism.<sup>106</sup> However vague these charges, they became a regular basis for the government to justify the arrests of PAI militants.

Although within the UPS conflicts were brewing between supporters of Mamadou Dia’s central reform measures and local party politicians behind Senghor, the government was consistent in its attacks on the PAI. Mamadou Dia, though portrayed in his later showdown with Senghor as a proponent of socialist reform, was unremitting in his attacks on the PAI. In response, the PAI and its networks of student and labor militants held Dia in contempt. A December 1959 letter from the *Secrétariat exécutif* of the Senegalese section of the PAI to Dia accused him and his colleagues of trying to muzzle the growing demand for independence and Africanization. The author mocked Dia for being afraid of protesters (“*les porteurs du pancartes*”) due to the government’s inability to respond to the needs of the “masses.” Calling Dia a “lackey” of foreign powers, the letter called for him to step down: “Mr. President

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and a number of the PAI internal meeting minutes were confiscated (and are now held in the archives). See also “Pour la libération des détenus politiques,” Tract, Comité Central du PAI, Dakar, 14 February 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>105</sup> The tract was entitled “Ahidjo dans nos murs,” Parti Africain de l’Indépendance, Territoire du Sénégal, carton 487, SVP, ANS. Ahidjo was seen as pro-French, having worked with the colonial high commissioner of Cameroon, Jean Ramadier, to remove André-Marie Mbida from power. Ahidjo was leading his own attack against the domestic opposition of the UPC. On the arrests see “La répression des menées subversives,” news clipping, *Paris-Dakar*, 9 December 1959, reprinted in dossier 1, 5D, RAD. See also: “P.A.I. - Arrestation de DIOP Majhemout,” 7 December 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. This report also claims that PAI activists had purchased 20 litres of gasoline to be turned into 50 molotov cocktails, stored at a PAI activist’s house. It is unclear if the claim is true, as the supposed Molotov cocktails were never used. And from what I can tell, this was not claimed in arresting Diop and Mané.

<sup>106</sup> Letter from Magona, pour le Secrétariat Exécutif du Territoire (du PAI) de la RDA, to Mamadou Dia, President du Conseil de Gouvernement du Sénégal, 14 December 1959, arrived 20 December 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS; “Fait de Jour de Radio-Mali, Voici une déclaration du Comité Central du P.A.I. sur la répression au Sénégal,” No Date (at least April 1961, but possibly later), carton 487, SVP, ANS; “Renseignements. N. 26 C-BM.3. Valeur: A/1. ‘A/s Conférence tenue à Kaolack par M. Baro Youssoupha membre du P.A.I.’,” sent to Surété du Sénégal (in Kaolack), 26 August 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

[of the *Conseil de la gouvernement*], if you and the implementers of your policy, as well as your mentors, wish to be useful at least once in Africa, pray, retire forever from the political scene.”<sup>107</sup> The government’s campaign of repression against the PAI only seemed to validate the party’s Cold War-influenced perspective that there were two camps: those who sided with the forces of imperialism and those who opposed them. The concept was amorphous, but the experience of repeated repression convinced Majhemout Diop that the party must be on the right side of a global struggle. In 1961 he argued: “But the best claim of nobility for the PAI, is it not the blind fury and morbid hatred that the colonialists and their Senegalese agents feel for it?”<sup>108</sup>

### **The 1960 Elections and the Banning of the PAI**

In March 1959, the PAI central committee took stock of the cumulative years spent by members in prison, the tens of thousands of CFA francs paid in fines, and the members fired from their jobs and deported, all in the year and half since the party had been founded to fight for a “socialist society in Black Africa.”<sup>109</sup> In spite of their increasingly rancorous criticism, PAI leaders may have been feeling the cumulative effects of the repression, and approached the UPS in late 1959 to talk about possible unity on the question of “immediate independence” in the midst of the creation of the Mali Federation. A letter from the PAI to the UPS in September 1959 argued that the “grand majority” of Senegalese people

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<sup>107</sup> Letter from Magona, pour le Secrétariat Exécutif du Territoire (du PAI) de la RDA, to Mamadou Dia, Président du Conseil de Gouvernement du Sénégal, 14 December 1959, arrived 20 December 1959, carton 487, SVP, ANS. “Monsieur le Président (of the Conseil de la gouvernement), si vous et les exécutant de votre politique ainsi que vos maîtres à penser, désiriez être au moins une fois utiles à l’Afrique, de grâce, retirez-vous à jamais de la scène politique.”

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 267. “Mais le meilleur titre de noblesse du PAI n’est-il pas l’acharnement aveugle et la haine morbide que lui vouent les colonialistes et leurs agents sénégalais?” in his tract, “Deuxième lettre aux Sénégalais à l’occasion du Quatrième Anniversaire du Parti Africain de l’Indépendance (PAI).”

<sup>109</sup> “Fait de Jour de Radio-Mali, Voici une déclaration du Comité Central du P.A.I. sur la répression au Sénégal,” No Date (at least April 1961, but possibly later), carton 487, SVP, ANS. “...societe socialiste en Afrique noire.”

desired independence in 1960, and that this goal was shared by the UPS, PAI, and PRA-Sénégal. Senghor rebuffed the PAI's call for a meeting of the parties, reminding PAI leaders that the two previous "unity" conferences that had taken place since 1957 had come to nothing. Taking an swipe at both the PAI and PRA-Sénégal, Senghor argued that in Senegal "every malcontent founds a party, and then calls for unity. This is a fruitless game."<sup>110</sup> As Abdoulaye Ly pointed out, the implication was clear: the only "unity" open to opposition parties was to integrate *into* the UPS.

On July 31, 1960, municipal and regional elections took place across Senegal. On the day of the elections, PAI militants in Saint-Louis were excluded from voting stations as opposition observers, and began to claim that the ballot boxes were being stuffed in favor of the UPS.<sup>111</sup> However, it seems that PAI members had prepared for a confrontation in Saint-Louis, where the local population had rebelled the year before when the government moved the territorial capital to Dakar.<sup>112</sup> The government later accused the PAI of "attempted rebellion, accompanied by acts of robbery and bodily harm," including leading a crowd in robbing ("*attaque à main*") of the home of the regional colonial governor, Daniel Cabou—a future minister in Senghor's government.<sup>113</sup> Historian Christian Roche claims that PAI militants attacked six voting stations, burned two cars (including that of the outgoing mayor of Saint-Louis, Boubacar Sèye), and shot at Cabou's home.<sup>114</sup> In Saint-Louis, the PAI claimed that the army of the French

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<sup>110</sup> "...tout mécontent fonde un parti pour lancer, ensuite, un appel à l'unification. C'est là un jeu stérile..." Letter quoted in *Paris-Dakar* 3 Oct 1959, reprinted in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 364-65. Per Ly, the UPS "n'envisageait pas autre chose qu'une intégration éventuelle du PAI."

<sup>111</sup> 31 July 1960 election official results in Saint-Louis: 114,852 total votes. UPS: 110,427; PRA-S: 1,666; PAI: 315. Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance*, 220.

<sup>112</sup> Gueye, interview, 17 July 2012, claims he prepared Molotov cocktails for the protest.

<sup>113</sup> "...tentative d'insurrection caractérisée, accompagnée par ailleurs d'actes de brigandage et de violences corporelles." *Paris-Dakar* printed the declaration of Obèye Diop, on 2 August the minister of information. Published as "Epilogue des graves incidents de Saint-Louis..." Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 265-66.

<sup>114</sup> Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance*, 220.

Community had intervened to repress the protesters, under stipulations of the Franco-Senegalese military accords. The party claimed that fifty people were arrested and at least eleven injured including Majhemout Diop, who “nearly lost his life” and was rushed to a hospital in Dakar.<sup>115</sup> PAI activists were arrested in other cities in Senegal, while soldiers opened fire on a crowd in Fatick, killing two.<sup>116</sup> The following day, the PAI in Senegal, and its publications, were banned by a decree adopted by the Conseil des ministres and signed by Dia, in his capacity as Président du conseil du gouvernement.<sup>117</sup> Less than a week later, another group of PAI militants were arrested after being accused of the “reconstitution of a dissolved association.”<sup>118</sup>

Most of the PAI members arrested on or after election day were held in prison without trial. After seven months of “preventive detention,” some began a hunger strike on February 14, 1961, demanding to either be charged or released.<sup>119</sup> Two PAI leaders arrested in Saint-Louis participated, along with fourteen PAI militants held in Dakar, and a PRA-Sénégal prisoner in Ziguinchor.<sup>120</sup> After eight months, the detainees in Dakar were finally given trials: six were acquitted and five given sentences between nine months and a year. In Saint-Louis, party militants received sentences of three to nine months in jail, although one PAI leader in Saint-Louis, a primary school teacher, was held without trial for ten months.

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<sup>115</sup> Quote is from the PAI statement. Ly claims that a gendarme was actually killed during the protests, though I have not seen this documented anywhere. Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 275.

<sup>116</sup> "Fait de Jour de Radio-Mali, Voici une déclaration du Comité Central du P.A.I. sur la répression au Sénégal," No Date (at least April 1961, but possibly later), carton 487, SVP, ANS. For events in Tambacounda, see Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 71.

<sup>117</sup> See "Decret portant Interdiction d'une Association Politique," 1 Aug 1960., N. 60.267, dossier 1, 5D, RAD. The decree was then to be announced with posters around the Cap-Vert region. See "Procès-Verbal d'Affichage," from Jean Collin, 5 Aug 1960, dossier 1, 5D, RAD.

<sup>118</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 266. “reconsitution de ligue dissout.”

<sup>119</sup> “Pour la libération des detenus politiques,” Tract, Comité Central du PAI, Dakar, 14 Februrary 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>120</sup> “Pour la libération des detenus politiques,” Tract, Comité Central du PAI, Dakar, 14 Februrary 1961, carton 408, DA CADN.

Majhemout Diop, arrested for the third time on election day in 1960, was never tried, but simply held for nine months without trial before a judge forced the government to release him. A few months after the party was banned, three Saint-Louis PAI activists were again sent to prison for six to eight months after being accused of trying to reconstitute the party. According to police reports, most of the arrested militants held jobs as low-ranking civil servants and teachers, but those who were held the longest were often students or higher ranking political figures, such as Alioune Ba, who was the *Directeur de la Cooperation* in the ministry of rural economy.<sup>121</sup>

Diop went into exile abroad, while militants who stayed loyal to the party in Senegal continued their organizing underground. The PAI had existed legally for less than three years, facing almost immediate repression for its Marxist orientation and outspoken critiques of colonial authorities and the BPS/UPS administration. As a result, the party had hardly grown beyond its original network of urban students, teachers, and a small set of young workers. Nevertheless, a group of militants with a shared experience of repression were hardened in their determination to organize opposition to the UPS regime. This commitment would be increasingly tested in the coming years as new waves of repression tore the PAI apart. But the PAI remained a historic presence that continued to appeal to young intellectuals throughout the 1960s, and its members remained implanted in two key places: the trade unions and the student movement.

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<sup>121</sup> Two PAI militants who were only visiting in Senegal from Paris were both given one-year sentences, possibly as a way to hold PAI activists living abroad. "Fait de Jour de Radio-Mali, Voici une déclaration du Comité Central du P.A.I. sur la répression au Sénégal," No Date (at least April 1961, but possibly later), carton 487, SVP, ANS.



### III. Collaboration and Autonomy? The Senegalese Trade Union Movement, 1958–62

#### The UPS's Relation to Trade Unions after the 1958 Referendum

The campaign against the PAI was paralleled by government attempts to discipline—or muzzle—the trade union, youth, student, and women's organizations that collaborated with the PAI. This section looks at the direction of the trade union movement in Senegal after the 1958 referendum. The Senegalese labor movement, particularly in the capital city, was large, and drew on a long history of organizing and agitation.<sup>122</sup> This culminated in 1955-56 with the creation of the Union générale des travailleurs d'Afrique noire (UGTAN), an AOF-wide autonomous African trade union federation that integrated nearly all sections of the Senegalese labor movement. The formation of UGTAN was followed by the loi-cadre reforms in 1956, which led African political leaders across AOF and AEF to attempt to steer trade unions away from confrontation with the state and toward collaboration. Many trade union leaders in Africa were courted by emerging African politicians, and transitioned to being political party leaders. In Senegal, when the Conseil de gouvernement was formed following the loi-cadre reforms, a leader of the UGTAN and longtime BDS/BPS militant Latyr Camara became the civil service minister.<sup>123</sup> As Senghor and Dia's BDS merged with other parties to become the BPS, and then the UPS, political consolidation brought greater numbers of trade union leaders from UGTAN into the orbit of the new ruling party. Thus Senegalese trade unionists had high expectations of the new government: workers

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<sup>122</sup> See Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*; Gueye, "Léopold Sédar Senghor et le mouvement syndical."

<sup>123</sup> Similar moves were made by the new governments in Mali and Guinea. Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 252.

even began bringing their grievances against European bosses directly to Mamadou Dia, asking him to intervene to rectify the problem.<sup>124</sup>

However, as Omar Gueye has argued, the Senegalese trade union movement maintained its autonomy throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, particularly its right to strike.<sup>125</sup> In 1957, private sector workers across Senegal went on strike for eighteen days, demanding the application of salary rates called for in the new *Convention collective fédérale du commerce*.<sup>126</sup> At the time, the Conseil de gouvernement responded with official support, and used workers' grievances to highlight the inadequacy of the government authority provided by the *loi-cadre*.<sup>127</sup> BPS leaders used the strike as leverage in negotiations with metropolitan authorities, arguing that their lack of genuine control over the territorial administration left them unable to properly address the issues behind the mass walk out.

However, the 1958 referendum taxed the delicate relationship between trade unions and ruling party. With the UGTAN calling for a "no" vote in the referendum, and the UPS calling for a "yes" vote, Camara resigned as minister.<sup>128</sup> After the referendum, the Senegalese administration began to attack trade union leaders who had entered opposition parties or challenged the UPS's growing authority. In a theme that would later appear during a split in the teachers union, Mamadou Dia now characterized his trade union critics in 1958 as "a ruling class [that] no longer has the notion of its own social vocation. These union leaders have lost sight that they should primarily protect the occupational interests of

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<sup>124</sup> In 1958, workers at the territorial printing press complained to Mamadou Dia that one of their co-workers was being unfairly threatened with dismissal by a white head of the press, for having come back later than planned after the death of his nephew. See "Letter to Mamadou Dia (Président du Conseil de Gouvernement), from "Les membres du Conseil Syndical des Ouvriers Africains de l'Imprimerie du Gouvernement du Senegal", Saint-Louis," 7 Aug 1958, carton 357, SVP, ANS.

<sup>125</sup> Gueye, " Senghor et le mouvement syndical."

<sup>126</sup> For two days of the strike civil servants joined in solidarity.

<sup>127</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 118.

<sup>128</sup> He was replaced by Ibrahima Sarr, the veteran leader of the 1947-48 rail strike and a longtime BDS member. Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 252. See also Gueye, " Senghor et le mouvement syndical," 9.

workers, and not act the part of political leaders.”<sup>129</sup> Dia’s criticism of trade unionists who weighed in on political issues was highly selective: many trade union leaders worked closely with the UPS and had even become party leaders. His vitriol was reserved for those who called strikes and protests of government actions, which he described as “harmful,” “fruitless” and “superfluous.”<sup>130</sup> Dia expressed his frustration with UGTAN trade unionists who challenged the UPS’s policies in spite of agreements that conceded to workers’ demands in 1957 and 1958. He laid the terms starkly: “You can not claim independence and increasing wages at the same time.”<sup>131</sup> But in fact, he did not want independent trade union leaders agitating for either. In particular, he chastised PAI, PRA-Sénégal, and other radical trade unionists radicals who espoused Marxism:

It is necessary that union leaders cease claiming both corporate and political mandates; that they stop dreaming of a proletarian dictatorship in a country where 80 percent of the population are not waged workers, [*non-salariée*]; that they let the government, which represents all the people, administer in the best interests of the community; that they focus on providing services to workers, by serving as liaisons between government officials and labor—by being faithful interpreters of the needs [and] challenges faced by employees...<sup>132</sup>

Prior to the referendum, unions had succeeded in gaining many of their demands through strikes and subsequent negotiations with colonial authorities and Dia’s administration. For private sector

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<sup>129</sup> “L’U.P.S. au lendemain du referendum,” signed, Rufisque, 4 October 1958, Mamadou Dia, carton 130, SVP, ANS. “...une classe dirigeante n’ayant plus la notion de sa vocation sociale propre. Ces dirigeants syndicalistes ont perdu de vue qu’ils devaient avant tout défendre les intérêts professionnels des travailleurs, et non se substituer dans leur tâches aux responsables politiques.” Moreover, Dia accused trade union leaders of having cut themselves off from the workers they represent because they had adopted a higher standard of living: “coupure entre leur genre de vie, et celui de la communauté qu’ils devaient représenter.”

<sup>130</sup> “L’U.P.S. au lendemain du referendum,” signed, Rufisque, 4 October 1958, Mamadou Dia, carton 130, SVP, ANS. “...une agitation néfaste et stérile – superflue.”

<sup>131</sup> Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 254. “On ne peut pas réclamer en même temps l’indépendance et une augmentation des salaires.”

<sup>132</sup> In a similar vein, a representative from the Ministry of Education told teacher unionists, “Le Syndicalisme Sénégalais, en tout cas le Syndicat de l’Enseignement, ne saurait se nourrir de slogans et se figer dans cette attitude d’agressivité encore en usage dans d’autres secteurs où la lutte syndicale se traduit par une querelle perpétuelle entre les maigres et les gras.” An unsigned letter or speech from a representative of the Ministry of Education. Possibly an address from Director of the Cabinet of the minister of education, Amadou Arona Sy, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

workers, minimum wages and family allocations were increased, while in the public sector, the status (and wages) of agricultural workers, day laborers, and “*auxiliaires*” improved. Agreements were reached that gave doctors, midwives, and veterinarians higher wages; police officers were now paid for performing “supplementary work”; and the government agreed to construct new union halls (*bourses du travail*). Due to these concessions, Dia claimed in 1958 that the government had invested a million CFA francs into improvements for workers.<sup>133</sup> Dia used this statistic to argue that workers’ needs were best served by staying off the streets and instead participating in a collaborative effort with the administration. But some radical unionists drew the opposite conclusion: that the gains had been secured *because* unions had remaining autonomous from the UPS and used strikes to press their demands.

### **The Workers Strikes of 1958–59**

Almost immediately following the establishment of the new Senegalese republic at the end of 1958, 2,100 postal workers ignored Dia’s exhortations and went on strike. In January 1959, UGTAN called a follow-up strike that brought postal workers back into the streets, joined this time by civil servants, and workers in commercial, oil, and gas companies. The government crackdown was swift: all of the striking civil servants were fired, along with all but three of the 260 employees of Mobil-Oil; roughly three thousand workers in total.<sup>134</sup> When UGTAN attempted to hold a mass membership meeting on January 8 in their usual location, the *parc municipal des sports* in Dakar, the meeting was banned. Strikers attempted to meet the next day on a private lot rented by the youth leaders of the CJS, but the *Haut commissaire générale de l’AOF* sent in *gendarmes* and police to break up the meeting. The national

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<sup>133</sup> “L’U.P.S. au lendemain du referendum,” signed, Rufisque, 4 October 1958, Mamadou Dia, carton 130, SVP, ANS.

<sup>134</sup> Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 252; Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 330-31. The public workers’ strike was declared illegal.

assembly quickly moved to pass a law allowing the government to requisition any worker, without exception, in the case of a strike.<sup>135</sup> Lamine Gueye, Senghor, and Dia condemned the civil servants as over-paid workers who put their personal greed before the betterment of the nation.<sup>136</sup> In his memoirs, Dia defended his use force to break the strike, considering it only an attempt by “the left opposition” to topple (“*abattre*”) the UPS’s nascent regime.<sup>137</sup>

Tensions between public workers and the government persisted after the strike. In November, the minister of transport and telecommunication, Abdoulaye Fofana, punched the general secretary of the postal and telecommunications workers union. Forty-eight hours later, Fofana followed his act of aggression by transferring all of the union’s leaders out of Dakar to new jobs spread across the country.<sup>138</sup> In January 1960, UPS leaders incited rural supporters to attack striking teachers.<sup>139</sup> Finally, in 1961 the government imposed a new code de travail that limited workers’ right to strike.<sup>140</sup>

### **Toward Union-Government Collaboration**

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<sup>135</sup> Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 253.

<sup>136</sup> Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 253-54.

<sup>137</sup> Dia, *Mémoires d'un militant du Tiers-Monde*, 99-103.

<sup>138</sup> “Résolution” from Union des Syndicats Ex UGTAN de la region du Cap Vert, Comite de Coordination des Syndicats du Secteur Public, Signed by the sec gen of the comite, Diop Sidy, 11 November 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>139</sup> “Discussion Autour du Rapport Moral” Point de Vue de la Section de Dakar. Rapporteur: N’Gom Doudou, adjoints: Fall Bassirou, Mme. Sohail, SUEL Congress Kaolack, Dec 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS. Per N’Gom, during the January 1960 strike, peasants were told that the teachers just wanted “cake for themselves” and the teachers were soon attacked by peasants.

<sup>140</sup> “Fait de Jour de Radio-Mali, Voici une déclaration du Comité Central du P.A.I. sur la répression au Sénégal,” No Date (at least April 1961, but possibly later), carton 487, SVP, ANS.

The UPS's effort to bring unions into the "work of nation-building" was not simply about containing workers' demands and reducing strike actions.<sup>141</sup> Ostensibly, union leaders would participate in establishing economic initiatives and see that they be carried out without incident. Rather than being a focal point for opposition forces, Dia and Senghor hoped that unions could instead "mobilize" the labor of workers, thereby meeting the government's productivity goals. Dia claimed that the intention was to increase overall prosperity and a shared "well-being."<sup>142</sup> In practice however, this meant that workers' demands were secondary to the need for increased labor productivity. Although wage workers were chastised for wanting "cake for themselves," (e.g. demanding higher living standards), rural producers were equally enjoined to work harder, in order to meet the administration's economic growth plans.<sup>143</sup> The exigencies of state-led development in the Third World—whether in a "socialist" form or not—led new governments like Dia's to push for greater labor productivity in the drive for the "primitive accumulation" of national capital.

To undermine any possible disruption by militant trade unionists, the UPS granted resources to union leaders who agreed to mobilize their members in support of the administration's plans. In 1958, Abbas Gueye, a founding leader of the UPS, led a section of UGTAN members in creating UGTAN-Autonome, which supported the UPS's call for a "yes" vote in the referendum.<sup>144</sup> Following the repression of the January 1959 UGTAN strike, representatives at the UGTAN national conference in May

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<sup>141</sup> "Letter N. 885, M.ND. from Mamadou Dia to "les Secrétaires Généraux de l'Union Générale des Travailleurs du Sénégal. 81, rue Blanchot, Dakar," 23 Nov 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS, "oeuvre de construction nationale."

<sup>142</sup> This developmental mobilization was particularly clear in: "Mamadou Dia speech on May Day 1962," 1 May 1962, carton 357, SVP, ANS. In Dia's May Day speech to union leaders and workers in 1962, he made a passing reference to "the freedom of your movement," but asserted the need for trade unions to "le désir de coopération qui anime, coopération par le dialogue, par la libre confrontation des thèses, dans un climat de confiance et d'estime renouvelées."

<sup>143</sup> "Discussion Autour du Rapport Moral" Point de Vue de la Section de Dakar. Rapporteur: N'Gom Doudou, adjoints: Fall Bassirou, Mme. Sohai, SUEL Congress Kaolack, Dec 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>144</sup> "Resolution from UGTAN-Autonome. Cover letter signed by El-Hadj Gueye Abbas," 12 Nov 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

attempted to ease tensions with the government by expressing regret for joining the “no” vote camp in 1958.<sup>145</sup> The secretary general of UGTAN, Alioune Cissé, then broke off with another group of unions to create UGTAN-Unitaire, which, like UGTAN-Autonome, pledged to increase collaboration with the government and rejected the “protest unionism” (“*syndicalisme revendicatif*”) of the previous years.<sup>146</sup>

The teachers unions, strongholds of the PAI and PRA-Sénégal, were soon mired in conflicts over their relationship to the government. This was particularly true in the *Syndicat unique de l'enseignement laïc* (SUEL), which represented Senegal’s public primary school teachers. SUEL had called for a “no” vote in 1958, and continued to protest Senegal’s membership in the French Community, ongoing foreign control of the economy, and the presence of French troops in the new republic.<sup>147</sup> Members in Dakar called for a litany of reforms to education, particularly the rapid Africanization of the teaching corps and an overhaul of colonial curricula.<sup>148</sup> In 1959, at least a dozen SUEL activists were suspended, transferred, or fired for their political agitation.<sup>149</sup>

The government saw SUEL as yet another vehicle for the UPS’s radical opponents,<sup>150</sup> and helped initiate a split in the union, led by a small group of pro-UPS teachers around Doudou Ngom and Kabirou

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<sup>145</sup> Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 331.

<sup>146</sup> These unions had merged in late 1959 to create the UGTS. See Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 255.

<sup>147</sup> “Appel aux Jeunes Enseignants,” Le Bureau National du SUEL, Letterhead: Fédérations des Enseignants d’Afrique Noire (FEAN) and SUEL (BP 196, Saint-Louis), 11 October 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS.

<sup>148</sup> “Discussion Autour du Rapport Moral” Point de Vue de la Section de Dakar,” carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>149</sup> “Appel aux Jeunes Enseignants,” Le Bureau National du SUEL. Letterhead: Fédérations des Enseignants d’Afrique Noire (FEAN) and SUEL (BP 196, Saint-Louis), 11 October 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS; “Communication en date du 20 novembre 1961 adressée au Secrétaire général des Nations Unies par le Syndicat unique de l’Enseignement laïc du Sénégal (S.U.E.L.),” signed “Pour le Bureau national, Le Secrétaire général chargé des relations extérieures,” carton 357, SVP, ANS; “Discussion Autour du Rapport Moral” Point de Vue de la Section de Dakar. Rapporteur: N’Gom Doudou, adjoints: Fall Bassirou, Mme. Sohai, SUEL Congress Kaolack, Dec 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>150</sup> “Compte Rendu sur le Congrès du SUEL tenu à Kaolack les 27 et 28 Décembre 1960,” carton 494, SVP, ANS.

M'Bodj.<sup>151</sup> Few teachers from SUEL joined the new union, the *Syndicat national de l'enseignement laïc du Sénégal* (SYNELS).<sup>152</sup> But once the SYNELS was formed, Mamadou Dia agreed to cover half of its budget with government subsidies, while SUEL faced increasing repression.<sup>153</sup> Ngom led the charge in accusing SUEL members of acting at the behest of “foreigners” to attack the Senegalese government, rather than engaging in “nation building.”<sup>154</sup> SUEL, however, remained the dominant union, while SYNELS was kept afloat through government support. Ngom had won the trust of UPS leaders and would become one of the regime’s key representatives in the labor movement. In 1968, it would be Ngom who would negotiate the end of the general strike.

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<sup>151</sup> A report on the December 1960 Seventh Congress of the SUEL in Kaolack claimed that the group “favorables au Gouvernement” was “peu nombreux” based on who spoke up. The other group was comprised of those elements “soumis à l’influence PRA, PAI et sympathisants” (including some within the UPS) some of whom “ont peur de ne pas s’aligner sur les positions de l’extrême-gauche.” See “Un Congrès pas comme les autres” Unsigned, may be the first part of the document by Doudou N’Gom, folder Syndicat: SUEL/Teachers, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS; “Compte Rendu sur le Congrès du SUEL tenu à Kaolack les 27 et 28 Décembre 1960,” folder Syndicat: SUEL/Teachers, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>152</sup> “Compte Rendu sur le Congrès du SUEL tenu à Kaolack les 27 et 28 Décembre 1960,” folder Syndicat: SUEL/Teachers, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>153</sup> “Letter n. 1058 PCM/CAB, from Mamadou Dia to the Minister of Finances,” 19 July 1962, carton 357, SVP, ANS. On repression, see: “Communication en date du 20 novembre 1961 adressée au Secrétaire général des Nations Unies par le Syndicat unique de l'Enseignement laïc du Sénégal (S.U.E.L.), signed “Pour le Bureau national, Le Secrétaire général chargé des relations extérieures,” carton 357, SVP, ANS; “Motion de Protestation contre les mutations arbitraires d’enseignants membres du SUEL décidés par le gouvernement du Sénégal à l’occasion de la rentrée scolaire 1961/1962,” Le Bureau National du SUEL, (probably around Oct 1961), carton 357, SVP, ANS; “Les Enseignants du Monde Entier Soutiennent la Lutte des Enseignants do Senegal,” No date, probably November 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS; “Appel aux Jeunes Enseignants,” Le Bureau National du SUEL. Letterhead: Fédérations des Enseignants d’Afrique Noire (FEAN) and SUEL (BP 196, Saint-Louis), 11 October 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS; “Circulaire no-1, SUEL/62 à toutes les sections du SUEL. Objet: Lutte pour le rétablissement des libertés démocratiques syndicales au Sénégal,” Sec Gen for Le Bureau National du SUEL, Letterhead: Fédérations des Enseignants d’Afrique Noire (FEAN) and SUEL (BP 196, Saint-Louis), 16 [?] October 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS.

<sup>154</sup> “De la nécessité de l’autodéterminer” signed, Doudou N’Gom “Membre du Bureau Provisoire du SYNELS,” carton 494, SVP, ANS. SUEL replied by defending their right to independence from the government. “Circulaire no-1, SUEL/62 à toutes les sections du SUEL. Objet: Lutte pour le rétablissement des libertés démocratiques syndicales au Sénégal,” Sec Gen for Le Bureau National du SUEL, Letterhead: Fédérations des Enseignants d’Afrique Noire (FEAN) and SUEL (BP 196, Saint-Louis), 16 [?] October 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS; “Les Enseignants du Monde Entier Soutiennent la Lutte des Enseignants do Senegal,” no date, probably November 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS.



In the wake of UGTAN's collapse, a congress was held to create a new territorial trade union federation, the Union des travailleurs du Sénégal (UTS),<sup>155</sup> which brought together trade union leaders who had moved closer to the regime. UTS leaders criticized the "disastrous" UGTAN strike of January 1959 and the "excess of politicization" in the union movement—specifically in reference to the remaining original UGTAN fraction (UGTAN-Orthodoxe).<sup>156</sup> Echoing Dia's critique of radical unionists, they declared in their founding resolution that "any reference to class struggle [was] inappropriate" and would lead to the "dispersion of forces in fruitless doctrinal competitions."<sup>157</sup>

The government backed the UTS, and UPS delegates were present in large numbers at the founding congress. UTS leaders proclaimed that they were not interested in submitting to the government, but that they hoped to gain access to government officials, in order to influence budgetary spending and push for worker participation in the management of public enterprises.<sup>158</sup> Abbas Gueye

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<sup>155</sup> Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 255. Notably, the UTS project was initiated by David Soumah, a Catholic trade union leader exiled from Guinea, who became one of Senghor's closest allies and decried the actions of his fellow unionists during the 1968 general strike.

<sup>156</sup> "Welcome speech given by Papa N'Diaye, sec gen de l'union nationale de thiès. Hôtel de ville," 27 Nov 1960, folder Conseil National de l'U.T.S. a Thiès, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS; "3ème Conseil National de l'Union des Travailleurs du Sénégal, Thiès, le 27 Novembre 1960, Rapport du Secrétariat Collectif," folder Conseil National de l'U.T.S. a Thiès, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>157</sup> "3ème Conseil National de l'Union des Travailleurs du Sénégal, Thiès, le 27 Novembre 1960, Rapport du Secrétariat Collectif," folder Conseil National de l'U.T.S. a Thiès, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS. "...la nécessité [sic] primordiale pour la Centrale de poursuivre sa mission de décolonisation pour libérer l'homme de toutes les servitudes qui l'oppriment rendent inopportune toute référence à la lutte des classes permettent d'éviter la dispersion des forces dans des compétitions doctrinales stériles." Furthermore, they criticized agitation, which they claimed would compromise the "règlement pacifique de tous les problèmes au mieux de l'intérêt de tous" through collaborative negotiations with the government. While this work is going on "toute agitation s'avère prématurée [sic] et déloyale [sic] surtout lorsque la cogestion ouvre la porte la plus large aux possibilités d'investigation de négociation et de règlement pacifique de tous les problèmes au mieux de l'intérêt de tous."

<sup>158</sup> "3ème Conseil National de l'Union des Travailleurs du Sénégal, Thiès, le 27 Novembre 1960, Rapport du Secrétariat Collectif," folder Conseil National de l'U.T.S. a Thiès, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS. "Nous ne sommes pas surpris de la campagne orchestrée par les adversaires de la paix sociale qui accusent l'UTS d'avoir renoncé au revendication ouvrière et d'être à la dévotion du Gouvernement." The UTS retained some of the heterogeneity of its founding organizations and their demands. The founding meeting called for worker involvement in the co-management of the economy, and the redistribution of national income "la

and the leadership of UGTAN-Autonome had already established periodic meetings between union leaders and the government “for the peaceful settlement of issues concerning to workers, taking into account African realities.”<sup>159</sup> UTS leaders claimed that recent gains for workers—such as the promise of social security, wage increases for teachers, and price reductions—were *not* the product of the strikes of 1959 and 1960, but of UTS leaders’ non-confrontational approach.

Meanwhile, the weakened UGTAN-Orthodoxe refused to join the new federation, continued to call for strikes, and moved deeper into Third World networks by affiliating with the “Casablanca Group.”<sup>160</sup> Abdoulaye Thiaw, a leader of the UGTAN-Orthodoxe, was arrested November 25th after being accused of writing a tract that called for a general strike. In response to the tract, the government called in the military to occupy Dakar, and declared on Radio Dakar: “The government warns workers against the consequences which would inevitably result from their participation in an exclusively *political* strike.”<sup>161</sup> The distinction between “corporate” and “political” actions would later be used to justify the repression of student organizations at the University of Dakar that were deemed “political”—but first it was first used against the UGTAN-Orthodox, suspected of close ties with the PAI. The beleaguered union federation was banned by the government on December 1, 1960. Thus through a

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judicieuse et harmonieuse élévation des niveaux de vie” for workers on an even levels with other sections of society. They called for the “mise en valeur” of Senegal through public and private investments.

<sup>159</sup> Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 257. “...pour un règlement paisable de toute les questions intéressant les travailleurs, compte tenu de toutes les réalités africaines.”

<sup>160</sup> “3ème Conseil National de l’Union des Travailleurs du Sénégal, Thiès, le 27 Novembre 1960, Rapport du Secrétariat Collectif,” folder Conseil National de l’U.T.S. a Thiès, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>161</sup> Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 258. (Emphasis mine). Faye says that Abdoulaye Thiaw was arrested first in November 1960. Archives suggest that this happened again in early 1962 (or late 1961) on his return from the Vème Congrès Syndical Mondial. See a letter of support from the French CGT: Letter to Mamadou Dia, Premier Ministre du Sénégal, Dakar, from Germaine Guille, Secrétaire pour la Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), 17 Jan 1962, Paris, carton 357, SVP, ANS. See also Kalidou Diallo, “Le mouvement syndical: crises et recompositions,” in *La société sénégalaise entre le local et le global*, ed. Momar Coumba Diop (Paris: Karthala, 2002), 445.

combination of repression and co-optation, Ly notes that UGTAN affiliates were “quickly brought to heel or broken in each of the states that integrated into the Community.”<sup>162</sup>

With the UGTAN-Orthodoxe eliminated, UTS leader Alioune Cissé announced that at the next congress in January 1961, the new federation would become the sole national trade union federation.<sup>163</sup> Government representatives escalated their calls for collaboration, and Cissé declared that “national interests” were “inseparable from the interest of the laboring masses” and that all “social strata” needed to cooperate with the government.<sup>164</sup> However, much to the frustration of UPS officials, UTS officials still guarded their independence from the ruling party. Union leaders called for a strict division between political and trade union questions, but were not afraid to raise a mix of both.<sup>165</sup> They mounted a massive show of force in Dakar on May Day 1960, demanding wage increases and the freezing of price controls on consumer commodities—but also condemned French nuclear tests in the

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<sup>162</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 254. “...rapidement mis au pas ou cassée dans chacun des Etats engagés dans l’intégration au sein de la Communauté...” Although a similar process also took place in Guinea.

<sup>163</sup> “Letter from UTS (Union de Travailleurs Senegalaise) signed by Alioune Cissé,” carton 494, SVP, ANS. This was likely Cissé’s speech to the SUEL congress (teacher’s union).

<sup>164</sup> “Letter from UTS (Union de Travailleurs Senegalaise) signed by Alioune Cissé,” carton 494, SVP, ANS. See also an unsigned letter or speech from a representative of the ministry of education, possibly the director of the cabinet of the minister of national education, Amadou Arona SY, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>165</sup> “3ème Conseil National de l’Union des Travailleurs du Sénégal, Thiès, le 27 Novembre 1960, Rapport du Secrétariat Collectif,” folder Conseil National de l’U.T.S. a Thiès, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS. The UTS claimed not to support any particular party and defended a “régime Démocratique.” UTS leaders also claimed that the UTS was faithful to the “principles of revolutionary unionism” but did not think of its activity in terms of class struggle: “Il ne peut et ne doit être question de se substituer aux partis politiques et aux gouvernements dans l’exercice des prérogatives qui leur sont dévolues en fonction de la confiance et de la volonté des populations.”

Sahara and the ongoing presence of “imperialism” in Africa.<sup>166</sup> A year later the UTS endorsed workers’ protests against the increase in parliamentary deputies’ base salaries to 200,000 CFA francs.<sup>167</sup>

PRA-Sénégal and PAI militants continued to exert pressure within the UTS, so much so that UPS leaders quickly abandoned the new federation. Within a year of the UTS’s formation, Abbas Gueye led a pro-UPS group that broke away. Moreover, in a preview of events in Congo in 1963, Catholic trade union leaders from the CATC remained skeptical of participating in a federation that compromised their autonomy vis-à-vis the government. The UTS stumbled along, until the Catholic trade unionists agreed to participate in a new national union federation, the Union nationale des travailleurs sénégalais (UNTS) in April 1962.<sup>168</sup> The UNTS leadership accepted certain government “obligations” but still claimed a degree of autonomy.<sup>169</sup> However, in exchange for their general obedience, union leaders sought major subsidies from the government, and Mamadou Dia supported these requests.<sup>170</sup> After receiving a sum

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<sup>166</sup> Faye, *La vie sociale à Dakar*, 256; “3ème Conseil National de l’Union des Travailleurs du Sénégal, Thiès, le 27 Novembre 1960, Rapport du Secrétariat Collectif,” folder Conseil National de l’U.T.S. a Thiès, 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>167</sup> “Fait de Jour de Radio-Mali. Voici une déclaration du Comité Central du P.A.I. sur la répression au Sénégal,” No Date, carton 487, SVP, ANS.

<sup>168</sup> “Letter from” President du Comité Préparatoire (du Congrès extraordinaire, UNTS) (Lamine Diallo) to Senghor, as sec gen of the UPS,” 6 Nov 1962, carton 357, SVP, ANS. Formal accords were signed in October 1962, though the UNTS was functioning in name already between April and October. Previously, the UGTS (Combo of UGTAN-Autonome and UGTAN-Orthodoxe) leaders had tried to have the CATC kicked out of their headquarters. This is clear from Letter n. 821 from Babacar Ba, Director of the Cabinet of the President, to the Minister of Work and the Fonction Publique, 15 November 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS. Ba directed the labor minister to help the UGTS get set up at the space they were granted in 81, rue Blanchot, even if it meant expelling the current residents, the CATC trade union.

<sup>169</sup> “From Gueye Bassirou, for the UNTS Secrétaires Généraux to M. Le Président du Gouvernement du Sénégal, Dakar (Senghor),” 3 August 1962, carton 357, SVP, ANS. UNTS leaders claimed there was a problem of funds in order to address the “obligation qui nous incombe en tant qu’organisation indépendante sur le plan intérieur et sur le plan extérieur.” The continued influence of PAI and PRA-Sen militants is noted in James Smoot Coleman and Carl Gustav Rosberg, *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1966)

<sup>170</sup> “Letter n. 1058 PCM/CAB, from Mamadou Dia to the Minister of Finances,” 19 July 1962, carton 357, SVP, ANS.

from the Senegalese government to get the UNTS started, the leaders then asked for a twenty-five million CFA franc annual budget from the ministry of finance.<sup>171</sup>

Through this method of “dialogue,” the government was able to manage the workers’ movement over the following years, but was never able to completely integrate the UNTS into the ruling party. As repression took an increasing toll on the PAI and PRA-Sénégal, many of the parties’ worker-members continued to influence their unions. As will be explored in the next chapter, this ongoing presence of unionists opposed to the UPS regime later allowed for the organization of the 1968 general strike. But while Senghor was able to quell union agitation during the mid-1960s, he still struggled to do the same with students at the University of Dakar.

## IV. The Student Movement in Dakar, 1958–62

### The Early Years of the University of Dakar

The creation of the University of Dakar in 1957 was the product of a multi-faceted campaign to expand Africans’ access to French education after World War II. Colonial schools had hitherto offered a watered-down academic curriculum, with an emphasis on manual labor and agricultural training. The education campaigns supported by emerging African politicians like Senghor instead demanded the same curriculum as metropolitan schools, with equally-recognized diplomas.<sup>172</sup> As Tony Chafer argues, the campaigns’ successes—such as the University of Dakar—came at the cost of a lingering cultural dependence on France.<sup>173</sup> After independence in 1960, the University changed only nominally: it remained part of the official French university system, was completely funded by the French

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<sup>171</sup> “From Gueye Bassirou, for the UNTS Secrétaires Généraux to M. Le Président du Gouvernement du Sénégal, Dakar (Senghor),” 3 August 1962, carton 357, SVP, ANS..

<sup>172</sup> Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 94-97.

<sup>173</sup> Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 98.

government,<sup>174</sup> and granted diplomas with the same status as those awarded in France.<sup>175</sup> In addition, the French government continued to provide the vast majority of instructors and technicians.<sup>176</sup> Consequently, the management of the university and the administration of academic programs were under the control of the French education ministry.

The Franco-Senegalese accords of 1961 reflected some of the contradictions inherent in the post-war education movement. The accords began by stating that the French language and French education had always been “for the Senegalese people” and were “loyal to African traditions,” and that diplomas granted in Senegal should have the “international value” of those bestowed by the French university system.<sup>177</sup> At the same time, the 1961 agreement stated that the university was a “Senegalese public institution.”<sup>178</sup> The general orientation of studies and research were therefore passed to a committee headed by the Senegalese education minister.<sup>179</sup> However, even this committee was dominated by Frenchmen, giving French authorities “all the desirable guarantees” over its conclusions.<sup>180</sup> The vice-

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<sup>174</sup> “Projet d'accord entre la république Française et la république Sénégalaise relatif à l'Enseignement Supérieur,” 1961, carton 314, SVP, ANS. Based upon the “identité des diplômes délivrés et, portant, concordance des programmes et de la scolarité avec ceux des Universités françaises.”

<sup>175</sup> “Accord de Coopération en Matière d'enseignement supérieur entre la République Française et la République du Sénégal,” 1961[?], carton 314, SVP, ANS. Also mentioned in “Projet d'accord entre la république Française et la république Sénégalaise relatif à l'Enseignement Supérieur,” 1961, carton 314, SVP, ANS.

<sup>176</sup> “PCM/AD/Sec. 10 Jan 1961, Note on the 1961 accords from the Sec of National Education in Senegal (Henri Dieng),” carton 314, SVP, ANS.

<sup>177</sup> “Accord de Coopération en Matière d'enseignement supérieur entre la République Française et la République du Sénégal,” 1961, carton 314, SVP, ANS.

<sup>178</sup> “...établissement public sénégalais.” This agreement replaced the agreement established under the Mali Fédération. “Projet d'accord entre la république Française et la république Sénégalaise relatif à l'Enseignement Supérieur,” 1961, carton 314, SVP, ANS.

<sup>179</sup> The rules of the committee are laid out in “Projet de Décret devant faire l'objet d'échanges de lettre entre le gouvernement de la République Sénégalaise et le gouvernement de la République Française,” 1961, carton 314, SVP, ANS.

<sup>180</sup> “Projet d'accord entre la république Française et la république Sénégalaise relatif à l'Enseignement Supérieur,” 1961, carton 314, SVP, ANS. “...toutes les garanties souhaitables quant au sérieux...” See, in

president was the university rector (a position held by French men until 1971), and the rector became the de-facto Senegalese director of higher education (*Directeur de l'enseignement supérieur*).<sup>181</sup> The rest of the committee was filled with the deans of the university's four colleges (arts, law and economics, medicine, and sciences), faculty representatives, and the directors of university institutes—positions dominated by Europeans. Yet even this committee remained advisory in nature: all decisions concerning curriculum and exams would remain in the hands of the French education ministry.<sup>182</sup> Throughout the 1960s, radical students increasingly criticized French control of the university as a barrier to “real independence.”

During the early 1960s, a teaching hospital was established at the university and the four colleges were expanded, allowing enrollment to double, from 1,012 students in 1959-1960 to 2,139 in 1965-1966. During the same period, the number of Senegalese students grew from 334 to 599, consistently making up just less than one-third of the student body.<sup>183</sup> The rest of the student body hailed from

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general documents in carton 314, SVP, ANS, which make clear that most deans and institution heads were European. Only lower levels committees at each institute and among the faculty of each faculté, were to consist of a majority Senegalese. “Accord de Coopération en Matière d'enseignement supérieur entre la République Française et la République du Sénégal,” 1961[?], carton 314, SVP, ANS.

<sup>181</sup> “Projet de Decret devant faire l'objet d'échanges de lettre entre le gouvernement de la République Sénégalaise et le gouvernement de la République Française,” 1961, carton 314, SVP, ANS; “Accord de Coopération en Matière d'enseignement supérieur entre la République Française et la République du Sénégal,” 1961[?], carton 314, SVP, ANS.

<sup>182</sup> “Projet de Decret devant faire l'objet d'échanges de lettre entre le gouvernement de la République Sénégalaise et le gouvernement de la République Française,” 1961, carton 314, SVP, ANS: “...les programmes des études et des examens et la scolarité...”; “PCM/AD/Sec. 10 Jan 1961, Note on the 1961 accords from the Sec of National Education in Senegal (Henri Dieng),” carton 314, SVP, ANS; “Projet d'accord entre la république Française et la république Sénégalaise relatif à l'Enseignement Supérieur,” 1961, carton 314, SVP, ANS.

<sup>183</sup> This did not increase significantly until after 1968–1969. For statistics see “Statistiques Universitaires 1975–1976,” Bulletin 1, Rectorat de l'Université de Dakar, Bureau des Statistiques, UCAD.

France and the former AOF territories. Most students received living stipends while attending the university, which were provided by the states from which students originated.<sup>184</sup>

### **The Growth of African Student Unions in Dakar**

At the university's precursor, the Institut des hautes études de Dakar, students formed a common union<sup>185</sup> in 1950. The Association générale des étudiants de Dakar (AGED) was originally led by French students, but within a few years African students had been elected to most of the leadership positions. By the mid-1950s, most French students had abandoned the AGED for a local chapter of the Union nationale des étudiants de France (UNEF). A final break was prompted by events in 1956. In Montpellier, UNEF students were implicated in an attack on African students, which strained relationships between French and African students in Senegal, and led AGED to organize a solidarity demonstration in Dakar.<sup>186</sup> Additionally, the general turn among trade unionists toward autonomous African organizations prompted AGED leaders, in June 1956, to change the organization's name to the Union générale des étudiants d'Afrique occidentale (UGEAO).<sup>187</sup> Senegalese authorities later noted the somewhat scandalous nature of the change: it was first time a group had used the term "Afrique occidentale," without including "française" at the end.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> In 1959, the rector stipulated that scholarships of equal and fixed amounts would be available to students from across the AOF based on financial needs and their level of study. "Note à l'intention des étudiants de l'Université de Dakar," n. 4.675/U. Université de Dakar, From le Recteur, Lucien Paye," 27 April 1959, carton 314, SVP, ANS.

<sup>185</sup> Formed in 1950, it became majority African in membership in 1951-1952 (mostly at William Ponty). See Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 292.

<sup>186</sup> Dieng, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 1, 51-52.

<sup>187</sup> For different explanations see Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 129; Dieng, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 1, 52.

<sup>188</sup> "Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal. May 1962. Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM," carton 374, DA, CADN. See also Dieng, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 1, 63. The UGEAO's tracts, however, often placed the beginning of the organization erroneously in 1957, with the transition of



Prior to 1956, the AGED had organized across both secondary and tertiary educational establishments, sometimes leading protests against the curricula and professors that students judged to be demeaning.<sup>189</sup> By the mid-1950s, authorities viewed the AGED as “a center of Communist propaganda,” as leaders like Moustapha Diallo and Charles Diané, had developed connections to Communist-affiliated international student and youth organizations like the ISU.<sup>190</sup> Amady Aly Dieng, an AGED member in the 1950s, recounts that African students formed reading circles to discuss contemporary works of radical philosophy, and attended lectures on Marxist topics by Abdoulaye Ly (later of the PRA-Sénégal) and other African and French intellectuals.<sup>191</sup> Nevertheless, as Dieng points out, prior to 1956 AGED leaders mostly organized cultural and social events, avoiding explicit engagement in politics. The organization’s transition to the UGEAO, marked a radicalization and change in orientation for African student leaders in Dakar.

UGEAO activists became increasingly involved in territorial and international political organizations, particularly the PAI. The UGEAO’s newspaper, *Dakar-Etudiant*, had been started under the AGED by Dieng and Ousmane Camara, who both joined the PAI.<sup>192</sup> At the time of the 1958

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the Institut des Hautes Etudes into the University of Dakar. “B/1. Destinaire n. 111, Organisation-Internationale, Publication par l’U.I.E. d’une brochure de l’U.G.E.A.O. historique de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” March 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>189</sup> Not only at the Institut des Hautes Etudes, but also at Lycée Faidherbe in Saint-Louis and Collège Delafosse in Dakar. “Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal,” May 1962, Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM,” carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>190</sup> “Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal,” May 1962, Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM,” carton 374, DA, CADN. “...un foyer de propaganda communiste.”

<sup>191</sup> Dieng, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 1, 47-48, 54.

<sup>192</sup> Ousmane Camara, after being active in FEANF in the early 1960s, changed alliances, and played a key role in the suppression of Leftist organizations in the mid 1960s. Ousmane Camara, *Mémoires d'un juge africain : itinéraire d'un homme libre*, Hommes et sociétés (Paris: Karthala, 2010). In 1960, the paper aimed to come out every two months had a print run of about one thousand copies. The editor in 1960 was Emile Ologoudou, a Dahomean student in Dakar, who was at a meeting for editors in July 1959 put on by the ISU in Romania. “Destinaire n.111, Afrique Noire, Activités de l’Union générale des étudiants d’Afrique occidentale,” 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. In 1961 or 1962, *Dakar-Etudiant* was replaced with a new paper, *Le Flambeau*.

referendum, students used tracts and *Dakar-Etudiant* to stake out a position for “immediate and unconditional independence,” and “the denunciation of the loi-cadre Gaston Defferre and the Franco-African Community.”<sup>193</sup> Senegalese authorities claimed that the UGEAO was responsible for all of the “incidents, manifestations, [and] meetings” on campus that turned the university into a bastion of “no” voters.<sup>194</sup>

The UGEAO’s rejection of the French Community mirrored the position of African students in France, in the FEANF. At the tenth FEANF congress at the end of 1958, students approved a manifesto that called the new imperial structure “essentially colonialist, holding various African states under the same political and economic domination as the French Union and the *loi-cadre*...” The FEANF congress believed that efforts to create an African federation within the community would remain “under the thumb of colonialism,” and that effective trans-territorial unity could only be achieved outside of the Community. The FEANF questioned Mamadou Dia’s statement that “everyone in Africa [is] in agreement about the necessity of independence.” If this was so, student leaders in France and Dakar argued, not everyone was in agreement about when independence should be claimed and what it should look like.<sup>195</sup>

In Mamadou Dia’s statement after the 1958 referendum, youth and student organizations were not spared from his vitriol for those who opposed the UPS. Dia’s criticism of young “intellectuals” was strikingly similar to his attitude toward the trade unions. Dia portrayed the UPS as having gone out of its way to support youth organization leaders’ travel to international meetings like the 1958 African Youth

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<sup>193</sup> “Destinaire n. 111, Organisation-Internationale, Publication par l’U.I.E. d’une brochure de l’U.G.E.A.O. historique de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” March 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>194</sup> “Les Associations Etudiantines au Sénégal,” May 1962, report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM,” carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>195</sup> “Manifeste” approved by the Xè FEANF congress, signed by Hamat Ba, president of the executive committee, 3 February 1959, carton 130, SVP, ANS.

Festival in Bamako.<sup>196</sup> Now, Dia criticized them for becoming “movement professionals” and instead called on them to follow the example of youth leaders in China who, according to Dia, “have participated decisively in the training of the poorest populations.”<sup>197</sup> Dia further demanded that “intellectuals” work for the “national interest, for the revolution that we [the UPS] want to undertake” and not the revolution of “their preferences or their fantasies.”<sup>198</sup> Characterizing them as unproductive critics, Dia insisted that “to have the right” to speak of independence, youth “must participate with all their might and make sacrifices.”<sup>199</sup> References to the Chinese Communist Party’s attempts to create obliging student and youth leaders committed to “nation building” would be a common refrain of the UPS government—<sup>200</sup>one later used by Senghor in the midst of the 1968 strike.

UGEAO leaders, however, stuck to their positions. In the lead up to legislative elections in Senegal and the Ivory Coast in March 1959, the FEANF and UGEO leaderships released a joint statement arguing that independence could not be achieved by an “adding reforms” to the structure of the French Community. They believed that the French government was not willing to relinquish military bases in Africa, did not want to lose control over the exploitation of African resources, and needed access to African markets to guarantee the success of the newly launched European Economic Community (EEC).

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<sup>196</sup> Youth organizations like the CJS and the Maisons des Jeunes were predominantly led by students and former students.

<sup>197</sup> “...ont participé de façon décisive à l’encadrement des milieux les plus déshérités, à l’évolution des plus malheureux.” Dia also calls on them to follow the example of the Moroccan “route de l’Unité.” “Position de l’Union Progressiste Senegalaise (U.P.S.) au lendemain du referendum du 28 Septembre 1958, rapport 1958,” carton 130, SVP, ANS; “L’U.P.S. au lendemain du referendum” Signed, Rufisque, le 4 Octobre 1958, Mamadou Dia, carton 130, SVP, ANS.

<sup>198</sup> “...leurs goûts ou leur fantaisie.”

<sup>199</sup> “Position de l’Union Progressiste Senegalaise (U.P.S.) au lendemain du referendum du 28 Septembre 1958, rapport 1958,” carton 130, SVP, ANS; “L’U.P.S. au lendemain du referendum” Signed, Rufisque, le 4 Octobre 1958, Mamadou Dia, carton 130, SVP, ANS. “...ou alors, qu’ils ne parlent pas d’indépendance. Pour en avoir le droit, il faut participer de toutes ses forces par des sacrifices.”

<sup>200</sup> The same approach was taken during the 1968 general strike, when Senghor would address students by citing Mao. See chapter 2.

To the students, politicians who “refuse[d] to engage in the revolutionary struggle” and “preferr[ed] to consolidate their personal power through the promises of the colonial government,” were ready to renounce independence if it mean compromising their own hold on power.<sup>201</sup>

Throughout 1959 and 1960, student leaders were hopeful, but ambivalent, about the Mali Federation. Students were encouraged by the potential influence of the US-RDA’s leaders on the politics of the Federation, but were discouraged by the closed-door negotiations over the terms of independence, and most importantly, believed the Federation could do little if some aspects of sovereignty remained controlled by French or institutions of the French Community.<sup>202</sup> In December 1960, in an address to the SUEL congress, a UGEAO representative laid out the organization’s perspective on the question of “indépendance totale”—a slogan they shared with the PAI, and used interchangeably with “indépendance réelle.”<sup>203</sup> While the UGEAO commended the independence of the former colonies, they continued “we have not failed to emphasize...the mixed nature of these many independences emptied of genuine content.”<sup>204</sup> According to the UGEAO, “genuine” independence required full internal and external “sovereignty,” free rein in international politics, the removal of foreign military bases from African soil, and breaking up the *economie de traite* controlled by foreign

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<sup>201</sup> “Déclaration des Etudiants d’Afrique Noire (FEANF-UGEAO) devant les élections du 22 mars (1959 ?) au Sénégal et en Côte D’Ivoire,” signed by the Comité Executif de la FEANF and the Bureau Executif de l’UGEAO, carton 130, SVP, ANS.

<sup>202</sup> They later accused the French of sabotaging the Federation. “Destinaire n. 111, Afrique - O.N.U. L’UGEAO et le groupe Afro-Asiatique de l’ONU,” 1961 (1960?), carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>203</sup> “Message de l’Union générale des étudiants d’Afrique occidentale (UGEAO) au Congrès du SUEL,” December 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS. On real independence: “Pour nous les étudiants, l’indépendance réelle avec tous ses attributs, est un préalable à l’Unité Africaine qui se fera quelles que soient les forces corruptives mises en jour.”

<sup>204</sup> “...nous n’avons pas manqué de souligner en son temps, le caractère mitigé de ces nombreuses indépendances vides de leur contenu réel.” “Message de l’Union générale des étudiants d’Afrique occidentale (UGEAO) au Congrès du SUEL,” December 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

businesses.<sup>205</sup> UGEAO leaders also called for a democratization of education and political life, mass literacy campaigns, the reform of university curricula, the accelerated training of new African cadres, and the the guarantee of academic freedom.<sup>206</sup> Although some UPS leaders, like Dia, ostensibly agreed with some of these goals, party leaders did not appreciate students constant agitation and impatient calls to break from the French Community. When UGEAO leaders brought these demands into their first congress in December 1960, the event provoked a confrontation between students and UPS leaders.

### **A Scandalous Congress and Evaporating Goodwill**

Even as Dia faced off with student opponents after the 1958 referendum, the UPS nevertheless tried to establish a cordial relationship with student representatives—for example, inviting a UGEAO delegation to attend Dia’s Tabaski (Eid al-Adha) dinner in June 1959.<sup>207</sup> When the UGEAO planned its first congress for December 1960 at the University of Dakar, student leaders met with president Senghor and secured three million CFA francs in government funding—two million for the regular operations of the organization, and one million to host the congress.<sup>208</sup>

However, the 1960 congress, rather than mending students’ relationship with the UPS, resulted in an irreparable break. In the relationship between the government and the UGEAO. According to the French embassy in Dakar, the congress “constituted, in its scale and violence, an extremist event

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<sup>205</sup> See also the discussion of indépendance véritable when talking about Cameroon: “Communiqué,” Le Comité Exécutif de l’UGEAO, No Date (late Jan or early Feb 1961), carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>206</sup> “Destinaire n. 111, Organisation-Internationale, publication par l’U.I.E. d’une brochure de l’U.G.E.A.O. historique de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” March 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN; “Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal,” May 1962, Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM,” carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>207</sup> Letter from Dia to UGEAO president, 15 June 1959, inviting him to Tabaski dinner at Dia's house on 17 June, carton 357, SVP, ANS.

<sup>208</sup> Télégramme-Départ n. 10360 from Haut Représentation de France, Dakar, to Communauté Paris, 27 Dec 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN.

without precedent in Dakar.”<sup>209</sup> With about one thousand people in attendance—almost entirely students—the UGEAO congress was huge public event. Most came from the University of Dakar, but the congress also hosted representatives from the FEANF, the International Union of Students in Prague, the UNEF; the West African Student Union (WASU), the General Union of Algerian Muslim Students, and student organizations in the Soviet Union, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, China, and the United States.<sup>210</sup>

The Senegalese government and ruling party were quite visible at the conference. The UPS’s youth section, the *Mouvement des jeunes de l’UPS* (MJUPS) sent representatives, and the conference was opened by a high-ranking official from the national education ministry. Seydouba Konaté, a UGEAO member, spoke second, and thanked the Senegalese government for providing the financial, material, administrative, and moral support to make the conference possible.<sup>211</sup>

However, the congress was deeply unsettling for the Senegalese government and the French university administration. Responding to the speeches at the congress, French security services described it as “a communist demonstration, anti-French, anti-Western and anti-anything that does not obey the orders of the Moscow-Beijing-Cairo axis.”<sup>212</sup> Banners hung in the main assembly iterated a lengthy list of demands including the democratization and Africanization of the University, an end to the

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<sup>209</sup> “Destinaire n. 111, Sénégal, Activités Extrémistes de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. “...a constitué, par son ampleur et sa violence, une manifestation extrémiste sans précédent à Dakar.”

<sup>210</sup> Note: only about 25 participants were women. See Note technique de Renseignements, “Objet: Premier Congrès à Dakar de l’Union Générale des Etudiants de l’Afrique Occidentale (U.G.E.A.O.), les 23-23 et 24 Décembre 1960,” carton 408, DA, CADN; Haute Représentation de France, Dakar. N. 3586/SSEC, 29 December 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN; B.S. Sénégal. Informateur B/2. Dakar, 24 December 1960; “La Vie du Sénégal,” Premier Congrès de l’Union Générale des Etudiants de l’Afrique Occidentale, 23 Dec 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>211</sup> B.S. Sénégal. Informateur B/2. Dakar, 24 December 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>212</sup> “Destinaire n. 111, Sénégal, Activités Extrémistes de l’ U.G.E.A.O.,” 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN, “...une manifestation communiste, anti-française, anti-Occidentale et anti tout ce qui obéit pas aux ordres de l’axe Moscou-Pékin-Le Caire.”

“fascism” of new African leaders, the reinstatement of Patrice Lumumba’s government in Congo, the freeing of political prisoners, the removal of African troops fighting alongside the French in Algeria, and “total and genuine independence (*indépendance totale et réelle*) for all African people.”<sup>213</sup>

In the presence of international delegations and press representative, the congress focused on issues of African independence at large, rather than the UGEO’s specific projects at the University of Dakar. A series of resolutions were passed: the first defended Mauritania’s right to independence and admittance into the United Nations; another demanded immediate independence for Algeria, without a referendum; a third called for an end to French nuclear testing in the Sahara.<sup>214</sup> The congress attacked Chaing Kai-shek’s government in Taiwan and called for China to be admitted to the UN because, as a Senegalese delegate noted, “the modern world can not ignore the existence of the country’s seven hundred million inhabitants.”<sup>215</sup> The congress also criticized the UN force’s actions in the Congo, which they believed undermined Lumumba’s government.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> The complete list of banners included “L’Afrique aux Africains,” “Chefs d’Etats africains – halte au fascisme,” “Hand [sic] off Africa,” “Vocation africaine de l’Université,” “Indépendance totale et réelle pour tous les peuple d’Afrique,” “A bas l’agression impérialiste au Congo – Rétablissement du gouvernement légal de Lumumba,” “Indépendance de l’Angola et des colonies Portugaises,” “A bas le complot de la Conférence d’Abidjan,” “Pain – Paix – Liberté,” “Leaders africains retirez vos troupes d’Algérie,” “Libérez les patriotes emprisonnés,” “Référendum contrôlé par l’O.N.U. en Algérie,” “Vive la solidarité Afro-Asiatique,” “Démocratisation de l’enseignement.” In B.S. Sénégal. Informateur B/2. Dakar, 24 Dec 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN. Indépendance totale was a theme echoed by Seydouba Konaté in his opening remarks. See “La Vie du Sénégal,” Premier Congrès de l’Union Générale des Etudiants de l’Afrique Occidentale, 23 December 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>214</sup> Possible APF clip. “Fin des travaux du Congrès de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” 27 December 1960, Dakar; “La Vie du Sénégal,” Premier Congrès de l’Union Générale des Etudiants de l’Afrique Occidentale, 23 December 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>215</sup> “Destinaire n. 111, Sénégal, Activités Extrémistes de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN, “...le monde moderne ne peut pas ignorer l’existence des 700 millions d’habitants de ce pays.”

<sup>216</sup> Following the conference, the UGEO bureau wrote the president of the UN Afro-Asia group, laying out a series of positions that they asked the Afro-Asian group to move on. First, they condemned UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld for the UN’s actions in the Congo, which they saw as undermining Lumumba’s government. They felt that the breakup of the Mali federation had also been the result of imperial intrusion, and condemned French nuclear testing in the Sahara. But they used the letter to also criticize governments within the Communauté for allowing troops from their countries to be sent to Algeria to fight with the

Speakers decried the Senegalese government and many of its diplomatic allies in Africa and Europe during the conference, albeit often indirectly. In a particularly embarrassing moment for the host government, the congress called for the release of political prisoners in Senegal and read statements from two of the jailed PAI student members currently engaged in a hunger strike, Ba Hamat and Touan Bona Zané Fé.<sup>217</sup> After the congress, Senghor faced a great deal of criticism from within the UPS for having bestowed a large amount of funds to the UGEAO.<sup>218</sup> The government was furious that the funding had gone toward a conference openly critical of the regime and Senghor himself banned the publication of the motions and resolutions of the congress afterward.<sup>219</sup> French authorities were equally scandalized that such a congress had taken place within a French university: "In the opinion of informed observers, never have the walls of a campus, built with money from France, heard so many insults, threats and demands addressed to France, as during the three days of the Congress."<sup>220</sup>

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Communauté army. They pushed the group to take all measures to end South African apartheid and secure the independence of Namibia. Lastly, they called on the group to demand that China be allowed into the UN. Destinaire n. 111, "Afrique - O.N.U. L'UGEAO et le groupe Afro-Asiatique de l'ONU," 1961 (1960?) carton 408, DA, CADN; see also the UGEAO declaration from July 1961, "Déclaration à propos de la Journée Internationale de Solidarité avec la Jeunesse Algérienne en Lutte," U.G.E.A.O., Dakar, 5 July 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>217</sup> "Pour la libération des détenus politiques," Tract, Comité Central du PAI, Dakar, 14 Feb 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. Also listed as André Zanifé.

<sup>218</sup> B.S. Sénégal 899, Dakar, "Objet: A/S. Congrès de l'U.G.E.A.O.," 27 December 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>219</sup> B.S. Sénégal, Informateur B/2, Dakar," 6 January 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. The resolutions were, however, published in the UGEAO's paper, *Dakar Etudiant*. *Dakar Etudiant*. Nouvelle Série: N. 1 February 1961, Organe Central de l'Union Générale des Etudiants d'Afrique Occidentale, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>220</sup> Haute Représentation de France, Dakar. N. 3586/SSEC, "Note technique de Renseignements, Objet: Premier Congrès à Dakar de l'Union Générale des Etudiants de l'Afrique Occidentale (U.G.E.A.O.), les 23-23 et 24 Décembre 1960," 29 December 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN. "De l'avis d'observateurs avertis, jamais les murs de la Cité Universitaire, édifée avec l'argent de la France, n'ont entendu autant d'insultes, menaces et mises en demeure à l'adresse de la France, que pendant ces trois jours du Congrès."



## The Repression of the UGEAO

After the December 1960 congress, the administration quickly became more hostile to the UGEAO. Tensions between the government and the UGEAO escalated when, on February 14, 1961, the UGEAO organized a demonstration in Dakar calling for the liberation of PAI political prisoners. There, UGEAO students handed out tracts about the PAI prisoners hunger strike.<sup>221</sup> Shortly thereafter, as news of Patrice Lumumba's murder spread, the FEANF called a protest outside the Belgian embassy in Paris, where police attacked the crowd of three to four hundred African students, and arrested 164 participants.<sup>222</sup> The UGEAO also announced a protest at the University of Dakar, but the day before it was to take place, the government banned the gathering. Campus was then swamped with police forces to prevent the demonstration from taking place.<sup>223</sup>

Also in February of 1961, the UGEAO bureau was banned from meeting at the university.<sup>224</sup> The UGEAO leadership complained that the minister of youth and sports was trying to provoke a rupture (*éclatement*) with the UGEAO by promising favors and money to pro-UPS students. Moreover, as Senegalese security services noted, the government was holding radical students in jail as hostages—

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<sup>221</sup> Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Noire. "Tract du P.A.I. diffusé par l'U.G.E.A.O. à Dakar," 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>222</sup> Led by students from Congo-Brazzaville in FEANF who were hostile to Fulbert Youlou, a protest was called in Paris that drew three to four thousand African students, and a few French "progressistes et communistes" near the Belgian embassy. The twenty-seven detained Senegalese students who participated were listed and sent to the Senegalese government. See Premier Ministre, From Y. Huchard, Interim Director of the Sécurité Extérieure de la Communauté, Paris, N. 947 SSEC / SE 800.040, Note de Renseignements, "Objet: Réaction des étudiants africains en France à l'annonce du décès de M. Lumumba," 27 February 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; "Letter from Hettier de Boislambert (Haut Rep de France, Dakar) to Senghor," 21 March 1961. carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>223</sup> Eventually, on 26 February, the UGEAO held a meeting outside of its siège, outside of the university, which drew about 100 students and reps from the PRA-SEN, the RJDA and ex-UGTAN. B.S. Sénégal, Dakar, "Objet: U.G.E.A.O.," 27 Feb 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; "Haut Representation de France, Dakar, n557 /SSEC. Note de Renseignements. Objet: Réunion du Comité Exécutif de l'U.G.E.A.O.," 21 February 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>224</sup> B.S. Sénégal, Informateur B/2, Dakar, 6 March 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

promising only to release the students once the authors of certain anti-governmental tracts were named. Escalating the situation further, the government accused the UGEAO of working in cahoots with the PRA-Sénégal and the PAI on an “alleged plot against the government” and demanded information about it.<sup>225</sup>

In March 1961, the UGEAO asked for a meeting with the French ambassador in Senegal, Hettier de Boislambert, and presented him with a letter, asking that it be delivered to de Gaulle. The letter expressed solidarity with nine FEANF students who had been expelled, harassed, and arrested by French authorities for their political organizing.<sup>226</sup> The letter characterized these actions as racist and fascist reactions, and went further to reject the “neocolonial French Community and condemn those who have chosen to endorse this undertaking against the will of the African people.” The UGEAO claimed that it would continue to fight for an “unconditional, nonaligned independence.”<sup>227</sup>

Though the letter then ended on a conciliatory note, de Boislambert was incensed. The French ambassador admonished the students for criticizing the country that hosted their fellow students, and instead of delivering it to de Gaulle, took the letter to Mamadou Dia.<sup>228</sup> Dia promised to take all

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<sup>225</sup> B.S. Sénégal, Informateur B/2, Dakar, 6 March 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. “...prétendu complot contre le gouvernement”

<sup>226</sup> “Letter from the Comité Executif de l’U.G.E.A.O., Dakar, to M. le Président de la République Française: Paris, and M. le Haut-Représentant de la France au Sénégal, Dakar,” 9 March 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. Three Guineans, two Malians, four Cameroonians, not named. The students in Dakar accused the government of allowing racism and a “fascist reaction” to develop in the face of the FEANF’s activity, instead of the “humanist traditions” of the French people.

<sup>227</sup> “Letter from the Comité Executif de l’U.G.E.A.O., Dakar, to M. le Président de la République Française: Paris, and M. le Haut-Représentant de la France au Sénégal, Dakar,” 9 March 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>228</sup> “Letter from Hettier de Boislambert (Haut Rep de France, Dakar) to Senghor,” 21 March 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. He told students that “la moindre des courtoisies consistait à ne pas insulter un pays qui donne l’hospitalité et prend à sa charge les frais d’éducation de nombreux étudiants africains.” He then mocked their complaints about the Senegalese government’s “fascism” and “neo-colonialisme” and not-so-subtly told them that they had not yet earned the right to raise criticisms: “J’ai conclu, en congédiant mes interlocutors, que lorsqu’ils auraient lutté contre le fascisme comme d’autres l’ont fait pendant de longues années, pris les risques que certains hommes ont couru dans cette lutte et ainsi mérité le droit à parole, ils pourraient s’insurger contre ce qu’ils appellent le fascisme et le néo-colonialisme.”

measures necessary to end the “subversion” taking place within the university—including the expulsion of foreign students and the cancelation of certain classes, a strategy that the Senegalese government would use on multiple occasions in the years that followed.<sup>229</sup> With the the funding and administration of the university under French control, Dia was now under greater pressure to control the students.

Following the conflict with de Boislambert, French security services reported that the UGEAO no longer had interest in organizing study abroad trips in France—instead offering trips to China and Soviet Union. The UGEAO leadership called on students not to accept the study abroad trips set aside for 174 students by the French high commissioner of youth and sports.<sup>230</sup>

In April 1961, on the first anniversary of independence, the UGEAO attempted to organize a reception for visiting journalists at the student bar on campus. However, on the day of the event, students found their campus again besieged by police and the bar occupied.<sup>231</sup> Students argued in a tract immediately following the event that the Senegalese government had yet again proved itself incapable of respecting “elementary principles of liberty.”<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Télégramme Départ n. 00214 from Hettier de Boislambert, Haute Représentation de France, Dakar, to Communauté Paris, 24 March 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>230</sup> Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Noire, “Opposition de l’U.G.E.A.O. à un voyage de la jeunesse Africaine en France,” 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. It seems that one officer of UGEAO actually proposed sanctions against thirteen Malian students who had accepted a *voyage d’étude* in France, though it is unclear if this actually took place. See Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Noire, “Activités de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” 1961 (incorrect, should read 1960), Dakar Amba 408.

<sup>231</sup> Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Noire, “Activité de l’U.G.E.A.O. lors des fêtes de l’indépendance du Sénégal,” 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; Communiqué, Executive Committee of UGEAO, 3 April 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>232</sup> Again a month later, a UGEAO communiqué condemned the “régime anti-démocratique” and the use of “forces de repression” in Sénégal. Haute Représentation de France, Dakar. N. 1604 / SSEC, Note de Renseignements, “Objet: L’U.G.E.A.O. diffuse une Résolution sur les Antennes de Radio-Mali,” 20 May 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

Later in 1961, the UGEAO planned a colloquium on the role and future of universities, to complement their second congress in December.<sup>233</sup> The gathering sought to bring together teachers and intellectuals from across Africa, and by September 1961, the students had secured the participation of a number of major West African thinkers including Alioune Diop, Cheikh Anta Diop, Amadou Hampaté Ba, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, and Assane Seck. French security services labelled the speakers “high-profile extremists”—although in reality their political ideas and orientations varied greatly.<sup>234</sup> But UPS leaders were likely worried that the presence of established opposition figures like Diop and Seck, among a host of other prominent intellectuals at a UGEAO event would legitimize the student union. Thus, on October 17, the government banned the planned conference and immediately asked its embassies and consulates to deny visas to anyone planning to travel to the conference.<sup>235</sup>

In response to the prohibition of the conference, and the subsequent arrest of the popular professor (and PRA-Sénégal leader) Assane Seck, students launched a series of public protests, temporary occupations of the campus, and walkouts from class (*grève des cours*), which were joined by students from the Lycée Maurice Delafosse.<sup>236</sup> The government arrested a number of student militants

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<sup>233</sup> Annex to above letter. Letter from Seydouba Konaté, VP aux Affaires Panafricaines, UGEAO, Dakar, 5 August 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>234</sup> Destinaire n. 111, Sénégal, “Activités Extremistes de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; “...extremists de premier plan,” Destinaire n. 111, Sénégal, “Colloque de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” September 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; Letter from Seydouba Konaté, VP aux Affaires Panafricaines, UGEAO, Dakar, 5 August 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>235</sup> “Destinaire n. 111, Sénégal. Interdiction du “Colloque de l’Université,” fin October 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>236</sup> “Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal. May 1962. Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM,” carton 374, DA, CADN; “Télégramme-Départ n. 520 from Mouradian, Haute Représentation de France, Dakar, to Diplomatie Paris,” 22 December 1961 carton 374, DA, CADN; “Destinaire n. 111, Sénégal. Activités Extrémistes de l’U.G.E.A.O.,” 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

(including the UGEAO president, Emile Logoudou) and those arrested students hailing from outside Senegal were expelled—just as Dia had promised the French ambassador.<sup>237</sup>

### Turning to Campus Problems

With the UGEAO facing a campaign of repression because of their engagement in “politics,” the organization seems to have shifted in 1961 to a greater focus on changing the structure of the University of Dakar and improving the quality of student life on campus.<sup>238</sup> The union was particularly frustrated with the administrative council of the *Centre des œuvres universitaire de Dakar* (COUD), which oversaw the management of the university facilities and services for students, including lodging, food, leisure, and medical care. For the previous three years, students had been included on the committee along with the deans of the four colleges and the university Rector. The UGEAO executive committee argued that the administrative council regularly ignored the recommendations of the various commissions were never acted upon. The students claimed that the administration had used them as “pawns” and as a “prop” (*caution*) on the administrative council of the COUD, to make it look like the administration’s unilateral decisions had been the product of student input.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> This resulted in a number of arrests, including of some foreigners: Vignet-Zunz (of the PCF), KONE Ibrahima (Law student), SOKHO Philiping, LOGOUDOU Emile (Humanities student and President of the UGEAO) were all expelled. Another expelled student, Philiping Sokho, had been directing the Université Populaire, which in the wave of repression, was closed down in December 1961.

<sup>238</sup> "Mémorandum. Les Etudiants mis devant leur responsabilités par le conseil d'administration du centre universitaire des oeuvres de Dakar," Le Comité Exécutif, Union Générale des Etudiants d'Afrique Occidentale, 2 November 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS.

<sup>239</sup> "Mémorandum. Les Etudiants mis devant leur responsabilités par le conseil d'administration du centre universitaire des oeuvres de Dakar," Le Comité Exécutif, Union Générale des Etudiants d'Afrique Occidentale, 2 November 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS. "Mais le CA du Centre fait fin de toutes ces études: il ne travaille que dans une seule direction foulant ainsi aux pieds le principe même de la co-gestion: [sic] nous siégeons depuis trois an comme des pions, des éléments de façade permettant à l'administration des Oeuvres d'avoir une caution à des décisions unilatérales."

On October 30, 1961, the administration presented the student representatives with proposals to raise the cost of rent and of meals. Students resisted these increases, laying out a critique of the state of the facilities. First, students argued that the dorm facilities were derelict: promised improvements and new furniture had been waiting for three years, three-quarters of the restrooms were unusable, the window screens were broken (thus letting in mosquitos), sinks in the rooms—if they worked—pumped in waste water, and most rooms only had one weak light bulb to work under.<sup>240</sup> Second, students claimed that the university restaurant was overpriced, lacking in space, supplies, and quality food, leaving some students with dysentery and diarrhea. Lastly, students provided detailed budgets to show that the proposed increases in the cost of rent and food would far surpass their scholarships—an issue that would persist and eventually spark the 1968 strike.<sup>241</sup>

Students on the administrative council of the COUD claimed that they had previously proposed how to repair dorms; improve meals while lowering costs and prices by using smaller local provisioners; and estimated a budget for students with children—to no avail. Students also wanted greater representation in decision making, including inclusion on a committee to oversee the transfer of the University of Dakar from French to Senegalese authorities, and the Africanization of the staff.

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<sup>240</sup> "Mémorandum. Les Etudiants mis devant leur responsabilités par le conseil d'administration du centre universitaire des oeuvres de Dakar," Le Comité Exécutif, Union Générale des Etudiants d'Afrique Occidentale, 2 November 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS. The university had also converted housing intended for young professors into guest housing for diplomats, tourists, and conference guests. The students proposed that this housing be made available to students with families who currently were not provisioned with living quarters on the campus. Otherwise, the students demanded, the university should provide them with extra funding to help cover their transport and rent.

<sup>241</sup> "Mémorandum. Les Etudiants mis devant leur responsabilités par le conseil d'administration du centre universitaire des oeuvres de Dakar," Le Comité Exécutif, Union Générale des Etudiants d'Afrique Occidentale, 2 November 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS. The UGEAO estimated that costs for food and lodging at university would rise from 10,000 CFA francs per month to 11,100 for single students, and from 18,000 CFA francs to 19,700 per month for married (presumably, male) students. While the costs would rise 1,100 CFA francs per month for single students, their *bourses* were only expected to increase 284 CFA francs per month. The UGEAO further estimated that with other costs included (laundry, transportation, textbooks, and leisure activities), a real cost of living for a single student was already around 18,700 CFA francs per month, while most student bourses had decreased from 20,000 CFA francs to 14,000.

Compared to the conditions of life of much of the rest of the country at the time, many of the students' grievances may have seemed frivolous. (For example, one of UGEAO's complaints was that students' mopeds were being stolen because of insufficient guard staff on campus.)<sup>242</sup> But the UGEAO's demands were tied to their sense that their living conditions should be conducive to creating the next generation of West Africa leaders and intellectuals. At the time, the group of students from the various countries across AOF were still relatively small—even the Senegalese students, by far the largest contingent, only numbered about four hundred in 1960. The African students at the University of Dakar as well as those studying in France expected to become the technicians, managers, planners, and administrators of the new state. Even Mamadou Dia, while harassing UGEAO members in 1961, still understood the need to attract students to the University of Dakar (and away from universities in France) and therefore took their demands for increased scholarships seriously.<sup>243</sup>

### **The Students' Allies**

During this time the UGEAO's connections to the PAI and a vast array of international allies brought both repression from the Senegalese government *and* the resources that allowed the student movement to

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<sup>242</sup> "Mémorandum. Les Etudiants mis devant leur responsabilités par le conseil d'administration du centre universitaire des oeuvres de Dakar," Le Comité Exécutif, Union Générale des Etudiants d'Afrique Occidentale, 2 November 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS.

<sup>243</sup> Within Dia's offices, there was a concern in 1961 that student demands for better bourses (on par with those of students in France) should be taken seriously if the University were to continue to attract promising students: "En raison des difficultés de recrutement qui connaît actuellement l'Université de Dakar, il faudrait examiner sérieusement ces réclamations, notamment la taux des bourses qui serait nettement inférieur a celui dont bénéficient en France les Etudiants. En fait, il faudra étudier dans leur ensemble, les questions touchant a l'Université qui travers une période délicate." Handwritten note, likely from the director of Dia's cabinet, Babacar Ba, attached to "MEMORANDUM: LES ETUDIANTS MIS DEVANT LEURS RESPONSABILITES PAR LE CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION DU CENTRE UNIVERSITAIRE DES OEUVRES DE DAKAR," UGEAO, Le Comité Executif, Dakar, 2 Nov 1961, carton 357, SVP, ANS.

persist. UGEO leaders most closely linked to the PAI and the FEANF,<sup>244</sup> so much so that French security services reported that the three organizations had agreed to take over each others' "tasks" if one were dissolved by the Senegalese government.<sup>245</sup> Students in Dakar were some of the leading members of the PAI, and in particular, the student section of the PAI—the *Mouvement d'étudiants du PAI* (MEPAI, sometimes with *élèves* added, and called MEEPAI).<sup>246</sup> Right after the UGEO was formed, the presidency shifted from Charles Diané to Tidiane Baïdy Ly, a founder of the PAI.<sup>247</sup> Senegalese and French authorities were concerned that the UGEO "was completely controlled by the communists of the African Independence Party."<sup>248</sup> In 1960 and 1961, the French embassy tracked eight UGEO leaders from Senegal, Niger, Dahomey, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire, who were either PAI members or close

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<sup>244</sup> In 1961, the FEANF and the UGEO attempted to create a common organization, the *Conseil des étudiants d'Afrique Noire* (CEAN). French security services worried that this was a first step toward the UGEO trying to create a "Panafrikan Federation of Students." Although the CAEN faltered, the two organizations remained closely linked, frequently collaborating on joint statements and issuing common demands. "Letter from Konate Seydouba, Vice-President au Affaires Panafricaines de l'UGEO, Dakar-Fann, to FEANF," 7 June 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; "Letter from DANSOKO Amath, the V-P aux Affaires Extérieures, U.G.E.A.O., Dakar, to the President of FEANF," 5 February 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>245</sup> Thus at a PAI meeting in France in 1960, it was supposedly decided that if the PAI was dissolved in Senegal, the UGEO would "prendrait à sa charge un partie des tâches du comité central de ce parti (et inversement)." Similarly, it was agreed that if the FEANF was dissolved in France, the French section of the PAI would take charge of its tasks, and vice-versa. Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Occidentale, "Activités de l'U.G.E.A.O.," 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>246</sup> In a letter to his comrades in Paris, Vignet-Zunz, a PCF student in Dakar (until he was deported) claimed that the PAI had "trained a lot of militants" at the University of Dakar ("formé beaucoup de militants," "Annexe 1: 19 Mai 1961, Dakar. Letter from J. Vignet to "tous les camarades de la cellule Tirot," 19 May 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>247</sup> Senegalese authorities later claimed that it was Ly who turned the UGEO into an "annexe du PAI" and "marxiste." "Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal. May 1962. Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM," carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>248</sup> Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Occidentale, "Activités de l'U.G.E.A.O.," 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; and the "émanation estudiantine du PAI," " Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Noire, "Seminaire des femmes africaines organisé par l'U.G.E.A.O.," 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.



affiliates.<sup>249</sup> The UGEO also organized the *Université populaire africaine* in Dakar, which had been founded in 1956 by PAI leader Majhemout Diop as a school to help workers improve their literacy and discuss political texts—but was forcibly closed by the government in 1961.<sup>250</sup> While PAI members were always a minority in the leadership bodies of the UGEO, they were the most cohesive fraction of the leadership and thus largely set the tone for the student movement. As Abdoulaye , Mamadou Diouf, and Mohamed Mbodj have argued, it was not simply the case that the PAI influenced the student movement. As noted in the introduction, it was the radicalizing of the student movement itself that provided the impetus for the formation of the PAI, and students made up many of the party’s early young cadres.<sup>251</sup>

The UGEO, like the PAI and the FEANF was an organization with members from across the former AOF and thus, often took up campaigns outside of Senegal. In early 1961, two Cameroonian students active in FEANF were expelled from France because of their activity in the UPC. The UGEO immediately raised a vigorous protest and began distributing a tract in Dakar.<sup>252</sup> The UGEO directed most of its anger at the new Cameroonian president, Ahmadou Ahidjo, whom they despised for

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<sup>249</sup> Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Occidentale, “Union Générale des Etudiants d’Afrique Occidentale, (U.G.E.A.O.),” 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN. The UGEO’s new paper at the University of Dakar in 1962, *Le Flambeau*, was considered by french authorities to be “extremist” due to being run by the Dahomean student Assa Félicien Medjibo, a purveyor of “marxisme-léninisme,” and edited by Tidiane Ndiame, a PAI member. Destinaire n. 111, “Activités de l’Union Générale des Etudiants d’Afrique Occidentale (U.G.E.A.O.),” April 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>250</sup> It was first called the *École de Manguiers*, co-founded by Christian Lamery, a PCF medical student who was later expelled from Senegal in 1961 for “anti-governmental activities.” Says it had a “communiste” and “anti-nationale” orientation, and was controlled by the UGEO and led by the Malian student until closed by the government in December 1961. “Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal. May 1962. Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM,” carton 374, DA, CADN. See also, Thioub, “Le mouvement étudiant de Dakar et la vie politique sénégalaise,” 273.

<sup>251</sup> Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, “Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais,” 297.

<sup>252</sup> Note de Renseignements N. 432 / SSEC, “Objet: L'UGEO proteste contre une mesure d'expulsion de France de deux étudiants Camerounais,” 9 February 1961, Dakar, Haute Représentation de France, carton 408, DA, CADN; Haute Représentation de France, Dakar, Télégramme Départ n. 80 to Communauté PARIS,” 11 February 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

colluding with the French government to repress the UPC and student organizations.<sup>253</sup> In September, the UGEO called for the freedom of students jailed in Abidjan for their political activities, retained a lawyer for their legal defense, and sought support from the FEANF and International Union of Students.<sup>254</sup> Through these and other international connections, the UGEO leadership developed relationships with a vast number of student organizations across West Africa, including in Anglophone countries including Nigeria, Uganda, and Liberia.<sup>255</sup> The UGEO also gained access to funding from the governments of Mali, Ghana, and Guinea.<sup>256</sup> While student leaders generally viewed these regimes

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<sup>253</sup> "Communiqué," Le Comité Exécutif de l'UGEO, No Date (late Jan or early Feb 1961), carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>254</sup> Destinaire: n. 111, Afrique Noire, "L'UGEO et les étudiants de Côte d'Ivoire," September 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; "Letter from the V-P aux Affaires Panafricaines, UGEO Seydouba Konaté to the President of FEANF," 13 Sept 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>255</sup> Coming out the ISU's 1960 Congress in Baghdad, UGEO representatives took responsibility for the preparations of a 3ème Conférence Panafricaine des Etudiants, first approaching the Secrétariat permanent de la Conférence des peuples africains in Accra, asking if they could act as a third party to request funding from African governments. (Previous meetings took place in Kampala 1958 and Tunis 1959.) The UGEO was supported in organizing this by what French security forces referred to as the other "extremist African organizations": the FEANF, Association des étudiants malgaches, the Confédération des étudiants du Maghreb, the Union des étudiants antillais, the Confédération nord-africaine des étudiants (UGET - UGEMA - UNEM), the JRDA in Guinea, Togolese and Sierra Leonian student unions, and the Ghanaian National Association of Socialist Students Organization (NASSO)—who offered to organize the financial committee. The UGEO's next move was to ask three national student associations historically closed off to politics of the ISU to join the preparatory committee: Nigeria, Uganda, and Liberia. French security services reported that they had made contacts with some leaders at the University of Ibadan who were sympathetic, but were far from gaining agreement from student associations in the Sudan, Ethiopia, Libya, and even the UAR (Egypt). They envisioned a preliminary meeting taking place in Accra, which would include a seminar that brought students together to define "Panafricanism." "Annex: Letter from Diagne Pathé for the Executive Committee of the UGEO to the General Secretary of the Conference of African Peoples, Accra, 20 April 1960, carton 408, DA, CADN; Destinaire N. 111, Afrique, "Vers une 3ème Conférence Panafricaine des étudiants," 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>256</sup> Sudanese UGEO officers had also met with Malian president Modibo Keita and other ministers within the framework of the short-lived Mali federation, who promised to support the organization. Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Noire, "Activités de l'U.G.E.A.O.," 1961 (incorrect, should read 1960), carton 408, DA, CADN. Support from Mali did seem to arrive. See, for example: "Annexe, 20 April 1960, Letter from Diagne Pathé for the Exec Committee of the UGEO, Dakar, to the Sec Gen of the Conference of African Peoples, Accra," carton 408, DA, CADN; Destinaire N. 111, Afrique, "Vers une 3ème Conférence Panafricaine des étudiants," 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN, which is discussed in the next section. They also turned to the governments of Mali and Ghana for funding: Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Noire, "Bourses pour l'U.G.E.A.O.," no

friendly to their aims, after 1961, UGEAO's relationship with Guinea quickly soured as details of the repression of student and labor militants became known.<sup>257</sup>

The UGEAO's leadership was highly influenced by Third-World Communist regimes. The UGEAO developed friendly relations with the Chinese Students Association,<sup>258</sup> and in 1962, UGEAO members created a wildly-popular campus exhibit on "The Cuban People's Revolution."<sup>259</sup> Although the UGEAO gravitated toward Communist, or Communist-affiliated organizations and governments, its alliances were often quite flexible. Leaders often tried to gain resources and support from competing Cold War organizations. For example, the UGEAO leaders were active in both the Soviet-aligned International Student Union and the Western-allied International Student Conference, (and its permanent Coordinating Secretariat, COSEC).<sup>260</sup> Ultimately, these connections provided venues for students to

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date, prob mid-1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Noire, "Financement de l'U.G.E.A.O.," October 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>257</sup> "Communiqué," Executive Committee of the U.G.E.A.O., Dakar, 14 June 1961, carton 374, DA, CADN. See also Dieng, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 2.

<sup>258</sup> Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Noire, "Activités de l'Union Générale des Etudiants d'Afrique Occidentale (U.G.E.A.O.)," 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; Copy of a letter from the Administrative Direction of the National Federation of Students of China, Peking, to the U.G.E.A.O., Dakar, 30 March 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>259</sup> And wrote a declaration in solidarity with the Fédération Universitaire et le Mouvement des Jeunes Rebelles in Cuba. See: "Déclaration à propos des agressions impérialistes contre Cuba," 18 April 1961, UGEAO Executive Committee, carton 408, DA, CADN. Attendance was so strong that the week-long show was extended for another five days. French authorities believed the show to be part of a propaganda push from the Cuban government to reach new supporters, possibly through the intermediary of the International Union of Students. However, UGEAO students themselves seem to have taken up the task of organizing the show with great excitement, and the editor of the UGEAO's paper led tours of the show. For French security services, the comments in the visitor's book were "clearly inspired by Chinese propaganda and the primacy of armed struggle as a revolutionary action." Informateur, C.E. et S.R. "K.N." Organisations Internationales, "Propagande de l'UGEAO en faveur de Cuba," 7-8 February 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN; Letter from Mamadou Diop, V-P of International Affaires, U.G.E.A.O. to the International Student Union, 5 February 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN; Destinaire n. 111, Cuba, "Propagande Cubaine en Occident," February 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>260</sup> Representatives from the AGED had first attended the International Student Conference in 1954, and joined the International Student Union later, becoming a full member organization of the latter in 1960. Destinaire N. 111, Afrique, "Vers une 3ème Conférence Panafricaine des étudiants," 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. French security forces described the UIE as an "organisation communiste" and the CIE-COSEC as an

protest the repression of their organizations on an international stage, and allowed them persist in spite of the animosity of the UPS government—sometimes through supplies as simple as a copy machine.<sup>261</sup>

### **New Competitors**

Most students initially rallied around the UGEO as it faced repression from the government. However, UGEO leaders' intransigence led some students to form a short-lived student organization with closer ties to the UPS, the *Fédération des étudiants libres de Dakar* (FELD).<sup>262</sup> In May 1962, the Senegalese government reported that the UGEO was in crisis—though without acknowledging the role they had played in assuring such a crisis.<sup>263</sup> Senegalese officials were initially skeptical of FELD's likelihood of success, but in the government's attempt to break UGEO, FELD became a useful tool. When the two

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"organisation occidentale." See: Destinaire n. 111, France-Sénégal, "Cinquantième Congrès de l'U.N.E.F.," 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; Destinaire n. 111, Organisation-Internationale, "Publication par l'U.I.E. d'une brochure de l'U.G.E.A.O. historique de l'U.G.E.A.O.," March 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>261</sup> In 1960, the UGEO was able to secure a "duplicateur" via COSEC, paid for by the United States National Student Association (USNSA), whose international activities were themselves funded by the US Central Intelligence Agency. It should be noted that although the USNSA's international activities were supported by the CIA until 1967, the view from the French embassy in Dakar was very different. They were concerned that the USNSA was being pulled much more toward the Communist International and an "undiscerning anti-colonialism." In Jan 1963, the USNSA send a telegram of "protestation" to the Sen Gov't for the canceling of the 2nd UGEO congress planned for Dec 1962. That same month they asked the UGEO for information on Neo-Colonialism in Africa for a series of seminars they planned to hold with American and African students.) Destinaire n. 111, Afrique-Etats-Unis, "Relations entre l'Association Nationale des Etudiants des Etats-Unis et l'Union Générale des Etudiants d'Afrique Occidentale," 28 Jan 1963; Destinaire n. 111, Etats-Unis – Afrique Noire, "Séminaires sur le Néo-Colonialisme en Afrique," 18 Jan 1963; carton 374, DA, CADN. Though a small contribution, French authorities claimed the machine would be critical for the UGEO to pick up most of the "tâches politiques" of the PAI just after it was dissolved in Senegal. Destinaire n. 111, Afrique Occidentale. Activités de l'U.G.E.A.O., 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN.

<sup>262</sup> The UGEO had already co-existed with two confessional student groups. First, the Union des Etudiants Catholiques de l'Université de Dakar and second, the Association Musulmane des Etudiants d'Afrique Noire. The latter was created in 1954, and according to the Senegalese government, was know to have "sympathies non déguisées pour le communisme." In early 1962, it was led also by LY Ciré who had taken over the editing of "Dakar-Etudiant" after Ousmane Camara. "Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal," May 1962, Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM," carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>263</sup> The MJUPS was finally able to set up a small committee on campus in 1961, and the government believed that Dahomean students had "sorti du giron communiste." "Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal," May 1962, Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM," carton 374, DA, CADN.

student organizations both requested to hold their annual congresses the weekend before Christmas in 1962, the Council of Ministers approved the FELD's congress and banned the UGEAO's. The minister of information justified the decision by characterizing the UGEAO as an illegal organization and pointed to the international troubles caused by the 1960 UGEAO congress, and the strikes and protests on campus in December 1961.<sup>264</sup>

The FELD congress ultimately only drew about 75 students, but signified the Senegalese government's attempt to integrate FELD more closely. Senghor agreed to provide the FELD with 400,000 CFA francs, but also made sure the congress was "indirectly facilitated" by Alioune Sene, the assistant director of the president's cabinet. The President of the FELD, Joseph Hounton, opened with a speech attacking the UGEAO for "gathering together foreign mercenaries for infantile and negative protests." FELD members instead saw themselves as "adopting a language of reason for realistic and constructive politics" and couched their goals in "the rehabilitation of African values" and "authentically African solutions."<sup>265</sup> Moreover, they described themselves as "the objective expression of an authentically African elite" and contrasted themselves to groups like the UGEAO who adopted "imported political credos."<sup>266</sup> This style of attack on radical students, used by Dia and Senghor throughout the 1960s, served as a sometimes-coded, sometimes-explicit form of anti-Communism.

Though FELD was careful not to position itself as an organization that adhered too closely to any party, they elected a MJUPS leader to their Executive Committee.<sup>267</sup> Hounton followed the congress by

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<sup>264</sup> Lastly, the minister explained that FELD had proposed a strictly "internal" congress, (which the UGEAO had not), and that even that congress would have to be held off-campus. Ambassade de France, Dakar, Télégramme-Départ n. 1493-1495 to Diplomatie Paris, 14 December 1962, carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>265</sup> Ambassade de France, Dakar. N. 3245 / SCTIP / SL, Note de Renseignements, "Activités étudiants, 26 December 1962," 27 December 1962, carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>266</sup> "Motion sur la presse au niveau de la FELD," December 1962 FELD Congress, carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>267</sup> Ambassade de France, Dakar. N. 199 / SCTIP / SL, Note de Renseignements, "Activités Etudiants, 28 Jan 1963," 29 January 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN.

asking for a meeting with Senghor to explicitly raise the question of having MJUPS students join the FELD.<sup>268</sup> Less than a month after FELD's first congress, the government made another strategic move to sideline the UGEAO. On January 4, 1963, the minister of national education notified FELD leaders that they would now choose the student representatives for the administrative council of the COUD—not the UGEAO.<sup>269</sup> The FELD, however, was never able to establish itself, and in spite of the UGEAO's weakened state in 1963, the French embassy still claimed that the latter association remained "one of the centers of action for Communist propaganda in Senegal."<sup>270</sup> The FELD however, was something of a model. Over the next decade, the UPS launched multiple attempts at creating a student union allied with the regime. This often forced student radicals to direct their energies toward the basic defense of their autonomous organizations, rather than corporate demands or broader political campaigns. But as , Diouf and Mbodj argue, the government's attempts to create state-sponsored union had another effect,

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<sup>268</sup> Letter from Hounton Joseph for the executive committee of FELD, Dakar, to Léopold Senghor, President of the Republic of Senegal, 27 December 1962, carton 374, DA, CADN. However, not all Dahomean students were pleased with Hounton, the president of FELD, and four students were accused of physically attacking him in February 1963 and arrested. See *Ambassade de France, Dakar. Télégramme Départ n. 335/337 to Diplomatie Paris,* 27 February 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN; *Ambassade de France, Dakar, Télégramme Départ n. 350/353 to Diplomatie Paris,* 1 March 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>269</sup> This was the subject of conflicting tracts from both the FELD and UGEAO. The UGEAO claimed to have secured a dominant victory in elections for the Conseil d'Université. FELD rebutted that most students refrained from voting to send representatives to this "decorative" body, so the UGEAO could not really claim a triumph. The number of votes for candidates from each group is unknown, though documents seem to imply that UGEAO garnered many more votes. French reports indicate that the membership of both groups was "assez réduits." See: *Renseignements, N. 124, source spécialement protégée à ne jamais communiquer, Afrique Occidentale, "Activités de la FELD (Fédération des Etudiants Libres de Dakar),"* 22-25 January 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN; *Ambassade de France, Dakar, N. 172 / SCTIP / SL, Note de Renseignements, "Activités Etudiants, 24 jan 1963,"* 25 Jan 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN; *"Adresse aux Etudiants,"* Executive Committee of the Fédération des Etudiants Libres de Dakar, 22 Jan 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN; *"Appel. Militants de l'U.G.E.A.O.,"* Executive Committee of the U.G.E.A.O, 19 Jan 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN. Not surprising throughout the early 1960s, the UGEAO occasionally raised the claim that they should be recognized as the only representative organization of African students in Dakar: *"Les Associations Etudiantines au Sénégal,"* May 1962, Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM," carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>270</sup> *Ambassade de France, Dakar, N. 313 / SCTIP / SL, Note de Renseignements a/s F.S.M,* 9 February 63, 11 February 1963, carton 374, DA, CADN.

which was to further entrench the majority of Senegalese students in their opposition to the government.<sup>271</sup>

## V. After 1962: Senghor's Presidential Regime

### The Downfall of Mamadou Dia

By 1962, the UPS government seemed to be on the verge of controlling its radical critics: the PAI and UGTAN-Orthodoxe had been forced underground; the UGEO's 1962 congress was banned; and a new state-sponsored trade union federation (the UNTS) and student union (the FELD) were poised to take off. As the UPS's hegemony grew, however, cracks *within* the party were dramatically revealed in a showdown between Mamadou Dia and Léopold Senghor.<sup>272</sup>

Catherine Boone argues that the root of the conflict lay in debates within the emerging party-state over the implementation of the "African road to socialism"—namely who should control the rural economy, particularly groundnut production and marketing.<sup>273</sup> Per the first Senegalese constitution Dia, now prime minister, was in charge of "the government administration, and day-to-day policy making and implementation."<sup>274</sup> Senghor, as president, held constitutional authority over the UPS, the military, and external affairs.

As noted above, the UPS had relied on the support of rural dignitaries, especially Muslim leaders, who managed the majority of the groundnut crop. However, as the UPS increasingly took over the

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<sup>271</sup> Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 301.

<sup>272</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*. See also Cruise O'Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal*; Edward J. Schumacher, *Politics, Bureaucracy, and Rural Development in Senegal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Diouf, "Le clientélisme, la "technocratie" et après?," 10-13.

<sup>273</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 90 See also Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 280. The February 1962 UPS congress in Thies still called to put the country on the "voie africain du socialisme."

<sup>274</sup> As he had been since 1958.

territorial administration in the late 1950s, it attracted young urban intellectuals, many of them recent university graduates who were drawn to Dia's outspoken commitment to restructuring the national economy through state intervention. They were brought into the government to work with French planners who provided resources to launch reforms in the countryside. Between 1960 and 1962, the planning teams around Dia tried to implement programs that limited the influence of the local power brokers in the rural economy. First, the administration nationalized the purchase and export of groundnuts, through the *Office de commercialisation agricole (OCA)*.<sup>275</sup> Second, through a program of *Animation rurale* led by young volunteers, they tried to organize groundnut producers into rural cooperatives that would create a direct link between the government and peasants. Third, they moved to expand the role of OCA, making it a mass purchaser of consumer commodities for sale to rural populations at controlled prices.<sup>276</sup>

These reforms provoked a backlash. Foreign trading firms and private traders (both exporters of groundnuts and importers of commodities) pushed back against the possibility of being displaced by the OCA. French businesses were worried about the possible loss of control over commercial trade and creeping nationalization. Murid leaders and money lenders believed that their economic and political authority would be threatened by plans for a more robust *Animation rurale* and genuine producer cooperatives.<sup>277</sup>

A crisis within the UPS was finally set off by Dia's proposal to reduce the planning autonomy and resources of individual ministries, in order to create a centralized planning ministry within the prime minister's office. Furthermore, he moved to implement a program that would formalize hiring

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<sup>275</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 91.

<sup>276</sup> Countries like Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire did the same with cocoa, for example. Note that there were more significant proposals for land reform that were never passed.

<sup>277</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 90-93.



administrative cadres on a merit-based system (ostensibly to cut down on nepotistic appointments) and closely train, monitor, and discipline personnel.<sup>278</sup>

Dia's proposal provoked a split: regional UPS leaders accused Dia's administration of "insensitivity to local interests" while central government administrators argued that local politicians were blocking the implementation of the UPS's own "socialist" program.<sup>279</sup> Ultimately, it was *not* the UPS's rhetorical invocation of "socialism" that prompted a backlash, but the administration's attempts to increase state influence and control over key sectors of the economy. Murid leaders pushed to have Dia removed, and were backed by Senghor, veteran UPS leaders who had personal patronage networks to defend, and parliamentarians with commercial interests.<sup>280</sup>

On December 15, 1962, a faction of UPS parliamentary deputies introduced a motion to censure Dia's government. Dia contested the legality of the move on the basis that Senegal was still formally under the state of emergency put in place after the collapse of the Mali Federation, and called in police to clear out the assembly. With the backing of the French military Senghor accused Dia of trying to mount a coup and ordered the Senegalese army to arrest Dia and four ministers loyal to him.<sup>281</sup>

Opposition activists were ambivalent about Dia's arrest. The prime minister had spent years overseeing the repression of opposition parties, trade unions, and independent student organizations; these organizations did not take to the streets to support him now.<sup>282</sup> In the months that followed, other

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<sup>278</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 93.

<sup>279</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 93. See also Rita Cruise O'Brien, *White Society in Black Africa: The French of Senegal* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1972).

<sup>280</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 93.

<sup>281</sup> Valdiodio N'Diaye, Joseph Mbaye, Ibrahima Sarr, and Alioune Tall.

<sup>282</sup> See for example, Renseignements N. 01887, Informateur, S.R. et C.E. Sénégal, "Communiqué de l'UGES (Union Générale des Etudiants Sénégalais) diffusé pendant les récents événements de Dakar," December 1962, carton 374, DA, CADN. See also Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 80. The PRA-Sénégal did not jump to Dia's defense, but still used the events to criticize Senghor. The party later referred to December 1962 as "le

pro-Dia administrators were fired and purged from the UPS. *Animation rurale* and the purview of the OCA were scaled back dramatically, while local party politicians regained authority and French business confidence was restored.<sup>283</sup>

### **The Vanquishing of the Opposition Parties**

Senghor had long-contrasted the UPS, which he described as a “parti unifié,” with a “parti unique.”<sup>284</sup> Following the party mergers of the 1950s and early 1960s, the title did reflect the UPS’s coalition-like organization. A variety of “clans and caucuses” existed in the party, some organized around local party authorities, and others around party members who had integrated into the UPS from previously existing parties.<sup>285</sup> However, from the UPS’s founding, party leaders saw the party and the administration as a single unit.<sup>286</sup> Thus, all conflicts within the party were by their nature conflicts within the government, and vice-versa.

Following the removal of Dia and his supporters at the end of 1962, Senghor moved to exert greater personal authority over the UPS party-state. He and his supporters drafted a new constitution, which was put to a referendum in March 1963 that eliminated the position of prime minister and put control of both the state and the UPS in the hands of the president.

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prétendu complot” used by the clique around Senghor strengthen their position and create a presidential regime. See the 1963 “Manifeste des candidats de la liste Démocratie et Unité Sénégalaise patronnée par le PRA-Sénégal” in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 284-87.

<sup>283</sup> Schumacher, *Politics, Bureaucracy, and Rural Development in Senegal*; Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 94.

<sup>284</sup> From an October 1957 issue of *Le Monde* quoted in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 106, 22.

<sup>285</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Political Opposition in Senegal: 1960–67," 565.

<sup>286</sup> When PRA-Sénégal was formed and split from the UPS in the lead up to the referendum, Dia announced that replacements for the PRA-Sénégal ministers who has been removed from the government would be decided at the UPS party congress. “Position de l'Union Progressiste Senegalaise (U.P.S.) au lendemain du referendum du 28 Septembre 1958. rapport 1958,” carton 130, SVP, ANS; “L’U.P.S. au lendemain du referendum” Signed, Rufisque, le 4 Octobre 1958, Mamadou Dia, carton 130, SVP, ANS.

A group of former UPS members-turned opposition figures opposed the new constitution. Organized as the Bloc des Masses Sénégalaises (BMS) in 1961, and joined by Cheikh Anta Diop, they sought to be an umbrella organization for other UPS dissidents.<sup>287</sup> The Bloc called for a vote against Senghor's new constitution, but the campaign failed and the party faced increased harassment from the government. In October 1963, a section of the BMS leadership decided to split off to join the UPS at the latter's party congress.<sup>288</sup> As was the case with other parties, BMS leaders were then rewarded for their deference with official party posts and places on the UPS electoral list. However, some BMS leaders, including Cheikh Anta Diop and Samba Diop refused to merge, but were never able to rebuild the Bloc, and their small faction was banned by the government.<sup>289</sup>

The PRA-Sénégal was also debilitated by Senghor's regime in 1963. Since PRA-Sénégal leaders had broken from the UPS to call for a "no" vote in the 1958 referendum, the party had survived as a legal opposition party. But like other opposition figures, PRA-Sénégal militants were frequently imprisoned by the government for their political activities.<sup>290</sup> In the face of harassment, party leaders vacillated between condemnations of the UPS and negotiations to re-unite the UPS.

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<sup>287</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 561, 65; Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 272. The BMS began negotiating with the UPS in 1962.

<sup>288</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 273.

<sup>289</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 278-79; Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 560-61, 64. A fraction of former BMS members who had refused to integrate in 1963 later created the *Front National Sénégalais* (FNS) in 1964 with a group of *Diaistes* (Aboubacry Kane, Ndiougou Wack Ba, Mody Diagne, Mody Niane) only to have it promptly banned by presidential decree in October for harboring partisans of Mamadou Dia.

<sup>290</sup> At the end of 1960, the Minister of the Interior banned some of the leading PRA-Sénégal militants from the Casamance region, one of the places the party had a foothold. See decree of the Minister of Interior 1 Dec 1960, printed in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 260. See also Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 558. Other militants were thrown into prison for distributing tracts in April 1961, and Louis Da Costa, a primary school teacher and leader of the PRA-Sénégal was held in "preventive" detention in Ziguinchor for nine months following the elections of 1960. Da Costa joined with 16 imprisoned PAI militants in the Feb 1961 hunger strike against their preventive detention. "Fait de Jour de Radio-Mali", "Voici une déclaration du Comité Central du P.A.I. sur la répression au Sénégal," no date, (at least April 1961, but possibly later), carton 487, SVP, ANS.

PRA-Sénégal leaders were in the midst of these negotiations during the 1963 referendum on the new constitution. Rather than opposing this centralization around Senghor, the party abstained from taking a position, thus compromising their critiques of the regime in the eyes of many young radicals.<sup>291</sup> However, after the constitution passed, PRA-Sénégal leaders broke off negotiations after the UPS only agreed to give them two ministerial positions out of the six they had requested.<sup>292</sup>

Thus, in the lead up to the December 1963 national elections, the PRA-Sénégal once again became critical again of the “antidemocratic” UPS regime.<sup>293</sup> At the same time a group of so-called “Diaistes”—supporters of Mamadou Dia—were placed under house arrest for trying to create a new party.<sup>294</sup> And in October, Cheikh Tidiane Sy (formerly of the PSS), tried to form a coalition calling for the release of political prisoners, but was once again arrested on charges of “inciting an armed revolt.”<sup>295</sup> The PRA-Sénégal took up the cause of the beleaguered opposition by assembling a joint list of candidates under the name Démocratie et unité sénégalaise. In the midst of preparing this list for the elections, however, PRA-Sénégal secretary general Abdoulaye Ly was arrested and—based on one line he had written in a tract—accused of attempting to foment a police and military to revolt.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 282. It was in this context that a group split from the PRA-Sénégal, criticizing the leadership’s decision to negotiate in exchange for ministerial positions, and calling instead for a “non” vote on the 1963 referendum. They are kicked out of the party and become PRA-Rénovation. Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 298.

<sup>292</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 282-83.

<sup>293</sup> Quoted in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 275.

<sup>294</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 276.

<sup>295</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 276-77. Sy had formed a *Front de Salut Public*, which called for amnesty for political prisoners including Mamadou Dia and Thierno Mohamed Saïd, the Tijani Chef Spirituel de Médina-Gounas.

<sup>296</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 278, 83 The line in the November 1963 tract that resulted in his arrest was: “We call to witness our brothers of the Senegalese army and police officers, NCOs and men who, posted at our frontiers or laboring at our work-sites, should not remain indifferent to what is happening to

On the day of the elections, the PRA-Sénégal militants gathered, protested fraudulent activity at voting stations, and began a march down the *allées du centenaire* in central Dakar. Police opened fire, killing ten demonstrators and injuring sixty others.<sup>297</sup> The day after the elections, PRA-Sénégal and PAI militants were arrested across the country, and the protests accused of “fanaticism, banditry and looting.”<sup>298</sup>

In a replay of earlier repression against the PAI, three PRA-Sénégal leaders were held for twelve months before being released without having faced a trial.<sup>299</sup> In July of 1964, the PRA-Sénégal was still petitioning for the release of approximately thirty of their militants.<sup>300</sup> Officially, the opposition list garnered 70,000 votes (6 percent) but PRA-Sénégal contested this result.<sup>301</sup> Afterward, the PRA-Sénégal, already cracking from internal division and its small size, was never able to recover as an opposition party.<sup>302</sup> Ly was released from prison after the election, only to be arrested again a year later and, incredibly, blamed for the deaths of the protesters on the *centenaire* and imprisoned for twelve

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their brothers and sisters, to the future of their children and of their country.” Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 562.

<sup>297</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 562.. Though he says the protesters were trying to “break into” the presidential palace. Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 288, refers to the protests as “peaceful.”

<sup>298</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 287, 89-90. From a Ministry of Interior report, unsigned, issued January 1964.

<sup>299</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 290.

<sup>300</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 294.

<sup>301</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 288. A PRA-Sénégal tract also accused MJUPS militants of sacking and burning down the PRA-Sénégal offices.

<sup>302</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 291-92, 301. The PRA “mourut à la suite des élections du 1er décembre 1963, n’ayant pas homogénéité et la force nécessaires...” According to Ly, the party began engaging in conscious self-censorship, especially of the party’s paper, *Indépendance Africaine*.

months.<sup>303</sup> By June 1966, Ly and other party leaders, Ahmed Moktar M'Bow and Assane Seck, had agreed to collapse the party into the UPS.<sup>304</sup> All three were promptly given ministerial portfolios.

Assessing the situation in 1967, Donal Cruise O'Brien wrote:

Senegal did not have an enviable historical tradition of electoral honesty under colonial rule, and since independence the situation has if anything deteriorated. The stuffing of ballot boxes, the exclusion of opposition observers at the polls, violent intimidation, repeated voting by dedicated militants, all these are part of the colonial heritage. The official announcement of results allows last-minute adjustments to be made by the government where the above methods prove inadequate.<sup>305</sup>

By 1967 Senegal was a single-party state in practice, if not constitutionally. The government adopted a "single national list" system, which required that a party win a majority of votes on a national level to receive *any* parliamentary representation—making it nearly impossible for an opposition to hold any seats in the national assembly.<sup>306</sup> While the leaders of the UPS government set up structural barriers to electoral competitors, they were also savvy about bringing their competition into the *parti unifié*. As Cruise O'Brien writes, "the temptation of the fruits of office held out by President Senghor has proved irresistible for all but a very few."<sup>307</sup> In fact, the history of parties like the PSS, BMS, and PRA-Sénégal indicate a trend: the leaders of these three parties played up their position as opposition leaders as leverage to obtain ministerial appointments when they agreed to enter the UPS.<sup>308</sup> With few exceptions, notably the PAI, opposition parties had become a means for a small number of leaders to gain access to

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<sup>303</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 289.

<sup>304</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 564; Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 303-06.

<sup>305</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 562. O'Brien concludes that the BMS in March 1963, and the PRA-Sénégal in December 1963 are believed to have been more successful than the official results showed.

<sup>306</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 562.

<sup>307</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 561.

<sup>308</sup> Donal Cruise O'Brien says that BMS and PRA were often "...expressing their undying hostility to the corruption and inefficiency of the government, while at the same time secretly negotiating the number of official positions which would induce them to join the UPS." Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 565.

state authority through cooperation with Senghor. The amalgamation of the UPS and the state that had existed from the late 1950s now took on an increasingly personal character. Although the UPS continued to remain a coalition of different caucuses, the accepted range of debate over economic, social, and administrative reform became increasingly narrow and dependent on Senghor's approval.

### **The Banning of Independent Student Organizations**

Students participated in the protests that took place in Dakar in the aftermath of the December 1963 elections. Some were swept up in the arrests and expelled from the University of Dakar. The following year, as Senghor consolidated his presidential regime, the government forcibly dissolved the UGEAO.<sup>309</sup>

Radical Senegalese students initially took refuge in their national organization on campus: Union générale de étudiants du Sénégal (UGES). The UGES, founded in November 1961, was a component part of the larger UGEAO, but had never been as active—or as critical of the government—as the parent organization.<sup>310</sup> But French authorities believed that as disbanded Senegalese UGEAO activists flooded into the UGES in 1965, they turned it into a “Marxist” organization linked to the PAI.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Thioub, "Le mouvement étudiant de Dakar et la vie politique sénégalaise," 273 Bathily, Mbodj, and Diouf claim the UGEAO was banned in November 1964 and UGES in February 1965. Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 301.

<sup>310</sup> Senegalese students created the Union Générale de Etudiants du Sénégal (UGES) in November 1961, to link Senegalese students in both Dakar and France into a common organization. "Ambassade de France, Dakar. N.2.089/SCTIP. Note de Renseignements. Objet: Mesure d'expulsion contre Zunz et Touche Moulin - étudiants communistes Français à la Faculté de Dakar," 7 August 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN. According to French intelligence reports had been "en sommeil et inféodé à l'U.G.E.A.O." "Note. Occasionelle. A/1. SR et de CE. Sénégal. Activité de l'U.G.E.S. NK.", 21 January 1965, DA 672, CADN. But interestingly, the UGES congress on July 30, 1962 at the *Maison des Jeunes* in Dakar, ended with an homage to Senghor. "Ambassade de France, Dakar to the Ambassador, M. Le Blanc, and M. Guillemin. Congrès UGES," 30 July 1962, carton 408, DA, CADN. See also: "Les Associations Estudiantines au Sénégal. Report prepared by the Senegalese Government for the Secrétariat of the UAM," May 1962, carton 374, DA, CADN.

<sup>311</sup> "Sénégal. Activités de l'UNES. (Renseignements)," 5 January 1966, DA 672, CADN. French authorities claimed that the UGES leaders were "tous membres du Comité Exécutif de l'U.G.E.A.O. et du P.A.I./Sénégal ou, à tout le moins, sympathisants." "Note de Renseignements: N. 1146-SCTIP/SL. Ambassade de France. Objet: Interdiction de l'Union Générale des Etudiants Sénégalais (U.G.E.S.)," 7 April 1965, DA 672, CADN.

Although UGES was legally recognized in November 1964,<sup>312</sup> the government responded by backing a new Senegalese student organization a month later with a very similar name, the Union nationale des étudiants Sénégalais (UNES).<sup>313</sup> The UNES was closely tied to the regime from the start, and was led by Moustapha Niasse from the youth section of the ruling party (MJUPS).<sup>314</sup> UGES leaders feared that appearance of the UNES meant that the government was preparing to ban UGES in the hopes of forcing students to engage solely with an organization closely tied to the government.<sup>315</sup>

In the UGES's homemade newspaper, (produced in a campus dorm room), articles by Aly Sow and Malick Ndaw listed students' grievances—the same ones that would ultimately lead to the 1968 strike. Sow focused on the overcrowding of campus dormitory rooms and student complaints about recent reductions in scholarships—also implying that the government had been granting scholarships to students based on their connections to the ruling party. Ndaw argued that curricula determined by the French education ministry no longer fit the needs of Senegalese students. In an open letter to Senghor in November 1964, UGES leaders lamented that the president refused to meet with them, and raised many of the same issues. They claimed that after two years of being promised a new dorm to ease

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<sup>312</sup> Only in November 1964, with the attack on the UGEOA mounting, did students apply for legal recognition for UGES, which was granted. "Note de Renseignements: N. 1146-SCTIP/SL. Ambassade de France. Objet: Interdiction de l'Union Générale des Etudiants Sénégalais (U.G.E.S.)," 7 April 1965, Dakar Amb 672, CADN.

<sup>313</sup> *L'Université d'Aujourd'hui* was the UNES paper, see "Note. Salamine. N. 481. Objet: Activités de l'Union Nationale des Etudiants sénégalais [sic] (U.N.E.S.)," 22 February 1966, DA 672, CADN. The French embassy described UNES as "pro-gouvernementale": "Sénégal. Activités de l'UNES. (Renseignements)," 5 January 1966, DA 672, CADN.

<sup>314</sup> "Sénégal. Activités de l'UNES. (Renseignements)," 5 January 1966, DA 672, CADN. The UNES statutes abstained from any mention of an open alliance with the UPS, instead invoking repeatedly the goal of orienting student toward "la construction du pays et à la prise de conscience du fait national au Sénégal", "sa participation à toute campagne d'intérêt national," and "l'édification de la nation Sénégalaise, forte et unie." "Statutes of the UNES," DA 672, CADN.

<sup>315</sup> "Note de Renseignements. Ambassade de France. Dakar. N. 865 – SCTIP/SL. Objet : Activités de l'Union Nationale des Etudiants Sénégalais (UNES)," Source: H.C. Valeur: B/2, 16 March 1965, DA 172, CADN. UGES leaders attacked the UNES as "marionnette, griot d'un parti" (Editorial, *La Voix*). French embassy reported "De ce fait un certain nombre d'étudiants sont réfractaires à cette associations [UNES] qu'ils considèrent comme « Une entreprise de domestication." "Sénégal. Activités de l'UNES. (Renseignements)," 5 January 1966, DA 672, CADN.



overcrowding, it was yet to be constructed, while some students had been placed in a conference room (*salle de conférences*) as a dormitory and hundreds of others still awaited housing. UGES leaders also took up the UGEAO's demand that students be brought back on to the board of the Centre des oeuvres universitaires de Dakar (COUD)—having been removed three years earlier.<sup>316</sup>

UNES leaders had justified the creation of their organization on the basis that the UGES was a “political” organization, and that a student union should be “apolitical” or “corporate.” While Sow did not call out the rival UNES by name, he talked about the UNES and its pretense of being “apolitical” when it was actually a “puppet, a griot for a party.”<sup>317</sup> In contrast, UGES leaders defended their right to be “political”—opening a debate that would be at the heart of the conflict between student activists and the Senegalese government in the years leading up to the 1968 strike.

Between 1964 and 1968, the Senegalese government justified the banning of student organizations on the basis that they were engaged in “politics”—i.e. addressing issues beyond the immediate sphere of campus life. As noted earlier, this was the same justification that the government had given when dissolving the UGTAN-Orthodoxe years earlier. In response, student activists from UGES argued that students were being trained to become cadres in the civil service, government, and private

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<sup>316</sup> In an open letter to Senghor in November 1964, the Executive Committee of UGES lamented that the president refused to meet with them. They claimed that after two years of being promised a new dorm to ease overcrowding, it was yet to be constructed, while some students had been placed in a conference room (*salle de conférences*) as a dormitory and hundreds of others still awaited housing. Students were also having their stipends cut even when they had met the required conditions to obtain a full scholarship. UGES leaders also took up the UGEAO's demand that students be brought back on to the board of the Centre des Œuvres Universitaire de Dakar (COUD)—having been removed three years earlier. 208-209 : (Lettre) A Monsieur le Président de la République, Dakar, from the Comité Exécutif de l'Union Générale des Etudiants Sénégalais. 20 November 1964. Published in *La Voix de l'Etudiant Sénégalais*, organe générale des étudiants sénégalais (U.G.E.S.). Dir: Aly Sow, Réd en Chaf : Malick Ndaw, Nov-Dec (1964), N. 1, DA 672, CADN.

<sup>317</sup> Aly Sow “Editorial”, *La Voix de l'Etudiant Sénégalais*, organe générale des étudiants sénégalais (U.G.E.S.), Dir: Aly Sow, Réd en Chaf: Malick Ndaw, Nov-Dec (1964), N. 1., DA 672, CADN, “marionnette, griot d'un parti.”

companies, and thus would have a stake in administering the country. To do this well, they needed not only to acquire technical proficiency, but remain politically engaged.<sup>318</sup>

UGES leaders' fears of being banned were not unfounded. On March 12, 1965, their activities were outlawed by Senegal's interior minister.<sup>319</sup> UGES members however, continued their agitation, printing tracts and reviving the *Université populaire africaine* for workers and school dropouts.<sup>320</sup> With UGES banned, UNES was the only legal student union in Senegal.<sup>321</sup> UNES president (and UPS student leader), Moustapha Niasse pledged to take up student issues around scholarships and housing, but through increasing collaboration with the government.<sup>322</sup> However, in the year that followed, UNES failed to grow beyond the small circle of students close to the ruling party. Niasse and company continued to receive the official support of the government, but, as will be explored in the next chapter, they were quickly swamped by new student unions formed after an explosive student protest in 1966.

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<sup>318</sup> Non à la Réform-Fouchet. Pour une réforme générale de l'Enseignement, Malick Ndaw *La Voix de l'Étudiant Sénégalais*, organe générale des étudiants sénégalais (U.G.E.S.), Dir: Aly Sow, Réd en Chaf: Malick Ndaw, Nov-Dec (1964), N. 1, 14 April 1965, DA 672, CADN. However, just a few days before the UGES was banned, perhaps as a defensive position, UGES's leaders argued that in fact they were the "organisation majoritaire et apolitique." Message from Comité Exécutif de l'UGES, Dakar, no title, 8 March 1965, DA 672, CADN.

<sup>319</sup> UGES was banned on 12 March 1965 by the minister of the interior, arrêté n. 3890/MINT/APA. par arrêté N. 3890 en date du 12.03.65. "Note de Renseignements: N. 1146-SCTIP/SL. Ambassade de France, Objet: Interdiction de l'Union Générale des Etudiants Sénégalais (U.G.E.S.)," 7 April 1965, DA 672, CADN; Sénégal, Activités de l'UNES, (Renseignements), 5 January 1966, DA 672, CADN; "Synthèse N. 15/65, p. 11 Affaires intérieures, 'Chez les Etudiants,'" 14 April 1965, DA 672, CADN.

<sup>320</sup> "interdiction" vs. "dissolution": "Note de Renseignements: N. 1146-SCTIP/SL. Ambassade de France, Objet: Interdiction de l'Union Générale des Etudiants Sénégalais (U.G.E.S.)," 7 April 1965. DA 672, CADN; "Synthèse N. 15/65, p. 11. Affaires intérieures. 'Chez les Etudiants,'" 14 April 1965, DA 672, CADN.

<sup>321</sup> "Sénégal, Activités de l'UNES, (Renseignements)," 5 January 1966, DA 672, CADN.

<sup>322</sup> Note, Salamine, N. 3.678, "Objet: Activités de l'Union Nationale des Etudiants Sénégalais (U.N.E.S.)," 7 December 1965, DA 672, CADN.

## The PAI: Crisis and Resiliency

In the period from 1960 to 1966, the PAI was incapacitated by constant government repression, isolation, and infighting. By the mid-1960s, secretary general Majhemout Diop and other leaders were in exile or imprisoned.<sup>323</sup> Following the banning of the party in 1960, many members dropped out of political activity or made peace with the UPS government in exchange for administrative positions.<sup>324</sup> Nevertheless, the remaining party militants continued to participate in worker and student unions and provided the key thread that helped rebuild the student movement in the late 1960s and organize the 1968 strike.

After being forced underground in the early 1960s, the party continued to publish its journals in clandestinity and even held party meetings in Senegal; but party militants and their family members were regularly arrested and tortured by Senegalese security forces.<sup>325</sup> The situation became yet more dire when Ousmane Camara, a former PAI student leader with intimate knowledge of the party became Senghor's head of national security in 1964.<sup>326</sup> Camara orchestrated a campaign of mass arrests and special trials that sent some PAI members to prison for a decade.<sup>327</sup>

With Diop in exile in Bamako, Seydou Cissokho, second in the party hierarchy, coordinated the activity of a shrinking number of underground PAI militants in Senegal. They attempted to link the suppression of the party to more generalized "plot (*complot*) against democratic freedoms." Party

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<sup>323</sup> On this period of repression see Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, ch. 4.

<sup>324</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 560.

<sup>325</sup> See Diop, *Mémoires de luttés*; Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, ch. 2-4.

<sup>326</sup> Ousmane Camara, a former activist in AGED, UGÉAO and FEANF had after independence moved his way through the judiciary before joining the Ministry of Armed Forces in 1963. See Camara, *Mémoires d'un juge africain*; Camara interview, 2 July and 19 July 2012.

<sup>327</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 154-55. This was the case for Charles Gueye, see Charles Gueye, interview with author, 17 July 2012, Dakar. Also discussed in Dieng, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 2; Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 560.

members attempted to create coalitions like the National Democratic Front (FDN), to join together disparate members of harassed opposition organizations.<sup>328</sup> However, these coalitions were ephemeral, in part due to state harassment, and in part due to difference between organizations. The PAI (and its allies in the UGEAO and UGTAN) saw opposition parties like the PSS and PRA-Sénégal as “opportunists”—opposing the regime when they were under attack and then cooperating with the regime when they thought they could gain ministerial positions. The PRA-Sénégal and PSS leaders, meanwhile, criticized the PAI for being “dogmatic” and politically inflexible in a time of repression.<sup>329</sup>

With legal outlets for challenging Senghor increasingly closed off to the party, Diop proposed taking up an armed struggle.<sup>330</sup> In 1964 a group of about twenty-five PAI comrades participated in four months of military training in Cuba.<sup>331</sup> In Bamako, Diop failed to secure weapons, but nevertheless, when word of the PAI’s intentions reached the Malian government, they refused to allow the PAI to set up a base in Mali.<sup>332</sup> Still without guns, the newly-trained PAI militants nevertheless set off to set up

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<sup>328</sup> “...complot contre les libertés démocratiques” “Pour la libération des détenus politiques,” Tract, Comité Central du PAI, Dakar, 14 Feb 1961, carton 408, DA, CADN; Lettre de Protestation auprès de M. le Ministre de l'Intérieur de la République du Sénégal, [Solidarity letter from Thiès comrades], Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, Section de Thiès, For the Bureau, P.VI????, 12 Aug 1959, SVP 487, ANS; “Alerte à la population,” P.A.I. Section de Saint-Louis, 3 Dec 1959, SVP 487, ANS; “A propos du meeting du P.A.I interdit à Saint-Louis, le Samedi 8 Août,” Tract; Parti Africain de l'Indépendance, Section de St-Louis, 1959, SVP 487, ANS. See Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 93-94 on the PAI’s links with the BMS, and another coalition, FUSI.

<sup>329</sup> These are covered in great detail in Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 261-67.. Similar critiques within the PAI, Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 95-96.

<sup>330</sup> As Donal Cruise O’Brien assessed in 1967, the PAI had never successfully established a base outside of urban areas in Senegal—and thus had little support in the peanut-producing regions, Casamance, and Eastern Senegal. Majhemout Diop, who published *Classes et idéologies de classe au Sénégal*, from exile in 1964, argued that it was the urban working class and poor who would lead a revolution against Senghor’s regime, with support from the rural population. O’Brien, “Opposition in Senegal,” 560.

<sup>331</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 113-21. See also Dieng, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 2, and Gueye, interviews, 17 and 26 July 2012.

<sup>332</sup> Gueye, interviews, 17 and 26 July 2012. Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 129.

camps in eastern Senegal and the Casamance region.<sup>333</sup> Arms never materialized and the would-be guerillas were constantly pursued by Senegalese troops. Sadio Camara recounts how his original team of about a dozen militants in 1964 was eventually reduced to two by 1966, as his comrades were captured, murdered, or turned on one another.<sup>334</sup>

The party was in disarray by 1966, with members isolated from one another and from Diop, now in exile in eastern Europe.<sup>335</sup> Nevertheless, as other opposition parties were absorbed into the UPS, the PAI remained a pole of attraction for Senegalese students who saw the party as a principled opponent of Senghor's undemocratic regime. During this time, students in Dakar, Saint Louis, and Thiès continued to join the clandestine cells of the student section of the party (the MEPAI).<sup>336</sup> The MEPAI, while aligned to the party's main principles, was largely autonomous, allowing many new members keep a distance from the infighting within the PAI at the time. As will be explored in the next chapter, these students would go on to lead the 1968 strike.

## Conclusion

By 1966, all opposition parties—with the exception of the PAI—had been absorbed into the UPS.<sup>337</sup> Yet within Senegal's ruling party, Donal Cruise O'Brien noted in 1967 that "little attempt is made to enforce discipline as long as nominal allegiance is given vociferously, and open opposition to government

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<sup>333</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 130.

<sup>334</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, ch. 6.

<sup>335</sup> This opened the way to factionalizing and splits in the party, especially as leaders took different side in the conflict between China and Soviet Union. In 1965, a faction of young PAI members that that was unhappy with Diop's alliances with the Soviet Union split off to form the short-lived pro-Chinese *Parti communiste sénégalais*.

<sup>336</sup> Kane, interview, 5 July 2012.

<sup>337</sup> With the exception of a sliver of the ex-BMS.

directive is avoided." Senghor, in spite of his incredible political savvy and power, had not managed to give "his party any particular sense of purpose." This ambiguity gave the party enough flexibility to absorb its competitors, but the party's goals were even less clear than in Mamadou Dia's era.<sup>338</sup>

Was the UPS, then, a coalition of parties with significantly different goals and strategies? There is little indication that this was the case. Instead, O'Brien describes the UPS as "a coalition of notables, each with his private following..."<sup>339</sup> Abdoulaye Ly, in reflecting on the experience of the party he led, the PRA-Sénégal, argues that, after the December 1963 elections, his party had abandoned any claim to being a "revolutionary" organization. According to Ly, the PRA-Sénégal decided to join the UPS in 1966 precisely because there was little difference in "political practice" between the two parties.<sup>340</sup> Opposition parties began to simply serve the purpose of forcing a negotiation for their inclusion into state power, rather than representing a different set of political principles.<sup>341</sup>

As O'Brien concluded, the ability of the UPS to successfully absorb so many of its competitors rested on their control of the state, which was itself, after independence, a basis for the creation of a new ruling class. He argued in 1967 that "if there is a ruling class in Senegal, it is the parliamentary and bureaucratic elite, and this group is so far separated in style and standard of living from the rest of the population as to have some consciousness of corporate interest."<sup>342</sup> The promise of access to power through connections to the UPS drew in a younger generation of young intellectuals during the early

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<sup>338</sup> See also Aristide R. Zolberg, *Creating Political Order; The Party-States of West Africa* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966).

<sup>339</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 565.

<sup>340</sup> Ly says that by 1966 the PRA "les assises, en tant qu'organisation révolutionnaire, s'étaient affaïssées depuis les élections du 1er décembre 1963 acheva d'effacer dans la pratique politique les frontières anciennes entre les deux partis opposés jusque-là, créant ainsi les conditions concrètes de la dernière des fusions de partis au temps de Senghor." Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 305.

<sup>341</sup> The BMS is perhaps the clearest example of this.

<sup>342</sup> Cruise O'Brien, "Opposition in Senegal," 566.

1960s. As Abdoulaye Ly laments, the PRA-Sénégal suffered from its inability to recruit younger members away from the youth section of the UPS.<sup>343</sup> Instead, Senghor used the removal of Dia's supporters in 1962 to elevate younger UPS cadres to new positions of authority.<sup>344</sup>

Outside the UPS, the PAI was scrambling to regroup after the disastrous attempt to launch a guerilla struggle; young radicals at the University of Dakar no longer had a student union; and radical trade unionists struggled to keep the UNTS from becoming too closely tied to the regime. The initial wave of radical opposition from 1958 to 1962 had been brought under control. But as the next chapter shows, Senghor and the UPS's solid hold on political power existed alongside mounting grievances against the regime, particularly among urban residents, students, and workers. As the various "clans and caucuses" within the UPS focused on their internal jockeying for influence, they were caught off guard by the sudden emergence of an urban rebellion in 1968. However, as I argue in the next chapter, the leadership of the uprising emerged from the networks that radicals in the PAI and allied organizations maintained underground during the mid-1960s.

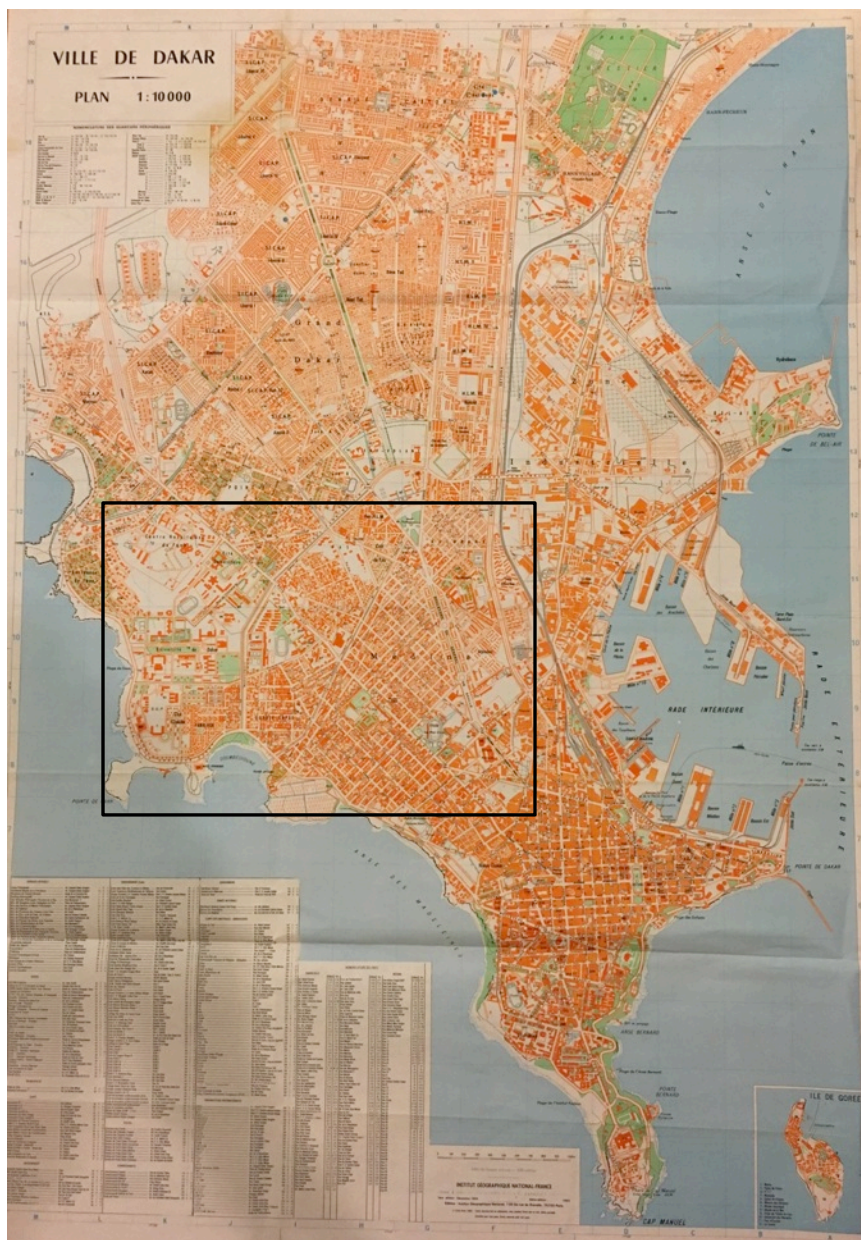
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<sup>343</sup> Ly, *Regroupements politiques au Sénégal*, 302.

<sup>344</sup> As noted in the following chapter, Senghor would do this again following the crisis of 1968.

# CHAPTER 2

## Senegal 1966-1968: The Transformation of the Student Movement and the 1968 Uprising



*[Fig. 5: Map of Dakar, see detail below. Source: Institut Géographique National–France, reproduced by Matthew Swagler]*





*[Fig. 6: Detail of the University of Dakar campus and Médina. Source: Institut Géographique National–France, reproduced by Matthew Swagler]*

## Introduction

By 1966, Senegal's ruling regime, under President Léopold Senghor, appeared more secure than ever. All opposition figures and organizations had been either brutally repressed, and/or incorporated into the government monopolized by Senghor's party, the UPS. As in Congo-Brazzaville under Fulbert Youlou, repression and incarceration were often tools used by the state to make opponents more pliable and willing to assimilate into the ruling party. In 1965 and 1966 the UPS government became yet more politically hegemonic after two successful offensives. The first was the regime's wholesale legal and military assault on the clandestine actions of the PAI, officially banned since 1960. The second was the

successful integration of the only remaining legal opposition, the PRA-Sénégal, into the ranks of the UPS (See chapter 1).

The UPS government never officially banned the existence of opposition parties *tout court*. In practice, however, by 1966, Senghor's government had done just that. Yet as in Congo-Brazzaville in 1963, the assertion of unity among the political elite could obscure growing social crises, particularly in urban areas. Such was true of politics in Senegal, when between 1966 and 1971 strikes by students and workers presented an ongoing challenge to the UPS regime. During this time, the formally inclusive party-state proved to be internally unstable, and unable to address the country's growing social and diversity. Between 1966 and 1968, the University of Dakar became increasingly overcrowded, students lost much of their financial support, workers' wages stagnated while the cost of living skyrocketed, urban unemployment jumped, and farmers faced a drought alongside a major drop in peanut prices.

The breaking point was a mass revolt in 1968 that deeply destabilized the regime. The crisis began with a strike led by Senegalese students at the University of Dakar, but quickly transformed into a widespread urban rebellion and a general workers' strike across cities in Senegal. The workers' strike continued for a week (longer in some instances), and the student strike lasted months. Workers and students ultimately won many of their demands in the negotiations that followed. Although the Senegalese army played the major role in ending the urban rebellion, even army officers put forth and won some of their own demands for the reform of the regime. This chapter follows the events of 1966 to 1968 in Senegal, and shows how the crisis came to a head.

Around and since 2008—the fortieth anniversary of tumultuous events across the world in 1968—there has been an increasingly interest studying the “global 1960s,” or the more 1968-centric French term, “*les années 68*.”<sup>1</sup> This work has been largely driven by a two key concerns. First, to examine how

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<sup>1</sup> For works that approach the Senegalese events from an années 68 perspective, see Patrick-Papa Dramé and Jean Lamarre, *1968, des sociétés en crise une perspective globale* (Laval: Presses universitaires de Laval, 2009); Hendrickson, "Imperial Fragments"; Blum, "Sénégal 1968"; Blum, *Révolutions africaines*; Stafford,

social rebellions of the 1960s and early 1970s were connected materially, organizationally, and intellectually across national borders. Second, in some cases, to challenge the scholarly emphasis on events in Europe and North America, by examining examples of concurrent social upheaval across the rest of the world, including Africa. Thus, my own research on the Senegalese revolt of 1968 took place simultaneously with that of a group of other researchers: Françoise Blum, Burleigh Hendrickson, and Omar Gueye.<sup>2</sup>

I was initially drawn to the topic because, like many fellow researchers, I was surprised by the lack of attention given to the events of 1968 in Senegal. Although within Senegal, debates over 1968 took place at conferences, in political conversation, and in print media, there was little published work dedicated to the subject. Magatte Lô published a chapter on his version of events (as UPS leader in charge of union relations), while student participant Aboulaye Bathily published the only book-length study in 1992, alongside an article by Senegalese historian, Ibrahima Thioub, which that came out the same year.<sup>3</sup> My research, particularly interviews with student activists from the era, gave me a rich sense of how their approach to political organizing in Dakar was shaped by an internationalist perspective. They saw their actions as part of a global revolutionary movement, and thus, their actions could be analyzed in a global 1960s or années 68 framework. The most obvious example is the 1966 student strike at the University of Dakar, discussed below. The strike, which opened a new era in student political organization in Dakar, began as a protest of foreign intervention in Africa following the coup that toppled Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah. The following year students shut down campus for a day in solidarity with Vietnamese resistance to US occupation.

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"Senegal: May 1968, Africa's Revolt." Gueye also touches on this briefly, see Omar Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal," 155-60.

<sup>2</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968"; Hendrickson, "Imperial Fragments"; Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal."

<sup>3</sup> Magatte Lô, *Sénégal : syndicalisme et participation responsable*, Mémoires africaines, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987); Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*; Thioub, "Le mouvement étudiant de Dakar et la vie politique Sénégalaise." For greater discussion on the utility of both Lô and Bathily's work, see Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal," XIII-XXI.

But if student radicals adopted an internationalist perspective as their general framework, it was the local social and political conditions in Senegal that led to the strike of May 1968. The strike exposed, more than any other event in the first decade of Senegalese independence, that the UPS regime was not as unshakable (nor as all-encompassing) as leaders like Senghor believed. Although the government was able to quell the unrest in less than two weeks, the regime was clearly taken aback as the university student strike ignited a broad rebellion, supporters of the party in the capital seemed to vanish during the protests, and Senegalese military officers began voicing their disaffection about the lavish lifestyles of UPS politicians.

Student leaders dubbed the three most explosive days of the strike “(l)es trois glorieuses journées révolutionnaires des 29, 30, et 31 mai.” Their use of the term “les trois glorieuses” referred to the shared moniker of three prior events: the French revolution of 1848, the rallying of colonial authorities in French Black Africa to the side Free France in World War II, and the three days of protest that brought down the government of Fulbert Youlou five years prior in Brazzaville.<sup>4</sup> It was a conscious choice to frame their actions as part of a tradition of political rebellion that traversed metropolitan, colonial, and post-colonial African history. Yet unlike *les Trois Glorieuses* of Congo in 1963 (see chapter 3), the protests in Senegal in 1968 did not topple the regime. Senghor was forced to make unforetold concessions to workers, students, and army officers, but did not lose his grip over the UPS, the army, or the state.

As in Congo in 1963, many student and worker radicals had called for the fall of the regime, but did not begin their strike with that goal. Only as the rebellion rapidly grew did the possibility arise. As analyzed in this study, the scales tipped quickly in the Congo to allow for the ouster of the regime. But the outcome of the 1968 strike in Senegal showed that the opposition would have to be far better organized in order to topple Senghor’s government. In 1968, Senghor had advantages that Youlou did

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<sup>4</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 25(?) June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

not have in 1963. First, when his critics accused him of being a *valet* of neocolonialism, he invoked his long history as an anti-colonial figure, (which he did in his speech to the nation in the midst of the protests on May 30, 1968.) Second, the Senegalese police and army forces were much larger than those of Congo in 1963, and unlike in Congo, remained loyal to the regime.<sup>5</sup> Third, Senghor had the full backing of the French government, both diplomatically and militarily. During the strike, the French government manipulated the parameters of the two countries' "mutual defense" accords in order to allow French troops stationed in Senegal to play a critical role in "restoring order."<sup>6</sup> Lastly, Senghor had developed a strong network of backers across the country in the competitive Senegalese political battles of the 1950s, particularly in the vast peanut-growing regions of the country where leaders of the Mouride sufi tariqa organized support for the UPS regime.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, the strike dealt a surprising blow to the stability of the UPS regime, which raises important questions. First, why did it happen when it did? Although the country was mired in a variety of social and economic crises in 1968, such crises do not in themselves lead to organized social upheaval, at least not on any predictable timetable. Second, with all of the organized opposition repressed or co-opted into the UPS, how was the strike organized and where did the leadership come from?

The explanations offered at the time by French and Senegalese authorities are unconvincing. French authorities, preoccupied with simultaneous events in the metropole, simply believed students in Dakar were "mimicking" their striking student counterparts in France. Senghor similarly accused students of doing "the same thing as the whites," which he stated crudely as "*même chose toubabs*" (a

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<sup>5</sup> In Congo in 1963, military commanders facilitated the departure of of Youlou's government, but did not assume power.

<sup>6</sup> This also contrasts with 1963 in Congo in 1963, where French troops were initially sent in to protect key sites, only to be removed when Foccart and de Gaulle dropped their support for Youlou.

<sup>7</sup> To some degree also true among the Tijaniyya, though less universally. For how this played out in 1968, see below and Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal," 203-07. In Congo, it should be noted, political parties were newer, regional in orientation, and Youlou had only become a major player in politics in 1956. Moreover, he had a very mixed relationship with the Catholic Church, the major religious institution in Congo. See chapter 3.

common west African term for white people).<sup>8</sup> Senghor claimed that this “mimicry” was fueled by “foreign” intervention, particularly an amorphous “red imperialism” that he believed worked through local agents—such as clandestine PAI activists, ex-PRA-Sénégal members, or other radicals among the students and trade unions. Like Youlou, who blamed Chinese intervention for his downfall and the subsequent direction of Congolese politics, Senghor also refused to concede publicly that opposition to his regime might be local in origin.<sup>9</sup> They both invoked the idea of “red communism” as a threat to the national independence supposedly represented by their regime. Student strike leaders in Dakar quickly dismissed Senghor’s accusation as a bizarre, conspiratorial theory. Bathily, a student leader and PAI activist at the time of the strike, argues that the strike erupted out of spontaneous anger over the social crisis facing students and the urban population in Senegal—not communist infiltration or clandestine parties like the PAI.<sup>10</sup>

More recently, work by Burleigh Hendrickson and Françoise Blum have contextualized the strike within the framework of other African popular revolts, postcolonialism, and the French *Mai*.<sup>11</sup> They have examined the strikers’ global connections, without becoming mired in debates about whether it was an “internally” or “externally” motivated revolt. As Blum argues, the “national and international contexts—Senegalese, African, French-African, global—are closely intertwined.”<sup>12</sup> I share many of their conclusions, but in this chapter, hope to make a different argument. First, I agree with former student

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<sup>8</sup> His speech on 30 May, 1968. See “Allocution de Monsieur le Président de la République, Message à la Nation,” 30 May 1968, dossier Sénégal, événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, Sénégal Bibliographie, CD, ANS.

<sup>9</sup> See chapter 3 and Fulbert Youlou, *J'accuse la Chine* (Paris: La Table ronde, 1966).

<sup>10</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*.

<sup>11</sup> Blum compares the Dakar *Mai* to the French *Mai*, noting some provocative parallels. See Blum, “Sénégal 1968.”

<sup>12</sup> Blum, “Sénégal 1968,” 147. “...les contextes nationaux et internationaux—sénégalais, africain, franco-africain, mondial—sont étroitement mêlés.” See also Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, “Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais,” 301.

leaders assessment that the strike may have exploded *without* the influence of simultaneous events in France—which certainly was the case in the Congo in 1963. But Bathily, Blum, and Hendrickson have de-emphasized the role of organized, albeit clandestine opposition organizations throughout the whole period of time from 1958–1968. These authors compellingly explain the various reasons why students and workers would have embarked on a strike in 1968. But I believe returning to the question of organization helps us understand why this explosion of struggle actually took place.<sup>13</sup>

As in Congo, the strike showed that as space for opposition within the sphere of “official” politics vanished, other, ostensibly “non-political” organizations arose as representatives of social grievances and political disaffection.<sup>14</sup> While in Congo the trade unions first raised the banner of protest in 1963, in this case, it was the students.<sup>15</sup> A detailed look at the student and workers’ strikes of 1968 in Senegal shows that they were well-prepared by people with years of organizing experience, education in Marxist and other leftist ideas, and a clear set of political goals that reached beyond the immediate demands of the strike (see chapter 1). Thus, while Senghor’s conspiratorial vision of foreign intervention is incorrect, so too is an exclusive emphasis on spontaneity. The pace and militancy of the 1968 strike may have been due to the spontaneous participation of tens of thousands of people, but the strike itself was the product of careful preparation by union and student radicals.

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<sup>13</sup> Gueye seeks to emphasize the centrality of the trade union and student movement, but his work offers more of a holistic re-assessment of the 1968 events, with a great deal of emphasis on the UPS and other players, for example, the Dominican Fathers. Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal.”

<sup>14</sup> See Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal,”; Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, “Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais.”

<sup>15</sup> Although for Gueye, the students, organized into a union, were part of the larger trade union movement. See Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal.” As this chapter shows, student leaders relations to a handful of non-student trade unionists were important in 1968, but they were largely cut off from the larger trade union movement.

# I. Crises On and Off Campus

## The 1966 Student Strike

By the 1965-1966 academic year, the number of students at the University of Dakar had more than doubled since independence, to approximately 2139. The student body was split almost in even thirds between Senegalese students, other Francophone African students, and French students. The ongoing struggle by African students to form independent student unions, as described in the previous chapter, thus took place in the context of rapidly rising enrollments. This placed growing pressure on University resources, such as dormitories and classrooms, which became increasingly crowded. Simultaneously, the growing student population provided student radicals with a larger audience.

By the spring of 1966, the Senegalese government had banned both the independent union of Senegalese students, the Union Générale des Etudiants Sénégalais (UGES), and the umbrella union for all African students, the Union Générale des Etudiants d'Afrique Occidentale (UGEAO). But in February 1966, African student activists at the University, acting without the structure of a recognized union, were able to instigate a protest through the streets of Dakar, which transformed into a student strike.

The protest began in reaction to the news that Kwame Nkrumah had been overthrown by a military coup in Ghana on February 24. Students' identification with Nkrumah as a hero of African independence had long been part of the rhetoric of the UGEAO, and he had helped secure FEANF a new office in France 1964.<sup>16</sup> Most did not follow events in Ghana closely (including Nkrumah's repression of his own radical critics) and did not have access to Nkrumah's writings. But they revered the Ghanaian leader for his anti-colonial organizing in the 1950s and the general policies he promoted: insistence on national unity over ethnic chauvinism, federation of newly independent African states, open

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<sup>16</sup> Note, n. 5., Direction des Renseignements Generaux, 8ème Section/No 929 (979 ?), "La Federation des Etudiants d'Afrique Noire en France," 16 Dec 1964, 5AG/FPU, ANF.



collaboration with Communist countries, and socialism through direct state intervention into the economy.

Thus, university student leaders described Nkrumah's fall as a "reactionary putsch" that was part of the "imperialist offensive to reconquer Africa."<sup>17</sup> These informal student leaders called for a mass meeting four days later, February 28, at 1pm on the basketball court at the University to protest "against the hail ("grêle") of coups d'États in Africa."<sup>18</sup> From the meeting, students marched toward the British and American embassies—governments they suspected of having supported the coup against Nkrumah. However, before reaching their destinations, students were attacked by police and gendarmes with tear gas and clubs. Forty-seven students were arrested, but released the following day.

Following the initial protests, courses restarted on March 2. That day, eight students were summoned to the Ministry of Education, only to be promptly taken into police custody because of their alleged role in leading the protest. Of the eight, three were Senegalese students who had their scholarships cut off and were summarily expelled from the university. The other five students, three from Dahomey and two from Upper Volta, were promptly expelled and deported. In response, African students at the university reconvened and decided not only to begin a strike of classes, but to desert the campus in solidarity with their expelled classmates.<sup>19</sup> On March 8, a group of students from Mali and Upper Volta boarded the train bound for Bamako. An organized contingent of Mauritanian students departed March 11, and Dahomeans two days later. On March 14, Senegalese students departed *en masse* to "rejoin their families."

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<sup>17</sup> "organisée pour protester contre le putch [sic] réactionnaire au Ghana et contre l'offensive impérialiste de reconquête de l'Afrique..." Report, "Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives," Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>18</sup> Report, "Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives," Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>19</sup> Report, "Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives," Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN.

The following week, the Senegalese government backed down, accepting the return of the expelled students and recognizing the students' right to create unions. Student delegates were then sent to inform departed students of the negotiated return to classes, and students began returning in time for classes to start again on April 13. Student leaders then negotiated for additional gains. First, student delegates to the Conseil d'administration du Centre Universitaire des Oeuvres (referred to as the COUD) would again be democratically elected by students, for the first time in at least three years. This would ostensibly give students a platform to address problems in the functioning of the campus. Second, students gained the right to "joint management" of the campus cinema, *Ciné Club*—<sup>20</sup>a demand for greater cultural and social autonomy. Last, and most important, the government agreed to recognize the formation of a new student union.

Some Senegalese scholars and former student militants have argued that Senghor likely caved to student demands in order to obtain calm in the city as performers, visitors, and media arrived from across the world for the first Festival mondial des arts nègres (FESMAN) in April 1966.<sup>21</sup> The rapid outbreak of the protest and students' desertion of campus likely caught Senghor off guard. The strike showed that even though the government could harass student leaders and ban student unions at the university, it could not stop student organizing.

Historical accounts of the 1966 protest and strike have emphasized the spontaneity of the events. The particular timing of the initial protest and its ability to quickly draw together a large group of African students was clearly a spontaneous response to Nkrumah's downfall. However, the success of the strike was based on the informal organization of radical student leaders. Many had collaborated through their work in the now-illegal student unions, and shared connections to organizations like the PAI or the PAI's

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<sup>20</sup> "Communiqué," Comité Directeur of the UED, 7 February 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>21</sup> Ousmane Ndiaye, interview; Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 302.

student wing, the MEPAI.<sup>22</sup> When a university-wide student union formed after the strike, the elected leaders put out an official account of the events of February 1966, implying that the desertion of campus was centrally coordinated by a *comité directeur*.<sup>23</sup> Although it is not said directly, the report indicates that there was already existing student leadership that, despite the lack of a formal organization, had enough credibility to organize the initial mass meeting, the desertion of campus, and negotiations with the administration.

During the previous semester, these students had attempted to organize a boycott of the ceremony marking the start of new academic year. But the fall of Nkrumah and the government's harsh reaction to students' protest provided a bigger opportunity for student leaders to mobilize African students in order to push back against the government's attack on independent student unions.

The strike leaders readily admitted that not all students supported the strike. In particular, they chastised African students of who were "subservient" to the ruling parties of West Africa for leading a campaign of "infiltration and sabotage" during the strike, by acting as government informants and providing false information to other students.<sup>24</sup> Among Senegalese students, this was clearly meant to attack the small group of students who had openly aligned with Senghor's party, the UPS, and were attempting to lead a government-sponsored student union, the Union nationale des étudiants sénégalais (UNES) at the University of Dakar (see chapter 1).

Strike leaders criticized other African students for being "opportunists" preoccupied with their personal success, especially older students who had resisted the desertion of campus out of concern that they would not receive their diplomas. And although some French students did respect the strike

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<sup>22</sup> Sometimes referred to as MEEPAl, with the extra "E" standing for *élèves*. i.e. primary and secondary school students.

<sup>23</sup> Report, "Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives," Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>24</sup> Report, "Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives," Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN.

call, most did not. They reportedly held a meeting at the football stadium during the strike, where those assembled decided not to follow the strike call. Strike leaders saw this as an affront to the basic principles of solidarity. They argued that when the national French student union, the Union nationale des étudiants de France (UNEF) called a strike in France, African students adhered to it, and did not reserve the right to exempt themselves.<sup>25</sup>

French professors were divided in their reaction to the strike. The assembly of professors in the *Faculté de Lettres*, who were predominantly French, passed a motion in support of the students, but in other places, students accused French faculty of threatening to quit teaching in Dakar, and of using the crisis to argue for greater French control over the university.

The University administration came under particularly harsh criticism from strike leaders for their response to the strike. They accused the director of the COUD of collaborating during the strike with pro-government students and the police. They placed immediate blame for the crisis on the rector, a French librarian, Pierre Lelièvre. They argued that since the rector never bothered to learn about student grievances and would only meet with a small group of students of his liking, he showed students that he did not take their problems seriously.<sup>26</sup>

Strike leaders held the Senegalese government responsible for the “degradation” of the university, and the “harassing and muzzling” of student organizations, which had created “conditions for the explosion of indignation and anger.” But they also admonished the leaders of other states in the Organization Commune Africaine et Malgache (OCAM), notably Togo, Dahomey, Côte d’Ivoire and Niger,

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<sup>25</sup> Report, “Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives,” Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>26</sup> Instead of meeting with “leurs représentants qualifiés” he met with “une poignée d’individus d’un représentativité imaginaire.” Report, “Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives,” Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN.

for trying to turn public opinion against the strikers. According to strike leaders, these African heads of state followed the “magic wand” of the conductor, the French government.<sup>27</sup>

But the strike was also an opportunity for radical students to develop new alliances. Strike leaders claimed that they had built relationships with African university professors, who had been generally supportive of the strike. Further, during the 1966 strike, students received support from trade unions connected to the university, like the Association des Professeurs Africains, the Association des Ingénieurs et Techniciens Africains, the Syndicat des Vétérinaires, and the Syndicat de Médecins, Pharmaciens et Chirugiens, Dentistes—many of which had PAI members in leading roles.<sup>28</sup>

The 1966 strike reinvigorated the university student movement, and created a new generation of student radicals, who sought to break through the “stagnation” that had befallen the student movement between 1963 and 1966.<sup>29</sup> The memory of the strike quickly took on a mythical quality. New independent student unions were not formed until the following semester, but student leaders often wrote as though they had been founded in the immediate aftermath of the February 1966 strike.<sup>30</sup> Further, the basketball court on campus that had been the site of the student general assembly on February 28 became known as the *Terrain du 28 Février* or sometimes referred to as *Place du 28 Février*, thus monumentalizing the event. But more importantly, the strikers’ success in forcing concessions from the government increased the confidence of many student leaders.

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<sup>27</sup> Report, “Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives,” Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>28</sup> Report, “Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives,” Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN. To the contrary, they harshly criticized the association of parents of élèves (FENAPES) for backing the government against the university students.

<sup>29</sup> Report, “Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives,” Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1967 carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>30</sup> “30 April, 1 May, Etudiants et travailleurs, renforçons notre lutte patriotique et anti-impérialiste!!!,” Tract, Comité Directeur of UED,” 30 April 1968, Dossier U.E.D. Union des étudiants de Dakar, 1967-1971, Folder U.E.D. 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

Over the next two years, from 1966 to 1968, economic, political, and social crises arose in Senegal that created the conditions for a mass urban rebellion. In the rest of this chapter, I will show how these crises developed and why African university students, although numbering just over two thousand, became the catalysts for a social upheaval that spread well beyond the confines of the campus.

### **The Groundnut Crisis**

During the 1960s, the groundnut industry, namely peanuts, was the major driving force of the Senegalese economy, accounting for 20 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 78 percent of the value of the country's exports.<sup>31</sup> Farmers expanded production after independence, driving the growth of the country's GDP, and increasing the annual incomes of groundnut producers by 6 percent a year between 1959 and 1965.

But reliance on a single commodity proved to be a great vulnerability for the Senegalese economy. Starting in 1966, droughts, which had previously come every four years, became a biennial problem, hitting Senegal's farmers again in 1968. The same year, the French government ended preferential trade agreements that had subsidized the export of Senegalese groundnuts to France, as a condition of French membership in the European Economic Community (EEC). Although the Senegalese government attempted to buttress production by subsidizing groundnut producers, the total value of exported groundnuts dropped precipitously, and along with it, the GDP.<sup>32</sup> By the 1970-71 season, when

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<sup>31</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 52 This is for all groundnut related products. Groundnuts alone (no related products) were 69 percent of exports, and 17 percent of the GDP. Agriculture was 32 percent of the GDP.

<sup>32</sup> International Development Association, *The Economy of Senegal*, vol. 1; UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 10. See also Prosper Youm, "The Economy Since Independence," in *The Political Economy of Senegal under Structural Adjustment*, ed. Christopher Delgado and Sidi Jammeh (New York: Praeger, 1991).

another drought hit, groundnut production had dropped to less than half what it had been in 1965—lower than at any point since independence.<sup>33</sup>

Alongside plummeting production, the prices paid to groundnut producers fell by 17-18 percent from between 1965 and 1967, (also the lowest since independence), and remained at the same level for the next three seasons.<sup>34</sup> Simultaneously, the cost of supplies like fertilizer rose by 23 percent during the same period, also as a result of French membership in the EEC and the cutting of previous subsidies. Senegalese government initiatives in the early 1960s to encourage farmers to buy equipment on credit left many growers in debt as the droughts hit consecutively in 1966, 1968, 1970 and 1972.<sup>35</sup> Compounding these problems, the government took full control of groundnut purchasing in 1967 through a network of “cooperatives,” having phased out purchasing by private trading companies. However, the government cooperatives proved unable to pay farmers the value of their crop at the time of sale, and “resulted in increasing delays in payments to farmers.”<sup>36</sup> As a result, during the last five years of the decade, rural incomes dropped by more than half.<sup>37</sup>

For many students and trade union militants in urban areas, the agricultural crisis created an opening to challenge the UPS’ political hegemony in rural areas and forge new alliances between urban and rural producers. As will be shown later, the 1967 groundnut drought in particular led students to

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<sup>33</sup> In terms of ‘marketable’ crop. Rebounded strongly in 71-72, only to plummet lower than ever in 72-73. International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 11.

<sup>34</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 10,11,13, 20. This was in spite of increasing prices on the global market from 1968-1971.

<sup>35</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 10.

<sup>36</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 10. “Later, however, they led to the complete replacement of cash payments by payments in government notes, cashable only with considerable delay. Farmers, who are in urgent need of cash at the time of groundnut marketing, complained bitterly.”

<sup>37</sup> Coura Badiane, “Senegal’s Trade in Groundnuts: Economic, Social and Environmental Implications,” Ted Case Studies 646, December 2001.

appeal to those who drew their livelihood from agriculture—70 percent of the population—as potential allies.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Urban Economic Situation**

This groundnut crisis was significant for in urban areas for two main reasons. First, for the government, which controlled groundnut marketing, it resulted in the loss of critical state income between 1966 and 1969, at a time when state expenditures continued to rise.<sup>39</sup> This put increased pressure on the government to hold down the cost of other expenditures—such as wages in the public sector and education. Second, it encouraged a new wave of migration from the peanut-growing regions into urban areas, exacerbating existing competition over scarce jobs.

By 1968, at least one quarter of the Senegalese population lived in urban areas, which were experiencing their own economic malaise.<sup>40</sup> Over the course of the 1960s, the per capita GDP for the Senegalese population dropped by 7 percent. Although driven by the groundnut crisis, the decline was actually less severe for the rural population (3 percent) than for the urban population, where there was a 21 percent decline. This was due to a flood of former rural inhabitants moving toward cities as the cyclical droughts became more severe.<sup>41</sup> By 1968, the expansion of industry, which had shown the best growth rate of all sectors of the economy since independence was slowing down, foreclosing one means

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<sup>38</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, V.

<sup>39</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 11, 28. “As a result of the groundnut crisis, groundnut production declined, from two-thirds of total agricultural value added at the time of independence to little over half by 1970...In addition, the over 20 percent fall in export prices in 1967/68 forced the Government to reduce tax rates on groundnut exports, resulting in a further decline of tax yields.”

<sup>40</sup> The World Bank estimated urban pop at 29 percent by 1970, compared to 18 percent for the rest of Africa. International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 46.

<sup>41</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, IV.



of new urban residents to find steady work.<sup>42</sup> According to a 1969 UNESCO report, the previous four years had brought a “regression in the average standard of living.”<sup>43</sup>

The formally employed, waged workforce in Senegal at the end of 1968 was about 122,000 people, about eight thousand of whom were non-Senegalese. The Senegalese workforce was split evenly between the public and private sectors.<sup>44</sup> UNESCO noted that this made up about 8 percent of the estimated “economically active” working age population of both sexes between fifteen and fifty-nine years old, and just over half of the “economically active” urban male population, which was estimated to be 225,000.<sup>45</sup> With an urban population growth of about 6 percent per year during the 1960s, the creation of new jobs in the cities was not keeping pace with those seeking employment. For example, while 25,000 jobs were created between 1967 and 1969, the number of “able-bodied men” in urban areas increased by 55,000.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> UNESCO, “Senegal Education 1969,” 2. While its expansion likely helped create jobs, it wasn’t actually generating national income, because it was so heavily subsidized. “[B]ecause of the small importance of manufacturing in Senegal’s economy (less than 10 percent of GDP in 1960), its fast expansion had only a limited impact on overall economic growth. Furthermore, most of the industries received very liberal tax concessions which reduced their impact on government revenues to almost zero. As in many other countries, increasing import substitution led to a net fall in public revenues.” International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 9.

<sup>43</sup> UNESCO, “Senegal Education 1969,” 6.

<sup>44</sup> UNESCO, “Senegal Education 1969,” VII, 13, 16.

1970 actuals: 1.2 million employed in rural sector; 125,000 in traditional handicraft; “modern sector” of 150,000 salaried, 50,000 self-employed, and 110,000 unemployed. From International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 51.

<sup>45</sup> UNESCO, “Senegal Education 1969,” Annex I/2. Based on a 3.8 million estimated population. Ages 15-59, 1,980,000, of which 490,000 were urban and 1,010,00 were male; 250,000 were urban males. The “economically active” male population of working age was 910,000 (90 percent of total), 225,000 urban. With 560,000 female (58 percent of working age women) “economically active” for a total of 1,470,000 “economically active.”

<sup>46</sup> A 1969 UNESCO called this “clearly inadequate.” See UNESCO, “Senegal Education 1969,” 6.

UNESCO estimated that out of the 36,508 Senegalese who were actively looking for wage labor in 1968, 1913 had found a job during the past year—only 5 percent.<sup>47</sup> The demand was highest—and competition fiercest—for skilled and unskilled labor with minimal formal education requirements. As the state sought to limit the number of students who could advance into the already crowded secondary school institutions, the number of unemployed Senegalese with primary school degrees jumped by thousands each year.<sup>48</sup> As early as 1961, teachers in Dakar had estimated that seven to ten thousand of their students finished primary school each year and were unable to find regular employment.<sup>49</sup>

The crisis of unemployment was most visible in the capital city, home to half a million people by 1968, about 13 percent of the country's population.<sup>50</sup> In September 1967, two hundred elected leaders and workplace delegates of the Union Régionale des Syndicats du Cap-Vert<sup>51</sup> (the greater Dakar metropolitan area) met to discuss the problem of urban unemployment. At the time, union leaders estimated that there were 45,000 unemployed workers in Cap-Vert.<sup>52</sup> One trade union leader noted that with the scarcity of jobs and stagnation in hiring, it would be no surprise to see unemployed workers abandon support for the government.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 18.

<sup>48</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 158.

<sup>49</sup> Discussion Autour du Rapport Moral, Point de Vue de la Section de Dakar, Rapporteur: N'Gom Doudou, adjoints: Fall Bassirou, Mme. Sohai, Folder Syndicat: SUEL 1960, carton 494, SVP, ANS.

<sup>50</sup> Up to 600,000-700,000 by 1972 and growing at 3.8 percent by births, and by 5 percent including migration into the city. International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 4, 45.

<sup>51</sup> Which operated under the umbrella of the UNTS.

<sup>52</sup> Renseignements a/s "Rencontre des Syndicats du Cap-vert," N. 794/K-1, 27 September 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>53</sup> Renseignements a/s "Rencontre des Syndicats du Cap-vert," N. 794/K-1, 27 September 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

Scarcity of work extended to those with secondary and even tertiary education. The job market was being swamped annually with thousands more leaving secondary school. Even those who graduated from secondary school struggled: Of the 837 secondary school graduates looking for work in 1968, only 156 found jobs.<sup>54</sup> From the perspective of many students, this was partially due to the 8000 non-Senegalese—predominantly Europeans—who were formally employed in Senegal in 1968, almost exclusively as technicians and supervisory staff. While African nationals made up almost the entire workforce of skilled and unskilled workers, they were only a tiny minority of upper-level managers and technicians.<sup>55</sup> For example, African nationals only held 9 percent of the upper executive positions in the private sector, lending credence to university students' claims that the Senegalese economy lay in the hands of French bosses.<sup>56</sup>

Trade unionists and students were particularly critical of the government's reliance on technical assistance personnel, numbering 1800 in 1968—1450 of whom were provided and paid by France.<sup>57</sup> They were heavily represented in teaching; in 1968 for example, 79 percent of secondary school teachers were non-Senegalese.<sup>58</sup> Even Assane Seck, the Senegalese Minister of Culture and ex-PRA-Sénégal leader, openly complained to a representative of the French Ministry of Culture that the dramatic disparities in pay between Senegalese employees and French technical assistance personnel in

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<sup>54</sup> In addition, from 1967-1969 14,000 people dropped out of upper secondary education alone looking for work as "qualified executives" (cadres). UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 18.

<sup>55</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 4-5.

<sup>56</sup> Compared to the private sector, Senegalese held a greater number of technician and managerial positions in the public sector. In the public sector, Senegalese held just less than half of the high-ranking administration jobs. See UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969,". On the ongoing predominance of European senior staff in the private sector, see International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 5, 50.

<sup>57</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 4.

<sup>58</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," VII. At the time, there were approximately 1500 European *assistants techniques*, including 69 percent of teachers in the country. Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 158.

similar positions maintained the domination of Dakar's *plateau* neighborhood by Europeans, while African professionals were forced to live outside of the center of the city.<sup>59</sup>

Students and trade unionists were upset that the government was moving slowly to reduce the number of foreign technical assistance personnel and other French supervisors and replace them with Senegalese staff. The government's goal to place Senegalese in one-third of public and private sector jobs by 1973 was far too little, far too late for most job-seekers and school graduates.<sup>60</sup> Dakar's legacy as the capital of France's West African colonies created an additional problem for those seeking jobs in the public sector. As the World Bank noted in 1973, "For political and social reasons, a large number of civil servants formerly working for A.O.F. were incorporated in Senegal's national civil service between 1958 and 1960 and have remained there ever since."<sup>61</sup> This was the case not only with upper-level European supervisors and technicians, but also aging lower-ranking African functionaries, who crowded the ranks of the public sector, leaving less room for new hires and promotions.

Even among those Senegalese who had found formal wage labor, the heavy presence of foreign managers and technicians was seen as a barrier to advancement, and with it, better salaries. Over the course of the 1960s, as the GNP per capita (in constant values) fell for the Senegalese urban population,

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<sup>59</sup> Renseignements "Compte-rendu de l'Ouverture de la Conférence sur l'Assistance Technique," N. 113/K-1. 5 February 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. The two speakers did not attack each other directly, but it seems that COURVES tried to defend himself "contre le sens bourgeois dont Mr. SECK accuse les Assistants Techniques dont le revenu individuel dépasse 1 million et demi par an contre un minimum mensuel de 28.000 francs pour l'africain, ceci expliquant l'occupation du plateau par les européens et les quartiers de la Médina par les africains."

<sup>60</sup> The government released a new "four year plan" in 1969, with the stated goal of placing Senegalese employees in 1/3 of public sector and private sector jobs, including teachers, over the next four years.

<sup>61</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 25, 30. "Unfortunately, most of the inherited 'excess' civil servants were not those that Senegal desperately needed after independence (planners, engineers, teachers, extension service agents, etc.) and were difficult to be retrained."

it rose 18 percent for the country's fifty thousand foreign nationals, mostly French and Lebanese.<sup>62</sup> At the end of the decade, the average income for foreigners was eight times that of a skilled Senegalese laborer, up to twenty-two times that of an unskilled Senegalese worker, and nearly one hundred times that of the average Senegalese farmer.<sup>63</sup>

While the drop in Senegalese per capita urban incomes was due to growing unemployment, even those who held salaried positions did not see their living standards increase. Senegalese salaried workers saw their wages increase an average of 3 percent per year, but the cost of living increased at roughly the same rate, negating those gains.<sup>64</sup> As Dakar trade unionists pointed out, the wage scale for Senegalese workers had been frozen since 1958.<sup>65</sup> In February 1967, the Dakar section of the UNTS put out a statement outlining the relative decrease in wages faced by workers. The minimum monthly wage (*Salaire minimum interprofessionnel garanti*, or SMIG) was set at 7,625 CFA francs per month and had not changed since 1961. Using a Senegalese state report that tracked increases in the cost of living, they calculated that the value of the SMIG had declined by 66 percent in that time period.<sup>66</sup> They calculated that it currently required sixty-eight hours and twelve minutes of work at the minimum wage to afford a

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<sup>62</sup> In part this was due to the departure of many lower paid civil servants, but also because salaries for Europeans continued to rise at European rates. International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 13, 45.

<sup>63</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 13, 52. This reports lists the following income ranges: Farmers: 10,000-40,000 CFA francs a year; Urban workers: 250,000-300,000 (minimum 100,000 unskilled laborer, 275,000 skilled laborer, 700,000 foreman); Engineer 900,000; Chief executive: 2.5-4.5 million; Expatriate workers: 2-2.5 million.

<sup>64</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 14.

<sup>65</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968."

<sup>66</sup> From "Situation économique du Sénégal," Service de la statistique officielle, July 1966, referred to in Tract, "Des faits et chiffres sure la dégradation continue de la capacité d'achat des masses laborieuses," Secrétariat du Bureau Régional UNTS du Cap-Vert, 8 February 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

kilogram of rice, but with proposed increases in the price of rice, it would take closer to eighty hours of labor.<sup>67</sup>

Although Senegalese workers in urban areas with regular waged work enjoyed a remarkably higher standard of living than new immigrants arriving from the countryside, this migration to the cities put greater pressure on workers' stagnant salaries. Workers with steady salaries, predominantly male, usually supported many family members. Some retained connections to rural areas, and as kith and kin arrived to the cities, they could be called upon to assist them financially. Thus, while tensions likely existed between salaried workers and the growing number of urban unemployed (or irregularly employed), they were also bound together by a shared reliance on the wages of those who had secured steady work.

Salaried workers were highly concentrated in Dakar, which was home to 80 percent of the country's industrial output, 66 percent of all salaried employees, and half of the of civil servants.<sup>68</sup> As a result, trade union strength was concentrated Dakar. So, although salaried workers constituted a minority of the population, they exerted a disproportionate amount of power over the economic and social life of the capital.

### **The Struggle For The Médina**

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<sup>67</sup> Renseignement n. 123/K-1, a/s "Activités de l'UNTS," 2 October 1967; "Des faits et chiffres sure la dégradation continuelle du pouvoir d'achat des masses laborieuses," Secrétariat du Bureau Régional UNTS du Cap-Vert. 8 February 1967, both in carton 23, 5D, RAD. However, the general stagnation of wages did not affect everyone, notably the police forces, whose wages rose 36-60 percent at the lower ranks, and 4-10 percent for the higher ranks, in 1963. The raise, occurring between the supposed *complot* of Mamadou Dia and the controversial December 1963 elections, may have been a conscious move on the part of the UPS government to achieve greater allegiance among the lower ranks of the police. See 20 July 1963. Extrait J.O.S. N. 3616. Ministère de la Fonction Publique et du Travail. Decret n. 63-361 M.F.P.T. du 6 Juin 1963 portant statut particulier du cadre des fonctionnaires de la police. RAD Série B, carton 188.

<sup>68</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 46.

In the midst of Dakar's growing economic problems, new political tensions flared up 1967 in response to the government's plan to bulldoze sections the Médina neighborhood of Dakar to make way for new construction. The Médina, immediately adjacent to Dakar's downtown (the Plateau), was a bustling Senegalese residential and commercial area that contrasted sharply with the European-dominated Plateau. This segregation had been created in 1914-1915, when the colonial governor, William Ponty, had ordered the expulsion of the indigenous Lebou population from the *Plateau* during a yellow fever epidemic.<sup>69</sup>

Beginning in 1963, the French architect and urban planner, Marcel Ecochard, developed a plan that called for the removal of residents from crowded neighborhoods toward new neighborhoods farther from downtown.<sup>70</sup> The proposal was approved by government decree in January 1967, and Senghor and other UPS leaders hoped to see housing in the Médina rebuilt on the model of high-density French suburban apartment buildings.<sup>71</sup> They planned to level many existing structures in the neighborhood, and provide government loans for residents' rehousing.<sup>72</sup>

Landowners, mostly of Lebou heritage, resisted the terms of the proposed "modernisation" or "rénovation" of the area. Their status as the indigenous population of Dakar, and their history of

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<sup>69</sup> Jérôme Chenal and Cheikh Samba Wade, "Dakar la ville double," in *Quelques rues d'Afrique: observation et gestion de l'espace public à Abidjan, Dakar et Nouakchott* ed. Jérôme Chenal, et al. (Lausanne: Editions du LaSaur, 2009), 73.

<sup>70</sup> See GRDR, "Monographie de Dakar, version finale," in *La dimension locale de la dialectique Migration et développement, le cas France-Sénégal* (Montreuil Cédex: GRDR; IFAN, 2014). This report draws on Marc Vernière, *Volontarisme d'Etat et spontanéisme populaire dans l'urbanisation du Tiers-monde : formation et évolution des banlieues dakaroises : le cas de Dagoudane Pikine*, Mémoires de la Section de géographie, Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques 7 (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1977); Lat Soucabé Mbow, "Dakar: croissance et mobilité urbaines" (PhD dissertation, Université de Paris X-Nanterre, 1992).

<sup>71</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 160. "Senghor avait rêvé de faire de ce quartier populaire de Dakar une nouvelle 'Cité radieuse.'" Cité radieuse was a Le Corbusier project in Marseille, intended to house 1600 people in a self-contained space, with shops on the top, a nursery, a running track on the roof. See also Chenal and Wade, "Dakar la ville double," 73.

<sup>72</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 160. "Cela impliquait expropriations et relogements consentis selon des prêts remboursables."

removal from the Plateau likely fueled their resistance to yet another forced relocation. Some criticized Senghor, who owned a property in Normandy worth 2.5 million francs, for failing to invest in Senegal, while now trying to dispossess land owners in Dakar.<sup>73</sup> The government held a large meeting in January, with over two thousand in attendance, to try to win over Lebou dignitaries and residents.<sup>74</sup> Although the meeting was mostly attended by UPS members, the audience booed the minister of urbanism, Mady Cissoko, when he got up to speak. Police intelligence services in Dakar (referred to as K-1) declared the meeting a failure, and worried that Lebou members might leave the UPS *en masse*. Further, they believed this discontent prompted increased calls for the release of imprisoned former prime minister Mamadou Dia.<sup>75</sup>

Over the next few months, UPS leaders attempted to court Lebou dignitaries, as public anger persisted.<sup>76</sup> Heads of Lebou families in the Médina tried to forestall the planned forced removals by the military, until after the Tabaski holiday on March 22.<sup>77</sup> Lebou residents then protested Senghor's annual Tabaski celebration,<sup>78</sup> concerned about how they would be compensated, and whether the government

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<sup>73</sup> "D'aucuns déclarent que le Président de la République qui possède une domain en Normandie d'une valeur de 2 milliards 500000 francs, n'a rien investi au Sénégal et que c'est la raison pour laquelle il tient à déposséder les propriétaires de Dakar." Renseignements "Propos [sic] à l'endroit du Chef de l'Etat," N. 73/K-1, 26 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>74</sup> Renseignements n. 74/K-1, a/s "du project de rénovation de la Médina," 21 January 1967 Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>75</sup> A little unclear on the connection: "Synthèse des évènements marquants du Mois de Janvier 1967," n. 76, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>76</sup> Renseignements, n. 162/K-1, "Compte-rendu de la réunion tenu ce jour à la Place de Santiaba par la Collectivité Lébou a/s. de la rénovation de la Médina," 26 February 1967; Renseignements, n. 167/K-1, A/s: "Compte-rendu reunion de la Collectivité Lébou de Dakar," 5 March 1967, both Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>77</sup> Renseignements, n. 219/K-1 a/s "du problème de la Médina," 13 March 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. Actual language is "programme de déguerpissement."

<sup>78</sup> Senghor led this annual Eid celebration despite being Catholic.



would guarantee their rehousing.<sup>79</sup> Residents were skeptical because similar forced removals had already taken place in other areas, notably along the Allées du Centenaire (Boulevard de Gaulle), without provisions for the residents to be rehoused.<sup>80</sup>

The Caliph of the Mouride sufi tariqa, Senghor's long-time ally, Serigne Mouhamadou Fadl Mbacké, was silent through much of the controversy, which K-1 interpreted as tacit support for the Lebou opposition.<sup>81</sup> The resistance to the government's plan was led by older dignitaries, many of whom initially expressed their frustration with the UPS by evoking nostalgia for French rule.<sup>82</sup> But K-1 agents reported that young Lebous began joining the anti-rénovation campaign as the year progressed.<sup>83</sup> Accumulated bitterness toward the government in the Médina was set off in 1968, when the university student strike erupted in May. Almost immediately, the Médina became the site of the first, and most explosive, neighborhood upheaval as local residents fought with police forces for nearly a week.

### **The UPS's Internal Tensions**

By 1966, all opposition parties in Senegal had either been banned or integrated into the UPS. The country's sole party, which Senghor described as a *parti unifié*, consisted of an amalgam of different

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<sup>79</sup> "Bulletin de renseignements a/s des Lébous, à l'occasion de la Tabaski, les Lébous décident de manifester leur hostilité au Chef de l'Etat," n. 17 C/K 11, 21 March 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. Tabaski is the local name for the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha.

<sup>80</sup> Renseignements n. 651/K-1, a/s "Commentaires en ville de la déclaration radiodiffusée du Chef de l'Etat concernant la rénovation de la Médina," 20 July 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>81</sup> Bulletin de renseignements n. 19 C/K 11, "Vie politique, une partie de l'opinion prête à M'Backé Dramé l'intention de se présenter aux prochaines élections législatives," 10 May 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>82</sup> Renseignements "Propos [sic] à l'endroit du Chef de l'Etat," N. 73/K-1, 26 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD. There were also specific accusations levelled at Senghor: "D'aucuns déclarent que le Président de la République qui possède une domaine en Normandie d'une valeur de 2 milliards 500000 francs, n'a rien investi au Sénégal et que c'est la raison pour laquelle il tient à déposséder les propriétaires de Dakar."

<sup>83</sup> Renseignements n. 299/K-1, a/s "de la jeunesse léboue du Cap-Vert," 25 April 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

political forces. As shown in the previous chapter, by 1966, the UPS governed as a *parti unique* (single party), but the label of *parti unifié* is useful for considering the internal life of the party. The UPS had been borne out of French social democratic parties, and had adopted the political ambiguity and relatively loose organizational culture of this tradition. While Senghor's authority, as head of the party, was not to be challenged, the UPS attempted to contain a diverse array of members.

But when party infighting erupted in 1967 and 1968 it strained the resilience of the *parti unifié*. In February, Demba Diop, mayor of Mbour and a former minister, was assassinated in a parking lot in the city of Thiès. He was shot by Abdou N'Daffa Faye, a supporter of one of Diop's local rivals within the UPS.<sup>84</sup> Diop's funeral became the date of a national day of mourning. Faye was hastily tried by a special tribunal in Dakar and put to death by a firing squad, the first official state execution since independence.

The following month, in the midst of the conflict over the *rénovation* of the Médina, an assassination attempt was made on President Senghor as he led the official Tabaski celebration at the Grand Mosqué in the Médina. As Senghor was departing, a gunman tried to shoot the president with a pistol and was wrestled to the ground. Mostapha Lô was accused of carrying out the attempt, though he maintained his innocence through the time of his execution by firing squad in June 1967. Senghor defended the use of the death penalty in both cases, hoping that a firm response would discourage other violent expressions of intra-party rivalry and challenges to his authority.

UPS leaders used the assassination attempt to rally public support behind the President, holding a mass public meeting in Dakar just days afterward. The crowd pushed to march toward the Presidential Palace, cutting the rally short, and at the Palace, local UPS elder Samba Gueye addressed the crowd before Senghor briefly appeared to acknowledge their support.<sup>85</sup> UPS party sections then organized

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<sup>84</sup> François Zuccarelli, *La vie politique sénégalaise* (Paris: CHEAM, 1987) Zuccarelli names deputy Ibou Kébé, but other sources claim Faye was a supporter of Deputy Mayor Jacques d'Erville.

<sup>85</sup> Renseignements a/s, "du meeting de soutien au Président de la République," N. 250/K-1, 25 March 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. Several placards and banners were displayed

smaller public rallies in their respective neighborhoods.<sup>86</sup> A meeting in Bopp, drew 2000 people, greeted with a banner calling “For the Reinforcement of the Authority of the Party.” Speakers lauded Senghor as the “savior” and “liberator” of Senegal, and credited him for rescuing the Senegalese people from “slavery.” The Minister of Justice, Alioune Badara M’Bengue, characterized Senghor’s government as “the most democratic of the people of Africa,” and called Senghor the Senegalese equivalent of Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin.<sup>87</sup>

In the wake of Diop’s murder and the attempt on his life, Senghor consolidated his authority as head of the UPS and the state. His approval of the execution of Faye and Lô sent a clear message that threats to the ruling party’s stability and his personal authority would not be tolerated. Lô was a cousin of Cheikh Ahmed Tidiane Sy, a prominent figure in Tijani sufi tariqaa, and a former opponent of the government, who had spent time in jail as a leader of the opposition Parti de la Solidarité Sénégalaise (PSS) in 1959. In the early 1960s, Sy reconciled with Senghor, and was given a short-lived position as Ambassador to Egypt, where he had travelled with Lô. Lô’s connections to an important Tijani family led the government to attempt to find the source of the assassination attempt among higher authorities in Lô’s religious and familial circles. Sy responded by taking a conciliatory position vis-à-vis the

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facing the grandstand: “Vive Senghor, père de la negritude,” “Les traîtres au poteau,” “A bas les comploteurs diaistes,” “Vive Senghor, le promoteur de l’Unité Africaine.”

<sup>86</sup> On meetings in Pikine and Rufisque see Renseignements “Compte rendu Meeting U.P.S. organisé à ‘Gouye Senghor’ le 30-3-67,” N. 261/K-1, Source: A, 31 March 1967, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements a/s “Commentaires autour du meeting UPS organisé à Pikine le 1/4/67,” N. 266/K-1, 3 April 1967, Source: A. Valeur: 1 Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements n. 268/K-1 a/s “compte rendu du meeting UPS organisé à Rufisque le 2/4/67,” 3 April 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>87</sup> Renseignements “Compte rendu Meeting U.P.S. organisé à ‘Gouye Senghor’ le 30-3-67,” N. 261/K-1, Source: A, 31 March 1967, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. One speaker credited Senghor with the achievement of political independence for Senegal, while another claimed that Senegal would still be “in slavery” [“dans l’escalavage”] without Senghor. A leader of the local woman’s section of the party referred to him as “our savior” [“notre sauveteur”] Samba Gueye called him “the liberator” of the Senegalese people, while Alioune Badara M’Bengue received applause for compared Senghor to Lenin. (“Lenine était ce qu’il était à Moscou, Senghor à son tour, est ce qu’il est au Sénégal”). M’Bengue further characterized life under Senghor’s presidency as “the most democratic of the people of Africa.”

government, saying that he had always called for compromise on the issue of forced removals from the Médina—<sup>88</sup>a indication that Sy believed this conflict lay at the heart of Lô's actions. Lô was ultimately deemed to have acted on his own, and influential figures close to the family called on the president to pardon him. But Senghor refused to pardon Lô, and moved ahead with the execution, a declaration of his authority that served as a warning to other religious leaders.<sup>89</sup>

Following the assassination attempt, suspected supporters of former prime minister Mamadou Dia also came under suspicion, and were denounced at rallies for Senghor.<sup>90</sup> In some party sections in Dakar, leaders called for the creation of "vigilance committees" to "detect every person hostile to the political program of the government."<sup>91</sup> In the autonomous Lebou neighborhood of Yoff in Cap-Vert, UPS vigilance committees accused Yoff's Diaraf (executive), El-Hajj Talla Diagne, of collaborating with Dia supporters, who they implicated in the assassination attempt. As critics of Senghor came under

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<sup>88</sup> Renseignements n.269/K-1, "Chant religieux tenus à Meckhé par Cheikh Amhed Tidiane Sy," Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>89</sup> Perhaps because of lingering suspicions, Sy would come to the defense of the regime a year later during the revolt of 1968.

<sup>90</sup> Placards at the initial rally in Dakar supporting Senghor included one that read: "A bas les comploteurs diaistes." Renseignements a/s "du meeting de soutien au Président de la République," N. 250/K-1, 25 March 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. The regime had trained its supporters to see Dia as a perpetual turncoat threat, even from prison. Dia, like Sy, sought to distance himself from the assassination attempt, and wrote a letter to his family (reported in *Jeune Afrique*) stating that he rejected assassination as a means of taking political power. Dia said he would not ask for pardon from Senghor, that his fate is in God's hands only. Information n. 520/K-1 a/s I. Presse, 9 June 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>91</sup> In the words of the report: "décèler toute personne hostile à la politique du Gouvernement." Renseignements a/s "Commentaires autour du meeting UPS organisé à Pikine le 1/4/67," N. 266/K-1, Source: A, 3 April 1967, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. The calls for unified support behind the president prompted the the party, and particularly the MJUPS, leadership to call for "vigilance brigades." Such patrols were not specifically meant to catch additional assassination attempts, but more broadly "pour détecter tous le fauteurs de troubles" according to a Dakar police report. See Renseignements a/s "du meeting UPS prévue ce jour à 16 heures à Bopp," N. 259/K-1, 30 March 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignement, n. 895/K-1 a/s Réunion des Jeunes UPS du 5è secteur, 21 November 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

increased scrutiny, many, like Sy and Diagne, retreated from conflict with the President.<sup>92</sup> Senghor took advantage of the situation to push through a revision of the Constitution on June 20, 1967, that gave him greater powers as *chef d'état*, including the power to dissolve the National Assembly.

But despite Senghor's attempt to enforce political discipline inside and outside of the UPS, his party was rife with division. Reports from K-1 indicate that conflict continually broke out between rival factions within the UPS sections and subsections in the capital city<sup>93</sup> throughout 1967. While these reports are restricted to events in the Cap-Vert region, they nevertheless offer a glimpse into the troubled state of the party.

At the end of February, a conflict erupted between the UPS leadership and party youth militants, organized in the Mouvement des jeunes de l'UPS, or MJUPS. At an MJUPS workshop attended by 200 party youth delegates from Cap-Vert, the Minister of Sports and Youth, Amadou Racine Ndiaye, accused many MJUPS members of only joining in order to obtain political or administrative jobs. He further complained that many youth members never bothered to read a newspaper and lacked a basic knowledge of current events.<sup>94</sup> National MJUPS leader Samba Wagne replied harshly to Ndiaye, accusing party heads of only filling open government posts with "a friend or a parent."<sup>95</sup> In Dakar, this conflict spilled into at least two party sections, as MJUPS leaders challenged party elders like Abdoulaye Fofana

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<sup>92</sup> For example, this seems to have silenced the opposition being organized by Talla Diagne, diaraff de Yoff, who had been accused of working with the PAI and now 'des elements ex-Diaïstes impliqués dans le complot.' Renseignements a/s "des activités anti-gouvernementales de M. Talla DIAGNE de Yoff," N. 72/K-1, 7 February 1966, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements "Résolution contre Elhadji Talla Diagne," N. 265/K-1, Source: A, 1 April 1967, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>93</sup> Unfortunately, these reports do not exist for years past 1967.

<sup>94</sup> "...le Mouvement, pour certain, n'est qu'un moyen d'accéder à un poste ou de conserver une fonction." Renseignements "Compte rendu de la journée d'études du Mouvement des jeunes U.P.S. à la maison des Jeunes et de la Culture de Dakar le 26-2-67," 27 February 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>95</sup> Renseignements "Compte rendu de la journée d'études du Mouvement des jeunes U.P.S. à la maison des Jeunes et de la Culture de Dakar le 26-2-67," Source: A, 27 February 1967, Valeur: 1, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

and Samba Gueye for not allowing the youth of their sections to have input into party decisions.<sup>96</sup>

MJUPS militants also bristled when Senghor supposedly dismissed the importance of party youth militants in the upcoming 1968 legislative and presidential elections.<sup>97</sup>

Former members of the Parti de Regroupement Africain - Sénégal (PRA-Sénégal), which dissolved into the UPS in 1966, also led challenges to local UPS leaders.<sup>98</sup> In one section, they accused UPS heads of using their authority to control access to newly constructed housing.<sup>99</sup> In the UPS section in the neighborhood of Pikine, former PRA-Sénégal leaders called for the creation of “vigilance committees” following the assassination attempt, but did so in order to critique the party. They claimed many of the existing leaders were content being the protégés (“poulains”) of Senghor, and were far removed from the base of the party. They argued that had the party been better organized at the base, the attempt on Senghor’s life would have never occurred.<sup>100</sup>

After the assassination attempt, K-1 reported that many party militants left a rally for Senghor early, frustrated that the speakers only celebrated the president, and did not address the issues of the Médina expulsions, the political tensions behind the assassination attempt, or the controversy over a

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<sup>96</sup> Notably in the first and third sections. In the first section, Samba Gueye’s leadership was challenged by the “jeunes MJUPS” led by Babacar Kanoji. Renseignements N.623/K-1 “Compte-rendu de la reunion de la CA de la 1ère section,” 7 July 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD. In the third section, the MJUPS, represented by Abdel Kader Sabara, (perhaps also ex-PRA) also attacked the leadership of the section, particularly Abdoulaye Fofana. Sabara is the Sec Gen de la coordination des jeunes du Cap-Vert, and general treasurer of the national bureau of MJUPS. Renseignements n. 648/K-1 “Activités politiques au 3e Secteur,” 20 July 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements a/s “de l’investiture d’un M.J.U.P.S. au poste de Secrétaire municipal – des incidents entre jeunes on eu lieu,” N. 90/K-1, 31 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>97</sup> In this case, specifically referring to Abdel Kader Sabara. Renseignements n. 648/K-1 “Activités politiques au 3e Secteur,” 20 July 1967. carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>98</sup> Renseignements N. 642/K-1 a/s “3ème Secteur,” 19 July 1967; carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements n. 648/K-1 “Activités politiques au 3e Secteur,” 20 July 1967; carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>99</sup> Renseignements n. 281/K-1 a/s “de al mutation de M. Ibrahima Gaye, de Service des Logements,” 15 April 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>100</sup> Renseignements a/s “Commentaires autour du meeting UPS organisé à Pikine le 1/4/67,” N. 266/K-1, 3 April 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

new law meant to control spending on family ceremonies.<sup>101</sup> By mid-1967, at least three sections of the party in Dakar were demobilized by internal splits within the leadership.<sup>102</sup> Some of the smaller party committees also fragmented, with police being called in on multiple occasions to break up fights at party meetings across the city.<sup>103</sup> In the neighborhood of Fann-Hock (immediately adjacent to the University), the party was unable to resolve the crisis, and simply created two parallel committees organized around two competing leaderships.<sup>104</sup>

While youth section leaders criticized the party leadership, the youth section itself was already fraught with divisions. At the end of 1966, representatives from Kaolack and Cap-Vert had to be held back from brawling by police over accusations that MJUPS funds had been improperly spent.<sup>105</sup> Delegates from the regions of Thiès and Sine Saloum refused to participate in the national MJUPS board, also citing financial corruption accusations, leaving only five of the eight national sections involved. When the board of the Cap-Vert MJUPS met at the end of January 1967, to choose a representative to

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<sup>101</sup> Renseignements "Compte rendu Meeting U.P.S. organisé à 'Gouye Senghor' le 30-3-67," N. 261/K-1, Source: A, 31 March 1967, Valeur: 1 Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>102</sup> Renseignements n. 530/K-1 a/s. "renouvellement des organismes de base du Parti UPS," 12 June 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>103</sup> On Fann-Hock, see Renseignements n. 504/K-1 a/s "de la situation politique à Fann-Hock," 6 June 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements n. 518/K-1, a/s "Activités UPS à la S/Section de Fann-Hock," 9 June 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD. On fights in Mbode 4 see Renseignements n. 505/K-1 a/s "placements de cartes à M'Bode 4," 6 June 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD. Renseignements n. 530/K-1 a/s. renouvellement des organismes de base du Parti UPS, 12 June 1967. carton 23, 5D, RAD. On Rebeuss 1 see Renseignements n. 579/K-1 a/s "du comité litigieux de Rebeuss 1," 25 June 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>104</sup> Renseignements n. 620/K-1 a/s "situation politique à Fann-Hock," 8 July 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>105</sup> Renseignements n. 383/K-1 "Incidents en dernière heure à la conférence du MJUPS des 26 et 27-11-66," 28 November 1966, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

sit on the *Conseil Municipal*, the meeting ended with a fistfight between representatives from Dakar and Rufisque, who supported opposing candidates.<sup>106</sup>

The internal crises of the UPS, however, did not result in the emergence of public splits. Even as UPS youth and student members criticized UPS elders for monopolizing party and government posts, they remained loyal to the party, and opposed youth and student activists outside the party who were critical of Senghor. If anything, the party appeared to be at the peak of its consolidation by October 1967, when the last remnant of a former opposition party, the Bloc des Masses Sénégalaises (BMS), led by Samba Diop, agreed to integrate its members into the UPS.<sup>107</sup> The UPS remained hegemonic, even if internally divided and dealing with accusations of local corruption. And the party could still mobilize people, as it did at the rallies supporting Senghor, and later in the summer, when two-thousand people showed up for a mass women's meeting led by female UPS leaders.

But the internal crisis in the party, the ongoing conflict over the Médina, and the execution of a member of a notably Tijani family had repercussions. The annual sale of UPS membership cards, a gauge of popular support and source of millions of CFA francs in party revenue, was seriously upset in 1967.<sup>108</sup> Party leaders in Cap-Vert lamented that more party cards had been sold among the dispersed populations of Casamance and Sénégal Orientale than in the dense capital city, the organizational hub of the party.<sup>109</sup> In the suburbs of Dakar, 18,000 cards went unsold. A decline in party membership in the suburb of Thiaroye was reportedly rooted in anger over increased fees for vendors selling their goods at

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<sup>106</sup> Renseignements a/s "de l'investiture d'un M.J.U.P.S. au poste de Secrétaire municipal – des incidents entre jeunes on eu lieu," N. 90/K-1, Source: A, 31 January 1967, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>107</sup> And gained seats on the *Bureau politique*.

<sup>108</sup> Renseignements n.432 /K-1 a/s "du bureau de l'Union Régionale du Cap-Vert," 17 May 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>109</sup> "Circulaire from the UPS Commissaire Politique, Ousmane Seydi, to UPS section leaders in the Cap-Vert region," 20 May 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.



the market.<sup>110</sup> But within many party sections and subsections, the crisis stemmed from the conflicts between leadership cliques. In some sections, cards were reportedly refused to members of the internal party opposition.<sup>111</sup> In the Bargny section, police were brought into stop fights from breaking out over the distribution of cards.<sup>112</sup>

Even though the MJUPS had a formal monopoly on youth organization, K-1 reported that the party struggled to gain young adherents.<sup>113</sup> For example, when the board of the *Maison des Jeunes de Pikine* asked all members of the *Maison* to join the MJUPS, most declined.<sup>114</sup> Pikine was a relatively new suburb, the product of forced removals from areas closer to downtown Dakar. Thus, the recent memory of the UPS' heavy-handed approach to moving the population of the city may have led to a lack of enthusiasm for the party among young residents.

The assassination attempts of 1967 against Senghor and Demba Diop thus had a contradictory effect. On the one hand, the party rallied around Senghor and began a hunt for opponents of the regime. On the other hand, a crisis-within the UPS emerged, as party leaders and members argued over the cause of the complacency that had taken hold in the party. In the context of an emerging economic crisis, the conflict over the Médina, and the struggle to reestablish independent student unions, the ruling party was unable to address mounting criticisms, particularly in the capital city, where a revival of opposition was taking place.

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<sup>110</sup> Renseignements N. 280/K-1 "Mécontentment des maraîchers de la banlieu de Dakar," 15 April 1967 carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>111</sup> Renseignements n. 408/K-1 a/s "des placements de cartes UPS," 9 May 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>112</sup> Renseignements n. 449/K-1 "Placement de cartes UPS à Bargny," 22 March 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>113</sup> Renseignements n. 422/K-1 a/s "du Conseil National du MJUPS," 13 May 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD. They printed 60,000 membership cards, though it is unclear how many were sold.

<sup>114</sup> Renseignements, n. 580/K-1 a/s "Réunion du bureau de la Maison des Jeunes de Pikine," 25 June 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

## II. The Struggle Over Campus

### The Aftermath of the 1966 Strike

Events at the University of Dakar between the 1966 and 1968 strikes have been glossed over in histories of the student movement in Senegal. The 1966 strike is generally noted for reviving the student movement and creating the new student unions that would go on to lead the 1968 strike. But looking more closely at what the new unions did on campus during the two years *between* the strikes reveals two key dynamics. On the one hand, it buttresses the arguments made by Abdoulaye Bathily and other former participants that the 1968 strike was an expression of African students' mounting conflict with the UPS regime, and not an imported articulation of the protests taking place in France (as Senegalese and French authorities claimed). On the other hand, it shows that students' struggle with the government between 1966 and 1968 waxed and waned, and was rooted in overlapping international, imperial, national, and local political circumstances. The US war in Vietnam, continued French dominance over key sectors of the economy and the running of the university, the effect of the economic crisis in Dakar, tensions over the Médina, and the internal crisis of the UPS all had repercussions on campus in the lead up to the 1968 strike.

Following the 1966 strike, the government was forced to negotiate with African student representatives. With the former unions representing African students no longer legally recognized, these students were likely invested as representatives by their peers through a combination of formal and informal means. During this time, students continued to elect representatives within each *faculté* to advocate for their needs. Non-Senegalese African students also continued to elect officers for their national student organizations. Some Senegalese students continued to carry on the name of the General Union of Senegalese Students (UGES) despite being banned, and likely played a major role in organizing the protest and the student response to the arrests (see chapter 1). Out of the negotiations

with the government, this amalgam of student leaders went on to form two new student unions in the fall of 1966, which the Senegalese government had, in the abstract, agreed to recognize as representative student bodies. The first was the Democratic Union of Senegalese Students (Union démocratique des étudiants sénégalais, or UDES), representing Senegalese students at the university. The second, the Dakar Students Union (Union des étudiants de Dakar, or UED) was an umbrella union encompassing representatives from all national groups at the university—although in the tradition of the outlawed UGEAO, its membership was predominantly students from sub-Saharan Africa.

The primary conflict on campus in 1966 and 1967 arose over the government's refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the UDES and the UED as representative student organizations at the University of Dakar. Not only did the regime refuse to recognize the UDES and the UED, but it also went about sponsoring *competing* student formations. But the government-backed unions never succeeded in gaining broad support among students. Instead, government efforts to actively undermine the UDES and UED further alienated many African students from the UPS regime.<sup>115</sup> By going through this conflict, I hope to show that the government's decision to spurn representatives from the new student unions laid the groundwork for the 1968 strike.

### **New Student Unions and the UPS Students**

After successfully negotiating the return of the expelled students and the right to form new student unions following the 1966 strike, student leaders believed that the government might be more open to their input about the university. They were encouraged by the appointment of a new minister of national education in June 1966, Amadou Mahtar Mbow. Mbow was a leader of the PRA-Sénégal, the party that formed as a breakaway from the UPS in 1958, in order to call for a "no" vote in the 1958 referendum. As noted in chapter 1, when Mbow and other PRA-Sénégal leaders agreed to cease activity

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<sup>115</sup> Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 301.

as an opposition party and fuse with the UPS in 1966, they negotiated for three ministerial portfolios.<sup>116</sup>

In this shakeup, Senghor demoted the existing Minister of Education, Ibra Wane, (likely due to the fallout after the 1966 strike), and replaced him with Mbow. On one hand, many Senegalese student leaders were skeptical of opposition figures like Mbow who had agreed to join the UPS. On the other hand, student leaders claimed that they initially had high expectations for Mbow, whom some had known as a professor at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (attached to the University of Dakar) during the 1966 strike.<sup>117</sup> Students perhaps believed that Mbow's own past as a harassed opposition figure would make him more sympathetic to their struggle for an independent union.

However, this hope was dashed by the beginning of 1967, as it became clear that the government was making a concerted effort to build up regime-linked student organizations at the expense of the UDES and UED. In an attempt to undermine the new Senegalese student union (UDES), the government attempted to revive the moribund government-sponsored National Union of Senegalese Students (UNES), by placing students loyal to the ruling party at the helm.<sup>118</sup> By March 1967, the UNES had become synonymous with the small campus chapter of the UPS, the Fédération des étudiants UPS, which likely numbered around two dozen students.<sup>119</sup>

The Fédération des étudiants UPS attempted to increase its profile and memberships in December 1966, by hosting two public forums, in Dakar and Kaolack, to address "student issues." UDES leaders protested that they had not been invited, despite representing a much larger base of supporters. They

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<sup>116</sup> Amadou Mahtar Mbow, Assane Seck, Abdoulaye Ly all received ministerial portfolios.

<sup>117</sup> "Halte à la mystification," Comité Directeur, UED, 6 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>118</sup> "Synthèse des évènements marquants du Mois de Janvier 1967," N. 76, No date, carton 23, 5D, RAD. UNES had originally formed in 1965 with government support, as the only legally recognized student union on campus, in an attempt to undermine the independent UGES (forerunner of the UDES). Tellingly, Dakar police reports describe the UNES as simply the same as the UPS student section.

<sup>119</sup> The French report in March 1967 implied that the MJUPS and UNES had essentially become synonymous. Note, Salamine, N. 677, Objet: "Activités des Etudiants de l'U.N.E.S.," Source: ERARD, 15 March 1967, Valeur: B/2, carton 672, DA, CADN.

complained that the Minister of Education and the President were now eager to collaborate with a “groupuscule” of UPS students, while brushing off student union representatives when they requested meetings to discuss “student issues.” And while the Ministry of the Interior refused to legalize the UDES, UPS students held events at government-sponsored venues in the presence of “ministers, deputies, [and] mayors.”<sup>120</sup>

However, despite official support, the UPS students remained a negligible force on campus. Dakar police agents (K-1) reported that although the theme of the UPS students’ seminar on “student concerns” was favorably received by students, the leaders of the Fédération des Etudiants UPS were unpopular, and were seen by most students as “careerists, who only care about their personal interests.”<sup>121</sup> The appointment of the UPS student leaders to sought-after posts as assistant principals in schools (*surveillants généraux*) and teacher/headmasters of boarding schools (*maîtres d’Internat*) was a source of much consternation on campus.<sup>122</sup>

The head of the Fédération des Etudiants UPS, Moustapha Niasse, was outspoken in his criticism of students who did not back the ruling party. When UDES leaders got a hold of a copy of Niasse’s report to the UPS seminar at the end of December 1966, they published excerpts in a tract distributed on campus. In his report, Niasse had bitterly accused most African university students of being “reckless” militants: “dreaming of a *maquis* and feeding themselves poorly understood Marxism.” Niasse believe

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<sup>120</sup> “A propos des déclarations de Niasse,” Tract, Comité Exécutif of UDES, Dakar, 4 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; “Communiqué from the Comité Exécutif de l’UDES, 23 December 1966, carton 23, 5D, RAD; “Communiqué,” Comité Exécutif de l’UDES, Dakar, 23 December 1966, carton 672, DA, CADN. The UNES had access to Maison des Jeunes et de la Culture. See Note, Salamine, N. 729, Objet: “Réunion de l’U.N.E.S.,” Source: ERARD, 20 March 1967, Valeur: B/2. carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>121</sup> Renseignements, N. 410/K-1, 31 December 1966, carton 23, 5D, RAD. “... ‘carriéristes’, qui ne soucient que de leurs intérêts personnels”; Renseignements a/s “du Séminaire de l’U.P.S. sur les problèmes des Etudiants,” N. 409/K-1, 30 December 1966, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>122</sup> Renseignements a/s “du Séminaire de l’U.P.S. sur les problèmes des Etudiants,” N. 409/K-1, Source: A, 30 December 1966, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

that government needed to “civilize” and “tame” the “multitude” of non-UPS students, as one tames the rejected offspring of an animal mother.<sup>123</sup> Niasse called for party elders to enforce UPS membership among their sons, to not allow student representatives to be elected, and to only give UPS students posts as teacher-headmasters of public boarding schools (*maîtres d’Internat*).

Niasse emphasized that the UDES and UED were “illegal organizations,” whose existence went against the interests of the party. Niasse wrote caustically in his report to the meeting, “It is useless to try to attract the sympathies of people whose hatred of the regime is rooted deeply rooted in their core [lit: viscera].”<sup>124</sup> He further criticized the new Minister of Education, Amadou Mahtar Mbow, for not doing more to prevent the formation of the UED and the UDES.<sup>125</sup> Niasse’s militant defense of the ruling party found few supporters on campus. One Dakar police report concluded that the UPS student organization could grow, if only the leadership was “entrusted to others beside Moustapha Niasse and his friends.”<sup>126</sup>

Niasse’s leadership may have been one factor in UPS students’ failure to grow, but their challenges likely reflected the wider crisis within the UPS and the party’s youth section. With intra-party squabbles tying down much of the UPS leadership in Dakar, the party seems to have paid little attention

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<sup>123</sup> “A propos des declarations de Niasse,” Tract, Comité Exécutif of UDES, Dakar, 4 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. “Tel l’ami des bêtes qui tente de rattraper les rejetons d’une femelle enfuie, le gouvernement doit apprivoiser les étudiants.”

<sup>124</sup> “A propos des declarations de Niasse,” Tract, Comité Exécutif of UDES, Dakar, 4 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. “Il ne sert à rien de vouloir s’attirer les sympathies d’éléments dont la haine du régime est profondément enracinés dans leurs viscères.”

<sup>125</sup> “A propos des declarations de Niasse,” Tract, Comité Exécutif of UDES, Dakar, 4 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>126</sup> Renseignements a/s “du Séminaire de l’U.P.S. sur les problèmes des Etudiants,” N. 409/K-1, 30 December 1966, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD, “confiée à d’autres que Moustapha Niasse et ses amis.”

to the strategy of the Fédération des Etudiants UPS.<sup>127</sup> Niasse's personal loyalty to the party was nevertheless rewarded in the party, and he later became a minister in the governments of both Senghor and his successor, Abdou Diouf, and is currently the president of Senegal's National Assembly.

The failure of the UPS students and their National Union of Senegalese Students (UNES) to gain adherents did not stop Senegalese authorities from using the existence of UNES as a tool for threatening UDES, which remained in a state of legal ambiguity—neither legally recognized nor banned.

The same month, the Senegalese government joined in the creation of the Mouvement des étudiants de l'organisation commune africaine et malgache (MEOCAM). The group was to be the student section of OCAM, the economic cooperation organization comprised of twelve former French colonies in Africa, as well as Togo, Congo-Léopoldville (Kinshasa) and Rwanda.<sup>128</sup> MEOCAM was thus officially sponsored not only by the ruling party of Senegal, but all OCAM-affiliated governments, and held its first congress in Niamey just after New Years in 1967.<sup>129</sup> Among the sixty-four delegates present, the four students representing Senegal were UPS members.<sup>130</sup>

With the backing of ruling parties, MEOCAM threatened to undermine the independent student associations that drew together students from across Francophone Africa. The most important were the Federation of Black African Students in France (FEANF) and the newly created Dakar Students Union

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<sup>127</sup> Notably, in K-1 reports, news of the Fédération des Etudiants U.P.S. largely ceases after 1966.

<sup>128</sup> Founded in 1965 as an expansion of the UAMCE, itself an adaption of the UAM.

<sup>129</sup> According to Dakar-Matin 31 December 1966, this meeting included "64 participants: 12 delegates of the provisional Exec Committee of which 8 Ivorian students, 4 Senegalese...26 delegates representing the 13 countries of OCAM (2 per state)...and 26 African student representing European universities." "Communiqué à Propos du M.E.O.C.A.M.," Comité Directeur, UED, 3 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; "L'U.N.E.S. et le M.E.O.C.A.M.," Bureau of the Association des Etudiants Sénégalais en France, No Date (February 1967), Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>130</sup> Renseignements a/s "des Etudiants," N. 409/K-1, 29 December 1966, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; "Communiqué à Propos du M.E.O.C.A.M.," Comité Directeur, UED, 3 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

(UED), both of which protested the creation of MEOCAM. The UED leadership mocked MEOCAM's backers' claim that it was an expression of African Unity, "for African unity will not be made by the puppet [governments] of O.C.A.M. rejected [lit: vomited] and condemned by African peoples."<sup>131</sup> They saw MEOCAM as a sign that the "reactionary leaders of Africa" were worried about their loss of popular support, and sought to nurture young "dauphins" who would support and carry on their politics.<sup>132</sup>

UED leaders did not believe that MEOCAM would gain traction, but feared that MEOCAM's existence would be used by the Senegalese government to justify their refusal to recognize the UED.<sup>133</sup> Their fears were validated when the Minister of the Interior, Amadou Cissé Dia, made an announcement at the end of December, affirming that the UED would *not* be recognized as the representative of African students at the university.<sup>134</sup> The government appeared to throw down the gauntlet, and UED leaders, worried that they might be the next student union banned outright, responded by calling for a two-day strike.

### **January 1967: A Cautious Strike for Recognition**

In January 1967, tensions between the government and the new student union leaders came to a head. Despite assurances after the February 1966 strike that Senegalese authorities would recognize new student unions, the government had refused to legalize either the UDES or the UED (while backing pro-

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<sup>131</sup> "...car l'unité Africaine ne se fera pas par les fantoches de l'O.C.A.M. vomis et condamnés par les peuples africains." "Communiqué à Propos du M.E.O.C.A.M.," Comité Directeur, UED, 3 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>132</sup> "Communiqué à Propos du M.E.O.C.A.M.," Comité Directeur, UED, 3 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>133</sup> "Communiqué à Propos du M.E.O.C.A.M.," Comité Directeur, UED, 3 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>134</sup> Renseignements a/s "des étudiants," N. 13/K-1, 5 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD. Apparently it was after a speech by Senghor at the end of the year (1966) that the minister of interior was brought to say in a single phrase, to the students, that the UED was not recognized.



government formations, UNES and MEOCAM, as competitors). Senghor and Mbow refused to recognize the UDES and UED on the basis that the unions' leaders would not agree to limit the purview of their activity to "corporate" issues.<sup>135</sup> The line between what constituted "corporate" (*corporative*) positions from "political" (*politique*) positions was never clearly defined. But working to promote the UPS was seen as being above "politics," as simply collaboration with the government in the interest of the nation as a whole. Thus, Niasse, the head of the UPS students, declared unironically that "student[s] should not be political."<sup>136</sup> The underlying issue was thus whether the UDES and the UED would be allowed organize outside of—or in opposition to—the UPS government.

With the creation of new government-sponsored unions, UED and UDES leaders faced not only a denial of legal recognition, but the possibility of being banned entirely. But they had one clear advantage: they garnered the support of the vast majority of African students on campus. According to French and Senegalese intelligence reports, the UDES claimed a membership of 650 out of the 685 Senegalese students enrolled at the University.<sup>137</sup> As Senegalese student leaders pointed out, after the 1966 strike, the government had been forced to negotiate with the student leaders who later formed of UDES, even though they lacked legal recognition.<sup>138</sup> UED leaders (including UDES leaders as a subset)

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<sup>135</sup> Synthèse des évènements marquants du Mois de Janvier 1967, N. 76, No date, carton 23, 5D, RAD. "Corporate organizations that, notwithstanding the provisions of Presidential Decree on student associations, would not comply with regulatory requirements in this area; have not been recognized by the Interior Minister."

<sup>136</sup> "A propos des déclarations de Niasse," Tract, Comité Exécutif of UDES, Dakar, 4 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>137</sup> Renseignements a/s Assemblée générale des étudiants de l'U.E.D. et de l'U.D.E.S., 7 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Synthèse des évènements marquants du Mois de Janvier 1967, N. 76, No date, carton 23, 5D, RAD; +15 March 1967. Note. Salamine. N. 677. Objet : Activités des Etudiants de l'U.N.E.S. Source : ERARD. Valeur : B/2. carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>138</sup> "Manifeste," Comité Executif de la UDES, 3 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

thus decided to launch a limited strike to show that they could mobilize African students and were the dominant union on campus.

On January 4, 1967, the UED called a general assembly on the basketball court that had served as the starting place for the protests the year before, and which students renamed the Place [or terrain] du 28 Février 1966.<sup>139</sup> The assembled students passed a resolution that rejected an alliance with any party, refused to restrict of demand to “corporate” issues, and condemned “international imperialism.” The resolution stated that the UED had initially hoped to collaborate with the Senegalese government, but that this was now impossible due to the government’s refusal to recognize the UED “as a legal organization.” They thereby declared a forty-eight hour warning strike for January 5 and 6.<sup>140</sup>

According to Senegalese intelligence services, the strike was followed the next morning by “all students of the various [political] tendencies at the University.”<sup>141</sup> Mbow, as Minister of National Education, reiterated publicly the government would only authorize sporting, confessional, and “corporative” student organizations.<sup>142</sup> The government claimed that UNES qualified under this definition, while UDES was disqualified because it refused to limit itself to corporate issues—thus, all Senegalese students could only belong to UNES.

But despite this official support, the UPS students who led UNES were largely powerless in the face of the strike. When Mostapha Niasse, leader of the UPS students attempted to speak from the front

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<sup>139</sup> Renseignements a/s “de l’U.E.D.,” N. 12/K-1, Source: A, 5 January 1967, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>140</sup> “Résolution,” Union Des Etudiants de Dakar, 4 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. The strike was to be possibly followed by a strike of the student restaurant.

<sup>141</sup> “...ensemble des étudiants des diverses tendances de l’Université.” “C’est sans défaillance aucune, que le mot d’ordre de la grève des cours a été suivi ce matin par l’ensemble des étudiants des diverses tendances de l’Université.” Renseignements a/s “des étudiants,” N. 13/K-1, 5 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>142</sup> “...sportives, confessionnelles, corporatives...” Note, Salamine, N. 677, Objet: “Activités des Etudiants de l’U.N.E.S.,” Source: ERARD, 15 March 1967, Valeur: B/2. carton 672, DA, CADN.

of the general assembly, he was harangued by the crowd and left.<sup>143</sup> In the midst of the strike K-1 reports stated that the UNES and the MEOCAM leaders “have no representivity at the level of the students” and questioned whether students would actually return to classes if the UDES and the UED<sup>144</sup> were not recognized.

The *Bureau nationale* of the UPS students met on the first day of the strike. They decided to write a tract critical of the UED, but also decided not to attempt to break the picket lines—likely an indication that they lacked adequate support to successfully end the strike.<sup>145</sup> The following day, they agreed that if the UED declared an open-ended strike, they would follow it, rather than risk a confrontation with strikers by attempting to go back to classes.<sup>146</sup>

Conflicts over sexual morality and dormitory access for students of opposite genders also played into the 1967 strike. Male student access to women’s dorms was not raised as a student demand at the University of Dakar, as it famously would be a year later at the University of Paris-Nanterre, kicking off the French strike of May 1968. Nevertheless, Senegalese authorities and male strike leaders clashed over the issue of sex on campus. During his radio address in the midst of the strike, Mbow claimed that upon visiting student delegates on the campus earlier in the year, he saw “in each [male] student dorm

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<sup>143</sup> Renseignements a/s “de l’U.E.D.,” N. 12/K-1, 5 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>144</sup> Renseignements a/s “des étudiants,” N. 13/K-1, 5 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>145</sup> Renseignements a/s “Réunion Extraordinaire du Bureau Nationale des Etudiants U.P.S.,” N. 14/K-1. Source: A, 5 January 1967, Valeur: 1, carton 23, 5D, RAD. They ultimately delayed releasing their tract on the request of the minister of education, Mbow, who planned on making a radio announcement that evening. Their consent indicates that they were willing to follow the political lead of the party.

<sup>146</sup> They did, however, decide to request government protection for those students, “African and non-African” who wanted to return to classes on Monday. Senegalese security services reported that some “foreign” students wanted to go to class, but feared being “molestés par les grévistes.” Renseignements a/s “Réunion des étudiants U.P.S.,” N. 18/ K-1, Source: A, 6 January 1967. Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

room where we entered there was always a girl and in each [female] student room a boy.” Such a situation, Mbow opined, could not be tolerated by the government. Furthermore, he claimed that male students had been caught trying to enter women’s dormitories after 10pm, against university rules.<sup>147</sup>

The executive committees of both the UDES and the UED promptly condemned the Minister’s “hostile attitude,” “hypocritical paternalism,” and his attempt to turn the public against the students.<sup>148</sup> They claimed that the minister’s comments about female students “discredited the morality of the African female elite.”<sup>149</sup> The UED executive committee equally took offense at the minister’s portrayal of male students as “sex-obsessed, lustful animals,” and denied that male students were attempting to enter female dormitories late at night.

UED leaders said that the supposed incident had taken place when students invited Mbow to tour campus in October 1966 to discuss the dormitory shortage. They argued that Mbow greatly exaggerated; only one male was present in a female room in the early evening. Furthermore, the moral fear-mongering was distracting from the actual issue of student housing, with male students now three-to-a-room and female students two-to-a-room, in rooms originally intended for one student.<sup>150</sup>

It should be noted that the executive committees of both the UED and the UDES were exclusively male. And as Andrew Ivaska has documented in Tanzania in the same period, young men often used public discussions of female sexuality as a forum to highlight the class differences between themselves

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<sup>147</sup> “dans chacune des chambres d’étudiants où nous pénétrions il y avait toujours une fille et dans chaque chambre d’étudiante un garçon.” Quoted in: “Halte à la mystification, Comité Directeur, UED, 6 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>148</sup> “Résolution,” Comité Exécutif, UDES, 6 Jan 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>149</sup> “Sont scandalisés par le mal fondé et la gratuité des assertions du Ministre sur les Etudiantes africaines.” “Soulignent que ces affirmations jettent le plus grand discrédit sur le moralité de l’élite féminine [sic] africaine.” Although which female students he was referring to is unclear. There were less than one hundred Senegalese female students, more than three hundred French. “Résolution,” Comité Exécutif, UDES, 6 Jan 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>150</sup> “Halte à la mystification, Comité Directeur, UED, 6 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

and party elites, by questioning the moral behavior of wealthy men.<sup>151</sup> Thus, UED leaders implied that if anyone was trying to enter the female dormitories it was likely wealthy older men who came to campus to satisfy their sexual desires with young female students: “The regular parking of “IDs”, “404s”, “Mercedès” SO’s or CD’s allows one to begin to answer to this question.”<sup>152</sup> Reflecting similar tensions, UDES leaders called the Minister’s proposal to forcefully integrating the UDES into the UNES a way to “emasculate” the strike leaders. Notably, in this conflict between Mbow and male strike leaders, female students were cast as noble victims, rather than sexual or political actors in their own right.

Students also took issue with Mbow’s claim that there had never been an attempt to raise the prices of meals at the University restaurant. To the contrary, UED leaders wrote, such an increase had been proposed in the budget for 1966-1967, but was voted down only because, as negotiated after the 1966 strike, students had elected UED representatives onto the Administrative Council of the COUD, as demand won in the 1966 strike.<sup>153</sup>

On the second day of the strike, UDES held a general assembly on campus to assess and reply to Mbow’s public address. In the midst of the meeting, Mbow sent a message requesting to meet with five leaders from UDES.<sup>154</sup> Given the arrest of student delegates during the 1966 student protests, delegates were dispatched warily. But they returned later to rejoin the general assembly, reporting that Mbow had promised that there were no plans to raise the price of meals at the campus restaurant, agreed to address the lack of student housing, and acknowledged his mistaken portrayal of female students.

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<sup>151</sup> See Ivaska, *Cultured States*.

<sup>152</sup> “Le stationnement régulier des ‘ID’”, “404”, “Mercedès” SO ou CD permet d’esquisser une réponse à cette question.” “Halte à la mystification, Comité Directeur, UED, 6 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>153</sup> “Halte à la mystification, Comité Directeur, UED, 6 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>154</sup> There is some ambiguity about whether it was UDES or UED representatives. See Renseignements a/s “Grève des cours des étudiants de l’Université,” N. 17/K-1, 6 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements a/s Assemblée générale des étudiants de l’U.E.D. et de l’U.D.E.S., 7 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

Mbow had also confirmed that in response to student demands, the interim head of the COUD would be dismissed.<sup>155</sup>

But Mbow's proposal for the UDES to merge into UNES was still received with disapproval. Most students loyal to UDES resisted the idea of dissolving the union into the small, government-backed, UNES. Students nevertheless agreed to end the strike and return to classes on Monday, so long as the government was willing to keep negotiating with them.<sup>156</sup> But the next day, students were dismayed at being only given a few minutes to speak with Mbow, and made no progress on the question of recognition of UDES and the UED.<sup>157</sup>

K-1 reported that conversations among students on campus suggested "a possible resumption of unrest,"<sup>158</sup> but UED and UDES leaders decided against resuming the strike. The two-day strike had been a successful display of force, but a continuation risked running through mid-year exams, and union leaders were not yet confident that students were prepared to boycott their exams and enter a prolonged conflict with the government.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Renseignements "Fin de la grève des cours des étudiants," N. 20/ K-1, Source: A, 7 January 1967, Valeur: 1, (Follow up to N. 17.), carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>156</sup> Renseignements "Fin de la grève des cours des étudiants," N. 20/ K-1, Source: A, 7 January 1967, Valeur: 1, (Follow up to N. 17.), carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements a/s Assemblée générale des étudiants de l'U.E.D. et de l'U.D.E.S., 7 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>157</sup> Renseignements a/s Assemblée générale des étudiants de l'U.E.D. et de l'U.D.E.S., 7 January 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements a/s Grève des étudiants de Dakar, N. 24/K-1, Source: A, 7 January 1967, Valeur: 1, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>158</sup> Renseignements "Fin de la grève des cours des étudiants," N. 20/ K-1, Source: A, 7 January 1967, Valeur: 1, (Follow up to N. 17.), carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>159</sup> Renseignements, N. 36/K-1, Source: A, 14 January 1967, Valeur: 2, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. They did not want to "confuse une situation dont les conséquences prochaines pourraient jouer dans les examens des étudiants." Instead, they decided to wait until after exams and focus on organizing an event to commemorate the second anniversary of the February 28 demonstrations. They further opted not to demonstrate during the "medical days" on campus, as they feared alienating fellow students.

Following the strike, events in Côte d'Ivoire made student leaders in Dakar more cautious. Ivorian students at the University of Abidjan, created in 1964, had faced a similar challenge in their relationship with the regime of Félix Houphouët-Boigny. As in Dakar, state officials had set up a government-sponsored union as a means to undermine the existing independent student union.<sup>160</sup> As in Dakar, students in Abidjan held a general assembly at the beginning of 1967 and agreed to a statement condemning MEOCAM as "a puppet organization, in the pocket of imperialists."<sup>161</sup>

Immediately following the January 1967 strike in Dakar, the Ivorian government cracked down on students in Abidjan who protested during a medical seminar on campus. The students responded with one day strike on January 22 at the University of Abidjan. Police stormed campus and attacked the strikers. The leadership of Côte d'Ivoire's ruling party met immediately and decided to expel all non-Ivorian students and forced Ivorian student leaders into military service.<sup>162</sup> The UED, described the student strike in Abidjan as a continuation of the February 1966 strike in Dakar, both challenging regimes attempting to "disintegrate the progressive movement."<sup>163</sup> UED leaders criticized the idea that

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<sup>160</sup> The students argued that the government of Côte d'Ivoire had very quickly tried to split students, by setting up the UNECI in 1960 as a counterbalance the more radical UGECI. They drew parallels between their own experience that of students at the University of Dakar who had to fend off Senghor's attempts to back the FELD and now the UNES. They noted that the governments of Dahomey, Niger, Haute-Volta all followed suit as did Senegal, when the government banned UGEAO in November 1964.

<sup>161</sup> "Déclaration Commune des Etudiants Africains de l'Université d'Abidjan sur le M.E.O.C.A.M" voted on January 13 at the University of Abidjan..." "Déclaration Commune des Etudiants Africains de l'Université d'Abidjan sur le M.E.O.C.A.M.," carton 672, DA, CADN. They argued that "in the eyes of African heads of state" they had become "foreign agents whose role is to transplant harmful ideologies to the dark continent" (des agents de l'étranger dont le sous-rôle est de transplanter dans le continent noir des idéologies qui ne lui sont que trop nuisibles") —an anticipation of Senghor's accusations toward student strikers in Dakar in 1968. Student leaders in Abidjan argued that they were not foreign agents, but that it was MEOCAM that was "a puppet organization, in the pocket of imperialists," (« une organisation fantoche, à la solde des impérialistes ») implying that MEOCAM was truly beholden to "outside" influences.

<sup>162</sup> A fate that Senegalese students would later face at the U of Dakar. "Resolution de l'Union des Etudiants de Dakar (U.E.D.) sur les événements survenus à l'Université d'Abidjan," 30 January 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>163</sup> "Resolution de l'Union des Etudiants de Dakar (U.E.D.) sur les événements survenus à l'Université d'Abidjan," 30 January 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

non-Ivorian students at the University of Abidjan were “foreigners” when in fact they were “Africans on African soil.” They would advance the same argument a year later during their strike in 1968 in Dakar, when Senghor moved to deport all “foreign” (i.e. non-Senegalese) students.<sup>164</sup>

Houphouët-Boigny’s severe punishment of students in Abidjan in 1967 would be echoed in Senghor’s response to student strikes in Senegal 1968 and the early 1970s. Françoise Blum notes that Senghor may have mimicked Charles de Gaulle’s response to student unrest in 1968, but he may have just as likely been following the Houphouët-Boigny’s lead.<sup>165</sup> First, like Houphouët-Boigny in 1967, Senghor, in 1968, accused students of acting at the behest of a vague “foreign” power—implicitly a “communist” one. Second, Senghor during the strikes of 1968 and after, Senghor also adopted the practice of responding to student challenges by expelling non-Senegalese students and drafting Senegalese students into the military.

### **The End of the Government Sponsored Student Unions**

The 1967 strike ended in a stalemate. Students had won some of their demands; notably, Mbow pledged to open new dormitories and not raise the price of meals at the University cafeteria. The strike had asserted the UDES and the UED’s dominance on campus, and was a training ground for students like Moktar Diack, who would go on to play a leading role in the 1968 strike.<sup>166</sup> But the main cause of the strike—the government’s refusal to recognize the UDES and the UED as legal, representative student

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<sup>164</sup> They called this a “micronationalisme borné en rétrograde.” “Resolution de l’Union des Etudiants de Dakar (U.E.D.) sur les événements survenus à l’Université d’Abidjan,” 30 January 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>165</sup> Blum, “Sénégal 1968.”

<sup>166</sup> Note, n. 1816, Salamine, Objet: “Activité de l’U.E.D. et de l’U.D.E.S.,” 25 November 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. Diack’s first name is often been spelled Makhtar or Moctar, but he clarified that he would like it spelled Moktar, interview with author, 1 July 2012, Dakar.



organizations on campus—remained unresolved. Through early 1967, Senegalese and French authorities worried about a revival of student protest.<sup>167</sup>

But the Ivorian government's crackdown on students in Abidjan sent a chilling message to student leaders in Senegal, who worried that if they relaunched the strike in Dakar, the UPS government<sup>168</sup> might respond in the same way. Thus, UED leaders struck a different tone in their communiqué of February 7, instead arguing that what was needed at the moment was "day-to-day activism."<sup>169</sup> They encouraged new elections for national student groups and other student bodies on campus.<sup>170</sup> They also conducted a study of the lodging created at Camp Claudel for new female student housing, and criticized the government for reducing funds for the project.<sup>171</sup>

In February, the UED organized a mass meeting to commemorate the anniversary of the 1966 strike. Students sang and drummed for hours, before a huge crowd packed into the basketball court

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<sup>167</sup> Over both housing and the refusal to recognize the UDES and UED. Renseignements a/s "des Etudiants de l'Université", N. 88/K-1, Source A, 30 January 1967, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>168</sup> Renseignements a/s "de l'U.D.E.S.," Source: A, 16 January 1967, Valeur: 1, carton 23, 5D, RAD. In mid-January UPS students spread a rumor on campus, and in government circles, that UDES was preparing an action to disrupt the Medical Days on campus. The false rumor was meant to generate greater animosity on the part of the Government toward UDES. However, French authorities claimed that UDES felt confident that the university "was theirs and not the UPS students'" and thus had to act carefully when calling an action. The Medical Days were of interest to students of "every tendency," and thus an inopportune time to disrupt campus if they wished to maintain majority support. Students in Côte d'Ivoire protested during a similar medical seminar taking place at the same time in Abidjan, and the Ivorian government dealt with the 'fauteurs de troubles' harshly. No solidarity movement arose in Côte d'Ivoire to defend the students, perhaps sending an chilling message to students in Senegal to wait until they were certain they could challenge the government directly.

<sup>169</sup> "militantisme quotidien," Communiqué, Comité Directeur of the UED, 7 February 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>170</sup> Communiqué, 7 February 1967, Comité Directeur of the UED, Carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>171</sup> Note, Salamine, N. 320, Objet: "Activités de l'Union des Etudiants de Dakar (U.E.D.) Resolution sur les événements de l'Université d'Abidjan," Source: Remusat, 2 February 1967, Valeur: A/2. carton 672, DA, CADN; Renseignements a/s "des Etudiants de l'Université", N. 88/K-1, Source A, 30 January 1967, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

where the strike had begun a year before.<sup>172</sup> At the meeting, union leaders presented their assessment of the previous year's strike, while the leaders of different national student organizations (Senegalese, Dahomean, Chadian, etc.) re-affirmed their commitment to the UED.<sup>173</sup> The meeting was also a forum to call on Mbow to recognize the UDES and UED, as well as chastising him for presenting students as "sexually debauched."<sup>174</sup> The FEANF sent a message criticizing the government's "reactionary" management of education and hesitance to introduce African languages, the Africanization of the university staff, and a new curriculum.<sup>175</sup> Police reports suggested that student leaders had considered marching through the city, but changed plans when Senegalese security forces began amassing around the edge of campus. The meeting ended without a confrontation and student leaders did not hold any major events during the remainder of the academic year.

Senegalese intelligence services reported that student leaders' decision not to relaunch a strike or major action in the spring of 1967 resulted from a strategic shift. During the January strike, Mbow had insisted that if students wanted their concerns acknowledged, they could only do so by joining the "corporate," government-backed UNES. In the aftermath of the strike, Dakar police reports warned that "almost all students" planned to "infiltrate the UNES in order to overturn its leadership," rather than

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<sup>172</sup> Renseignements a/s Activités des Etudiants de l'Université de Dakar dans la journée du 28-2-1967, N. 172/K-1, Source: A, 28 February 1967, Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>173</sup> Note, Salamine, N. 563, Objet: "Activités de l'U.E.D. Commémoration de la Journée du 28 Février 1967," Source: ERARD, 2 March 1967, Valeur : A/2, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>174</sup> "...des debauches sexuels." From the support letter of the Association de Eleves et Etudaints Guineens de Dakar. See Note, Salamine, N. 642, Objet: "Activité de l'U.D.E.S.," 13 March 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN; Renseignements a/s "éventuelle manifestation des étudiants de l'Université de Dakar," N. 167/K-1, 27 February 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>175</sup> "Lettre Ouverte à Monsieur le Ministre de l'Education Nationale du Sénégal," Bureau of the Association des Etudiants Sénégalais en France, No Date (February 1967), Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD. See also Renseignements a/s "éventuelle manifestation des étudiants de l'Université de Dakar," N. 167/K-1, 27 February 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

continue to fight for recognition<sup>176</sup> of their independent unions. Senegalese and French intelligence reports clearly believed that UDES represented the near totality of Senegalese students, (while UNES had barely thirty members), and could easily flood UNES with “Marxist” militants.<sup>177</sup>

Thus, both sides tentatively began negotiations for a UDES-UNES merger in March 1967, under the facilitation of the University Rector, Pierre Lelièvre, and officials from the Ministry of National Education. The UNES’ leadership, composed of the UPS students on campus, argued that since only UNES was recognized by the government, UDES should dissolve itself and join the ranks of UNES. UNES/UPS students proposed a bureau of nine students - five of whom would be representatives from the existing UNES, granting them a majority. For the proposed executive committee, however, they conceded a one-vote advantage to UDES by offering them twenty out of thirty-nine seats.<sup>178</sup>

The UDES, as a much larger organization, rejected this proposal for formal “equality” between the two organizations. Confident that UDES leaders had greater support from the student population, they instead called for democratic elections to determine all representatives on leadership bodies.<sup>179</sup> According to Senegalese security reports, this left the small core of UPS students that made up UNES

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<sup>176</sup> Renseignements a/s “des étudiants,” N. 29/K-1, 10 January 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>177</sup> “Synthèse des évènements marquants du Mois de Janvier 1967,” No date, N. 76. carton 23, 5D, RAD. UDES represented 650 of the 685 Senegalese students on campus, while the Mouvement d’étudiants de l’U.P.S. only represented about 27: “...mais cherchaient à créer une union pouvant être reconnue par les autorités, dont ils prendraient facilement le contrôle puisque sur les 685 étudiants sénégalais inscrits à l’Université, 650 appartiennent à leur association et 27 au M.E./U.P.S.” See Note, Salamine, N. 677, Objet: “Activités des Etudiants de l’U.N.E.S.,” Source: ERARD, 15 March 1967, Valeur: B/2, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>178</sup> Note, Salamine, N. 729. Objet: “Réunion de l’U.N.E.S.,” Source: ERARD, 20 March 1967. Valeur: B/2. carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>179</sup> UDES leaders stated that they agreed with the government’s desire to create a single union. They wished for it to be established on the basis of democratic elections on campus.

“trapped,” as they could only gain substantial representation on leadership bodies by rejecting democratic elections,<sup>180</sup> thereby exposing their own weakness.

Furthermore, UDES leaders rejected the idea that a present or future union should be a “corporate association” maintaining that “a student union should take a position on all issues of concern to the people of Senegal.”<sup>181</sup> Negotiations quickly stalled. As the academic year came to a close, UDES was still not legally recognized, while the UNES/UPS students failed to gain a broader base of supporters on campus. This did not stop Mbow from attempting to revive negotiations in December 1967, but this time, exasperated UDES leaders simply refused.<sup>182</sup> In tandem, MEOCAM floundered and in spite of official support from governments across Francophone Africa, was never able to grow enough to challenge the FEANF in France or the UED in Dakar.<sup>183</sup>

### **November 1967: A “Political” Student Strike**

By the start of the 1967-1968 school year, the government’s attempt to expand the membership of UNES and MEOCAM beyond a small core of pro-UPS students had failed. But the radical students who

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<sup>180</sup> The UNES rejected the UDES’s proposal to dissolve both organizations and proceed with “des élections démocratiques au sein de l’Université.” UNES rejected the UDES’s proposal on the basis that UDES was not legally recognized by the government. Renseignements a/s “Compte rendu de la réunions U.N.E.S.,” N. 230/K-1, 6 March 1967, Source: A. Valeur: 1, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Note, Salamine, N. 729. “Objet : Réunion de l’U.N.E.S.,” Source: ERARD, 20 March 1967. Valeur: B/2. carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>181</sup> “Résolution,” Conseil d’Administration, UDES. December 1967. carton 672, DA, CADN.. “...un syndicat d’étudiants devant se prononcer sur tous les problèmes intéressant le peuple sénégalais.”

<sup>182</sup> In December 1967 Mbow announced to the *Bureau politique* of the UPS a revived plan to fuse the two Senegalese student organizations at the University of Dakar to create a single “corporate” union, charged with the defense of the “real interests” of Senegalese students—a refutation of UDES’s “political” positions. He announced that a Constitutive Congress would take place during Easter vacation in 1968. Note, Salamine, N. 2566. “Objet: Activités de l’Union Démocratique des Etudiants Sénégalais (Section Sénégalais de l’U.E.D.),” 12 December 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN; “Résolution,” Conseil d’Administration, UDES. December 1967. carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>183</sup> The effort nevertheless staggered on until MEOCAM was finally disbanded in 1971. UNESCO and A. Adu Boahen, *Le rôle des mouvements d’étudiants africains dans l’évolution politique et sociale de l’Afrique de 1900 à 1975* (Paris: UNESCO ; Harmattan, 1993)

led the UDES and the UED remained locked in a tense stalemate with the regime. In November 1967, these students went on the offensive again for the first time in almost a year.

On November 15, UDES leaders called a general assembly at the Stade/terrain du 28 Février and proposed a twenty-four hour strike of classes in solidarity with Vietnamese resistance to the United States ongoing military assault.<sup>184</sup> The strike would be the culmination of an “International Week of Solidarity with Vietnam,” called for by the Prague-based International Union of Students, and observed by student organizations across the world in 1967. That day, students on campus had raised placards denouncing the United States’ actions in Vietnam, collected signatures for a call to solidarity with the struggle of the “Vietnamese people,” and put up posters about the Vietnamese National Liberation Front in the halls of campus buildings.<sup>185</sup> The assembly voted to strike that Friday, November 17, and various national student groups of the UED joined the organizing effort.<sup>186</sup>

The strike of classes was a success, as picketers denounced the United States and promote the National Liberation Front and North Vietnamese government. While the government decided not to intervene in the short strike, René Godet, a senior biology professor and the Dean of Sciences at the university chastised the students. Before the strike, the student council of the Sciences *faculté* had sent a letter to Godet announcing their intention to join the strike. Godet replied with a scathing open letter

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<sup>184</sup> Renseignements A/s des Etudiants de l’Université, N. 871/K-1, 16 November 1967. Source: A. Valeur: 2, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>185</sup> “Appel de Solidarité avec la lutte du peuple Viet-namien,” Comité Directeur, UED, 14 November 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements a/s des Etudiants de l’Université, N. 877/K-1. 17 November 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD. The UED followed the week with a tract reprinting the major demands of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, the North Vietnamese government, and the US’ violations of the Geneva accords. See: “Semaine internationale étudiante de solidarité avec le Vietnam.” Tract from UED, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>186</sup> Renseignements A/s des Etudiants de l’Université, N. 871/K-1, 16 November 1967. Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD; Renseignements a/s des Etudiants de l’Université, N. 877/K-1, 17 November 1967, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

addressed not to the student council, but to all students at the university.<sup>187</sup> Godet claimed that he was sympathetic to the student's concerns about "war and suffering" in the world, but called their action a "waste" and "useless." He opined that real solidarity required sacrifice—something students have never had to face. He wrote: "I fear that taking a rest on the steps of [campus buildings] and then having to make up the day's classes represents really little in the face of the sacrifices made in Asia."<sup>188</sup> He further accused the strikers of claiming to support freedom in Asia, while suppressing the freedom of fellow students in Dakar by shutting down their classes for a day—a coded reference to French students on campus who had not decided to join the solidarity action.

In a public response, UDES leaders justified their strategy, arguing that it was obvious that their actions would not "stop American aggression in Vietnam." Instead, the "week of action" and the strike were symbolic displays of solidarity, coordinated internationally, and meant to popularize the struggle of the Vietnamese across campus.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, they defended their right to implement the decision of the majority at the General Assembly by setting up picket lines and preventing the normal functioning of classes. They argued that, as a Dean, Godet was surely familiar with the need to carry out the will of a majority vote on a board or committee, over the desires of a minority. They accused Godet of only being interested in defending the minority rights of French students, but argued that many French students did not agree with him. They described Godet's antagonism toward the strike, and previous African

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<sup>187</sup> Open Letter from the Comité Directeur de l'UED, Dakar, to M. René Godet, Professeur à la Faculté des Sciences de Dakar, 29 November 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>188</sup> Letter from René Godet (Doyen de la Faculté des Sciences), Dakar, "Lettre ouverte à Mademoiselles et Messieurs les étudiants, 21 November 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN. "Je crains que le repos sur les marches de nos facultés et le fait d'avoir à recopier les cours de la journée représentent vraiment peu de choses en face des sacrifices consentis en Asie. Si vous n'y prenez garde, même un peu, va vous être enlevé par des enseignants décidés à rattraper les cours. Alors vos efforts déjà si minces seront réduits à néant."

<sup>189</sup> Open Letter from the Comité Directeur de l'UED, Dakar, to M. René Godet, Professeur à la Faculté des Sciences de Dakar, 29 November 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

students' strikes in February 1966 and January 1967 as thinly-veiled "racism." Other professors, both French and African, they argued, were not hostile to their Vietnam solidarity pickets.

UDES leaders did not shy away from asserting their authority in preventing students from going to classes. While noting that they had no police or army to force their decision on people, "...[W]e are, within the campus, our own armed force, our own police."<sup>190</sup> In these bold terms, UDES leaders emphasized the discipline that African students displayed toward the decisions of the UED general assembly, and their right to enforce that decision on other (presumably, French) students. Claiming that it was only a matter of time before the University of Dakar would become "authentically African" they taunted Godet, telling him that he should join a French university "before the African university erases you."<sup>191</sup> The strikes of 1968 and the years following seem to have convinced Godet to do just that, as he soon left Dakar and joined the University of Nice for the remainder of his career. The conflict with Godet exposed the polarization taking place between some members of the university administration and faculty, who still viewed the university as a "French" institution, and African students increasing rejection of this status.

But beyond this strife, the November 1967 strike was significant for an entirely different reason: it was explicitly organized around a "political" issue—the Vietnam war—and not around a "corporate" student issue (such as housing). This was precisely what the Senegalese government had declared that student unions were not allowed to do. UDES leaders' decision to organize a strike in solidarity with Vietnamese resistance to the United States was a savvy way to challenge the Senegalese regime's prohibition of "political" student actions. First, because within African student organizations at the

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<sup>190</sup> Open Letter from the Comité Directeur de l'UED, Dakar, to M. René Godet, Professeur à la Faculté des Sciences de Dakar, 29 November 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN. "...nous sommes dans le cadre de campus universitaire notre propre force armée, notre propre force de police."

<sup>191</sup> Open Letter from the Comité Directeur de l'UED, Dakar, to M. René Godet, Professeur à la Faculté des Sciences de Dakar, 29 November 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN. "Mais pour vous éviter des déboires nous vous conseillons de rejoindre une Université française avant que l'Université africaine ne vous écrase."

University of Dakar, opposition to the US-led war in Vietnam had long been a point of common agreement; it was an urgent issue that students could easily unite around. Second, while the strike was “political” by government definitions, it did not set radical student leaders up for a direct confrontation with the regime. The strike call did not attack the Senegalese government and students do not appear to have made a specific demand of the government in relation to Vietnam. Radical student leaders thereby used the strike in two ways: first as a means to gauge—and display—their level of support on campus, and second, to see what would happen if they defied Mbow and Senghor’s demand that they restrict their actions to “corporate” issues.

### **III. The Road to the 1968 Strike**

#### **Education, Scholarships, and Political Opposition**

During 1966 and 1967, student leaders had raised demands to improve student living conditions. Namely, they sought a solution to overcrowding in dormitories and called for greater elected student representation in decisions about the functioning of campus. Their clashes with Mbow and other government leaders did not arise primarily from these issues, but from students’ demand that they be able to engage in independent political activity. While the government tried to draw a distinction between student unions’ taking “corporate” versus “political” positions, student leaders refused to accept this demarcation. The clearest expression of this arose in late 1967 and early 1968 when the government attempted to cut Senegalese students’ scholarships. For the leaders of the UDES, the proposed reduction in student scholarships was simply another indication of the UPS’ corruption and misplaced priorities.



In October 1967, the national scholarship commission decided—over the dissenting votes of student representatives—to reduce university scholarships.<sup>192</sup> These scholarships served as living stipends, covering students' expenses, including food and housing.<sup>193</sup> Before the cuts, unmarried Senegalese students who received scholarships were paid 22,500 CFA francs per month, the same as the starting wages for skilled workers, and nearly three times the minimum wage for unskilled workers.<sup>194</sup> Student leaders did not dispute that the sum was significant: when UDES leaders created a mock budget in the spring of 1968, they noted that after covering their basic expenses single students with full scholarships had up to 4,200 CFA francs per month left over.<sup>195</sup> While some may have used this money on individual expenditures, others had family members who relied on these stipends as a source of income.

But under the planned reductions, most scholarships would be reduced to two-thirds or half of their previous amount, and all students would now be paid ten months out of the year instead of twelve. During the 1967–1968 school year, nearly a thousand Senegalese students were enrolled at the University of Dakar, and under the proposed cuts, only 418 scholarships would be available the following year, of which only 175 of those would be “full” scholarships.<sup>196</sup> According to UDES leaders, this would leave many students deeply in debt.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Commission Nationale des Bourses de l'enseignement Supérieur. See “Mémorandum sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar,” UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 May 1968, Folder Crise Mai 1968, Dossier Sénégal: événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, CD, ANS. Also reprinted in Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 163-72.

<sup>193</sup> “Mémorandum sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar,” UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 May 1968, Folder Crise Mai 1968, Dossier Sénégal: événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, CD, ANS.

<sup>194</sup> For students, the stipends were veritable salaries. Blum points out that a small car at the time cost 400,000 CFA francs. Blum, “Sénégal 1968,” 147.

<sup>195</sup> “Budget type de l'étudiant” UDES, reprinted in Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 173.

<sup>196</sup> For the new school year, the Commission Nationale des Bourses de l'enseignement Supérieur awarded 175 full scholarships, 129 2/3rds scholarships, and 114 half scholarships, based on a combination of student

As a French university, most the University's operating costs were covered by France, thereby reducing the Senegalese state's overall expenditures on the university. According to Andre Bailleul, the Senegalese government only began paying into the university's operating costs in 1965, when it covered 7.5 percent of the budget. But Senegal's contribution was set to increase rapidly each year after, from 17.5 percent in 1966–67 up to 50 percent by 1971.<sup>198</sup> Such increases cut into the Senegalese education operations budget, which was proposed to remain the same in 1968-1969 as the year before.<sup>199</sup> And even with these rising contributions, spending failed to keep pace with enrollments. The number of total students at the University of Dakar had grown by 300 percent since independence, while its budget had been raised by just under 150 percent during the same period.<sup>200</sup>

Following the general trend, the number of Senegalese students at the University of Dakar had also tripled since independence. The Senegalese government likely anticipated the growing budgetary strain that would result from the need for more student scholarships and housing, compounded by mounting Senegalese contributions to the overall University budget. It is possible that Senegalese officials expected that they could cover the increased costs with the expectation that the economic and tax revenue growth of the first half of the 1960s would continue, or accelerate. However, as the groundnut crises of 1966 and 1968 hit, such growth became elusive. Senghor's and Mbow's attempts to develop compliant student unions and derail the independent UDES and UED can be understood

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need and test scores. "Mémorandum sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar," UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 May 1968, Folder Crise Mai 1968, Dossier Sénégal: événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, CD, ANS.

<sup>197</sup> "Budget type de l'étudiant" UDES, reprinted in Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 173.

<sup>198</sup> 22.5 percent in 1967-1968, 27.5 percent in 1968-1968, and rising. See André Bailleul, "L'université de Dakar: institutions et fonctionnement, 1950–1984" (PhD dissertation, Université de Dakar, 1984), 115. It seems that this timeline may have been slowed down. In practice, by 1968, Senegal was only paying 13.4 percent of the University's operating costs. UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," Annex II/16.

<sup>199</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," XI, 11, 61.

<sup>200</sup> Bailleul, "L'université de Dakar," 115; Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 150.

partially in this context. They likely foresaw the mounting budgetary demands, and hoped they could get students to accept a decline in their living standards.

A couple weeks after the Vietnam solidarity strike in November 1967, UDES leaders called a general assembly of Senegalese students to talk about the proposed scholarship cuts.<sup>201</sup> In the tracts written afterward by student leaders—often Moktar Diack for the UDES—the “corporate” demand for full scholarships was embedded in a series of overtly “political” grievances. The Senegalese government (and French authorities) later interpreted this as evidence that that when students went out on strike in 1968 over the proposed cuts to scholarships, they had a deeper political agenda.<sup>202</sup>

UDES leaders saw the reduction of scholarships as part of the “bankruptcy” of the government’s handling of education. They criticized government authorities’ claim that one quarter of the national budget was spent on education. Their statistics showed that only 13 percent of the national budget in 1966-67 funded education across the four ministries that that coordinated regular schools, technical schools, popular education and youth programs.<sup>203</sup> Senegalese government reports to UNESCO claimed that the overall operational budget for education in 1966-67 was actually 18.1 percent of the national budget—higher than the UDES’ estimate, but still below the 25 percent claim they made publicly.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, the Ministry of National Education had its budget cut for 1968-1969, total operating expenditures on education were not set to increase, and capital investments were set to drop

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<sup>201</sup> Note, Salamine, N. 2588, “Objet: Activités de l’Union Démocratique des Etudiants Sénégalais (U.D.E.S.),” 15 December 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>202</sup> This comes up multiple times in “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” no date, Dossier Sénégal, Événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>203</sup> “Mémorandum sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 May 1968, Folder Crise Mai 1968, Dossier Sénégal: événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, CD, ANS.

<sup>204</sup> UNESCO, “Senegal Education 1969,” XI. UNESCO reported that 18.8 percent of the national budget (not including tech assistance) went to education in 1968-69, and that number was forecasted to drop to 17.6 percent in 1969-70.

significantly, resulting a decline in the percentage of the national spending that went toward education.<sup>205</sup>

Students mocked the government for proclaiming that education its main priority, when the expenditures on education were surpassed by the growing budget of the military and the president's office.<sup>206</sup> Further, they attacked the government's decision to limit the number students who could enter primary school.<sup>207</sup> From independence to 1968, the number of primary school students in Senegal had doubled.<sup>208</sup> The country's first four-year development plan (1961–1964) had hoped to achieve universal primary education between 1970 and 1975.<sup>209</sup> But by 1968, the goal had been reduced dramatically to getting *half* of eligible children into school by the year 2000.<sup>210</sup> Thus, only about 35 percent of the school age children (between the ages of six and thirteen) were enrolled in primary school in 1968, and there were no plans to increase this percentage in the near future. Although the

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<sup>205</sup> Students were told about the cut to the Ministry of National Education budget by someone at the Ministry. "Bourses entières pour tout le monde," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>206</sup> "Mémorandum sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar," UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 May 1968, Folder Crise Mai 1968, Dossier Sénégal: événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, CD, ANS. Combined, these budgets were about 600 million CFA francs more than expenditures on education, according to student calculations for 1966-67.

<sup>207</sup> Student wrote about Senghor's "decision de bloquer le taux de scolarisation au niveau peu enviable de 37 percent constitue un aveu implicite d'échec et d'impuissance." The actual level was closer to 35 percent. "Bourses entières pour tout le monde," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN; "De la situation économique et sociale au Sénégal à la veille de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 Feb 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," XII.

<sup>208</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," VII, 21,70. For 1959-60, 106,911 total pupils, and for 1967-68, 248,749 pupils.

<sup>209</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 53

<sup>210</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," IV.

number of students grew each year, the expansion of primary education was just keeping pace with population growth.<sup>211</sup>

Of those students who complete primary school, about 25–30 percent were allowed to advance into secondary school.<sup>212</sup> High school enrollees were then limited further, with 611 students passing the baccalaureate exam in 1968. This was a massive increase from the 141 Senegalese students who passed the baccalaureate exam in 1964.<sup>213</sup> The baccalaureate granted students access to university studies, adding to enrollment pressures at the University of Dakar. Government officials therefore proposed capping the number of students who could pass the baccalaureate, a move that university students criticized.<sup>214</sup>

UDES leaders believed that restrictions to education advancement and cuts to scholarships would have three negative effects. First, they argued that social inequality would be exacerbated. The reduction of scholarships had already begun among secondary students, and UDES accused the government of moving toward a “class” system in education, where only wealthy parents and those parents active in the UPS would be able to send their children to university.<sup>215</sup>

Second, student leaders argued that university students should be supported by full scholarships in the interest of national development. They were frustrated that the government replied to the

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<sup>211</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," VII. The Senegalese government aimed to send 50 percent of eligible children to school by 2000. UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," IV.

<sup>212</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," VII, 26. Total student enrollment for 1967-68: Primary 248,749; Lower Secondary 40,505; Upper Secondary 4,735; Higher Education 1,549.

<sup>213</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," VIII.

<sup>214</sup> “Bourses entières pour tout le monde,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. They further criticized the government for changing the exam to gain entrance into secondary schools in 1966, so as to cut back the number of students who advanced to secondary education. Renseignements n. 615/K-1 a/s “Entré en Sixième,” 4 July 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD,. Blum, however, presents higher numbers than these reports. Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 158.

<sup>215</sup> “Bourses entières pour tout le monde,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

growing number of university enrollments by trying to cap the number of eligible students and reduce scholarships. Students had long complained about the slow pace of Africanization within the upper ranks of the public and private sector, within the education system, and specifically at the University of Dakar. They accused Senghor of maintaining a reliance on European teachers and technicians,<sup>216</sup> rather than training enough new Senegalese graduates to take their place. Only 21 percent of all secondary teachers in Senegal were Senegalese, and only 16 percent of high school teachers in Dakar.<sup>217</sup> The percentage of African faculty at the University of Dakar had increased from 9 percent of the total in 1961-1962 to 31 percent by the 1967-1968 school year.<sup>218</sup> But students found this to be woefully inadequate. Even in the four-year plan for 1969-1973, the Senegalese government only aimed to place Senegalese candidates in one-third of public sector jobs, including teaching.<sup>219</sup> Students argued that resources needed to be spent on developing a greater number of African cadres and professors who could drive development Senegal (or in their respective countries.)

Since 1966, UED and UDES had argued against the University continuing to be a French institution. They felt that the professors and administration, the vast majority of whom were French nationals, held onto a “holy” attachment to teaching in French, using French curricula, and bestowing French diplomas—but to a select number of students, thereby limiting the number of graduates.<sup>220</sup> Instead, they argued, Africa needed more trained cadres, who should be taught curriculums based on “African

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<sup>216</sup> “Bourses entières pour tout le monde,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>217</sup> UNESCO, “Senegal Education 1969,” VIII, 33.

<sup>218</sup> Bailleul, “L’université de Dakar,” 113. From 13 out of 152 to 77 out of 247. The number of Senegalese faculty is not listed.

<sup>219</sup> UNESCO, “Senegal Education 1969,” 88.

<sup>220</sup> French teaching staff made up 247 out of 324 professors in 1967-1968. Notably, at one of the most militant *facultés*, Lettres, 44 professors were French, with only 8 non-French teachers.

realities.”<sup>221</sup> This was a repudiation of Senghor, and others, who had demanded the right to French education and diplomas during the colonial era. In the lead up to the 1968 strike the UDES leadership again complained that, “the Senegalese government exercises no control over [the University of Dakar], which is really only a French university located in Senegal.”<sup>222</sup>

Student leaders saw “la Francophonie” as a “neocolonialist project,” and hoped that they could “by conscious action, make this university the site of decolonization.”<sup>223</sup> Thus, UED leaders called for students in each *faculté* to organize discussions that would help articulate critiques of the current program. The UED also pledged to hold “conférences-débats” on contemporary education in Africa and collaborate with students across the continent to draft reform programs more broadly than just for the University of Dakar.<sup>224</sup> Students had also demanded a role in the management of the university, and since early 1967, UED leaders had put forth the following demands: co-management of the student restaurant; self-management of the university bar, student lounge, campus gym, and conference rooms; and input into the “problems” of medical care, transport, and lodging.<sup>225</sup>

Third, they saw cuts to scholarships as part of the growing wealth disparity between the leaders of the ruling party and the rest of Senegalese society. They accused of Senghor of calling for austerity as the economy stagnated, while maintaining lavish lifestyles for himself, his ministers, and the

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<sup>221</sup> Report, “Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives,” Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>222</sup> “Mémorandum sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar,” UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 May 1968, Folder Crise Mai 1968, Dossier Sénégal: événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, CD, ANS. See also chapter 1, and Blum, “Sénégal 1968,” 149-50.

<sup>223</sup> “Commemoration de la Journée du 21 Février,” Tract, Comité Directeur, UED, Late February 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>224</sup> Report, “Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives,” Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>225</sup> Report, “Le Mouvement du 28 Février: Signification et Perspectives,” Comité Directeur of UED, 5 January 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

parliamentary deputies.<sup>226</sup> Students claimed that National Assembly deputies, (all of whom were UPS members), made between 200,000 and 300,000 CFA francs per month.<sup>227</sup> If correct, this meant the annual budgetary expenses paid to the country's eighty deputies would have been approximately double the total expenditure on scholarships even if all 418 scholarships were paid at the full amount (22,500 CFA francs for twelve months). UDES leaders concluded by stating that they would accept cuts to scholarships on the day when to do so would benefit the "Senegalese people" and not simply become fruit for "the scandalous, fast, and ruthless enrichment of the mafia leaders."<sup>228</sup> Student leaders often stated that they believed government officials were also "misappropriating public funds," specifically using money set aside for the scholarship commission to pay for the UPS's campaign in the national presidential and legislative elections scheduled for February 1968.<sup>229</sup>

But these were the first national elections where UPS candidates had a complete monopoly. The official count proclaimed a voter turnout close to 95 percent, with Senghor and UPS deputies taking 100 percent of votes and all eight seats in the National Assembly.<sup>230</sup> Whether the turnout was factual or

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<sup>226</sup> "Bourses entières pour tout le monde," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>227</sup> "Des libertés démocratiques au Sénégal à la de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 February 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. Also in "Mémorandum sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar," UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 May 1968, Folder Crise Mai 1968, Dossier Sénégal: événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, CD, ANS.

<sup>228</sup> "Bourses entières pour tout le monde," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. "...l'enrichissement scandaleux, rapide et impitoyable de la maffia dirigéants."

<sup>229</sup> Untitled Tract from the Comité Executif de l'UDES, 8 December 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN; "De la situation économique et sociale au Sénégal à la veille de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 Feb 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>230</sup> PRA-Sénégal candidates amassed nearly 70,000 votes, about 6 percent of the total, but won no seats and had already been brought into the UPS.



exaggerated by the regime (as students suspected), the election was a reminder that the UPS was now completely unchallenged in the official political sphere.<sup>231</sup>

In this context, radical student leaders framed their defense of scholarships within their overt rejection of the UPS government, who they did not believe could represent the interests of the majority of the population. Student leaders put out two tracts in the days prior to the election laying out their critique of the UPS' record on the economy, social life, and political liberties.<sup>232</sup> The UDES portrayed itself as taking up the role of political opposition in Senegal, noting that students are also citizens and “in the silence of tamed or gagged opposition, our voice must rise to denounce the enemies of the Senegalese people.”<sup>233</sup> They framed the previous eight years as an attempt by the government to suppress those organizations who had called for “real” independence; including the 1963 attack on demonstrators at the Allées du centenaire (Avenue du Général du Gaulle), ongoing imprisonment of oppositionists, and “electric torture”—a clear reference to the fate of PAI militants accused of treason in their attempts to create rural guerilla units (see chapter 1).<sup>234</sup>

At the same time, student radicals continued to use expressions of global solidarity as a means of mobilizing their membership and defending their ability to take independent “political” positions. In

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<sup>231</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the Comité Executif of UDES, 25 June 1968. carton 672, DA, CADN. Senegal’s 1.3 million eligible voters were a sizable population, but not a majority of the estimated national population of nearly four million in 1968.

<sup>232</sup> “De la situation économique et sociale au Sénégal à la veille de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 Feb 1968; “Des libertés démocratiques au Sénégal à la de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 February 1968, both in carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>233</sup> Untitled Tract from the Comité Executif de l’UDES, 8 December 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN, “...dans le silence des oppositions apprivoisées ou baillonnées [sic], notre voix doit s’élever pour dénoncer les ennemis du peuple sénégalais.” Also UDES dismissed Abdoulaye Ly and the PRA-Sénégal as anything more than a loyal opposition that generally backs Senghor. See “Des libertés démocratiques au Sénégal à la de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 February 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>234</sup> “Des libertés démocratiques au Sénégal à la de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 February 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

January 1968, the UED put out the second issue of its newspaper, *La Voix de l'Étudiant*. Building on the November 1967 strike, the issue was dedicated to the history of anti-colonial struggle in Vietnam. Students also used the forty-page publication to present a general critique of French colonialism and American imperial intervention.<sup>235</sup> The strike in solidarity with Vietnam was followed by a mass meeting and two days of solidarity actions in February 1968 with people under Portuguese rule. Senegal did not have diplomatic relations with Portugal at the time, but police still amassed outside the campus to prevent students from marching to the United States embassy in protest of the war on Vietnam.<sup>236</sup>

In early March, the UED found a concrete opportunity to offer solidarity with the international campaign to boycott South Africa. Students learned that a South African delegation was scheduled to come to the University of Dakar for the Second African Psychiatry Conference. UED leaders declared that they supported the campaign coordinated by the Organization of African Unity to ban South Africa from the 1968 Summer Olympic games, and would “prevent by any means” the presence of a South African delegation on campus.<sup>237</sup> Though their pickets and protests do not seem to have halted the proceedings in Dakar, it was yet another occasion to defend their right to be “political.”

### **Urban and Political Connections**

While students saw themselves as one of the last bastions of political opposition in Senegal, the Senegalese government hoped to confine student politics to the university campus. By portraying students as hoarding financial resources in the midst of an economic crisis, authorities hoped to isolate them from the rest of the population. With less than one thousand Senegalese attending the University

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<sup>235</sup> Note, n. 33, Salamine, Objet: “Activité de l’U.E.D.,” 9 January 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>236</sup> “Journées de Solidarité avec les peuples sous domination portugaise” Note, n. 202, Salamine, Objet: “Activité de l’Union des Etudiants de Dakar (U.E.D.),” Source: Illion, 6 February 1968, Valeur: B/2, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>237</sup> “L’Apartheid ne passera pas!,” Tract, Comité Directeur of UED, early March 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

of Dakar in 1967-68, these students were a negligible portion of the half a million people living in the capital city.

However, students were able to play a larger role in the social life of the city than their numbers would suggest. On the one hand, their scholarships allowed them to enjoy living standards akin to the small population of skilled workers in Dakar; their material conditions and the insularity of the campus cut them off from the reality of most of the Senegalese urban and rural population. On the other hand, student radicals saw themselves as the humble intellectual representatives of the impoverished population. They used their time at the university to embark on their own political education, reading a wide variety of historians, philosophers, and Marxist thinkers. While ostensibly elites-in-training, they saw their path to economic and political influence blocked by the hostility of UPS leaders and foreigners. By 1968, graduates increasingly struggled to find the professional and managerial jobs they had anticipated.

While student radicals tended to meet on campus—and were increasingly barred from demonstrating off campus, many had connections in Dakar and beyond. The initial expansion of education after independence had brought new waves of Senegalese students from rural areas into urban high schools. This new wave of students came from diverse economic backgrounds and most were counted on to provide a steady income to members of their family upon graduation—if not earlier through their scholarships. By 1968, ten public high schools and three senior teacher training schools were operating in Senegal.<sup>238</sup> Of the 13,624 students enrolled in public high schools, 5,513, or 40 percent, studied at Dakar's three high schools, (a number pushed higher once students at Dakar's technical high school and teacher training school are taken into consideration.)<sup>239</sup> By 1968, only one of the high schools in Dakar provided for boarders, (about 360)—thus high school students who arrived

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<sup>238</sup> There were also five private high schools, who trained a much smaller number of students. I lack statistics on these schools, however. See UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 33.

<sup>239</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 33.

from outside the capital often stayed with members of their extended family or former communities who now resided in Dakar, where they became more connected to urban neighborhoods.<sup>240</sup> While only a small number of the students who started high school in Dakar eventually passed the baccalaureate and went to the University of Dakar, they maintained connections to their former classmates and younger students. Throughout the 1960s, student activists also offered free classes on the edge of campus to tutor secondary students hoping to pass the baccalaureate, and to help school dropouts gain their primary and lower secondary (*brevet*) certifications.<sup>241</sup> Over the summer, high school and university students who hailed from other cities, towns, or rural areas often returned home, where they maintained connections with younger students. When some of these junior students were accepted at high schools in Dakar, they reconnected with elder students who were already at the University.

Through these connections, tracts and radical literature passed between UDES militants and high school students. Although high school students still lacked a common national student union, formal associations existed among students of the upper grades at each high school. At the all-male Lycée Van Vollenhoven in Dakar, students boarders were often better organized than those who lived with families in the city, because of their shared lives together. The boarders tended to have clearer grievances that extended from the classroom to their living conditions. Thus, in 1966, 194 of the boarders (out of 360) walked out of classes over conditions at the school.<sup>242</sup>

By 1968, secondary school students had seen the effects of decreasing *per capita* funding for education in their own schools, and they were soon to inherit the conditions faced by university students, including the degradation of scholarships, living conditions at the university, and job

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<sup>240</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 33.

<sup>241</sup> See for example, Moktar Diack, interview 12 July 2012; Moussa Kane, interview 5 July 2012. This practice went back to the 1950s. Camara, interview 2 July 2012.

<sup>242</sup> Renseignements a/s "des élèves internes du Lycée Van Vollenhoven..." N. 394/K-1, 19 December 1966, Surûté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

prospects.<sup>243</sup> As a result, secondary school students followed the mounting conflict over university scholarships closely. Some had direct contact with university students; either from socializing on campus, or because university student leaders had also made a concerted effort to connect with students outside the high schools in the lead up to the strike.<sup>244</sup>

Within these student networks, there was a small, but important revival of interest in the banned PAI. The PAI's devastating history of repression since 1960 (see chapter 1) had left the party in shambles, long-abandoned by most of the four thousand members it had a decade earlier. The turn to clandestinity and the failed attempts to create armed rural guerillas left the party decidedly weaker, with many militants having been tortured, jailed, or demoralized by the experience.<sup>245</sup> In clandestinity, party militants were isolated from one another and from the leadership in exile. This opened the way to factionalizing and splits in the party, especially as party leaders took different side in the conflict between China and Soviet Union.

But nevertheless, the PAI remained an important pole of attraction for younger Senegalese (mostly men, but also a small group of female students) who wanted to challenge Senghor's restriction of democracy in the mid-to-late 1960s. During this time, high school and university students in Dakar, Saint Louis and Thiès continued to join the student section of the PAI (the *Movement des étudiants et élèves du PAI*, or MEEPAL). In 1965 and 1966, MEEPAL militants like Ousmane Baradji and Birahim Diagne

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<sup>243</sup> Like the *étudiants*, *élèves* and their teachers had also not been spared the decrease in *per capita* education funding. In 1967, the regional inspector of schools reported that twenty-eight elementary schools in the greater Dakar area completely lacked toilets, and seventeen had "insufficient" toilet facilities. At the end of the school year in 1967, the staff at the most prestigious high school, Van Vollenhoven, had been dramatically reduced, the school doctor had not been paid in ten months, and teachers were still waiting to be receive their overtime from the academic year. Letter n. 42 from the Inspecteur Régional de l'Enseignement (R. Robin) to the Minister of Education Nationale, Objet: Etat sanitaire des Ecoles, 13 January 1967, carton 188, B, RAD; "Procès-Verbal de la 2è reunion anuelle du Conseil de Gestion du Lycée Van Vollenhoven, 15 June 1967," 3 July 1967, carton 188, B, RAD.

<sup>244</sup> For example, Moktar Diack, interview, 12 July 2012.

<sup>245</sup> Charles Gueye, interviews; Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*.

(later UED president), provided a bridge between the student leaders of the UGEO and those of the later UDES and the UED. Many were drawn to the PAI's legacy as the party of socialism and opposition to Senghor, and joined the student section without a stake in the debates that were tearing the party apart.<sup>246</sup> This was possible because under conditions of illegality, the student section of the PAI acted autonomously from the party leadership, allowing students to escape some of the infighting.

The result was a "second generation" of student PAI members. Some of the new members were hardly five years younger than the previous group of PAI militants, but politically, they joined under different circumstances: after independence, in the period of Senghor's increasing single-party rule, when the PAI had been forced underground. They had not participated in the morale-crushing experience of the maquis.

Moussa Kane, who became a student PAI leader in the late 1960s, presents an interesting example of this. He joined because of his memory of the PAI from when he was in middle school. At the same time, he had a French teacher, Tidiane Baïdy Ly, who was a PAI militant. He saw Ly and other teachers get interrogated by the police and arrested at the school. Kane said that the teachers did not talk to the students about what was happening, but that the students understood. When Patrice Lumumba was assassinated in 1961 he and his classmates began to protest—and the first group to start distributing tracts was the PAI. Thus, upon arriving at the University of Dakar in 1967, he sought out the MEEPAL.

At the time of the 1968 strike, within the leadership of UDES and the UED were a core of about twenty students who were either members of the MEEPAL, or had been trained by the PAI.<sup>247</sup> MEEPAL

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<sup>246</sup> For this new group, older PAI student leaders like Majhemout Diop, Tidiane Baïdy Ly, Magatte Thiam, Samba Diouldé Thaim, and Amady Ali Dieng, were seen as the figures who had connected Senegal to anti-colonial movements across the Third World.

<sup>247</sup> Moktar Diack, interview, 12 July 2012. These students were a minority in the leadership of the union, but occupied most of the top positions, and were one of the few organized groups with a common political training and outlook.

activists held about a dozen of the forty-nine positions on the CA (Conseil d'Administration) of the UDES.<sup>248</sup> Though a minority in the leadership of the new unions, they held most of the key positions: four out of seven members of the bureau of the UDES were MEEPAI affiliated, including the president Mbaye Diack.<sup>249</sup>

### **Finding Allies**

Student radicals at the University of Dakar hoped that they could attract new allies by convincing city residents that the UPS government bore responsibility for the social and economic crises of 1967-1968. When opponents of the “renovation” of the Médina contacted UED leaders to ask for their support, they did not grant official UED support to the Lebou dignitaries leading the opposition, but students were encouraged to take part in the demonstrations as individuals.<sup>250</sup> Regardless of the UED’s hesitant endorsement, the connection may have still been important: the 1968 student strike would spark a tenacious rebellion from the frustrated residents of the Médina.

But student leaders were far more interested in establishing a close alliance with Dakar’s trade unions. K-1 reports claimed that students were at rebuffed at first. In March 1967, students approached the leadership of the government-sponsored trade union federation, the Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal (UNTS), and asked for help distributing a tract they had written about the economy to their members. The UNTS General Secretaries present reportedly told students that they

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<sup>248</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 89.

<sup>249</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 90-91; Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 148. Also confirmed by interviews with former UDES leaders Mbaye Diack, Moktar Diack, Moussa Kane, Birahim Ba, and Ousmane Ndiaye.

<sup>250</sup> Renseignements, N. 115/K-1, 6 February 1967, Surêté, 1966-67 Renseignements Généraux, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

were privileged members of society and that workers already paid for their studies. Union leaders then told students to spend more time their time on their studies and less time on making demands.<sup>251</sup>

Yet just a month later, the UNTS became a different organization. Following the elimination of opposition political parties, the government moved to rein trade unions into a single federation that would be closely linked to the UPS. This effort to control independent trade unions was the same one that guided the government's attempt to contain radical student leaders by only granting legal status to the UNES and MEOCAM at the University of Dakar. Many unions, especially those led by PAI and PRA-Sénégal activists, had resisted joining the UNTS. In January 1967, an incident at the main hospital in Dakar (Dantec) pitted a nurse against the wife of the President of the Senegalese Supreme Court, and became a point of struggle for the unions with very clear political undertones.<sup>252</sup> Hoping to more easily manage outbreaks of union agitation like this, the government initiated the merger of existing trade unions in April 1967, into a single national federation, the National Union of Senegalese Workers (Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal, or UNTS). While initially seen as a victory for the UPS, the unity of the trade unions actually introduced a group of PAI members, former members, and other critics of the regime into the leadership of the UNTS.<sup>253</sup>

The merger of the trade unions paralleled an attempt by PAI militants in Senegal to revive the party in 1967. As Sadio Camara points out in his memoir, a small group of PAI militants had remained active in their trade unions throughout the decade and now adopted a centralized strategy to shape the direction of the UNTS.<sup>254</sup> The PAI had trade union leaders in the Syndicat des enseignants (SES)—representing the party's roots in the intelligentsia of the previous generation—the Syndicat des

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<sup>251</sup> N. 107, Objet: Activités des étudiants de Dakar, 6 March 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>252</sup> "Synthèse des évènements marquants du Mois de Janvier 1967," No date, N. 76, carton 23, 5D, RAD.

<sup>253</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 27-29.

<sup>254</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 190-91.



ingénieurs et techniciens du Sénégal (SITS), the Syndicat des travailleurs de la santé, the Syndicat des travailleurs du commerce. Up to 1967, most PAI trade union leaders had opposed their local and national unions affiliating to the government-sponsored UNTS. After significant debate, however, most PAI trade union members reversed course, attempting to transform the UNTS and fight for its independence from the party—by joining it.<sup>255</sup>

The fusion of all trade unions into the UNTS in 1967 was therefore, Camara argues, not a sign of the UNTS's hegemony, but a concerted decision by a group of radical leaders, many connected to the PAI.<sup>256</sup> Camara argues that the merger resulted in a dramatically different UNTS national leadership than in the years prior. On the newly elected *bureau nationale* of the UNTS were eight PAI members, including Magatte Thiam, as the Secretary General adjoint.<sup>257</sup> Thiam, a professor at the University of Dakar, had been famously suspended after the student strike in 1966 and provided another link between MEEPAI students and trade union movement. The new strategy seems to have worked, as one year after the merger, the UNTS leadership put out a report that rejected cooperation with the UPS and called for union autonomy.<sup>258</sup>

The strategy of joining and redirecting the orientation of the UNTS from the inside, interestingly mirrored the attempt by UDES leaders to combine with UNES in order to take control of an "official"

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<sup>255</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 190-91. However, student leaders had connections to the independent unions that remained outside of the UNTS - notably teachers unions where the PAI and other opposition currents from the PRA-Sénégal had remained strong.

<sup>256</sup> See also Mbaye Diack, interview, 9 July 2012; Moussa Kane interview 5 July and 17 July 2012. Kane says that the PAI's mot d'ordre since 1962 had been to enter the unions, especially the UNTS. Comrades would carry around Lenin's pamphlet "Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder." Kane argues that the PAI is what connected the students to the unions—thus opening the possibility of the solidarity strike. Kane implies that Magatte Thiam and maybe even Amady Ali Dieng were in the union section of the PAI, thus connected to PAI leader Seydou Cissokho, but also to union movement more generally. For these student-trade union links, see also Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal."

<sup>257</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 191.

<sup>258</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 157.

student union that same year. It begs the question of whether both strategies stemmed from the PAI's perspective. During this time, a group of radical students organizing classes with union workers at the UNTS headquarters on topics such as Marx's *Capital* and the history of workers movements.

In the midst of the agricultural crisis, declining living standards in the cities, and the stagnation of workers wages, trade union and student leaders mounted an increasing attack on the UPS' handling of the economy. As a Senegalese police report noted, the crisis of housing in the city, and the decrease in hiring were contributing to an urban economic slump, ("marasme") and noted somewhat carefully, "One can say without being pessimistic that the situation has begun to deteriorate both politically and socially in the Cap-Vert region."<sup>259</sup> While the UPS touted the growth of the Senegalese economy, UDES militants responded before the elections in February 1968 with a somber assessment of "seven years of African socialism." They claimed that the key sectors of the economy were still controlled by a small coterie of "large international trusts" through their agents in the Senegal. UDES then laid out a description of five Frenchmen who administered thirty-three *sociétés* in Sénégal, including Charles Henri Gallenca, long-time president of the Dakar Chamber of Commerce and Industry.<sup>260</sup> A World Bank report in 1973 backed up the students' concerns, stating:

Senegal's industrial and services sectors are characterized by the predominance of foreign ownership and management. Many of the important companies in manufacturing, banking and trade are subsidiaries of French companies with their center of decision making located in France. Smaller companies are owned by foreigners living in Senegal. Foreign ownership is predominantly French for large and medium-sized companies and Lebanese for smaller commercial enterprises.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> "Synthèse des évènements marquants du Mois de Janvier 1967," No date, N. 76, carton 23, 5D, RAD. "...l'on peut dire sans être péssimiste que la situation commence à se détériorer tant sur le plan politique que sur le plan social dans la Région du Cap-Vert."

<sup>260</sup> De la situation économique et sociale au Sénégal à la veille de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 Feb 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>261</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 5.

Students further argued that the banking system in Senegal and remained in the hands of major foreign banks and bank managers, a claim backed up by World Bank studies.<sup>262</sup> Rather than seeing the Marché Commun Européen du Développement as a source of investment, they saw it as a control and check on the industrialization of Senegal. Similarly, they bristled at the Fonds Européens de Développement (FED) for only providing for investment in the sectors “which appear the most profitable for Europe.” In the cities, students decried unemployment/underemployment, and for those with waged work “the wage freeze and the high cost of living,” particularly for medical care. Far from only seeing this as an economic problem, students claimed it was leading to “moral degradation” including increases in petty crimes, “juvenile delinquency,” and prostitution.

The UDES criticized Senghor’s African socialism, stating: “...it is reasonable to wonder if this theory, so hastily elaborated, is dust meant to blind the people, ideological smoke, lacking consistency in both perspectives as well as realities.” They rejected the aging system of rural cooperatives, the early pride of the Dia government, as now being “socialist” in name only, keeping most peasants trapped in debt.<sup>263</sup> Students characterized the government’s forced spraying of farmers with DDT (as a Malaria prevention program) as a new form of torture.<sup>264</sup> In the cities, UDES claimed that the repression of the 1959 strike, and subsequent loss of three thousand jobs, had ushered in an era of fewer labor struggles, under the weight of pressure for labor unions to contribute to “national construction.”<sup>265</sup> While

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<sup>262</sup> International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 5.

<sup>263</sup> De la situation économique et sociale au Sénégal à la veille de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 Feb 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>264</sup> “Des libertés démocratiques au Sénégal à la de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 February 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. “Cette année, le Gouvernement sénégalais a inauguré lors de la champagne de recuperation des dettes en milieu paysan un nouveau système de torture: pulvérisation au DDT – avant le bastonnade – de pères de famille sous le regard impuissant de leurs enfants.”

<sup>265</sup> “Des libertés démocratiques au Sénégal à la de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968,” Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 February 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN; Note de Renseignements. N. 87, “Activités des étudiants,” 12 Mai 1968, 13 Mai 1968, 15 (?) Mai 1968, VALEUR: B/2, SENEGAL, carton 672, DA, CADN.

workers' wages stagnated, UPS deputies took home between 200,000 and 300,000 CFA francs per month.<sup>266</sup> "When the people of Senegal wanted socialism, did they want it under the cover of state capitalism concealing the international monopolies pillaging their resources?"<sup>267</sup>

It is hard to know whether the UDES' tracts on the Senegalese economy reached a wide audience beyond the boundaries of campus. But by May Day 1968, new UNTS leaders in Dakar had begun voicing many of the same complaints and claims. The fusion of unions in Dakar had prompted new discussions about the rising cost of living and demands for a decrease in the price of rice. As noted above, the city was home to two-thirds of the country's salaried workforce. When the UNTS called for independence from the ruling party and deposited its annual *cahier des charges* in May 1968, it railed against French control of the economy, arguing that French capital owned 70 percent of commercial companies, 80 percent of industry, and 56 percent of banks in Senegal.<sup>268</sup> Camara argues that PAI militants and their allies attempted to consult the base of their unions and put together a more militant and independent May Day celebration in 1968 than in previous years.<sup>269</sup>

Students responded with a tract just before May Day 1968 calling on workers to break from the UPS<sup>270</sup> as well as their own union leaders. They characterized the labor movement as one in retreat since the days of anti-colonial agitation by trade unions (UGTAN), students (UGEAO, FEANF), radical parties (PAI, UPC.) Students claimed that since independence African laborers had been manipulated by

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<sup>266</sup> "Des libertés démocratiques au Sénégal à la de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 February 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>267</sup> "De la situation économique et sociale au Sénégal à la veille de la mascarade électorale du 25 Février 1968," Tract, Comité Executif of UDES, 24 Feb 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. "Lorsque le peuple sénégalais a voulu le socialisme, voulait-il que sous le couvert d'un capitalisme d'état larvé les monopoles internationaux pillent ses ressources?"

<sup>268</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 158.

<sup>269</sup> See also Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 151.

<sup>270</sup> Note, n. 751, Salamine, Objet: Activités de l'Union des Etudiants de Dakar (U.E.D.), REMUSAT, 2 May 1968, Valeur: B/2, carton 672, DA, CADN.

placing labor unions under the control of those close to the regimes in power. Labor union leaders had become a “labor aristocracy” (using a term from Vladimir Lenin) who no longer spoke for the workers they represented—or who quickly dropped worker’s demands over cocktails with influential political and economic leaders and became “*ouvriers à Mercedes*.”<sup>271</sup> Students called on workers to reject their union leaders, and as those who create the wealth and services of society, struggle for a “state in which power is truly theirs.”<sup>272</sup> The tract seemed to indicate that students were either unaware or distrusting of the shift in the leadership taking place in the UNTS, and suggests that the link between MEEPAI students and opposition leaders within the UNTS may have been inconsistent.

As Sadio Camara concedes, the PAI remained highly disorganized at this time. Former MEEPAI members recount that the party, still operating under conditions of illegality, could not meet openly and membership information could not be shared broadly. Thus, members reported to an assigned liaison, or a cell leader, but were ignorant of who many of their fellow party militants were.<sup>273</sup> This led Abdoulaye Bathily, in his history of the 1968 strike, to generally disparage the idea that events were driven by the PAI, or other even weaker parties, the Senegalese Communist Party (PCS), or the Senegalese National Front (FNS).<sup>274</sup> Bathily argues that while some of these parties’ “key officials actively participated in the movement,” they did so “primarily as union actors or students pushed by the

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<sup>271</sup> “30 April, 1 May, Etudiants et travailleurs, renforçons notre lutte patriotique et anti-impérialiste!!!,” Tract, Comité Directeur of UED, 30 April 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>272</sup> “Etat où le pouvoir leur appartiendra véritablement.” “30 April, 1 May, Etudiants et travailleurs, renforçons notre lutte patriotique et anti-impérialiste!!!,” Tract, Comité Directeur of UED, 30 April 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>273</sup> The MEPAI was organized through secret cells, where only people higher up the hierarchy knew who they were. Rank and file members did not know one another. Often they were simply introduced to circles within unions or student organizations but unsure who else was in the organization. Moussa Kane, interview, 5 July 2012.

<sup>274</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 87-88.

rank-and-file."<sup>275</sup> He is undoubtedly right that these small parties did not control the timing or direction of the strike. But Bathily's argument that the May 1968 strike was simply a "spontaneous explosion of mass anger at the regime," does not explain how it took an organized form.<sup>276</sup>

Instead, it is more useful to think about the PAI and MEEPAI militants as stable pivots around which the organization of the most active students and workers took place in 1968 and the years immediately preceding the strike. At the University of Dakar, the MEEPAI, however small, set the tone for oppositional student politics at time when formal political opposition was collapsing. The first generation of the PAI leaders from the late 1950s had left an ideological imprint on the younger students, or "second generation," of MEEPAI militants in the 1960s. The party's orientation toward Marxism and Third World solidarity remained appealing to a core of young students who saw problems in Senegal as rooted not simply in Senghor's consolidation of power, but also the need to overturn the remnants of colonial rule that remained in place, whether military, educational, or economic. Further, in the context where there was no legal parliamentary opposition to Senghor and his party, the PAI's history of opposition to Senghor since the 1950s provided a glimmer of credibility for many young people. Lastly, whatever the disastrous state of the PAI after a decade of repression, it remained important because it had organizational links that allowed young radicals to connect with both national trade union leaders and international communist organizations that made them feel that they were part of a movement that could challenge capitalism and inequality.

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<sup>275</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 88. "...quelques uns de leurs principaux responsables ont participé activement au mouvement mais il le faisaient, avant tout, comme acteurs syndicaux ou étudiants soumis à la poussée de la base."

<sup>276</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 94.

## IV. The Explosion of May-June 1968

### The Warning Strike

Student leaders spent late 1967 and the first few months of 1968 attempting to negotiate with the government to restore their scholarships. But by May 1968, officials at the Ministry of National Education had simply stopped responding to UDES leaders' inquiries.<sup>277</sup> At a UDES-organized *journée d'études* held on campus shortly after May Day, a group of African faculty offered the support of the Association des professeurs africains de l'enseignement. On May 12, student representatives from Mali, Dahomey, Guinea, Mauritania, and Congo-Brazzaville criticized Senghor, with some accusing him of acting as a "dictator" and intervening to support conservative forces in their countries of origin.<sup>278</sup> Representatives from Togo, Chad, Haute-Volta, and Cameroon similarly critiqued their home governments and compared them to the Senegalese government. UDES leader Birahim Diagne again placed the call for full scholarships in the larger context of the need for political and economic change—and upped the ante in student criticisms of Senghor's negritude, calling him "an unconditional servant of colonialism, a Frenchman in black skin, but thinking [of himself as] white, a dreamer."<sup>279</sup> The day notoriously ended with a call for the "liquidation of the current regime."<sup>280</sup> French embassy reports on the *journée d'études* do not mention any decisions being made about going on strike, but the French

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<sup>277</sup> "Mémorandum sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar," UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 May 1968, Folder Crise Mai 1968, Dossier Sénégal: événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, CD, ANS.

<sup>278</sup> Note de Renseignements. N. 87, "Activités des étudiants," 12 Mai 1968, 13 Mai 1968, 15 (?) Mai 1968, VALEUR: B/2, SENEGAL, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>279</sup> Note, N. 817, Salamine, Objet: Activité de l'Union Démocratique des Etudiants Senegales (U.D.E.S.), REMUSAT. 15 May 1968, Valeur: B/2, carton 672, DA, CADN. Diagne concluded by accusing Senghor of being "un valet inconditionnel du colonialism, un français à la peau noire mais pensant blanc, un rêveur."

<sup>280</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 151. "...liquidation de l'actuel régime."

ambassador would later claim that this was where students first decided to engage in a half-day warning strike the following Saturday.<sup>281</sup>

Students engaged in strike actions and protests in 1967 and early 1968, but had always hoped to avoid a direct confrontation with the government by keeping their strikes limited to one or two days. These actions allowed radical student leaders to gauge their own support on campus, as well as the government's response. Senegalese students in UDES repeated this pattern when they called for four-hour "warning" strike to protest cuts to their scholarships on May 18, 1968. The warning strike was again meant to appraise both the solidity of their own ranks as well as potential government reactions. This was clear in a tract released by the Executive Committee of UDES the morning before the strike, which claimed that the limited nature of the strike intended to respect student concerns about upcoming end of the year exams.<sup>282</sup> The tract made it clear that the strike was focused on the demand to regain full scholarships, though UDES leaders still placed this demand within a broader critique of the government's management of the education system.<sup>283</sup>

Senghor believed that the regime had made a mistake by granting concessions to students after the 1966 strike, and he now refused to compromise on the cuts to student scholarships. A few days before the warning strike, he told Jean Vyau de Lagarde, the French Ambassador in Dakar, that he would not "tolerate the slightest disturbance in the functioning of the University" and would respond "firmly" to any student agitation.<sup>284</sup> When UDES members met on campus and upheld the strike call the night

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<sup>281</sup> Note, N. 839, Salamine, Objet: Agitation à l'Université de Dakar, 20 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>282</sup> "Bourses entières pour tout le monde," Tract, Comité Exécutif of UDES, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>283</sup> "Bourses entières pour tout le monde," Tract, Comité Exécutif of UDES, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN; Telegram, N. 422, from Lagarde (Ambassade de France, Dakar) to Diplomatie Paris 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>284</sup> Telegram, N. 421, from Lagarde (Ambassade de France, Dakar) to Diplomatie Paris, 17 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. (LaGarde's words, not Senghor's).



before it was to take place, the Minister of the Interior, Amadou Cissé Dia, cancelled his planned travels.<sup>285</sup> The next day, the strike was “followed by 100%” of the students, with pickets set up in front of each faculté, including fifty picketers outside of the College of Law and Economics.<sup>286</sup> University students were joined by high school students from Lycée Blaise Diagne, who had left their classes, and together marched through campus at 11:30am ending at the offices of the COUD, where UDES president spoke, reiterating student claims that representatives had taken their grievances to university authorities, only to be met with “lack of understanding and ill will.”<sup>287</sup> By noon, the rally had ended, and classes could resume.<sup>288</sup>

### **The Student Strike Begins**

Although the warning strike took place without a major confrontation, French officials were concerned that given Senegalese and University officials decision to not grant any concessions, that the students might be pushed toward more aggressive tactics.<sup>289</sup> Representatives from six trade unions intervened to encourage government representatives to consider the students’ demands.<sup>290</sup> In the week following the warning strike, UDES representatives met with the Minister of Education, but the outcome of these

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<sup>285</sup> Note, N. 839, Salamine, Objet: Agitation à l’Université de Dakar, 20 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>286</sup> Note, N. 836, Salamine, Objet: Grève des étudiants sénégalais, 20 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>287</sup> Note, N. 839, Salamine, Objet: Agitation à l’Université de Dakar, 20 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>288</sup> Telegram, N. 423, from Lagarde (Ambassade de France, Dakar) to Diplomatie Paris, 18 May 1968. carton 672, DA, CADN; Note, N. 839, Salamine, Objet: Agitation à l’Université de Dakar, 20 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. The embassy reported that only one “European” student tried to enter a building and was stopped by the strikers.

<sup>289</sup> Note, N. 839, Salamine, Objet: Agitation à l’Université de Dakar, 20 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>290</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the Comité Executif of UDES, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. SUEL (Syndicat Unique de l’Enseignement Laïc du Sénégal); SPAS (Syndicat des Professeurs Africains au Sénégal); APAES (Amicale des professeurs africains au Sénégal); SITS (Syndicat des Ingénieurs et Techniciens du Sénégal); UNTS; SMPCD. See also Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal,” 24.

negotiations is contested. Students claimed that they Mbow refused to concede to any of their demands when they met on May 21. But the French ambassador, Lagarde, claimed that in a meeting with Mbow on May 24, the Minister agreed to review their demands and try to satisfy them within “rather limited financial means at his disposal.”<sup>291</sup> Whether Mbow may have made ambiguous assurances in a meeting is unclear, but later documents indicate that any possibility of considering the students’ demands were quickly extinguished by Senghor and other UPS leaders.<sup>292</sup>

Following the warning strike, Senghor put forth an even stronger line of intolerance toward student agitation. Between the warning strike of May 18 and the beginning of the open-ended strike on May 27, a group of about fifty French students at the University of Dakar—out of eight hundred enrolled— “written a manifesto” in solidarity with student protesters in France, which they planned to present it to the embassy on the 27<sup>th</sup>.<sup>293</sup> According to Lagarde, were also rumored to be considering organizing a demonstration in the streets of Dakar.<sup>294</sup> The news prompted Senghor to reiterate his previous threats of repression, though now more strongly. Lagarde reported that Senghor promised to send in the military to shut down any demonstration, that any Senegalese student involved would be immediately drafted into the army, and all foreign students expelled the same day. Ominously, he threatened to “bring the militants from the bush to "subdue" the student movement.”<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> LaGarde’s words. Telegram 431/432 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 25 May 1968, reçu à 16h00, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>292</sup> In particular, those documents that chastised Mbow for showing sympathy to the students in the lead up to the strike.

<sup>293</sup> Telegram 431/432 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 25 May 1968, reçu à 16h00, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>294</sup> Over the weekend, however, the agitation among French students appears to have faded. The French embassy reported that the statement drawn up by a group of about fifty students was not adopted more broadly by the French students body and was dropped.

<sup>295</sup> “ferait venir les militants de la brousse pour “mater” le mouvement estudiantin.” Telegam 427/428 from Lagarde to: Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Télégramme À L’arrivée, Déchiffrement, 24 May 1968, received

A week after the warning strike, on Friday May 24 at 9pm, UDES held a general assembly composed of its Senegalese student members, along with representatives from other national groups within the UED, a contingent of French students, Lebanese students, and representatives from the teacher's union.<sup>296</sup> Tensions were clearly mounting: a police intelligence officer who attempted to spy on the assembly was recognized by the students and reportedly "stripped, beaten, and chased" from the meeting.<sup>297</sup> The assembly voted to begin an "unlimited strike of classes and practical work, with a boycott of exams" beginning at 8am on Monday, May 27, to be maintained until the satisfaction of their demands.<sup>298</sup>

The strike raised the question of international solidarity on campus. The demands applied exclusively to Senegalese students, who remained a minority on campus. The campus student body was nearly divided into thirds between Senegalese nationals (973), other African nationals (1160), French nationals (818), with a small population of non-French and non-African nationals (90).<sup>299</sup> Thus, the success of the strike relied upon the cooperation—if not the direct participation—of other students on campus. French intelligence services reported that the other African students of the UED backed the

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14h40, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS and carton 673, DA, CADN. Also reported by the SDECE that all French students would be immediately expelled and all Senégalese students immediately incorporated into the army. "Message du S.D.E.C.E," 25 May 1968, 18h.45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS; Report from the French Ministry of the Army/SDECE n. 4294 "La grève des étudiants de l'université de Dakar," 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>296</sup> Note de Renseignements, Objet: "Agitation estudiantine à Dakar," 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS. French intelligence (SDECE) reported that the UPS students were excluded from the assembly. But present were "quelques étudiants français" and "le professeur Verdun." "Message du S.D.E.C.E," 25 May 1968, 18h.45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS; Report from the French Ministry of the Army/SDECE n. 4294 "La grève des étudiants de l'université de Dakar," 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>297</sup> Note de Renseignements, Objet: "Agitation estudiantine à Dakar," 27 May 1968. FPU 2256.

<sup>298</sup> "...grève illimité des cours et des travaux pratiques, avec boycott des examens" Letter from the UDES Comité Exécutif to Monsieur le Doyen de la Faculté du Droit et de Sciences économiques de Dakar, 25 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>299</sup> Statistiques Universitaires 1975-1976, Bulletin #1, Rectorat de l'Université de Dakar, Bureau des Statistiques, UCAD.

Senegalese students' demands.<sup>300</sup> However, they claimed that this support was uneven across the different *facultés*. Those in the two largest *facultés*, the College of Arts and the College of Law and Economics were generally supportive of the strike, while those in the College of Sciences and the Medical school were reportedly "preoccupied with taking exams."<sup>301</sup> With Senegalese students as a demographic minority, French intelligence reports later argued that the majority of students on campus were not in favor of the strike, but that students "conformism" prevented the rise of any visible opposition.<sup>302</sup> As during actions in 1967, those who did not want to strike were not numerous enough, or well organized enough, to try to challenge it. French students who were unconcerned with Senegalese student scholarships, African medical and science students who did not want their exams disrupted, and pro-UPS students who were locked in a battle with the leadership of the UDES may have all disagreed with the strike call, but were too divided to offer a serious challenge.

On the eve of the strike, UDES put out a five page tract<sup>303</sup> claiming that the deterioration of their own social position was a "reflection" of the parallel experience of the Senegalese "working masses." Mbow took to the airwaves that evening in attempts to undercut student's appeals for solidarity. Whereas student leaders linked their critique of Senghor to the agricultural crisis faced by Senegalese

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<sup>300</sup> "Message du S.D.E.C.E," 25 May 1968, 18h.45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS; Note de Renseignements, Objet: "Agitation des étudiants à Dakar," 25 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS and carton 673, DA, CADN.

<sup>301</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; "Message du S.D.E.C.E," 25 May 1968, 18h.45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS; Report from the French Ministry of the Army/SDECE n. 4294 "La grève des étudiants de l'université de Dakar," 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS; Note de Renseignements, Objet: "Agitation des étudiants à Dakar," 25 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS and carton 673, DA, CADN.

<sup>302</sup> "conformisme des étudiants" Report from the French Ministry of the Army/SDECE n. 4294 "La grève des étudiants de l'université de Dakar," 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS. Note de Renseignements, Objet: "Agitation des étudiants à Dakar," 25 May 1968, carton 2256 5AG/FPU, ANS and carton 673, DA, CADN.

<sup>303</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

farmers in 1968, Mbow instead claimed that students were greedy to demand scholarships while most peasants struggled to make an income.<sup>304</sup> He reminded students that the government would show no leniency to strikers, and proclaimed that the next year's scholarships would be based on this year's exam scores. Undeterred, students began picketing in front of each faculté, the university administrative offices, and the main entrance to the campus<sup>305</sup> early the next morning. By 8am, striking students began distributing a tract explaining the reasons for the action. No police were present inside or around the university, and there was no initial response from the government.<sup>306</sup>

### **The Strike Spreads Off Campus**

Although campus and government officials did not immediately intervene, they were likely keeping a careful watch on the first morning of the strike. But they were caught completely off guard when the strike rapidly spread among secondary school students on the first day.

As noted above, university student radicals had built connections with secondary school students. Students from the Lycée Blaise Diagne and Lycée Technique Maurice Delafosse left their classes and came to campus on May 18 to participate in the university warning strike.<sup>307</sup> Although largely acting in solidarity with the university students, cuts to stipends were also taking place at the secondary level. The French embassy reported that “the whole of” secondary students (from middle schools, high

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<sup>304</sup> Telegram 433/435, from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 27 May 1968, reçu le 28—A 10h45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>305</sup> Note de Renseignements, Objet: “Agitation estudiantine à Dakar,” 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>306</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>307</sup> The students from Lycée Blaise Diagne arrived just in time for the march through campus. Students from the Lycée Technique arrived at Noon, just as the march was concluding. Note, N. 839, Salamine, Objet: “Agitation à l’Université de Dakar,” 20 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN; Note, N. 836, Salamine, “Objet: Grève des étudiants sénégalais,” 20 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

schools, and other secondary schools) supported the warning strike, noting that some had yet to received their own scholarship payments for the second and third trimesters.<sup>308</sup>

Bathily and other UDES leaders have recounted the increasing collaboration they had with older secondary school students in Dakar and with students the girls school in Thiès, including close collaboration the day before the strike began.<sup>309</sup> Not surprisingly, on the morning that the open-ended strike began at the University of Dakar, students at Dakar's three high schools, the technical high school, and the teacher training school (École normale supérieure) walked out of classes. By 10am, the older students at Lycée Van Vollenhoven had begun striking, reportedly chasing out younger students, breaking windows and "ransacking" the science lecture hall.<sup>310</sup> The sons of both the minister of the army (Ibrahima Boye) and Senegalese doctor Blondin Diop were both reported to have helped lead the strike at Lycée Van Vollenhoven.<sup>311</sup> The police were unprepared for the rapid outbreak of strikes in the capital's secondary schools.<sup>312</sup> Students who formed picket lines outside of the high schools were chased off by police, but once the police force had moved on, students quickly returned and reformed the pickets.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Note, N. 839, Salamine, "Objet: Agitation à l'Université de Dakar," 20 May 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>309</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 70-71. See also Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 151-52.

<sup>310</sup> Later French reports said the strikes were notled by the students in the "classes terminales" but instead by students in 2ème and 3ème. Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>311</sup> Note de Renseignements, Objet: "Agitation estudiantine à Dakar," 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>312</sup> Telegram 433/435 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 27 May 1968, reçu le 28 à 10h45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Note de Renseignements, Objet: "Agitation estudiantine à Dakar," 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>313</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

Senghor replied with a communiqué to the parents of all primary and secondary students informing them that as at the university, any “foreign” students participating in the protests would be immediately deported.<sup>314</sup> But by noon, the strike had spread to all of the secondary schools, both public and religious, in the city and students had left their classes.<sup>315</sup> French reports suggest that contingents of university students had gone to each of Dakar’s high schools in the morning to begin disrupting classes and provoking the students to join the strike.<sup>316</sup> But it seems unlikely that the secondary students operated blindly at the behest of university students. Primarily led by the more senior students, committees at each high school and the teacher training school composed unique statements on May 27 and 28 in support of the university students, while laying out their own reasons for joining the strike.<sup>317</sup> Each resolution had diverse grievances, demands, and approaches, reflecting the perspectives of the particular students in the upper grades.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Telegram 433/435 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 27 May 1968, reçu le 28 à 10h45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>315</sup> “A 12 heures, on indiquait à la Direction de la Sûreté Nationale que tous les élèves des lycées de Dakar, ainsi que ceux des institutions religieuses, avaient été contraints de quitter leurs classes.” Note de Renseignements, Objet: “Agitation estudiantine à Dakar,” 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>316</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. LaGarde also claimed that university students occupied the Lycée Van Vollenhoven and joined up with the elder students. Later reports don’t say anything about university students raiding the school, or about anything being broken - though it’s possible a couple university students did go to meet up with lycée leaders. Telegram 433/435 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 27 May 1968, reçu le 28 à 10h45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>317</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 71. See also “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the Comité Executif of UDES, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>318</sup> In most cases, it is unclear who wrote the resolutions. At the Lycée technique, it is made explicit that it came out of a meeting of the students in the classes terminales. But at the Lycée Blaise Diagne complaints about the challenges of advancement into the classes terminales suggests that students in 1e or 2e were involved as well. See Fatoumata Signate, interview with author, 29 June 2012, Dakar; “Déclaration des élèves du Lycée Technique Maurice Delafosse,” Pour les élèves du Lycée Technique M. Delafosse, La Commission, 28 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS; Lycée Blaise Diagne, Pour les élèves du Lycée Blaise Diagne, Le Comité de grève, no date, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

The resolutions nevertheless raised similar issues. All proclaimed their solidarity with the university students' demand for full and equitable bourses, and linked the crisis at the university to more general problems in the management of secondary education. Students at Lycée Van Vollenhoven and the girls high school, Lycée John F. Kennedy, emphasized the problem of scholarships among all secondary students. Students at Lycée Van Vollenhoven proclaimed that scholarships needed to be distributed on the basis of necessity, while students at the technical high school argued that they were passed over for scholarships, which favored students at the regular high schools.<sup>319</sup>

Among other shared grievances that appeared in the strike declarations, students at both Lycée Van Vollenhoven and Lycée John F. Kennedy complained about insufficient budgets for things like classroom supplies, food, medications, and sanitation. Both of these strike committees also objected to the severity of punishment for minor disciplinary transgressions—with students at Lycée Van Vollenhoven demanding that student representatives hold positions on the disciplinary board. At both Lycée Van Vollenhoven and the technical high school students expressed their frustration with curriculums that were “unsuitable” to conditions in Senegal. Students at Lycée Blaise Diagne, Lycée John F. Kennedy, and Lycée Van Vollenhoven criticized professors for their failure to fairly evaluate students when determining class advancement.<sup>320</sup>

The strike resolutions also manifested very particular concerns. At Lycée Blaise Diagne, students focused exclusively on recent restrictions that had been placed on how many students could advance into the first year of middle school, the final years of high school, and the university. Meanwhile, at the girls high school, students “denounced the intensive American propaganda within the school” saying

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<sup>319</sup> “Résolution des élèves du Lycée Van Vollenhoven,” Les élèves du Lycée Van Vollenhoven, 28 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS; “Déclaration des élèves du Lycée Technique Maurice Delafosse,” Pour les élèves du Lycée Technique M. Delafosse, La Commission, 28 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>320</sup> French professors came under particular criticism in the statement from students at Lycée Blaise Diagne, although this was an undercurrent at all the schools.



that it constituted a clear violation of the “‘neutrality’ of secondary education.”<sup>321</sup> They also called upon “their Senegalese and African sisters” to support the strike, and saw the liberation of women as a “indispensible condition for the development of the country.”

Students at the technical high school and the Lycée Blaise Diagne focused on students with terminal secondary degrees (*brevets*) not being able to find work, and at the former, they demanded that graduates be placed in positions among the public administration or the private sector. While most resolutions addressed their grievances toward government ministries, students at Lycée Blaise Diagne chose instead to address their strike call to their parents.

On the second day of the strike (May 28), national organization of parents of primary and secondary students (Fédération Nationale des Parents d’Élèves, or FENAPES) called upon parents to escort their children to school.<sup>322</sup> Upon arriving, however, parents found classes being led by the strikers themselves.<sup>323</sup> Thus, at noon, the government closed and evacuated all high schools and middle schools in the Dakar region, hoping to take control of the situation before students could initiate further organized actions.<sup>324</sup> Secondary students claimed that on from the first day of the strike their schools were invaded by police, leaving some students hospitalized.<sup>325</sup> Primary schools were closed shortly

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<sup>321</sup> The strike declaration did not specify what form of propaganda.

<sup>322</sup> Bulletin Quotidien d’Information de l’Agence de presse sénégalaise, n. 3595, 28 May 1968, p. 6-7, UCAD.

<sup>323</sup> Part the boarders at Lycée Van Vollenhoven. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>324</sup> “Déclaration des élèves du Sénégal au sujet des événements qui bouleversent l’Ecole Sénégalaise,” Comité national de grève des Lycées et C.G.E. du Sénégal, late June/early July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>325</sup> “Déclaration des élèves du Sénégal au sujet des événements qui bouleversent l’Ecole Sénégalaise,” Comité national de grève des Lycées et C.G.E. du Sénégal, late June/early July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

thereafter.<sup>326</sup> The strike quickly spread to secondary schools in Saint-Louis, and on May 29 to Thiès, leading the government to close schools in those cities, as well as Diourbel.<sup>327</sup>

On the afternoon of May 28, Mbow met with parents of secondary school students, who blamed him for the situation.<sup>328</sup> Both Mbow and the Minister of Technical Education, Emile Badiane, walked out of the meeting early and refused to attend another meeting, scheduled with parents in the Médina.<sup>329</sup> That evening, the UPS *bureau politique* continued to bicker, with Mbow now receiving the brunt of the internal attack.<sup>330</sup> The regime had not expected the spread of the strike into secondary schools and feared that students now had momentum on their side. Many parents were longer able, or interested, in enforcing discipline on their children. Whereas in 1966 FENAPES had condemned the university student strike, this time they did not, which likely encouraged students to maintain their protests.<sup>331</sup>

### **Senghor's Attack on Students and Other Enemies**

Despite Senghor and Mbow's firm warnings, university students had initially succeeded in shutting down campus. On the first day of the strike, the university teaching staff held a general meeting and after a lengthy discussion, resolved by a vote of 42-1 to mediate a solution to the conflict between striking

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<sup>326</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>327</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Ousmane Camara says Diourbel too, see Camara, *Mémoires d'un juge africain* 161.

<sup>328</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>329</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>330</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>331</sup> Although Gueye notes that throughout the crisis the parents hoped to get their children back to school as soon as possible. Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal."

students and Senegalese government authorities. They also decided not to plan exams under the current conditions.<sup>332</sup> Meetings took place that day between different combinations of students from UDES and the UED, faculty, the university rector (Paul Teyssier), Mbow, and Senghor.<sup>333</sup> The day ended with no resolution, but instead an ultimatum from Senghor to the UDES executive committee. Via Teyssier, Senghor transmitted his demand: a written declaration from UDES by 8am the following morning stipulating that their goals were strictly “corporate” and that they had no intentions of trying to overthrow his regime.<sup>334</sup>

The students’ stated motivation for the strike—the defense of their scholarships—was never accepted by either Senegalese or French authorities. Although Senghor and Mbow chastised students for being greedy in the face of rural poverty, they did not believe the strike was over scholarships. French and Senegalese authorities adopted three explanations, some of them contradictory. The first was that students in Dakar were hoping to emulate students in Europe. The second was that the leadership of UDES was radically opposed to the Senegalese government, yet agitated around the issue of scholarships as a way to mobilize the largest base possible. The third was that students were following commands from foreign communists (perhaps through the PAI or other clandestine oppositionists) who were set on toppling his government.

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<sup>332</sup> Resolution by the General Assembly of University faculty, 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>333</sup> Report from Jacques Foccart’s office to de Gaulle, “Note à l’attention de Monsieur le Président de la République, la situation au Sénégal,” 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Later report says students also met with Mbow: Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. The Comité Directeur of the UED met with the Rector protesting the need for the Rector to advocate the defense of academic freedoms with the President. See “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>334</sup> “We were told that Senghor wanted something by 8am the next morning, written, which would be published in which ‘nous stipulerions notamment que nos revendications étaient strictement corporatives et que nous ne voulions en aucun cas renverser son régime.’” “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

Senghor embraced the view of French authorities, who saw the student strike as an “imitation” of the protests taking place in Paris and Berlin. French officials estimated that students in Dakar were watching the “échec des forces de l’ordre en Europe” and believed that the Senegalese government would not send in the police. French authorities saw the UDES leadership as a radical core trying to manipulate the larger student body, and that the issue of bourses was simply a pretext to initiate a larger crisis for the regime. As French ambassador Jean Vyau de Lagarde wrote in a telegram just before the strike: “The true motives of the movement seem to be the desire of African students to imitate their European counterparts, and to pull the working class into an widespread movement.” LaGarde’s interpretation—that the Senegalese student strike was an echo of events in France—was sent to the office of Jacques Foccart, de Gaulle’s trusted secretary of African and Malagasy affairs. Foccart, or one of his staff, then passed on the message to de Gaulle on May 31.

Based on Senghor’s ultimatum to the students, he seems to have agreed that—at least for some student leaders—scholarships were simply a guise to justify sowing a more general rebellion aimed at toppling his regime. Student leaders had recently called for the “liquidation of the current regime,” and Senghor still feared that PAI (and perhaps ex-PRA) militants sought to overthrow the regime with the help of foreign allies. Senghor’s conspiratorial view of the PAI and some union leaders in particular was linked to his fear that they were a bulwark of “red imperialism.”

Student leaders rejected the government’s accusations that were working for “foreign” interests, but they also refused to sign a declaration that they did not seek to topple the government.<sup>335</sup> The UDES executive committee claimed that after meeting with Teyssier, they called a meeting of the larger Conseil d’Administration (CA) to endorse a response, which could then be submitted to a general assembly for approval. After discussing late into the night, students reportedly decided that endorsing the declaration demanded by Senghor was offensive, given that they had laid out the same demands in

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<sup>335</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 93. See also Mbaye Diack, interviews; Moktar Diack, interviews.

tracts for the past six months—ostensibly referring to their basic demands for full scholarships.<sup>336</sup> This however, did not allay Senghor’s fears that student leaders had revolutionary intentions. Teyssier reportedly replied that if they did not sign a declaration, the University of Dakar “would be destroyed.”<sup>337</sup>

Students refusal to sign Senghor’s pledge, and the spread of the strike into the secondary schools and beyond Dakar both prompted the UPS leadership to try to quash the student movement by force. On May 28, an *état-major* was created at the Ministry of the Interior, composed of representatives from all the branches of state “security forces.”<sup>338</sup> By the afternoon, police in the capital had emptied the secondary schools and encircled the university campus, setting up controlled checkpoints for people moving between campus and the adjacent neighborhoods.<sup>339</sup> With campus surrounded, UED leaders now called on students of *all* nationalities at the university to formally join the strike the next day, May 29.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>337</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. “...serait détruite,” in the students’ words. French reports later claimed that at a ministerial meeting that morning, and at a UPS Bureau Politque meeting that evening, most party leaders called for the use of force, but that Senghor (who had proclaimed so clearly his intention to use force) decided against doing so on the first day. See Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>338</sup> Note de Renseignements, Objet: “Agitation estudiantine à Dakar,” 27 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>339</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Students claimed that police had already set up a cordon and prevented them from coming or going by the evening of the 27th: “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>340</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

On the morning of May 29, students occupied the administrative buildings and blocked faculty and staff from accessing their offices.<sup>341</sup> In response, the government cut off all movement in and out of the campus, and at 10am, sent in “mobile intervention groups” (*groupes mobile d’intervention*, or GMI), a recent creation of Ousmane Camara, the head of national security (and a former student radical—see previous chapter).<sup>342</sup> Police raided the campus with tear gas grenades as students attempted to take cover in the campus dorms.<sup>343</sup> Students accused police of first destroying science labs, then throwing students out of the windows of the top story of the Pavilion A dorm. Doors and windows were broken down as police threw tear gas canisters into dorm rooms, with one student having his skin badly charred and leaving many students laying unconscious in the hallways and stairwells.<sup>344</sup> Those still standing were beaten with rifle butts and tripped as they were taken to the police vans—a scene reminiscent of the violent gauntlets created by New York City police as they expelled protesters from campus buildings at Columbia University just a couple weeks earlier.<sup>345</sup> Further, the UDES reported that at the dormitory for

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<sup>341</sup> “...locaux universitaires dont ils ont interdit l’accès au personnel administratif et enseignant.” Telegram 447/451 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 29 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS; Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. This report also claims that: “A l’Université, les grévistes expulsaient recteur, professeurs et personnels de l’administration et occupaient toute l’Université, commençant à saccager systématiquement, en particulier les laboratoires.” But this was not mentioned during the strike. Students later claimed that this damage was done by the police during the raid.

<sup>342</sup> Blum, “Sénégal 1968,” 163. Often composed of veterans from colonial wars. Documents at the time claimed they were part of the *Gardes Républicains*.

<sup>343</sup> And “grenades offensives.” “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Exécutif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>344</sup> Turning them into, in students’ words “fours crématoires.” “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Exécutif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>345</sup> Those still standing got “les coups de crosse suivis de crocs-en-jambe,” as they were brought down to police vans. “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Exécutif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

married students, the police were no less aggressive, hitting pregnant women and children as they expelled them from the dorms.<sup>346</sup>

In contrast, French reports repeated Senegalese government claims that it was students who had *provoked* violence by wielding “clubs, iron bars, stones, Molotov cocktails (and in an earlier report “acid”).<sup>347</sup> Bathily claims that students had built barricades around the four *facultés*,<sup>348</sup> but students denied that they had used weapons. The assertion that students mounted an armed defense of campus seems unlikely given that the same French report claimed that police had taken control of campus within only twenty to thirty minutes.<sup>349</sup> Furthermore, it described those students who tried to flee to the adjoining hospital as being “ruthlessly hunted down and captured.”<sup>350</sup>

The exact number casualties from the attack were contested. Initial reports from the French embassy listed two students killed in the attack and about twenty injured,<sup>351</sup> while the first tracts from UDES alleged that four students had been killed and 292 injured. Later, an official Senegalese government report released later claimed that only one student had been killed (a student of Lebanese heritage), and sixty-nine injured, with forty-two students hurt seriously enough to require

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<sup>346</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>347</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Officials later claimed to have found a stash of two hundred Molotov cocktails on campus, although this may have been fabricated.

<sup>348</sup> See Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 67-70.

<sup>349</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>350</sup> “...*impitoyablement traqués et capturés.*” Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>351</sup> Including a French national, although they may not have had much connection to France. Telegram 447/451 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 29 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS; Report from Jacques Foccart’s office to de Gaulle, “Note à l’attention de Monsieur le Président de la République, la situation au Sénégal,” 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

hospitalization.<sup>352</sup> But French reports contested this, noting that a “well placed” sources included in a French report suggested that in fact, three people had been killed and more than one hundred injured.<sup>353</sup> French reports suggested that the number of wounded students was likely much higher than the Senegalese government claimed, because many injured students fled the attack by heading to family homes off-campus to hide and avoid being arrested.<sup>354</sup>

By 1pm, campus had been cleared out, surrounded by security forces, and closed indefinitely. The arrested students were held in the heat of the afternoon on a tennis court at a military camp, where they claimed that the Red Cross was denied access to injured prisoners.<sup>355</sup> Four to five hundred of the arrested were then transported to Camp Archinard in the north of the country near Saint-Louis, along with arrested secondary students, and those arrested in street demonstrations.<sup>356</sup>

The following day, the government began deporting a total of 1307 non-Senegalese nationals.<sup>357</sup> The near totality of these students were from the countries of the former AOF. However, students and professors from France, Canada and Britain were also accused of playing significant roles in the strike,

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<sup>352</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. The official report stated that the dead student, Lebanese student Hanna Salomon Khoury, had been killed while trying to set off a Molotov cocktail.

<sup>353</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>354</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>355</sup> They were possibly first transferred to Gendarmerie bases: Mangin in Ouakam and Lat Dior in Dakar. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Students only mention Camp Mangin in “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>356</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>357</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. “Les étudiants africains non sénégalais ont été acheminés par avions (réquisition de places sur AIR-AFRIQUE) sur leurs pays respectifs.”



and were targeted with deportation.<sup>358</sup> Notably, Senghor was furious about the involvement of a group of French nationals, some of whom were white, but most of whom were of Senegalese métis heritage or Lebanese descent.<sup>359</sup>

Senghor continued to portray the strike as the product of foreign intervention. Later that day, as Dakar erupted in street protests, the government ordered the arrest and deportation of the two recently arrived reporters for the Chinese news agency “Chine Nouvelle,” the only official representatives of the Chinese government in Senegal.<sup>360</sup> Senegalese authorities accused union leaders Moustapha Thiam and Moustapha Sarr of having contact with the two Chinese reporters.<sup>361</sup> While he focused on communist links, Senghor also singled out other potential “foreign” threats. He threatened a group of French students and professors, all Dahomean students, United States Peace Corps volunteers, and staff at the Dominican mission with expulsion as well.<sup>362</sup> Senghor was furious that his fellow Catholics at the Dominican mission had taken in students who had been thrown out of campus.

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<sup>358</sup> Literally, “Point d’appui.” Telegram 478/479 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu à 14h15, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu le 1è à 21h30, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Telegram 487/488 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 4 June 1968, reçu le 6 à 13h00, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>359</sup> Senghor wanted to make an example of these students. Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu le 1è à 21h30, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Telegram from Ministry of the Army in Paris to COMSUP Dakar and Foccart's office 3 June 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Telegram 487/488 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 4 June 1968, reçu le 6 à 13h00, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>360</sup> Telegram 447/451 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 29 May 1968, reçu à 22h00, 5AG/FPU, ANF. See also: “Les deux représentants de l’Agence Chine Nouvelle ainsi que les ouvriers chinois arrivés assez récemment de Hong-Kong et travaillant à la nouvelle Emaillerie sénégalaise (Entreprise à capitaux libanais majoritaires) vont être expulsés.” In Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>361</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. For a different Blum, “Sénégal 1968,” 165.

<sup>362</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

Moreover, he accused them of radicalizing Christian students from Togo and Dahomey.<sup>363</sup> On June 1, Senghor told Lagarde that he would be forming a working group to begin “the redesign” of the University of Dakar as an “Senegalese establishment” in which no “foreign” professors would be allowed to teach, and no “foreign” students would be allowed to study “without the specific request of the interested country.”<sup>364</sup> All Dahomean students would henceforth be denied admission “because of their anarchic spirit, even though they are excellent students.”<sup>365</sup>

Bathily and other strike leaders have consistently denied that they called the strike with the goal of overthrowing the government. As noted earlier, many wanted see the regime toppled, but the state of opposition organizations at the time made such a goal illusive. University students’ had developed connections to secondary students, the PAI, and a handful of trade union leaders, but this fragmented opposition was hardly in a position to take on the UPS regime so long as it had the support of the Senegalese military and the French government. But campuses around the world were erupting in the spring of 1968 student leaders were following events abroad closely, especially those in France, where university student strikes had transformed first into urban protests and then by May 14, into workers strikes and factory occupations that spread rapidly across the country. These developments were likely the reason why UDES leaders moved from a “warning” strike to an unlimited strike and boycott of exams, instead of a safer limited strike of one or two-days. Students would have likely gone on strike over the issue of scholarships without the impetus of events abroad, but the militancy of the strike and student leaders’ expectations escalated as a global revolution seemed to be increasingly within the realms of the possibly. Thus, while students in Senegal had no preconceived plan to oust the

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<sup>363</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 171-72.

<sup>364</sup> Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu le 1è à 21h30, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. “...sans un demande expresse du gouvernement du pays d’interessé.”

<sup>365</sup> Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu le 1è à 21h30, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. “...en raison de leur esprit anarchique, bien qu’ils soient d’excellents élèves [sic].” (Lagarde’s words). They would be advised to go to Yaoundé or Abidjan.

government, they hoped that their protests would also provoke a more general rebellion—which it soon did, at least in Dakar.

### **The Many Threads of Urban Rebellion**

In the evening of the first day of the university strike, lengthy discussions and debates erupted on the streets of the Médina, among residents who had already been engaged in a heated contestation with the government over plans to level parts of the neighborhood for redevelopment.<sup>366</sup> But it was the closing of the secondary and primary schools on the second day (May 28) that shifted the nexus of the strike from the university campus to the neighborhoods of Dakar. The government moved quickly to close secondary schools with the intent of breaking up students and returning them to their homes.<sup>367</sup>

However, the closing of schools at noon on the May 28 instead released secondary school students into the streets. The boarding students at Lycée Van Vollenhoven and the teacher training school (ENS) were expelled from their dormitories and had their living stipends cut off, but were provided with no means of returning to their families (often living at a great distance from home).<sup>368</sup>

On the morning of May 29, as students were under siege at the university, groups of secondary students reportedly stormed the police precinct of the *6<sup>e</sup> arrondissement*, while other teenage demonstrators swarmed across the Médina, various neighborhoods on the edge of the city, and even

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<sup>366</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>367</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 75.

<sup>368</sup> “Déclaration des élèves du Sénégal au sujet des événements qui bouleversent l’Ecole Sénégalaise,” Comité national de grève des Lycées et C.G.E. du Sénégal, late June/early July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. Students claimed that many were taken in by families of their fellow students who lived nearby. École Normale Supérieure, Communiqué, Les élèves-professeurs de l’Ecole Normale Supérieure de Dakar, No Date, likely 28 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS. There is some ambiguity over whether they were actually expelled, or that was just the plan - but given that students were expelled from the internats, this would make sense.

around the city's port. Street protesters were reportedly scattered by the police, only to quickly regroup and rain stones down upon police patrols. Initially, protesters were said to be breaking stop lights and store windows, while later reports accused them of damaging city busses, and sacking two homes belonging to Ousseynou Seck, a national radio announcer who had vilified the students.<sup>369</sup> Students tried to attack the houses of Amadou Moktar Mbow and the head of national security, Ousmane Camara (see previous chapter), before being repelled by the police.<sup>370</sup> Secondary students were arrested and sent to military camps, where they claimed to be beaten, with some joining the university students being held at Camp Archinard.<sup>371</sup>

When the University was cleared on May 29, the protests died down in the heat of the afternoon, only to pick up quickly again around 5pm, when "groups of adult demonstrators armed with stones and clubs gathered at various points in the Médina and the peripheral neighborhoods."<sup>372</sup> Demonstrators attacked the house of Samba Gueye, local UPS leader and mayor of the Grand Dakar neighborhood, as well as attacking the UPS's new headquarters, the "House of the Party" (*Maison du parti*), which had opened just seven months prior, after four years of construction. Demonstrators engaged in running

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<sup>369</sup> Or later stated as: "*quelques groupes de manifestants qui saccagent totalement deux maisons appartenant à OUSSEYNOU SECK, speaker de la radio, ayant vertement stigmatisé l'action des étudiants.*" Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. See also Telegram 447/451 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 29 May 1968, reçu à 22h00, 5AG/FPU, ANF; "Déclaration des élèves du Sénégal au sujet des événements qui bouleversent l'Ecole Sénégalaise," Comité national de grève des Lycées et C.G.E. du Sénégal, late June/early July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>370</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. An incident that Ousmane Camara leaves out of his autobiography.

<sup>371</sup> The Lycéens claimed to have been subjected to a greater degree of brutality at the hands of the police than their university counterparts. On Wed 29 May, "nous fûmes en même temps plus que les étudiants brutalisés, mollestés et déportés dans les camps militaires." "Déclaration des élèves du Sénégal au sujet des événements qui bouleversent l'Ecole Sénégalaise," Comité national de grève des Lycées et C.G.E. du Sénégal, late June/early July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>372</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. "Des groupes de manifestants adultes armés de pierres et de gourdins se rassemblent en divers points de la Médina et des quartiers périphériques."

street battles with police, who responded with tear gas canisters. By the afternoon, police had set up patrols across Dakar, although street battles continued until midnight.<sup>373</sup> That day people similarly took to the streets in Saint-Louis, Thiès, and Kaolack.<sup>374</sup> A French report produced after the crisis declared about the demonstrators: “They enjoyed the sympathy—if not the support—of part of the population, especially in Médina,” where street battles continued on May 30.<sup>375</sup>

On the evening of May 29, the governor of Cap-Vert decreed the closure of all public venues (including movie theaters, bars, and restaurants), banned gatherings open to the public (including drumming, religious chanting, sports matches, public dances), and *any* gathering of more than five people in public.<sup>376</sup> Additionally, a curfew was put in place from 9pm to 6am, and the following evening the government closed the country’s only major airport.

### **The Trade Unions Enter the Fray**

In the run up to the university strike, student delegates from UDES continued to try to convince UNTS leaders to throw the weight of the national trade union federation behind students’ demand for

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<sup>373</sup> Or at least until midnight in the Médina. Telegram 447/451 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 29 May 1968, reçu à 22h00, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>374</sup> In Kaolack, where four protesters and one police officer (“garde”) were injured. Telegram 447/451 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 29 May 1968, reçu à 22h00, 5AG/FPU, ANF. A later report says that the youth in the Médina were 12-16 years old, “conduits” by older “meneurs.” Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>375</sup> “Ils bénéficiaient de la sympathie – pour ne pas dire l’appui – d’une partie de la population, surtout en Médina...” While the basis of this support from the population is unclear, it may have been related to the long conflict between Médina residents and the government, over state plans for the *renovation* of the Médina. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>376</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 76, 78.; Telegram 447/451 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 29 May 1968, reçu à 22h00, 5AG/FPU, ANF. The government further banned all “*bals publics, réunions sportives, chants religieux, tam-tam et tous rassemblements de plus de cinq personnes sur la voie publique.*” See also Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

scholarships. On May 24, a delegation of UDES representatives, joined by supporting delegations from the main union of public primary school teachers (SUEL), the union of African professors (SPAS), and the union of Senegalese engineers and technicians (SITS), had met with the national leadership of the UNTS.<sup>377</sup> These were unions in which members of the PAI, PRA-Sénégal, and other opposition activists maintained a strong foothold. However, the UNTS leadership initially rejected the overtures made by the students and their allies, and released a statement the next day declaring that they would not act in solidarity with the student strike.<sup>378</sup> Such hesitancy was not surprising. The national leadership of the UNTS remained an amalgam of trade unionists with diverse perspectives, and Bathily claims that UNTS succumbed to pressure from the government.<sup>379</sup> But discussions continued between the same unions, with UDES representatives acting as observers, on the first and second days of the student strike (May 27 and 28). On May 28, with schools now closed, the SUEL, SPAS, SITS, the doctors and pharmacists union (AAPES), and the national association of parents of *élèves* (primary and secondary students) put out a joint communiqué critical of the government's actions.<sup>380</sup> National UNTS leaders would not agree to call a solidarity action, but finally agreed to serve as mediators and to initiate negotiations with the

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<sup>377</sup> On this trio, see Momar Coumba Diop, *La société sénégalaise entre le local et le global* (Paris: Karthala, 2002).

<sup>378</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. It was most likely produced later on the day on 2 June. Bathily claims that the government convinced those favorable to the students in the UNTS (central trade union) to put out a statement on 25 May rejecting the students position the possibility that the union would act in solidarity with the student strikers. Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 66.

<sup>379</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 66.

<sup>380</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 152. These were the unions where the PAI and PRA-Sénégal had a foothold.

government on behalf of the students.<sup>381</sup> As noted earlier, this offer, and other mediation efforts by University faculty, and even administrators, failed to shift the government's position.

French authorities blamed "the well-known extremists" of the UNTS leadership for getting the union federation involved in the student strike, namely, Serigne Diop, Adama Ndiaye, Moustapha Thiam, Abdoulaye Thiaw, and Madia Diop (see previous chapter).<sup>382</sup> French authorities accused them of using student agitation to rile up rank-and-file workers. But there were also signs that the initiative to engage with the student strike came from the base of the unions; that workers put pressure on UNTS leaders to back the students. On May 21, just days before the student strike, the Union Régionale des Syndicats UNTS du Cap-Vert held a general assembly of workplace delegates. The meeting was called to discuss the "memorandum of demands" to be presented to the government. A French report claimed that most of the delegates openly "attacked" Senghor and his government.<sup>383</sup> Among some workers, a strike was already in the air before the students had started theirs. For example, the bank employees had called for a walkout on May 29 in response to their lack of payment for the month of May.<sup>384</sup>

The police attack on the university on May 29 was a turning point for the trade unions. By this time, union leaders were under extreme pressure from the rank-and-file to call for an immediate general strike in the wake of the crushing of the student strike.<sup>385</sup> That evening, the national leadership

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<sup>381</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. See also Communiqué from the Bureau National of the UNTS, 28 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>382</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>383</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>384</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>385</sup> Just hours afterward, the national UNTS leadership board met with the leadership board of the Union Régionale du Cap-Vert. See "Déclaration from the Bureau National de l'UNTS," no date, but after 29 May vote

board of the national UNTS met, as did the board of the Union Régionale du Cap-Vert. The national leadership decided to condemn the police violence toward the students, and voted to call for a twenty-four hour warning strike on May 31.<sup>386</sup> But the board of the Cap-Vert unions, which was joined by workplace delegates, voted to begin an open-ended general strike instead.<sup>387</sup> Reportedly, delegates from the Cap-Vert board then burst into the meeting of the national UNTS leadership and called on the latter to follow the lead of the local delegates.<sup>388</sup> The national board therefore agreed to extend the strike call to the entire country, with the notable dissent of David Soumah (a Guinean trade union leader in exile and close ally to Senghor), and in the absence of Doudou Ngom, (the UPS-appointed co-General Secretary of the UNTS, who was attending a labor convention in Geneva.)<sup>389</sup> Students and trade union activists immediately began printing strike calls and transporting them throughout the country.<sup>390</sup>

The leadership of the Cap-Vert section of the UNTS then called a meeting at the Bourse de Travail at 6pm on May 30, open to all workers.<sup>391</sup> At the meeting, union leaders called for a general strike to begin the following day, which, according to Lagarde and later French reports, aimed to “paralyze the

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of the Cap-Vert section to strike, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>386</sup> They condemned police violence in an earlier declaration that had stuck to the line of this being a “student issue.” “Déclaration from the Bureau National de l’UNTS,” no date, but after 29 May vote of the Cap-Vert section to strike, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>387</sup> Also to start on May 31. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>388</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>389</sup> Of the UNTS co-general secretaries, Alioune Cissé was elected and Ngom was appointed by the UPS. See Gueye, “Senghor et le mouvement syndical,” 17. See also Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Resolution from the Bureau National de l’UNTS, 29 May 1968, calling for a general strike on 30 May, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>390</sup> Blum, “Sénégal 1968,” 165.

<sup>391</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 76-77.



country's economy." Union leaders reportedly called for tactics including installing pickets in front of all businesses, disrupting traffic in the city through the building of barricades, closing markets, and forming strike brigades to defend against attacks from the police.<sup>392</sup>

That night, Abdoulaye Ly led a ministerial delegation to meet with national UNTS leaders.<sup>393</sup> The trade unionists demanded the release of the arrested students, to which Ly—a former opposition leader of the PRA-Sénégal—was notoriously “very firm, very severe and even violent towards trade unionists.”<sup>394</sup> Ly told union leaders that Senghor would only be willing to meet with them four days later, on June 3, a date likely proposed to coincide with the return of Doudou Ngom, the UNTS co-general secretary chosen by the UPS leadership. The ministerial delegation nevertheless made some concessions in the hopes of averting a general strike; they agreed to the immediate release of the arrested primary and secondary students and the eventual release of the university students at an unspecified later date—saving them from being conscripted into the armed forces.<sup>395</sup> Still, union leaders did not call off the planned mass meeting at the Bourse de Travail set for the next morning.

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<sup>392</sup> Telegram 460/461 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 30 May 1968, reçu à 21h20, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. See also Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>393</sup> Ly was not the Ministre de Fonction Publique et du Travail, a position held by Magatte Lô. He was the Ministre de la Santé Publique et des Affaires Sociales. Ly was therefore likely sent to meet with unionists not because of his official post, but because of his status as a former PRA leader and oppositionist.

<sup>394</sup> “...très ferme, très sévère et même violent envers les syndicalistes.” Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. The support for the regime from both Abdoulaye Ly and Cheikh Tidiane Sy during the strike is an indication of the long process of opposition co-optation that had taken place under Senghor during the previous decade.

<sup>395</sup> Originally, they were to be immediately incorporated into the army. This only took place after the 1971 student strike. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

## The Armies Step In

The government appears to have been caught off guard by the transformation of the student strike into a general strike and urban uprising. While containing the relatively small and concentrated university student population, they struggled to quell city-wide unrest.<sup>396</sup> On May 30, as demonstrators continued to face off with the police in the neighborhoods of Dakar, and local unions called for a shut down of the city, the government acknowledged the inability of the police to stop the protests, and mobilized three new armed forces.

First, the Senegalese army replaced the police in attempting to take control of the city and repress protesters. General Jean-Alfred Diallo, head of the Senegalese armed forces since 1962, criticized the police's inability to control urban protests in the opening days of the strike, and asked to take over for the beleaguered police forces, with the full backing of Senghor.<sup>397</sup> The news of the army's mobilization caused a "a psychological shock" in Dakar leading to unease and hesitancy among demonstrators, and stoking fears of a military coup.<sup>398</sup> Second, Senghor put out a call on May 31 to the governors of Sine-Saloum and Diorbel, both UPS strongholds, to organize party supporters to descend on Dakar, armed with clubs and machetes, to provide assistance to the army and police.<sup>399</sup> Third, and most crucially, Senghor requested the intervention of French troops, and President de Gaulle approved the application. During the crisis, French ambassador Lagarde met with Senghor almost every day, providing a direct link

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<sup>396</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 80.

<sup>397</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>398</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. On the fortunes of General Diallo in 1968, see Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal," 50, 195-99.

<sup>399</sup> Telegram 470/473 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 22h35, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. "...armes de gourdin" and machetes ("coupe-coupe").

between the Senegalese president and the office of Jacques Foccart in Paris.<sup>400</sup> With the announcement of the general strike on May 30, Senghor requested that French troops based in Senegal patrol the closed national airport at Yoff.<sup>401</sup> At 3am, French troops took control of the airport, upon authorization from the French minister of armies.<sup>402</sup>

That morning, with the general strike and urban rebellion escalating, Senghor asked that the French troops relieve Senegalese troops, "to protect sensitive points" in the city,<sup>403</sup> such as the power station in Bel-Air.<sup>404</sup> Foccart promptly sent a report to de Gaulle, outlining the situation and Senghor's request.<sup>405</sup> Based on the defense accords signed between France and the Mali Federation in 1960, Senghor's request was granted that evening (May 31), and French troops were put at Senghor's behest

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<sup>400</sup> As evidenced by the telegrams in carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF, and carton 673, DA, CADN.

<sup>401</sup> Telegram from the French Ministry of the Army to COMSUP Dakar, "Confidentiel Défense NR 2235...", 302335Z carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Note, "Objet: Intervention d'unités françaises à Dakar," 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. See also Report from Jacques Foccart's office to de Gaulle, "Note à l'attention de Monsieur le Président de la République, la situation au Sénégal," 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Just past midnight on the 30, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received a telegram from Lagarde asking for a reply to Senghor's request for French military intervention. See Telegram from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu le 31 à 00h45, including telegram 302152/Z, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>402</sup> Telegram from the French Ministry of the Army to COMSUP Dakar, "Confidentiel Défense NR 2235...", 302335Z carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Note, "Objet: Intervention d'unités françaises à Dakar," 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>403</sup> "...la relève des éléments de l'armée sénégalaise affectés à la protection de points sensibles statiques par des éléments de l'armée française." See Report from Jacques Foccart's office to de Gaulle, "Note à l'attention de Monsieur le Président de la République, la situation au Sénégal," 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Regarding French coverage of the power plant, see Telegram 462/463 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 13h45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>404</sup> Telegram 462/463 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 13h45, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>405</sup> Report from Jacques Foccart's office to de Gaulle, "Note à l'attention de Monsieur le Président de la République, la situation au Sénégal," 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

to “assure the domestic security of Senegal.”<sup>406</sup> The provisions of the defense accords signed by the governments of France and the Mali Federation, and then applied to Senegal, allowed the latter to “call upon the forces of the French army for its internal or external defense” and for mutual “defense against all threats.”<sup>407</sup> Françoise Blum argues that French military intervention in 1968 required bending the rules of the agreement, which did not include a clause for the maintenance of domestic order.<sup>408</sup> But from Senghor’s perspective, the strike was not simply a disruption, but a *threat* to the government itself.

French troops continued to guard the airport, but were now sent to occupy other key locations in and around Dakar, which freed up Senegalese troops to engage directly with protesters.<sup>409</sup> In almost identical language to that used by the Ministry of Armies in 1963 regarding intervention in Brazzaville, French commanders were asked to avoid placing the two thousand French troops based in Senegal in

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<sup>406</sup> Finally, in the early evening of the 31st, Lagarde received a response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordering him to set up a meeting with Senghor upon reception of the telegram and sign the requisition to “prêter le concours des troupes nécessaires pour assurer la sécurité intérieure du Sénégal.” This was justified based on the “accord de défense” signed between the governments of France and the Mali Federation two days after the latter became formally independence in June 1960, and the instruction ministérielle 69/DAM.2. of 31 Aug 1966, which stipulated the “avec l’accord de la République française, faire appel aux forces armées françaises pour sa défense intérieure et extérieure.” Also mentions “d’autre part à l’instruction personnelle et secrète adressée le 17 Avril 1968 par le Ministre des Armées au Vice-Amiral VILBERT qui précise notamment : ‘Vous devez en priorité maintenir la libre disposition des installations aériennes et portuaires de DAKAR.’” See Telegram from the French Ministry of the Army to COMSUP Dakar, “Confidentiel Défense NR 2235...,” 302335Z, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Note, “Objet: Intervention d’unités françaises à Dakar,” 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>407</sup> The Fédération of Mali “peut avec l’accord de la République Française, faire appel aux forces armées françaises pour sa défense intérieure ou extérieure” and “Le République Françaises et la Fédération du Mali se prêtent mutuellement aide et assistance pour leur défense contre toute menace.” See the accords of 4 April 1960 entre le gouvernement de la République Française et les gouvernements de la République du Sénégal, de la République Soudanaise, et de la Fédération du Mali.

<sup>408</sup> Blum points this out, see “Sénégal 1968,” 167. The same could be said for Brazzaville in 1963.

<sup>409</sup> Telegram from the French Ministry of the Army to COMSUP Dakar, “Confidentiel Défense NR 2235...,” 302335Z carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Note, “Objet: Intervention d’unités françaises à Dakar,” 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. The latter specifically stated “Il convient de préciser qu’il n’existe pas d’accords particuliers de maintien de l’ordre entre la France et le Sénégal.”

direct contact with the “native population.”<sup>410</sup> The French minister of armies also made it clear that he was prepared to send in additional troops from France if needed.<sup>411</sup>

In addition to these armed mobilizations, on May 30 the government asked Muslim leaders to take a public stance against the demonstrations. Calls for calm came promptly from the caliph of the influential Mouride tariqa, Serigne Mouhamadou Fallilou Mbacke, (the son of Mouride founder Amadou Bamba Mbacke) and Serigne Cheikh Ahmed Tidiane Sy, an influential Tijani cleric and former political opposition leader arrested in 1959 (see previous chapter). Bathily notes that their statements were then played repeatedly on national radio.<sup>412</sup>

Notably, however, other Tijani leaders, notably Seydou Nourou Tall (grandson of El Hadj Oumar Tall) and the caliph, Abdou Aziz Sy, remained silent during the demonstrations.<sup>413</sup> Moreover, Bathily argues that Mouride demonstrators did not follow the calls for calm from their caliph. On the evening of May 30 Senghor again addressed the nation, announcing the government’s restrictions on public gatherings, his decision to place the Senegalese army at head of national security, and his request for help from French troops.<sup>414</sup> Further, the government requisitioned all public workers “vital to the

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<sup>410</sup> “...population autochtone.” Telegram 122-123 from French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères to French Embassy in Dakar, Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, sent 18h35, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; Telegram 2239 from the French Ministry of the Army (Colonel Colin) to COMSUP (Military Command) Dakar, 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>411</sup> Note, “Objet: Intervention d’unités françaises à Dakar,” 31 May 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>412</sup> Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal,” 34.

<sup>413</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>414</sup> See “Allocution de Monsieur le Président de la République, Message à la Nation,” 30 May 1968, dossier Sénégal, événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, Sénégal Bibliographie, CD, ANS; Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

maintenance of essential public services.”<sup>415</sup> However, the state of emergency, the deployment of Senegalese and French troops, the requisitions, and the calls for calm from the caliph of the Mourides seems to have had no immediate impact on workers’ will to strike in the capital city on May 31.

### **The General Strike**

That morning, most workers refused their requisition orders, leaving the offices at the Building Administratif and the Palais de Justice closed and municipal services “paralyzed.” Yet it was not only the salaried wage workers of Dakar who joined the strike. In the city of half a million people, the markets were empty, small shops closed, and no buses, *car rapides*, or even taxis plied the streets, with only a few personal cars moving through Dakar.<sup>416</sup> Only a handful of stores opened in the early morning, with most closing by 9am as the strikers began to assemble.<sup>417</sup>

“A mass of pedestrians” marched from the Médina, where barricades had been constructed by demonstrators, and the city’s outer neighborhoods to gather at the *Bourse de travail* at 9am, before a planned march through the city.<sup>418</sup> A French report later claimed that a red flag was raised over the

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<sup>415</sup> Telegram 465/467 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 15h55, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. “...fonctionnaires et des agents indispensables au maintien des services publics essentiels.” Or later summarized as “Réquisition des personnels nécessaires à assurer la bonne marche des services publics et la vie de la Nation.” In Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>416</sup> Telegram 465/467 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 15h55, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Blum highlights the fluidity between waged and non-waged workers, “Sénégal 1968,” 169.

<sup>417</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>418</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

*Bourse de travail*<sup>419</sup> that morning. As union leaders announced the results of the previous evening's negotiations to a packed audience, police forces surrounded the neighborhood, launched tear gas canisters into the crowd and stormed the gathering. In the mêlée, all thirty-six union officials present (thirty-one men and five women), including the entirety of the UNTS Bureau National, were taken into custody.<sup>420</sup> The gathering of workers spilled into downtown Dakar, with five thousand protesters attempting to march to the Presidential Palace before being attacked again by Senegalese troops. By 10am, about two hundred people, including the UNTS leaders, had been arrested and taken to the central police station. Protesters besieged the station calling for their release, until being forced back by soldiers in a confrontation that echoed the one that took place in Brazzaville in August 1963.<sup>421</sup>

Official Senegalese reports claimed that twenty-five strikers were injured in the day's confrontation.<sup>422</sup> French authorities estimated that over the course of the first three days of the general strike, two strikers were killed and close to one hundred injured.<sup>423</sup> According to Bathily, close to three thousand union workers were arrested over the course of the first week.<sup>424</sup> Most union leaders were taken to an impromptu French military camp in Dodji, nearly three hundred and fifty kilometers outside

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<sup>419</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. "A 9 heures, l'affluence est considérable à la Bourse du travail où le drapeau rouge a été hissé."

<sup>420</sup> Doudou Ngom, David Soumah and Ibrahima Diallo (leader of the railway union), were not present. A handwritten note attached to "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin" listed the arrested unionists, which included the elected general secretary of the UNTS, Alioune Cissé, and five unnamed female trade union leaders.

<sup>421</sup> Telegram 465/467 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 15h55, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF; "Instruction, n. 1," Le Comité Centrale de Grève, 1 June 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>422</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>423</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>424</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 78-79.

of Dakar, while others were taken to Kedougou, seven hundred kilometers away in the far southeast of the country.<sup>425</sup>

As news of the attack on the Bourse de travail spread, teenagers of both Senegalese and Lebanese origin began demonstrating in the streets of downtown neighborhoods, with some accused of breaking store windows—targeting European-owned businesses, but supposedly largely leaving Lebanese stores unharmed—and smashing and burning cars.<sup>426</sup> Simultaneously, Lagarde reported that “everyone is in the streets” in the Médina and other “popular neighborhoods,” with demonstrators surrounding police stations armed with rocks, clubs, and iron bars.<sup>427</sup> For the second day in a row, protesters attempted to attack the UPS’s new Maison du Parti, the house of Samba Gueye, and the UPS Maison des Jeunes—the regular meeting place of the ruling party’s youth section.

As army troops retook control of the downtown area and secured government administrative buildings around noon, the demonstrators returned to residential neighborhoods, where they continued to lay siege to police stations.<sup>428</sup> The uprising spread beyond the confines of Dakar to neighboring

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<sup>425</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>426</sup> Reportedly ages fifteen to eighteen. The gender of the protesters is never noted in French or Senegalese reports. “Agissant essentiellement sur le grand axe central Avenue Gambetta – Marché Sandaga – Avenue Maginot et sur le début des rues perpendiculaires, de l’Indépendance, ils brisent des vitrines, pillent et saccagent des magasins (surtout ceux tenus par les Européens, ceux des Libanais ayant été beaucoup plus respectés), endommageant et brûlent des voitures.” Notably, the Lebanese stores were not targeted. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>427</sup> “...tout le monde est dans la rue...” Telegram 465/467 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 15h55, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>428</sup> With reinforcements being sent to the station in Liberté IV that was under attack. By 4pm, Lagarde says that security forces, under the command of the Chef d’Etat-Major Général mostly have the upper hand “et le derniers foyers d’agitation étaient peu à peu réduits dans la ville indigène.” Telegram 470/473 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 22h35, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.



Rufisque, requiring police reinforcements to be sent there.<sup>429</sup> A state of emergency had already been declared, and at 1pm security forces were given the order to shoot any protesters damaging or stealing property on sight.<sup>430</sup> The street fighting was prolonged and fierce, and in one instance, a helicopter was brought in to drop tear gas grenades on demonstrators from above. The Médina finally came under military control at 11pm that evening, but residents continued to battle with troops through out the night.<sup>431</sup> Lagarde reported the arrest of nine hundred people by the end of the day on May 31.<sup>432</sup>

## V. Settling the Strike: An Uncertain Truce

### The UPS Shakily Regains Momentum

Following the mass arrest of trade union leaders, strikers created an ad-hoc committee (*Comité central de grève*) on the morning of June 1. The committee released directions to maintain the strike, use vigilance committees to check neighborhoods for strike breakers, and “harass the forces of repression.”<sup>433</sup> Later that day, representatives from the Union Régionale du Cap-Vert released a communiqué also encouraging workers to maintain the strike.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> Telegram 465/467 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 15h55, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>430</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>431</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>432</sup> Telegram 470/473 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 31 May 1968, reçu à 22h35, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Later report says 650 were arrested on the first day of the strike. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>433</sup> Le Comité Centrale de Grève, “Instruction, n. 1,” 1 June 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>434</sup> Communiqué from the Union Regionale du Cap-Vert, no date, but late 1 June 1968, dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

However, Lagarde claimed that “life in Dakar had resumed its normal course,” with the streets cleared of demonstrators by the military, and the markets and many stores beginning to reopen.<sup>435</sup> Dakar’s main newspaper, *Dakar-Matin*, which provided unequivocal support for Senghor throughout the crisis, celebrated the “Failure of Subversion”<sup>436</sup> on its cover. However, busses, *car rapides*, and taxis remained off the streets, schools remained closed, and signs of the previous days upheaval were inescapable.<sup>437</sup> Senghor remained worried, telling Lagarde that he “still feared attempts to stir up disorder by well-trained Maoists.”<sup>438</sup>

By June 1, UPS supporters from the countryside had arrived, albeit, too late to intervene decisively in the strike.<sup>439</sup> Nevertheless, with the military controlling the city, UPS leaders took the opportunity to (apparently) suspend the bans on drumming and public gatherings in order to allow party militants to occupy public spaces. At 8am, they began assembling outside the Maison du Parti and Maison des Jeunes. Armed with bows, machetes, and clubs, and playing drums, they sang and chanted “Vive Senghor” and “Vive de Gaulle.”<sup>440</sup> They reportedly blocked traffic and forcing drivers and passerby’s to shout these slogans.<sup>441</sup> That afternoon, the party orchestrated a parade of about two thousand UPS

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<sup>435</sup> Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu le 1è à 21h30, dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>436</sup> See *Dakar-Matin*, 1 June 1968, dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. See also Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal,” XXII, 125, 44.

<sup>437</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. “vitre cassées, magasins saccages, feux de signalisation brisés, poteaux de signalisation tordus, épaves et tas d’ordures partout.”

<sup>438</sup> Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu à 21h30, dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>439</sup> “...de la brousse” Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu à 21h30, dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>440</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

militants to the presidential palace where Senghor delivered a speech.<sup>442</sup> Given the rather small turnout for a party that had claimed to receive one hundred percent of votes cast just months before, Senghor expressed his disappointment to Lagarde that the people of Dakar had not opposed the protesters.<sup>443</sup> As Omar Gueye, points, out the massive urban mobilization just two weeks later for the funeral of Lamine Gueye (11 June) was a notable contrast to the UPS's inability to bring its supporters into the streets during the crisis.<sup>444</sup>

With the state of emergency in place and the army continuing to patrol the city, the streets remained quiet again on Sunday, June 2.<sup>445</sup> Simultaneously, from after the UPS rally on June 1, through June 3, state leaders pulled back from public visibility. Lagarde hinted at internal tensions within the government caused by the strike, and Bathily argues that their retreat from public was a result of infighting.<sup>446</sup> Senghor confided to LaGarde that he was surprised by the rapid destabilization of the government and the "cowardice" of many party leaders, National Assembly deputies, and party members.<sup>447</sup> Mbow, as Minister of National Education, emerged as the most convenient scapegoat. He was accused by other UPS leaders of having told student and teacher representatives that he could not

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<sup>441</sup> The UPS militants were harassed by groups of young people who threw pebbles at them. Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>442</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>443</sup> Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu à 21h30, dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>444</sup> Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal," 201-02.

<sup>445</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>446</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 80.

<sup>447</sup> Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu le 1<sup>è</sup> à 21h30, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. "D'autre part, les événements ont montré la faiblesse ou la couardise d'un certain nombre de membres du parti, de ses responsables et de députés si bien qu'il a promis à une délégation de jeunes officiers, qui étaient venus l'entretenir de ce que ces faits avaient présent de choquant, de prendre des mesures d'assainissement."

meet their demands because the national education budget had not been increased for 1968–69, and that he disagreed with the lack of further allocations.<sup>448</sup>

The success of the Senegalese army—backed by French troops—in propping up the regime provided General Diallo and other officers with political leverage in the midst of the crisis.<sup>449</sup> Diallo, while expressing his commitment to supporting Senghor on June 1, also took the opportunity to raise the grievances of the “young army officers,” in particular their anger over “abuses” by UPS leaders and parliamentary deputies.<sup>450</sup> Diallo reportedly went so far as to request the dissolution of the National Assembly.<sup>451</sup> French authorities even expressed their surprise that military officers had defended the regime, given that “it is certain that the parliamentary elections [of 1968] angered everyone, including army leaders.”<sup>452</sup> But military officers decided to use their position during the crisis to leverage

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<sup>448</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. He was further accused of inciting—“sous-main”—the students to action, though this seems unlikely given what we know about events leading up to the strike.

<sup>449</sup> The army was largely credited with ‘saving’ the regime. Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal,” 195-99.

<sup>450</sup> Telegram 489/490 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 4 June 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS. What Senghor reportedly told Lagarde: “D’autre part M. Senghor m’a confirmé que le Général Diallo lui avait fait part du désir des jeunes officiers de l’armée de voir disparaître certains abus. ‘Je lui ai alors demandé,’ m’a dit M. Senghor, ‘si c’était des suggestions ou un ultimatum.’ ‘Le Générale Diallo m’a immédiatement répondu qu’il ne transmettrait pas d’injonctions à son chef, qu’il démissionnerait plutôt.’” See also Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal,” 198.

<sup>451</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. “Dans la matinée du 1er Juin, l’Armée Nationale arguant qu’elle avait sauvé le régime et prouvé sa loyauté et sa fidélité s’estimait en droit d’adresser au Chef de l’Etat une demande de dissolution de l’Assemblée Nationale. Il a été discuté de cette demande au cours d’un Conseil de Sécurité réuni dans la salle du Conseil à la Présidence le 1er Juin en fin de matinée.” Later in the report it says the officers raised a “une protestation contre la mollesse et l’attentisme dont ont fait montre dans cette affaire un certain nombre de députés (“indolence and inaction”).”

<sup>452</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. “Il est certain que les élections législatives avaient mécontenté tout le monde y compris les cadres de l’Armée.”

concessions from Senghor, rather than abandon him.<sup>453</sup> Senegalese and French military support was one of the most crucial factors in Senghor's ability to hold onto power in 1968. Army officers in Congo had also been a decisive factor during the protests in Brazzaville in 1963. But in that situation, they had decided not to defend Fulbert Youlou's government and instead worked with trade union leaders to topple the regime. Young radicals in Senegal in 1968 were not as fortunate.

### **Union Splits**

By June 1, the strike had been hobbled by the sheer weight of repression meted out over the previous week. The Senegalese and French armies controlled the city; hundreds, if not thousands, had been arrested; and the entirety of the student and trade union strike leadership in Dakar had been shipped to military camps in the far corners of the country. Moreover, the call for a general workers strike never achieved unanimity among the trade union leadership, reflecting the heterogeneous nature of the UNTS. The degree to which the strike became "national" was highly uneven. French authorities reported that the strike had been carried out predominantly in Dakar, Rufisque, and Saint-Louis. In Saint-Louis, for example, about 600 public workers refused requisitions orders.<sup>454</sup> But in some parts of the country, such as Casamance, a French report noted that regional UNTS leaders never agreed to the strike call emanating from Dakar and the national leadership.<sup>455</sup> In Diourbel, Sénégal Oriental, Thiès, Matam, and Podor they claimed that little to no strike actions took place, and most workers in Sine Saloum and Dagana responded to requisition orders. However, reports from the Senegalese Ministry of the Interior

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<sup>453</sup> Diallo was rewarded by being placed in charge not only of the army, but almost the entirety of state domestic armed forces, including the Gendarmerie, Garde Républicaine and Police. Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal," 197.

<sup>454</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. "C'est dans la ville de Saint Louis que le nombre de grévistes était le plus important : 575 soit : O.P.T. 50% - Santé 80% - Enseignement 60% - Elevage 25% - T.P. 20% - Hydraulique 65% - S.A.E.D. 10%."

<sup>455</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

found by Françoise Blum contradict this, noting that workers struck in large numbers until June 4 across Diourbel, Kaolack, Thiès, and Tambacounda.<sup>456</sup>

At the national level, a handful of union leaders, like David Soumah (who was close to Senghor) had refused to endorse the strike from the start. More importantly, the brutality of the attack on workers in Dakar on May 31 pushed other union leaders to call off the strike. That afternoon Ibrahima Diallo, general secretary of the railway union, called on members to return to work the following day. Shortly afterward, the leader of the union of civil workers at military installations announced that workers would go back to work at the French military air base in Ouakam—a decision that aided French intervention into the conflict.<sup>457</sup>

The UNTS's status as a quasi-governmental organization was reflected in its formal structure. The federation had co-General Secretaries: one elected by the membership, Alioune Cissé, and one appointed by the government, Doudou Ngom. Ngom was a long-time ally of the regime and had previously led the split in the teachers union (SUEL) to create a UPS-friendly breakaway union [See previous chapter]. But Ngom was attending a meeting of the International Labor Organization secretariat in Geneva when the strike was launched. Although immediately called back by the Senegalese government (May 30), he did not arrive until June 3, and was briefly put under house arrest upon his return.<sup>458</sup> The reason for Ngom's delayed appearance is unclear. He may have avoided returning at the moment of the strike call because he knew he would have been caught in the middle of a mounting conflict. As a UNTS leader, he would have faced pressure from workers in Dakar and local

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<sup>456</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 167.

<sup>457</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>458</sup> Report, "Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin," Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

trade union leaders to launch a strike. But as the UPS-appointed General Secretary, he would have also been called upon by the government to hold back the strike.

By the time Ngom returned on the June 3, the regime had already gained the upper hand by force. Ngom's brief house arrest was likely a means to remind him that he ultimately was expected to answer to the UPS government. Senghor promptly met with Ngom and demanded that he call on workers to return to work. Senghor agreed to release the imprisoned UNTS national leadership on the condition that they back Ngom's call for an end to the strike and "cease all opposition to the government." Ngom's appeal was broadcast at 8am on June 4, along with an announcement that the trade union leaders would be released, prompting Lagarde to declare that "life has now returned to normal completely"—although notably many workers did not return to work and all schools remained closed.<sup>459</sup> Bathily claims that Ngom's announcement was met by many Dakar workers with hostility, but succeeded in splitting some workers off from the strike, resulting in a gradual loss of momentum, even though the strike continued in some workplaces until June 10.<sup>460</sup> Bathily argues that as the worker's strike weakened, the main spaces of conflict shifted back to the residential neighborhoods of Dakar (noted by Lagarde on June 12) as young students and non-students still engaged in running street battles with police.<sup>461</sup> Three dozen strikers involved in street protests were eventually convicted of crimes and given sentences ranging from eighteen months to three years.<sup>462</sup>

### **The Release of the Students and Deportations**

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<sup>459</sup> Telegram 489/490 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 4 June 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS. SUEL (teachers) remained out on strike until June 8, 1968.

<sup>460</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 59, 83-85. Résolution Générale, 13 June 1968, Union Régionale des Syndicats UNTS du Cap-Vert, dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>461</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 86.

<sup>462</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 171.

The urban uprising and general strike successfully prevented Senegalese university students from being conscripted into the army. As the turmoil spread after the crackdown on campus and the Senegalese military took over for the beleaguered police forces, there was no possibility of quickly forcing the arrested students into the ranks of the army. Instead, they remained in limbo at the army's Camp Archinard. On June 1, with the city now under military control, secondary school students were released to their parents, along with those university students who simultaneously held jobs in primary and secondary schools.<sup>463</sup>

Moktar Diack, a third-year university student and a member of the Conseil d'Administration of UDES was let go, as he was working at Lycée Van Vollenhoven.<sup>464</sup> Diack promptly wrote a tract about the strike and the police attack on campus. He reportedly brought it to Camp Archinard in an attempt to have the Executive Committee of UDES review it before he began reproducing it. The following day, Diack was re-arrested and accused of "plotting against the security of the state," "spreading false news to incite revolt," and "contempt of court."<sup>465</sup> On June 9, the government agreed to release all of the remaining university students in military custody—likely under pressure from trade union leaders.<sup>466</sup> Diack however, would remain in prison.

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<sup>463</sup> "Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar," Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. When arrested secondary student were released on June 1, they complained that food had been withheld from them and army troops had insulted their parents. ("Là encore des averses d'injures n'ont pas marqué de s'abattre sur nos mères et nos pères.") See "Déclaration des élèves du Sénégal au sujet des événements qui bouleversent l'Ecole Sénégalaise," Comité national de grève des Lycées et C.G.E. du Sénégal, late June/early July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>464</sup> As a as a surveillant. Tract, "Nous exigeons la libération de notre camarade Moctar Diack, Comité Executif of UDES, 26 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>465</sup> "...complot contre la sûreté de l'Etat," "propagation de fausses nouvelles avec incitation à la révolte," "outrage à magistrat." These are the charges listed in the student tract. Tract, "Nous exigeons la libération de notre camarade Moctar Diack, Comité Executif of UDES, 26 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>466</sup> "Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar," Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.



Upon returning to their dorms, Senegalese students claimed all their books, clothes, radios, and other personal possessions had been removed by the police and “mobile intervention forces” who had raided campus.<sup>467</sup> UDES leaders argued that those who had raided campus were themselves “victims of the catastrophic economic situation of the country”—but that stealing students’ belongings would not relieve their hardships. Publicly, UDES leaders declared that state authorities’ reliance on violence to break the strike did not reflect the regime’s strength, but was instead a sign of “dementia and political blindness” on the part of Senghor’s “rotten” regime. Throughout June, they continued to contest the government’s official account of the raid and agitated for the release of Maktar Diack.<sup>468</sup>

### **Reopening Schools**

Senghor initially desired to keep all primary and secondary schools closed for the remainder of the academic year.<sup>469</sup> Yet, within days of the strike slowing down, the government re-opened the discussion, and began planning to assure the provision of secondary advancement through regular exams.

Senegalese authorities also began considering alternate plans for university advancement, either via exams taken upon the start of the new academic year, or through reviews of student work from the previous year.<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>467</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>468</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>469</sup> Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu le 1è à 21h30, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF. Senghor wished for all primary and secondary schools to remain closed, but still planned to administer most exams. Contra Senghor, in the immediate aftermath of the strike, Mbow hoped to open primary and secondary schools the following week. Despite Mbow’s fall from grace, his push to reopen schools and move ahead with exams was embraced by the government.

<sup>470</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

In mid-June, secondary schools were re-opened, and a group of secondary students were invited by the government to meet with Assane Seck, the new Minister of National Education, and Emile Badiane, the ongoing Minister of Technical Education. The joint communiqué from the meeting, which was read on state airwaves, angered other secondary students, who had organized the National Strike Committee of Senegalese High Schools and Middle Schools.<sup>471</sup> Strike committee leaders proclaimed that they would not return to school until the original grievances of the strike were addressed,<sup>472</sup> including university students' demands, "for the simple reason that they will become our major concern tomorrow." They blamed Senghor for creating an "explosive situation" and rejected the implication that by going on strike they had been responsible for shutting down primary schools. They argued that secondary schools should only be reopened once the government engaged in negotiations with UDES leaders and satisfied the immediate demands of the university students—notably, the reopening of the university.<sup>473</sup>

### **Government Reorganization**

At a meeting of the *Bureau politique* of the UPS on June 3, the party leadership decided to implement a number of administrative reforms in response to the grievances of strikers and soldiers.<sup>474</sup> First, the parliamentary deputies would have their salaries and living indemnities reduced. Second, the vice-presidents of the national assembly would no longer be provided with a personal car and driver, and a

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<sup>471</sup> *Comité national de grève des Lycées et C.G.E. du Sénégal*

<sup>472</sup> "Déclaration des élèves du Sénégal au sujet des événements qui bouleversent l'Ecole Sénégalaise," Comité national de grève des Lycées et C.G.E. du Sénégal, late June/early July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>473</sup> "Déclaration des élèves du Sénégal au sujet des événements qui bouleversent l'Ecole Sénégalaise," late June/early July 1968, Comité national de grève des Lycées et C.G.E. du Sénégal, carton 672, DA, CADN. .

<sup>474</sup> Blum attributes this entirely to the demands of Diallo and officers, 168.

free apartment (*appartements de fonction*).<sup>475</sup> Lastly, the financial autonomy of the national assembly was abolished, limiting—in principle—deputies’ control over their own spending.<sup>476</sup>

Further, on June 6, Senghor promptly reorganized the government, dropping or demoting ministers who had become liabilities or had—in his eyes—“showed themselves, during this troubled week, inferior to their duties.”<sup>477</sup> As another concession he reduced the number of ministries from nineteen to seventeen, perhaps in response to protesters’ complaints that Senghor’s government had become bloated and top-heavy.<sup>478</sup> Four ministers were let go, including the minister of youth and sports (Amadou Racine Ndiaye), the minister of labor and *fonction publique* (Magatte Lô), and the minister of information (Abdoulaye Fofana). Three other ministers were maintained, but demoted to less influential ministries: Amadou Cissé Dia, the former minister of the interior, Amadou Karim Gueye, former minister of the armed forces, and Amadou Mahtar Mbow, the former minister of national education. Within the UPS leadership, Mbow was scapegoated and blamed for the student strike. It is likely that Gueye was similarly blamed for the disaffection of troops, Ndiaye for the outbreak of youth protest, Lô for the revolt within the UNTS, and Dia and Fofana for the general failure to control the situation.<sup>479</sup> Yet Abdoulaye Ly, the former PRA-Sénégal opposition figure, used the crisis to display his complete support

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<sup>475</sup> Lamine Gueye, president of the Assembly since independence, and nearing death, was exempted from these changes.

<sup>476</sup> Telegram 489/490 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 4 June 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>477</sup> As stated to Lagarde, then restated by Lagarde: “enfin, le president m’a annonce qu’il remanierait jeudi son gouvernement pour eliminer ceux des ministres qui s’etaient montres, durant cette semaine troublee, inferieurs a leurs taches.” Telegram 489/490 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 4 June 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANS.

<sup>478</sup> Senghor’s first government, in 1960, included fourteen ministers.

<sup>479</sup> Ousmane Camara, for example, claims that Jean Alfred Diallo, head of the armed forces had demanded that Dia be let go as Minister of the Interior. See Camara, *Mémoires d'un juge africain* 161.

for Senghor, by aggressively attacking the strikers, and not surprisingly kept his position as minister of health and social affairs.

### **Trade Union Negotiations**

Senghor confided to Lagarde that he was prepared to make concessions to workers, and moved quickly to open up negotiations with union representatives.<sup>480</sup> Although the government attempted to negotiate with only the existing leadership of the UNTS, Bathily claims that striking workers pressed for direct representation from all unions.<sup>481</sup> Doudou Ngom continued to be subjected to countervailing pressures. Although leading the effort to end the strike, he filed a complaint with the International Labor Organization accusing the Senegalese government of violating union rights, making arbitrary arrests and attacking union offices.<sup>482</sup>

The government quickly opened tripartite talks between UNTS representatives, employers, and government officials. On June 13, the representatives from the negotiations agreed to a 15 percent increase in the monthly minimum wage (SMIG), the creation of pensions, employer contributions to health care, regulation of day labor to reduce abuses, new controls on the price of food and pharmaceutical items, and an informal agreement that the government would move toward the nationalization of utilities and greater Africanization of posts in various industries.<sup>483</sup>

Although Senghor was quick to negotiate an agreement favorable to wage workers, he was furious that the UNTS leadership had broken ranks with the government during the crisis. In August, Senghor met with David Soumah, the lone national UNTS leader to have openly dissented from the

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<sup>480</sup> Telegram 489/490 from Lagarde to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 4 June 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>481</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 96.

<sup>482</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 172.

<sup>483</sup> Full text of agreement reprinted in Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 96-98.

initial strike call. Senghor confessed to being surprised that the UNTS leadership was largely in the hands of former militants of the independent trade union federations that had originated in the UGTAN (the CST and CGTS) “or other traitors, from the PRA and PAI, who have succeeded in infiltrating [the UNTS].” Soumah estimated that ex-PRA and PAI trade union militants had formed a coalition and that attempting to expel them from the UNTS leadership would result in accusations would be viewed as hypocritical, since the stated reason for pushing unions to join the UNTS had been to “unify” them. Soumah and Senghor’s conversation pointed to an interesting paradox—one that Omar Gueye and others have observed—wherein trade unionists who were critical of the regime’s attempts to control the labor movement were able to take control of sections of the official “state” trade union. Senghor insisted to Soumah that the “extremists” must be stopped, and told him that the party apparatus was at his disposition “if needed to carry out this task.”<sup>484</sup>

In uncharacteristic fashion, French intelligence services mocked Senghor for being “without a doubt the only one not to know, or not wanting to know” that the leadership of the UNTS had been overrun by “extremists.”<sup>485</sup> Senghor’s fear that the UNTS could not be counted on to support the regime led him to seek assurances of support from both co-General Secretaries of the UNTS, Alioune Cissé and Doudou Ngom, in the case of renewed conflict between the students and government.<sup>486</sup>

The crisis also led Senghor to fear that the UPS in Dakar was being similarly threatened by former PRA and PAI militants who had infiltrated the party and were sowing discontent (or allying with opportunists) up to the level of “ministers and high-ranking officials.” He worried that these

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<sup>484</sup> Renseignements. n. 131, "Sénégal, Entretien Senghor-Soumah," 23, 24, 30 August 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. “...si besoin était, pour mener cette tâche à bien.”

<sup>485</sup> Renseignements. n. 131, "Sénégal, Entretien Senghor-Soumah," 23, 24, 30 August 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. “Il était sans doute le seul à ne le savoir, ou à ne pas vouloir le savoir, ce que lui permet maintenant de proposer l’aide du parti pour remettre de l’ordre dans la maison. Cela ressemble beaucoup à une avance non déguisée pour que l’UNTS rallie l’UPS.”

<sup>486</sup> He reportedly received assurances from both. Renseignements. n. 131, "Sénégal, Entretien Senghor-Soumah," 23, 24, 30 August 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

“oppositionists” could be jockeying for control of the party leadership in Cap-Vert. Senghor told Soumah he was not afraid to recreate his former party, the BDS, if need be, in order prove that he still had majority support within the UPS.<sup>487</sup>

Thus, Senghor replied to the crisis of May-June 1968 in two ways, both aimed at reconsolidating his authority. First, he conceded to the demands of striking workers in the hopes of buying their support, or at the very least, appeasing them. At the same time, he tried to protect the UNTS and his own party from being influenced by his long-despised rivals in the PRA and PAI.

### **Student Reactions**

Although Senghor worried about opponents in the trade unions, and even in the UPS, he reserved most of his public animosity for students at the University of Dakar. First, Senghor accused students of instigating the violence on campus. Students rejected this, noting that if that were the case, why had hundreds of students been injured, while police were left largely unscathed?<sup>488</sup> A UDES tract expressed surprise at the brutality of attacks on both students and workers during the strike, and saw Senghor’s regime moving toward more violent acts of repression.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Renseignements. n. 131, "Sénégal, Entretien Senghor-Soumah," 23, 24, 30 August 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. Senghor says that the UPS “a laissé noyauter et que ce noyautage s’était encore aggravé depuis environ un mois. Il a précisé qu’il était au courant des manœuvres des ex-P.R.A. et P.A.I. et qu’il n’ignorait rien des activités de certains ministres et haute-fonctionnaires dont l’ambition était de faire éclater, dans un premier temps, l’Union Régionale U.P.S. du Cap-Vert et d’en prendre le contrôle. Seulement, a poursuivi le Président, si ces gens là sont en mesure de prendre en mains l’Union Régionale du Cap-Vert – ce qui reste d’ailleurs à prouver – je suis, moi capable de recréer le B.D.S. et alors, nous verrons qui d’eux ou de moi sera majoritaire...”

<sup>488</sup> Tract, "Réponse à Senghor," UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. The UDES executive committee asked: if students were really armed, as Senghor claimed, why he did not mention the number of injured or dead “dans les rangs des forces de répression” during his national speech on May 30? “...car si les étudiants étaient armés, ils ne se feraient pas massacrer sans avoir la possibilité de riposter de la même manière.”

<sup>489</sup> Tract, "Réponse à Senghor," UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. The strike repression coincided with Senghor’s initiation of capital punishment in the country.

Second, student leaders rejected implications that they were responsible for the uprising in Dakar and the general strike. They insisted that the government's policies and the exploitation that took place under a "neocolonial bourgeoisie" had left the Senegalese people desiring far-reaching change. UDES leaders argued that it was the unmet needs of the broader population, and not student's subjective actions, that had led to the "awakening of the masses." They proclaimed themselves to be "patriotic" allies to the struggles of "our people" and claimed that it was absurd for Senghor to think that a couple thousand university students—even if they had been armed—could have overthrown the government.

Third, Senghor accused students and union leaders of acting at the behest of an ill-defined "foreign imperialism." Student leaders knew that Senghor was primarily referring to what he had called "red imperialism," a concept he first raised at the UPS students' seminar in 1967. UDES leaders saw this concept a deception advanced primarily by the political leaders of former colonial powers and the United States, who saw their hegemony threatened by former colonial or semi-colonial territories, like China, who embraced socialism. Student leaders rejected Senghor's accusation that students were acting as agents of socialist governments and represented an "imperial" threat to "national independence." They mockingly noted that if there was any imperial force in Senegal, it was none other than the French army, which had a base adjacent to the capital, and had occupied factories, the airport, and the main hospital during the strike.<sup>490</sup> Elsewhere, they mocked Senghor's image as a "father of African unity" when he had expelled all of the non-Senegalese students from the university.<sup>491</sup>

Fourth, students challenged Senghor's claim that they were simply tailing the actions of student protesters in Europe and the United States. There was a long history of student activism in Senegal, UDES leaders argued, going back to the UGEAO and the UGES, that could not be explained as mimicry.

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<sup>490</sup> Further UDES leaders accused Senghor and his ministers of regularly meeting with officials in Paris before attending any African or global conferences. Tract, "Réponse à Senghor," UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>491</sup> "Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar," Tract from the UDES Comité Exécutif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

UDES noted that they *did* support the actions of other students: notably those in the Portuguese colonies of Africa demanding independence, and “French, American, and German comrades” struggling “against the reactionary regimes of their countries.” Far from imitating their actions, UDES leaders argued that an independent crisis had been building at the University of Dakar since the strike of February 1966.<sup>492</sup>

Lastly, UDES leaders called on “patriots” to not let themselves be distracted by proposed reforms such as the fifteen percent raise in the minimum wage (SMIG), the shortening of deputies’ terms, and changes at the university taking place without the participation of students or professors. They envisioned the strike of 1968 as part of an ongoing struggle that was not limited to Senegal, but encompassed all of Africa, as repressive single-party states and military regimes increasingly became the norm.

### **Toward Student Negotiations**

The strike forced Senghor to recognize that the University of Dakar could not continue to function as a French institution. At the meeting of the UPS’ national *Bureau politique* on the first day of the student strike, Senghor reported that he had asked to replace the existing French management of the university<sup>493</sup> with a mixed Franco-Senegalese team. But by June 1, his tone had hardened, and he announced that he would form a working group to completely redesign the university as a “Senegalese institution.” But Senghor hoped to control the direction of university reforms, rather than allowing students to intervene. His motivation was at odds with the striking students: to purge the university of disruptive and treacherous European professors and “foreign” students.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> Tract, “Réponse à Senghor,” UDES Comité Exécutif, 26 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>493</sup> Report, “Crise au Sénégal, 24 mai au 2 juin,” Dossier Sénégal, événements Mai-Juin 1968, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.



In the ministerial shake up of June 6, 1968, Ahmed Moctar Mbow was replaced as minister of national education by another ex-PRA-Sénégal leader, Assane Seck. This initially created a renewed opening for negotiations, and student representatives from UDES entered into secret discussions with government officials between May and September.<sup>495</sup> But while Senghor had attempted to appease workers' demands and rein in the UNTS leadership, the government took a decidedly more intransigent position toward student strikers. Senghor initially refused to hold public negotiations with students over the re-opening and reform of the university.<sup>496</sup> Lagarde reported that the administration felt that the concessions made to students following the 1966 strike had emboldened the regime's young opponents and perhaps encouraged the outbreak of the strike in 1968.<sup>497</sup> Senghor was thus resistant to granting UDES leaders any further concessions. At a meeting of *Conseil* of the university on June 11, the director of Senghor's cabinet, Alioune Sene reiterated that "this is essentially a political problem. They wanted to overthrow the government," and rejected the idea of offering exams.<sup>498</sup>

But during the three months following the strike, UDES leadership held fast to their initial demands for full scholarships, and also raised new demands in light of the outcome of the strike.<sup>499</sup> They called for the immediate reopening of university, (which remained closed indefinitely), the return of all

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<sup>494</sup> Telegram 480/485 from Lagarde to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1 June 1968, reçu le 1è à 21h30, carton 2256, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>495</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 100. Although Bathily notes that the decision to engage in private talks was a source of debate among the UDES leadership.

<sup>496</sup> Blum argues that Senghor interpreted the attack on the University of Dakar's status as a French University as a personal affront. Blum, "Sénégal 1968,"

<sup>497</sup> Lagarde doesn't mention 1966 in particular, but it is implied. He notes that the government doesn't intend to "céder au chantage, mais de l'avis de beaucoup se trouve victime de la politique de concession jusqu'ici pratiquée." *Actuelle (Renseignement)*, N. 134, B/2, Sénégal, "Contacts Autorités – étudiants," 29 and 30 August 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>498</sup> "Procès-verbal du Conseil de l'Université, séance du 11 Juin 1968," UCAD archives

<sup>499</sup> "Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l'Université de Dakar," Tract from the UDES Comité Executif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. The UDES still framed their demands as part of their call for equal access to education for all Senegalese youth.

expelled non-Senegalese students, the liberation of Moktar Diack, (who was awaiting trial before a special court), and open negotiations “with all the students of Dakar” over the fate of the university.<sup>500</sup>

UDES leaders believed that the government had initially closed schools in a state of panic as the strike grew stronger.<sup>501</sup> But UDES leaders argued that the closing of both primary and secondary schools only validated their concern that Senghor was more concerned with controlling students than improving their education; primary school students would now be shut out of the next advancement to secondary schooling, and with secondary schools closed, new teachers wouldn’t be trained. The government initially proposed offering only one session of the baccalauréate exam, limiting the number of high school graduates who could potentially advance to university studies. And rather than helping students catch up, UDES leaders claimed that Senghor was refusing to allow teachers to organize summer courses. (This was perhaps due to Senghor’s concern about the close political connections between student militants and the teacher trade unions.) Further, UDES interpreted the closing of the University of Dakar as proof that Senghor did not see the urgent need to create new African senior administrators (*cadres supérieurs*) to replace European managers.<sup>502</sup>

In mid-July, Senghor still refused to concede to any of the students’ demands, and Moktar Diack remained in prison. That month, the *Conseil national* of the UPS approved Senghor’s plan to close the university for the following year.<sup>503</sup> The government claimed that the university would have to remain

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<sup>500</sup> “Tribunal Spécial” Note, n. 1018, Salamine, Objet: “Transmission d’un tract,” 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN; “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Exécutif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. The following month (July), UDES leaders began distributing two new tracts, the first responding to Senghor and the second demanding the release of Moktar Diack. See Note, N. 1072. Salamine. Objet : Tracts d’étudiants, 3 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>501</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Exécutif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>502</sup> “Déclaration des étudiants sénégalais sur les événements de l’Université de Dakar,” Tract from the UDES Comité Exécutif, 25 June 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. They also derided Senghor for shutting down the education system while claiming that Senegal would enter the “industrialized world” by the year 2000.

closed so it could be adapted “to the values of *négritude*.”<sup>504</sup> Students again pointed out the irony in the government closing educational facilities while state leaders had adopted the goal of increasing the number of African professors.<sup>505</sup>

Expelled “foreign” African students were still not allowed to return. According to the government plan, exams would take not take place anywhere in Senegal, but at rented sites in France and a few urban centers in Francophone Africa: Yaoundé, Abidjan, Lomé, Porto-Novo, Kinshasa, Rabat, Tanarive, Cotonou, and Brazzaville.<sup>506</sup> Radio Dakar began announcing scholarships to study abroad, and the government began making arrangements for students to continue their studies outside of Dakar. Students promptly scorned this move, arguing that it was hypocritical for the Senegalese government to deny students their scholarships under the pretense of a lack of funding, but then arrange costly programs to administer exams and future study across the globe, when it could be done in Dakar.<sup>507</sup>

The reasons for Senghor’s decision to shut down the university were obvious to the students, who called his actions “political.” First, with the university closed, reforms could be implemented without the input—or interference—of students. Second, with students dispersed across the globe, the maintenance

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<sup>503</sup> “Résolution,” UDES Conseil d’Administration, 22 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>504</sup> Tract, “Position des étudiants sénégalais sur le problème de l’Université de Dakar,” Comité Executif of UDES, Mid-July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. “...aux valeurs de la *négritude*.”

<sup>505</sup> “Résolution,” UDES Conseil d’Administration, 22 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. The anti-national and anti-African nature of the proposals, which will is the “sabotage délibéré de la formation des cadres pour perpetuer le maintien de l’assistance technique française...” Also, students also accused Senghor of having been opposed to reforms such as the Africanization of the teaching staff, claiming that reforms would result in granting diplomas of lesser-value—but now he was positioning himself as wanting to take drastic action to change the university.

<sup>506</sup> But to be still graded by professors in Dakar. “Résolution,” UDES Conseil d’Administration, 22 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. See also “Procès-verbal du Conseil de l’Université, séance du 28 juin 1968,” UCAD.

<sup>507</sup> Tract, “Position des étudiants sénégalais sur le problème de l’Université de Dakar,” Comité Executif of UDES, Mid-July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

of their organizations would be disrupted, weakening their future actions.<sup>508</sup> In an attempt to regain collective momentum, the UDES *Conseil d'administration* managed to meet in mid-July 1968, and asked university students and secondary students in their last year of high school to join youth organizations in the cities and neighborhoods where they were living.<sup>509</sup> They asked UDES students to refuse scholarships to study abroad.<sup>510</sup> They also asked students to reject the government's plan to slot many of them into training schools for "*cadres moyens*" and thereby deflect them from completing their bachelor's degree and more advanced degrees. UDES leaders continued to hold fast to their demands,<sup>511</sup> and until they were met the strike officially continued, including the boycott of exams and the boycott of scholarships for students to study outside of the University of Dakar for 1968–69.<sup>512</sup>

But with the African student body now dispersed across Senegal and West Africa, the tone of UDES tracts belied their loss of momentum,<sup>513</sup> as August arrived and Senghor still refused to consider

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<sup>508</sup> "Résolution," UDES Conseil d'Administration, 22 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>509</sup> Note, n. 1228, Salamine. Objet: "Activité de l'U.D.E.S., Source: ILLION-URBAINT," 25 July 1968, Valeur: B/2, carton 672, DA, CADN. This note claims that "des demandes d'adhésion au M.J./U.P.S. pourraient être également sollicitées par les étudiants." In some places, the students have asked to join the Maisons des Jeunes et de la Culture, notably in Bambey where the "Comité de Coordination des Elèves de Bambey a demandé à être inscrit en bloc." The student in Bambey would be a the center of a national student strike the following spring. See also "Résolution," UDES Conseil d'Administration, 22 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>510</sup> Although they would later accept them when the University was partially re-opened after negotiations with the government in September. Here UDES claims that "The government has sent 2/3 to other francophone universities and 1/3 toward instituts/ecoles de formation de cadres moyens." "Résolution," UDES Conseil d'Administration, 22 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>511</sup> And the reopening of the university, the holding of exams at the University of Dakar, the return of the expelled students, and reforms that included the participation of professors and students. "Résolution," UDES Conseil d'Administration, 22 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. At the National UPS congress held at the end of July, Senghor and Assane Seck, the new Minister of Education, raised the topic of university reform, much to the consternation of the UDES students. [But the doc doesn't say what was talked about of how students replied.] See Note, n. 1256, Salamine, Objet: "Activités de l'U.D.E.S.," 31 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>512</sup> "Réponse du Conseil d'Administration de l'U.D.E.S. au 8<sup>ème</sup> point du communiqué gouvernement/U.D.E.S., Conseil d'Administration of UDES, 10 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. Also in Sen CD 1.

reopening the university for the following school year.<sup>514</sup> Lagarde noted that students were angry—but also worried that suspended Senegalese students might still be expelled and conscripted into the military.<sup>515</sup> Lagarde claimed that as the summer wore on, most students became open to accepting a scholarship to study abroad, even as the UDES leadership maintained the call for a boycott.<sup>516</sup>

Yet, as the summer drew to a close, UDES leaders seemed to win a war of attrition. It is unclear why the UPS government decided to back down, but authorities may have been worried about a new explosion of student protest and embittered parents if the strike remained unresolved heading into a new academic year. Omar Gueye offers a more holistic assessment, claiming that Senghor had three motivations to settle the strike: first, to “limit the pretensions” of emboldened army officers; second to restore the confidence of the UPS’s *Bureau Politique* before the outbreak of another strike; and lastly, to respond to the calls for resolution from numerous quarters, notably religious authorities.<sup>517</sup>

The government released Moktar Diack at the beginning of September, likely to facilitate official discussions between UDES and the government.<sup>518</sup> (Student leaders had refused to open official negotiations so long as Diack remained in jail.) Senegalese university student leaders then met officially

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<sup>513</sup> Note, N. 1150, Salamine, Objet: “Activité de l’Union Démocratique des Etudiants Sénégalais (U.D.E.S.),” 18 July 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. L’UDES “repreant les exigences antérieures; toutefois la rédaction en est plus embarrassée et laisse transparaître une certaine inquiétude.”

<sup>514</sup> In August, UDES representatives met with the Director of Senghor’s cabinet, Alioune Sene. UDES continued to demands the complete reopening of the University, which the president rejected. *Actuelle (Renseignement)*, N. 134, B/2, Sénégal, “Contacts Autorités – étudiants,” 29 and 30 August 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>515</sup> “...la résiliation possibles des sursis des étudiants et leur incorporation dans l’Armée ou dans le service civique engendrent leur colère et en même temps leur fait très peur.” *Actuelle (Renseignement)*, N. 134, B/2, Sénégal, “Contacts Autorités – étudiants,” 29 and 30 August 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>516</sup> Lagarde claimed that there was on there was only a small group of “rigide” “irréductibles” who want to continued the upheavals of May. *Actuelle (Renseignement)*, N. 134, B/2, Sénégal, “Contacts Autorités – étudiants,” 29 and 30 August 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>517</sup> Gueye, “Mai 1968 au Sénégal,” 196.

<sup>518</sup> Note, n. 1816, Salamine. Objet: “Activité de l’U.E.D. et de l’U.D.E.S.,” 25 November 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

with Senghor (and other government authorities) on September 5 and 6, joined by representatives from the UNTS and the national organization of parents of primary and secondary students (FENAPES).<sup>519</sup> Among the “university” student delegation, UDES leaders had included a high school student, unbeknownst to government negotiators. At the negotiations, the UNTS and parents presented an eight point proposal, which government officials were willing to accept. Student delegates quickly agreed to all of the points except the last one, which outlined a plan for the “partial and gradual opening of the University of Dakar”—a compromise between student demands for a complete reopening and Senghor’s desire to keep the university closed. The proposal was then taken to the UDES *Conseil d’administration* (CA) for discussion on September 9.<sup>520</sup> CA members voted fifty to sixteen to endorse the proposed agreement, pending the acceptance of ten amendments.<sup>521</sup> When negotiations reconvened on September 13, the government capitulated to most of the students’ demands.<sup>522</sup> Lagarde reported that

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<sup>519</sup> Note, N. 1441, Salamine, Objet: “Tract de l’Union Démocratique des Etudiants Sénégalais, URBAIND, 4 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN; Telegram n.794/795 from Lagarde, French Embassy in Dakar, to French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 7 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>520</sup> “Réponse du Conseil d’Administration de l’U.D.E.S. au 8<sup>ème</sup> point du communiqué gouvernement/U.D.E.S., Conseil d’Administration of UDES, 10 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. Also in Sen CD 1. See also “Communique final de la rencontre entre le gouvernement et l’Union Démocratique des Etudiants Sénégalais,” 13 September 1968, printed in Telegram n. 806 from Lagarde, French Ambassador in Dakar, to Diplomatie Paris, 14 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>521</sup> The amendments included an expansion of the number of students who would be allowed to return to the University of Dakar the following year, (e.g. students in their first three years at the *Faculté de Droit*), the planning of two sessions of exams for October, and the opening of dorms to allow students to return and begin preparing for their exams. The original proposal included student demands for stipends to be paid over the course of twelve months, and students now called for back pay from July and August. “Réponse du Conseil d’Administration de l’U.D.E.S. au 8<sup>ème</sup> point du communiqué gouvernement/U.D.E.S., Conseil d’Administration of UDES, 10 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. Also in Sen CD 1. On the vote, see Note, n. 1460, Salamine, Objet: “Évolution de la situation estudiantine,” URBAIN, 11 Sept 1968, Valeur: B/2, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>522</sup> After which the strike, boycott of exams, and boycott of foreign bourses was finally officially called off. Telegram n. 807/809 from Lagarde, French Ambassador in Dakar, to Diplomatie Paris, Secret, 14 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. Text of this announcement: “Communique final de la rencontre entre le gouvernement et l’Union Démocratique des Etudiants Sénégalais,” 13 September 1968, printed in Telegram

the students “had achieved nearly complete success,” and the final accord was published and read over the radio shortly thereafter.<sup>523</sup>

The government agreed to “guarantee the continuity” of studies in 1968-1969 for all Senegalese *and* non-Senegalese students enrolled at the University of Dakar during the previous year. Some of the *facultés* at the University of Dakar would be open to all students, but others, like the School of Law and Economics and the School of the Arts were only open to first and second year students in certain departments. The COUD would be re-opened, thereby allowing student input into the management of the University (as re-established after the 1966 strike). Students were also promised a role in elaborating the plan to reform the university. The end of the year exams for 1968 were rescheduled for the fall at the University of Dakar, and returning students would be allowed to move back into their dorms at least one month before the exams.<sup>524</sup> The government also agreed, at the behest of the university students, to open negotiations with secondary students.

Student representatives did not win all of their demands. They agreed that those who could not return to the University of Dakar, because their year/*faculté* would be closed, would accept scholarships for study in France, thus backing down from their initial demand that the University of Dakar be fully reopened and all students allowed to return. But most critically, students won their demand for full scholarships. The government would not fraction bourses, they would be paid all twelve months of the year. Students were even to receive stipends retroactively for July and August 1968.<sup>525</sup>

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n. 806 from Lagarde, French Ambassador in Dakar, to Diplomatie Paris, 14 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>523</sup> Lagarde’s quote: “ont remporté un succès presque total.” Telegram n. 807/809 from Lagarde, French Ambassador in Dakar, to Diplomatie Paris, Secret, 14 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>524</sup> Telegram n. 807/809 from Lagarde, French Ambassador in Dakar, to Diplomatie Paris, Secret, 14 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

Throughout the summer, UDES representatives also negotiated for the protection of their striking Guinean counterparts. Since the early 1960s, students radicals from Francophone Africa had become increasingly angered by Sékou Touré's repression of trade unionists and other critics.<sup>526</sup> During the 1960s, Guinean students abroad split between those maintained links to the ruling *Parti démocratique de Guinée* and those who repudiated Touré's government. Thus, many Guinean students in Dakar were at odds with their home government and their expulsion back to Guinea may have put them in danger. UDES leaders therefore negotiated to prevent their deportation to Guinea after the strike, and for those whose would not be allowed to return to the University of Dakar, UDES leaders facilitated their departure to study in France.<sup>527</sup>

As Lagarde observed, the negotiations and signed agreement tacitly recognized UDES as the representative of Senegalese students, something the Senegalese government had tried to avoid during the previous two years.<sup>528</sup> But as another French report noted, the agreement offered a needed "respite" to the UPS, which was also dealing with a "rather virulent" opposition largely composed of *fonctionnaires* within the ranks of the government. Further, French officials worried that the agreement

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<sup>525</sup> See also Telegram n. 807/809 from Lagarde, French Ambassador in Dakar, to Diplomatie Paris, Secret, 14 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN. Negotiations with representatives of the élèves were wrapped up on 23 September 1968.

<sup>526</sup> Especially in FEANF/France, see Ibrahima Signaté, "Les étudiants veulent tout casser," *Jeune Afrique*, 6-12 January 1964; Direction des Renseignements Généraux, 8ème Section / no 184, "Activites des Etudiants Africains et Malagaches en France," 3 April 1964; Direction des Renseignements Généraux, 8ème Section / no 777, "À la FEANF," 9 August 1967; Direction des Renseignements Généraux, 8ème Section / no. 370, "La Lutte des Tendances au Sein de la Federation Des Etudiants D'afrique Noire en France (F.E.A.N.F.)," 30 March 1967, all in carton 531, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

<sup>527</sup> Note, n. 1460, Salamine, Objet: "Évolution de la situation estudiantine," URBAIN, 11 Sept 1968, Valeur: B/2, carton 672, DA, CADN. See also Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal," 99-100.

<sup>528</sup> Telegram n.794/795 from Lagarde, French Embassy in Dakar, to Diplomatie Paris, Secret, 7 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.



was “very precarious and the students reserve all the rights to political protest.”<sup>529</sup> The next three years would offer proof of this.

## Conclusion

On May 30, the day between the police raid on the University of Dakar, and the start of the workers’ strike, Senghor took to the airwaves for a lengthy address to the nation.<sup>530</sup> The speech was his most direct public engagement with the claims made by student leaders during the strike. He caustically reprimanded students and refuted their assertion that he was a puppet of “French imperialism.” In the speech, Senghor defended his anti-colonial record, notably his political actions in the 1940s and 1950s, and his role as a founder of *négritude*. Instead, Senghor argued, it was the students who had followed the lead of foreigners, by waiting to strike until French students had already done so.<sup>531</sup>

He further derided students for being “yesterday Trotskyist and anarchist, today Maoist” while also (rather contradictorily) acting in the service of “the most retrograde international capitalism.” He mocked students for admiring Mao without reading the Chinese leader’s statements carefully. Senghor read two of Mao’s quotations about the patient, hard work required over the course of decades to build a socialist society—work that he did not believe students took seriously in Senegal.<sup>532</sup>

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<sup>529</sup> “...une opposition – surtout constitué de fonctionnaires – assez virulents” Note, n. 1527. Salamine. Objet: “Tract de l’U.D.E.S.,” 25 September 1968, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>530</sup> “Allocution de Monsieur le Président de la République, Message à la Nation,” dossier Sénégal, événements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, Sénégal Bibliographie, 30 May 1968, CD, ANS.

<sup>531</sup> As noted above, “pour faire ‘même chose toubabs.’” As Blum notes, the accusation is somewhat ironic given that his speech came just five hours after DeGaulle gave a major speech with similar themes to the French nation. Blum, “Sénégal 1968,” 166.

<sup>532</sup> This critique, however, implied a parallel between Senghor’s Senegal and Mao’s China, a parallel Senghor would have surely rejected had he not been the one making it. Senghor similarly invoked Mao in a speech at the Université of Abidjan in 1971. See Hendrickson, “Imperial Fragments,” 278.

Although Senghor tried to lambast the students using their own icon, his speech spread their criticisms of the regime to a broader audience than the students had ever been able to do themselves. Further, it seems that the speech did little to deter the outbreak of the mass strike and protests that spread across the country the next day. Demonstrators likely found Senghor's claim that he was "anti-imperialist" difficult to accept when, following his speech, he called in the French army to put down the protests.<sup>533</sup>

Senghor's speech was sometimes witty, but belied his irritation and defensiveness. Blum and others have argued that the conflict between the students and Senghor was "generational," particularly as Senghor felt betrayed by students' rejection of their inclusion in the French education system.<sup>534</sup> The granting of French diplomas at the University of Dakar was a point of pride for Senghor and many of his generation. As Bathily, Mamadou Diouf, and Mohamed Mbodj point out, the demand for access to curricula and diplomas equivalent to those of metropolitan institutions—and/or access to metropolitan institutions—had been a key tenet of the Senegalese student movement from at least the 1930s.<sup>535</sup> These demands continued well into the 1950s after the creation of the Institut des Hautes Etudes de Dakar, the precursor to the University of Dakar.<sup>536</sup> Thus, when students called for an end to French management and French curricula at the University of Dakar in 1968, it marked a break from one of the long-held credos of the student movement in Senegal.<sup>537</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> The decision of the French military to intervene was a crucial shift in the balance of forces, one which perhaps led to a different outcome than that of Congo-Brazzaville and Dahomey in 1963.

<sup>534</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 163; Mamadou "Mao" Wane, "Mai 68 à Dakar, La dimension alternance générationnelle et émergence d'une révolution culturelle," *Sud quotidien*, 30 May 2008; Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal,"

<sup>535</sup> The demand had been raised by Lamine Gueye in his campaign to become the Senegalese deputy to the French National Assembly. Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 287.

<sup>536</sup> Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 292-93.

But beyond the question of French diplomas, the idea that the 1968 strike represented a clash of generations is less supportable. In general, student demands in 1968 were the *same* as those in previous generations. The demand for scholarships to complete higher education had also been central to the activism of Lamine Gueye's and Senghor's generations.<sup>538</sup> But in 1968, Senghor reproached Senegalese students for their "privilege" in receiving scholarships—just as the colonial government had chastised students in the 1950s when they had demanded scholarships. Similarly, student leaders had called for the democratization and expansion of educational opportunities since the early 1950s. Thus, when students in 1968 protested the stagnation of the education budget vis-à-vis the growth of the national police and military budgets, they were echoing Cheikh Anta Diop's complaint as a student in 1952 that the French were wasting money on "industries of war and other non-productive sectors" instead of education.<sup>539</sup> Lastly, as Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj point out, students in the 1950s had proclaimed the right for student unions to be a place for "political training" and not simply corporatist demands—<sup>540</sup>a key principle still fought for by students in UDES and the UED, but now rejected by Senghor. Thus, in many ways, the student leaders of 1968 shared many of the perspectives held by their forebears from the 1930s through 1950s.

The "generational clash" framework also fails to explain the involvement of many seasoned trade unionists in the 1968 strike, the cross-generational anger among Médina residents, and the withholding of support for the regime from some elder Tijani leaders. As I argue throughout this work, the conflict

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<sup>537</sup> Although as Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj point out, discussion of the need for education "appropriate" to African needs been raised even in the period of nationalist agitation, notably by Assane Seck in 1952, who later became the Senegalese Minister of Education after the 1968 strike.

<sup>538</sup> Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 287. Lamine Gueye had raised the issue in 1934.

<sup>539</sup> See Cheikh Anta Diop, "Vers une idéologie politique africaine," *La Voix de l'Afrique Noire*, n 1, February 1952, quoted in Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 294.

<sup>540</sup> Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 294-95.

between Senghor and the students was not so much generational, but rather a struggle over different visions of what post-independence Senegal (and Africa more generally) should look like.<sup>541</sup> For Senghor, the change that took place at the top of society, as state power shifted from French colonial authorities to the UPS government, meant that the old demands were now detrimental to the needs of “national construction.” But young radicals believed that the UPS government’s idea of “national construction” was a dead end, economically and socially. This conflict, so clearly on display in 1968, was the continuity of decade-long opposition to Senghor. The thread of this opposition was not always visible within the world of “official” politics, but remained unbroken. The tenacity of the PAI’s influence is one example, but there were many in the trade union and student movement inspired by the revolutionary ideals of the PAI without ever having been members. This was precisely because these ideas circulated globally, not just in 1968, but throughout the decade before, reaching young people in Senegal through student and trade union networks.

As Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj argue, since independence, students had been increasingly displaced as the nation’s “future leaders,” through Senghor’s consolidation of power, and became instead the “incorruptible conscience” of the nation—finding themselves no longer at the center of political life, but on the outside of it,<sup>542</sup> politically and socially sidelined. But even if this can be considered a generational division, generations are not monolithic. Senghor found people even among the 1968 “generation,” like Moustapha Niasse, who backed the regime and would be rewarded for their support over the coming decades. If there was a generational struggle on display, it was most clearly seen within the ranks of the UPS itself, as party youth leaders felt blocked in their advancement by party elders. But most Senegalese student leaders, like their predecessors from the previous decade, forthrightly rejected the idea that the

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<sup>541</sup> Also observed by Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, “Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais,” 298.

<sup>542</sup> Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, “Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais,” 298.

UPS could create the democratic and socialist society Senghor claimed to be leading—signifying not a generational divide, but a political one.<sup>543</sup>

Although the strike had the most important impact within Senegal, it also reverberated outside the country. On May 31, Senegalese students in France sat-in at Senegal's embassy in Paris, refusing to leave until the ambassador called the Presidential Palace in Dakar to convey the students' demands for the release of their counterparts in Senegal.<sup>544</sup> A week later, a "Committee of Direct Action against French Imperialism in Senegal" was created in Paris, likely in response to the use of French troops to break the strike. In September 1968, when Senghor traveled to the Frankfurt book fair in West Germany to receive the prestigious Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, German students organized a protest against Senghor in solidarity with students in Dakar. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a famous figure in the 1968 French student protests, was arrested along with twenty-five other students, and spent several days in jail for their actions.<sup>545</sup> UDES promptly fired off a letter to Heinrich Luebke, the president of West Germany, calling for the release of the arrested German students, and defending their "concrete expression of international student solidarity, founded on the principles of struggle against imperialism and its valets."<sup>546</sup> UDES leaders used the letter to express their "friendship" with the students and workers of Germany, and criticized the West German government's provision of arms to the Portuguese and collaboration of South Africa through NATO.<sup>547</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> Although it is worth pointing out that some of these students would, after later defeats, acquiesce and join the UPS/PS.

<sup>544</sup> Blum, "Sénégal 1968," 153; Gueye, "Mai 1968 au Sénégal," 135-36.

<sup>545</sup> Hendrickson offers the most thorough assessment, see Hendrickson, "Imperial Fragments," 182-85.

<sup>546</sup> "Lettre ouverte à M. Heinrich Luebke, Président de la République Fédérale d'Allemagne, s/c Monsieur l'Ambassadeur de la République Fédérale d'Allemagne, Dakar," Comité Executif of UDES, 28 September 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN. "expression concrète de la solidarité étudiante internationale fondé sur les principes de lutte contre l'impérialisme et ses valets."

But more importantly, the expulsion of African students back to their home countries simply served to spread the agitation across Francophone Africa. Upon returning home in 1968, students quickly applied similar critiques to their own governments and began launching local protest movements, notably in Dahomey and Côte D'Ivoire.<sup>548</sup> However, the momentum of 1968 was not easy to maintain as the new academic year began with students were dispersed across continents. Meanwhile, employers and the government quickly retracted many of the commitments made to workers at the negotiations of June 1968. Over the next four years, students and workers struggled repeatedly to recreate the power of the 1968 strike, with great sacrifice, but little success.

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<sup>547</sup> "Lettre ouverte à M. Heinrich Luebke, Président de la République Fédérale d'Allemagne, s/c Monsieur l'Ambassadeur de la République Fédérale d'Allemagne, Dakar," Comité Executif of UDES, 28 September 1967, carton 672, DA, CADN.

<sup>548</sup> See Report "Synthèse de l'agitation dans les Etats Africains 1968," 14 August 1968, carton 983, 5AG/FPU, ANF.

# PART II: Congo, 1958-1968



[Fig. 7: Map of Congo-Brazzaville. Source: [www.geographicguide.com](http://www.geographicguide.com)]



[Fig. 8: Map of Brazzaville, Republic of Congo]

## PREFACE

The next two chapters explore the tumultuous events in Congolese society and politics between 1958 and 1968. Chapter 3 focuses on the efforts of trade union, student, and youth organizations who challenged the Congolese government established by Fulbert Youlou following the referendum of 1958. Youlou, like Senghor, moved quickly to sideline his electoral opposition and the small but vocal group of activists who had rejected the French Community. But unlike in Senegal, Youlou's attempted consolidation of power unleashed an outbreak of urban protest in 1963 that he could not contain. The following chapter also looks at the social and political conditions that allowed trade union leaders to gain a wider audience in Brazzaville and lead the demonstrations that toppled Youlou's regime.



In the wake of this upheaval, a group of radical students and university graduates promoted themselves as the torchbearers of the “revolution” in Congo, and set about organizing young men and women in Brazzaville to defend their vision for the new government. Chapter 4 traces the rise of these youth organizations and argues that their leaders set the direction of Congolese politics until 1967. As in part I, these chapters show how the criteria for “real” independence established in the 1950s continued to set the demands of young radicals into the late 1960s. In Congo, youth leaders successfully pushed the new government to adopt many of the qualities of “real” independence—for example, the expulsion of French troops and the nationalization of the education system. I argue that in the process, they transformed urban social life in Brazzaville through the mobilization, politicization, and militarization of young people. And relatedly, I show how youth leaders turned Congo into a regional hub for anti-colonial and opposition movements from across the region.

In order to contextualize the rise and fall of Youlou’s regime, the following preface outlines the development of Congolese electoral politics in the 1940s and 1950s. In the aftermath of the 1958 referendum, the major political parties in Congo were locked in fierce competition, and it was unclear who would lead the new government. The volatile situation in Brazzaville stood in stark contrast to the UPS’s solid footing in Dakar. Senghor and Dia had established their political dominance in Senegal by 1958, but Youlou’s political career was just taking off.

### **Colonial Rule and Politics in Congo before World War II**

The origins of Congo’s political situation in 1958 can be better understood against the background of practices of colonial rule in AEF both before and after World War II. While Senegal had a long history of African involvement in French electoral politics, rooted in the Four Communes, the situation in Congo was quite different. As the capital of AEF, Brazzaville was homologous with Dakar, but electoral political

life in Congo developed more slowly, and remained far more fragile and provincial than in Senegal.<sup>1</sup>

Florence Bernault and Elikia M'Bokolo have argued that this was partially due to the greater level of repression and exploitation carried out by colonial authorities and European firms in AEF against African subjects.

The consolidation of French rule in the area of present-day Congo-Brazzaville was modeled on the infamous concessionary contracts of the Congo Free State established by King Leopold II of Belgium.<sup>2</sup> In 1899, French land claims in the Congo River basin were carved up and granted to forty newly-formed companies based in France, each holding contractual rights to vast swathes of yet-unmapped land and its resources (often rubber or timber), for a period of thirty years.<sup>3</sup> This era was marked by ubiquitous accounts of the bloody extraction of African labor and resources, through coercive taxation schemes, unpaid requisitioning of troops and workers, forced portage, torture, and outright massacre.<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> See Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*; M'Bokolo, "Colonial Policy in Equatorial Africa," See also Martin, *Leisure and Society*.

<sup>2</sup> For some of the literature on the concessionary regimes in AEF, see: Martin, *Leisure and Society*; Jean Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa, 1900-1945* (New York: Pica Press, 1971); Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Le Congo au temps des grandes compagnies concessionnaires, 1898-1930* (Paris: Mouton, 1972); Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Investissements privés, investissements publiques en AEF, 1900-1940," *African Economic History* 12(1983); Amin and Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Histoire économique du Congo, 1880-1968: du Congo français à l'Union douanière et économique d'Afrique centrale*.

<sup>3</sup> These *concessionnaires* were based in France and backed through a combination of French and Belgian capital. The companies' task was made easier by an 1899 decree that effectively abrogated all treaties established between the French and African authorities or chiefs in the region. Buell also notes that the "average rate of the rent was less than one percent of the value of the capital." Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, 231-33; Thompson and Adloff, *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa*, 13; Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa*, 22, 307.

<sup>4</sup> Notoriously critiqued in the introduction of René Maran's 1921 novel *Batouala* and Andre Gide's *Voyage au Congo* (1927), such practices resulted in both devastation and protest within the colony and multiple scandal revelations and reform proposals originating in the metropole. Thompson and Adloff, *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa*, 17. As Mann points out, similar forms of brutality through the indigénat in AOF also took place. Mann, *Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel*, 44-45.

resulting social calamities devastated the population of the AEF, which fell from an estimated fifteen million in 1900 to an estimated three million in 1921.<sup>5</sup>

Both during and after the concessionary period in Congo, the authority of the colonial administration and that of company agents became enmeshed.<sup>6</sup> As Bernault and M'Bokolo have shown, the combined authority of foreign business representatives and colonial administrators allowed little room for forms of independent African political organization to develop, even after World War II. Phyllis Martin has further emphasized that the history of concessionary rule and the power of foreign economic interests in AEF resulted in Congo receiving far fewer colonial resources than territories in AOF.<sup>7</sup> Colonial and economic authorities preferred to bring in skilled workers from other areas, notably AOF, rather than invest in the education of local populations.<sup>8</sup> Thus, at the start of World War II, educational facilities lagged far behind those of AOF; only three hundred Africans in all of AEF had primary education certificates.<sup>9</sup> "Compared to France's other colonies," Martin notes," from Indochina to the Antilles and

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<sup>5</sup> Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa*, 37. These should be understood as very rough estimates. The most deadly project was the Congo-Océan rail line that extended from Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire. Although forced labor was also used to construct the rail lines of West Africa, reports of working conditions, administrative complicity with labor cruelty and the extraordinary death rate (fourteen to twenty thousand estimated deaths) stood as yet another example of the AEF's exceptionally sordid legacy. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Compagnies concessionnaires*, 194-95; Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa*, 203; Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 33-36.

<sup>6</sup> See Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa*.

<sup>7</sup> While a system of rails had been under construction since the 1880s in AOF, construction of the first (and only) rail line in AEF was delayed until 1921. The rate of road construction between the two federations was equally unbalanced. Roads passable with motor vehicles were common to French West Africa before 1914, but almost unheard of in AEF. By the end of the 1930s, little had changed: French West Africa hosted 101,000 kilometers of roads by 1940, of which over a quarter could be used year round, while AEF could claim only a few thousand kilometers of road, few of them passable during the rainy season. Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa*, 204; Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 35; Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Compagnies concessionnaires*, 284-87.

<sup>8</sup> Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 23, 27.

<sup>9</sup> Martin, notes that "The only government school in the colony that offered post-primary education, the Ecole Edouard Renard, was opened in 1935. In that year it had ten pupils, compared to 930 pupils in eight

Algeria to Madagascar, Central Africa ranked at the bottom of French colonial priorities.”<sup>10</sup> As M’Bokolo argues, the governor of AEF, Félix Éboué, called for colonial reforms during the war, but his plans were hindered primarily by “[t]he immobilism of the territorial governors and the hostility of French economic interests [who] exerted a braking effect on implementation of the measures selected” up to 1956.<sup>11</sup> As a bleak 1949 report on food and nutrition in the AEF stated, “The prisoners are remarkably healthy since they are the best fed of all the African population.”<sup>12</sup>

Before World War II, inhabitants of French Congo responded to this state of affairs with revolts against labor requisitioning, as well as the avoidance of taxation, forced labor, and forced planting, largely through evasion or emigration.<sup>13</sup> In the southern part of present-day Congo, such resistance

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similar schools in French West Africa. In other words the system in Equatorial Africa was about twenty-five years behind that of West Africa.” Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 51. Alice Conklin also notes that in contrast with AEF, in French West Africa 200 new schools were created between 1903 and 1913, with 118 European teachers recruited to teach in them, and with additional 145 African teachers trained. By comparison, only five teachers had been recruited to the AEF during the same decade. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 138. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that only 5 percent of eligible African children in AOF attended a French school in 1946—and most in agricultural training schools. Campaigns for the expansion of French education were extremely active after the war. Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 94.

<sup>10</sup> Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> M’Bokolo, “Colonial Policy in Equatorial Africa,” 175; Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 261-306. Colonial administrative reforms notoriously had to be approved by the Chambers of Commerce: In 1948, it became mandatory for the AEF colonial governors to “consult the Chamber of Commerce on subjects as varied and important as the fixing of prices, customs duties and “all other taxes,” the creation of the new business establishments, “any basic reform of the economic system,” and “all questions affecting the Colony’s economic activity.” Consequently, when Éboué’s successor, André Bayardelle, drew up plans for the administrative reorganization of AEF, they were rejected by the Chambers of Commerce, and became a dead letter. In addition, between February 1944 and March 1948, eight Governor-Generals passed through Brazzaville. Thus, throughout the late history of AEF, successive administrators wavered on the implementation of previous decrees, allowing the entrenched commercial firms and monopolies, like the concessionaires before them, to exert a disproportionate influence on the practices of colonial rule. Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa*, 298; M’Bokolo, “Colonial Policy in Equatorial Africa,” 197-98.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa*, 299.

<sup>13</sup> Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa*, 28, 30, 107-08, 29, 203. See also Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 22. For a conceptualization of “avoidance protest” Michael Adams, “From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial and Colonial Southeast Asia,” in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas B. Dirks (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 89.

often developed within the resilient messianic cults organized around Simon Kimbangu, his follower Simon Mpadi, and André Matsoua.<sup>14</sup> Matsoua's followers had an important impact on Congolese politics both before and after the war. In 1926, Matsoua and four other Congolese had founded the Société amicale des originaires de l'Afrique équatoriale française<sup>15</sup> in France, where Matsoua had gained citizenship through his service in the military in the 1920s in Morocco.<sup>16</sup> After connecting with Communists in France, he agitated for French citizenship for Africans as well as an end to the *indigénat* and the abusive practices of European firms in AEF. The first branch of the *amicale* was created in Brazzaville, where it caught on among the Bakongo population, particularly among Kilari speakers.<sup>17</sup> When two delegates visited from Paris in 1928 to recruit and collect dues, they recruited thirteen thousand members within the year. These members began campaigns to refuse paying taxes or providing labor to the colonial government.<sup>18</sup> Matsoua was first arrested in Paris and tried in Brazzaville in 1930, as his supporters attempted to storm the courthouse. After the trial, his followers were repressed harshly by metropolitan and colonial authorities, and Matsoua later died in prison in 1942.<sup>19</sup> In death he became a martyr, inspiring a messianic movement among Bakongo peoples, many of whom continued to refuse to pay taxes, to work with missionaries, or to be drafted during World War II.

By the end of the war, the Matsouanist campaigns had been largely quashed and French citizenship rights had only been extended to three dozen black Africans across the entirety of the AEF—

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<sup>14</sup> Thompson and Adloff, *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa*, 308-14, 479-82. See also M'Bokolo, "Colonial Policy in Equatorial Africa," 174.

<sup>15</sup> Georges Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa: Social Dynamics in Central Africa* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970)

<sup>16</sup> He was active in the French mission to suppress the Rif resistance. Balandier suggests he was fueled by guilt because of his participation in this mission. Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa*, 392.

<sup>17</sup> The movement then spread to Libreville and Bangui.

<sup>18</sup> Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa*, 390-93; Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 82-83.

<sup>19</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 73.

compared to 85,000 in AOF.<sup>20</sup> Politicians from AOF, like Lamine Gueye and Félix Houphouët-Boigny, had developed political organizations before the end of the war and led the push for early colonial reforms and increased suffrage. But the same dynamic was not present in AEF, where no similar political organizations existed, even in the imperial capital city of Brazzaville.<sup>21</sup>

Heavy restrictions on access to secondary education, the press, and managerial or administrative posts, had long frustrated the aspirations of the small population of urban African civil servants. As Virginia Thompson, Richard Adloff, and Florence Bernault have emphasized, it was the introduction and expansion of imperial elections in the 1940s and 1950s that provided the only legal forum for the small population of French-educated civil servants to advance their grievances.<sup>22</sup> Yet as Bernault points out, the antecedent repression against the Matsouanists discouraged post-war African associations from taking a confrontational position vis-à-vis the colonial administration.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the historic weight of the colonial administration meant that up to 1956 election outcomes were largely determined by colonial authorities and influential European business interests, sometimes through open manipulation.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This small group had been granted a status created by Eboué, the “notables évolués.” Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 39. As noted earlier 80,000 of the 85,000 voters in AOF were in the Four Communes.

<sup>21</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 121. Nevertheless, as Danielle Sanchez has shown, the war and Brazzaville’s centrality to Free France resulted in a multitude of forms of cultural, social, and religious subversion and rebellions. See Sanchez, “Free(ing) France in Colonial Brazzaville,” ch. 4 and 5. See also Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 44.

<sup>22</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 91-92, 177.

<sup>23</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 182.

<sup>24</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 23, 94-103, 21. As Chafer notes, a single electoral college was established for AOF elections to National Assembly in 1946, after a walkout of all overseas deputies. But a double college (giving French citizens greater representation) was retained for AEF, Cameroon, and Madagascar. Similarly, while new territorial assemblies were also elected on the double college model, a single college was implemented in Senegal. Chafer, *End of Empire in French West Africa*, 65-66.

Therefore, after World War II, new parties emerged from the ranks of Congolese civil servants, but relied heavily on the support of metropolitan parties and colonial authorities.<sup>25</sup> If in Senegal, Senghor's strength drew from his ability to capture votes in the countryside, in Congo the opposite dynamic developed. After the war, Congo became one of the most urbanized countries in Africa with an estimated 35 percent of people living in cities in 1956. The African population of Brazzaville grew by at least 400 percent between 1940 and 1960, and the population of Pointe-Noire grew by 700 percent during the same period.<sup>26</sup> Increasingly these burgeoning cities became the places that determined the outcome of political contests.<sup>27</sup>

### **Electoral Politics in Congo, 1945-1956**

The dominant figure in Congolese politics following the war was Jean-Félix Tchicaya, leader of the PPC. Tchicaya was one of the few Africans in AEF to be granted the rights of French citizenship before 1946, and he served in the French military during the war. A graduate of the prestigious William Ponty teacher training school in Senegal, he was linked to other emerging elites in AOF, notably Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who was two years his junior.

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<sup>25</sup> Divisions in Congolese politics were also characterized by their supposed "ethnic" nature. As Florence Bernault had argued, there was a kernel of truth to this in the politics of the 1950s, but not as portrayed by colonial administrators and some early scholars of this period. Colonial ethnographers and authorities tried to create ethnic categories and promote segregation in Brazzaville along these lines, and assumed parties would form on this basis. Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 59, 101-02. See also Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 36-39, 200. Building on the work of Georges Balandier, Bernault explores how parties did not emerge out of statically-defined ethnic associations, but around changing ideas of social belonging that were heavily impacted by age and class. See Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 13; Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa*.

<sup>26</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 56-57. Bernault reports that the African population of Brazzaville grew from 25,000 people in 1940 to 126,000 in 1960, and that during the same time, in the coastal city of Pointe-Noire, the population jumped from 9,400 to 75,200. Similarly Dolisie, along the railroad line, emerged as a new city. According to Bernault, by 1956, Congo was the most urbanized territory in "tropical Africa." See also Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 28,51.

<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting Balandier's work on the connections between these new urban residents in Brazzaville and their relatives in the countryside, which were not broken. This however, largely meant that politics in the city spread beyond it, for examples, from the Matsouanists in Brazzaville out to the Pool region. Balandier, *Sociologie des Brazzavilles noires*; Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa*.

Tchicaya was elected by the small number of non-citizen African voters to represent Gabon and Congo at the two constituent assemblies after the war, and attended the founding of the RDA in Bamako in 1946. He then formed the PPC and affiliated it to the RDA in 1947, working closely with Houphouët-Boigny. Tchicaya, unlike some of his fellow deputies from the AOF, kept a low profile in the national assembly, thereby gaining the backing of much of the colonial administration, some major European firms in Congo and Gabon, and missionaries—the latter of whom he supported through subsidies to mission schools.<sup>28</sup>

As anti-colonial campaigns and labor strikes erupted after the war in much of West Africa, Congo and other AEF territories remained largely calm. As Bernault and Sanchez argue, this relative quietude hid the growing resentment at ongoing daily abuses and racism suffered by African residents of Congo.<sup>29</sup> PPC orators and the party's short-lived newspaper in the late 40s criticized colonial inequalities, and like Senghor, advocated for a single electoral college.<sup>30</sup> But rhetoric proved insufficient: the PPC's relative lack of confrontational action and Tchicaya's long stays in Paris began to erode his credibility as an anti-colonial figure among the growing urban populations.<sup>31</sup> When African suffrage began to expand more rapidly beginning in 1952, Tchicaya and the PPC began to lose ground to new competitors, notably, Jacques Opangault, leader of the Congolese Socialists, and Fulbert Youlou, a young African priest.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 106-09.

<sup>29</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 196-200.

<sup>30</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 177-78. Martin notes the campaign to stop the administrations plans to expel twenty-thousand people from the Bacongo neighborhood to make room for parks for European use, which Tchicaya protested and successfully stopped. Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 65-66.

<sup>31</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 201, 03-04.

<sup>32</sup> Opangault first led a section of the French SFIO, then joined with other SFIO sections in Africa to create the autonomous Mouvemente Socialist Africain (MSA) in 1957. Lamine Gueye was Opangault's counterpart in Senegal. A year later the MSA merged into Senghor's PRA.



Through 1951, elections in Congo were still deeply affected by the Matsouanists, who maintained their non-participation by abstaining or writing his name on election ballots in large numbers, rather than endorsing any of the living candidates.<sup>33</sup> But among Kilari and Kikongo speakers, many young students and civil servants were delving into electoral politics in the 1950s and contesting both their elders and the Matsouanists.<sup>34</sup>

The candidate who ultimately attracted this younger generation was Fulbert Youlou.<sup>35</sup> The Catholic Church was highly influential in Congo, and following the opening of electoral politics, Church leaders initially hoped to advance their own vision of a reformed colonial society. Youlou was one of the first candidates put forward by the European Church leadership, but initially floundered badly against the PPC. As a result of this and other election losses in 1951, Church leaders stepped back from active engagement in electoral politics, instead focusing on their press outlets and the growing Catholic trade unions in Congo, both of which would play a critical role in the events of 1963 in Congo.<sup>36</sup>

But Youlou continued to build a base of support through his work as a priest in Brazzaville overseeing Catholic youth organizations.<sup>37</sup> In 1956, he announced his candidacy for the January 1956 election to become Congo's deputy in the French National Assembly—much to the surprise of both

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<sup>33</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 159, 75. This was especially the case in the dense Pool region south of Brazzaville.

<sup>34</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 160. Seniority had been a major source of authority among Bakongo peoples. Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 335-36.

<sup>35</sup> Although Tchicaya was a practicing Catholic, and backed subsidies for Catholic mission schools, his early association with Communist networks pushed Catholic clergy to enter politics on their own accord in the 1940s. Bernault argues that Opangault had been involved in leading a movement among Mbochi speakers to defend education in Mbochi language in mission schools and led the Congolese SFIO, whose French section was explicitly anti-clerical. Opangault finally broke through this isolation through the growth of Force ouvrière unions. Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 167, 79-80.

<sup>36</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 167-68, 70. Youlou was ordained in 1946.

<sup>37</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 46.

colonial authorities and Congolese voters. The newly appointed French bishop of Brazzaville rejected Youlou's re-entry into electoral politics and suspended him from the priesthood.<sup>38</sup>

The election contest in January 1956, which pitted Tchicaya, Opangault, and Youlou against each other, was the first under universal suffrage and a turning point in Congolese politics. Youlou's battle with European Church authorities had given him anti-colonial credibility, particularly among young male Kilari and Kikongo-speakers. Although Youlou had not yet formed a party, his supporters agitated against older PPC backers and Matsouanists, turning to open intimidation on election day. In the Brazzaville neighborhood of Bacongo, mostly composed of Kilari and Kikongo speakers, Youlou's supporters attacked the homes of those notables who did not openly endorse Youlou, before being chased by police. Youlou's young militants then moved into the multi-ethnic neighborhood of Poto-Poto and began burning houses of suspected supporters of Tchicaya and Opangault, prompting reprisals from militants backing Tchicaya and Opangault.<sup>39</sup> During the three days of strife, over four hundred people were arrested, nearly one hundred houses destroyed, dozens injured, and four people killed.<sup>40</sup> As Bernault argues, the uprising was not "ethnic" in the sense that colonial authorities and scholars interpreted it. The violence had begun among Kilari speakers, as a generational conflict between young supporters of Youlou and the Matsouanists, before spreading to attacks on PPC sympathizers and European Catholic missionaries.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 235-36. The Bishop first transferred Youlou out of Brazzaville and issued an edict against priests running in elections. When Youlou did not back down, he was suspended.

<sup>39</sup> As Martin points out, the ethnic segregation that the administration tried to create in Brazzaville between Bacongo and Poto-Poto was a reflection of their own conception of ethnic divisions, not actual divisions in the eyes of most Africans. But over time, when linked to political mobilizations, these divisions became neighborhoods became more than symbolic. Martin, *Leisure and Society*.

<sup>40</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 241. After two more days of fighting, Opangault and Youlou called for calm under the order of the French High Commissioner in Congo.

<sup>41</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 241-42. Here she is specifically criticizing Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 22, 65-66. Gauze was the former colonial chief of security in Congo (1958-1962).

When the ballots were counted, Tchicaya, Opangault, and Youlou each received about one-third of the votes, with Tchicaya barely winning. While Youlou lost, he received the majority of votes in Brazzaville and had captured an important audience: for the first time since 1945, the percentage of the votes for the deceased Matsoua finally began to drop.<sup>42</sup> Youlou's support was based on multiple pillars. First, although he came from a Kilari-speaking family, he had been out of the Congo conducting his secondary schooling and theological training while the Matsouanist movement was at its peak. He therefore neither participated in the movement nor took part in the Church's condemnation of it.<sup>43</sup> As a result, Youlou did not initially face hostility from either colonial authorities or the Matsouanists, and found supporters both by participating in colonial advisory bodies and through his work with Catholic youth organizations.<sup>44</sup> After 1956, Youlou simultaneously used the sacredness of his priestly position *and* the notoriety of his defrocking, to increase his legitimacy.<sup>45</sup> In spite of his suspension, he continued to wear the *soutane* in white or bright colors, instead of the classic black robes, and adopted the nom de guerre, l'Abbé (The Priest, or Father).<sup>46</sup>

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The critique also applies to Wagret, *Histoire et sociologie politiques de la République du Congo*; Thompson and Adloff, *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa*.

<sup>42</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 236. Tchicaya won 31 percent of votes, Opangault, 29.1 percent, Youlou 27.7 percent. But notably, Youlou took 56 percent of the votes cast in Brazzaville. Matsoua still received five thousand votes, according to Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa*, 390-92. Gauze claimed that 35 percent of the ballots cast still went to Matsoua. Gauze also claimed that the UDDIA was also able to capture adherents of the messianic sect begun by Lassy Zéphérin by bringing the PPC political Stéphane Tchitchelle into the party - who had relations with the sect. Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 17-18, 21, 23.

<sup>43</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 244-45.

<sup>44</sup> In his first campaign for Mayor of Brazzaville, in 1956, Youlou had promised to lower the voting age to sixteen if elected. He did not carry through the promise. Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 46, 53.

<sup>45</sup> As Bernault argues, drawing on Georges Balandier, he also turned to a longer tradition of claiming approval and connection to ancestors, important for establishing political legitimacy among Bakongo peoples (which include Lari speakers). Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*; Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa*.

<sup>46</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 249-53. Youlou played on other elements of sacredness. For example, he circulated a story about praying on a river bank at the tomb of a famous Bakongo killed by the French. While

## The Loi-cadre Government in Congo

Whereas in Senegal, the loi-cadre elections reinforced the tendency toward political consolidation under the management of Senghor and Dia, in Congo, they brought about increased conflict. Youlou only formed a political party in 1956, in the context of municipal elections, when he won the race for mayor of Brazzaville.<sup>47</sup> His new party, the Union démocratique pour la défense de intérêts africains (UDDIA), lacked the backing of a metropolitan party or the RDA, so Youlou turned to a group of *petits colons* who offered financial backing and access to media promotion.<sup>48</sup> While Youlou publicly maintained an anti-colonial image due to his conflict with white Church leaders, he quietly drew on the resources of white small business owners, some of whom refused to serve Black customers. His support from these *petits colons* was made possible because of divisions among European businesses, namely between representatives of large firms, who had a long history of collaboration with colonial authorities, and the managers of smaller firms who resented the dominant companies. In the hopes of gaining economic advantage, these small business owners and professionals hitched their aspirations to the UDDIA's rise in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire.<sup>49</sup>

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praying, Youlou claimed he saw a caiman (a type of alligator) and adopted the animal as his party emblem, linking him with the anti-colonial figure.

<sup>47</sup> Youlou's breakthrough took place at a moment when colonial reforms were giving greater political weight to urban areas, shifting the site of political movements (like Matsouanism) out of rural areas and into Brazzaville. Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 259-60.

<sup>48</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 254, 55, 59.

<sup>49</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 260-65. As Bernault argues, up to 1955, the representatives of large firms established during the concessionary period had worked with the colonial administration to manage the outcome of electoral contests in Congo and Gabon. On Youlou's French allies, see also Jean-Pierre Bat, "La décolonisation de l'AEF selon Foccart: entre stratégies politiques et tactiques sécuritaires" (PhD dissertation, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2011).

As Youlou's prospects improved, former PPC stalwarts opted to join the UDDIA, and Youlou was able to break out of his initially narrow ethnic base.<sup>50</sup> In 1957, Houphouët-Boigny dropped Tchicaya and the PPC as the RDA affiliate in Congo, and adopted Youlou's party.<sup>51</sup> By the 1957 loi-cadre elections, the PPC and Opangault's Socialists had entered into an alliance to stop the rise of the UDDIA. They narrowly succeeded, but some Socialist deputies were persuaded—allegedly bribed by Youlou's white allies—to switch parties, join the UDDIA, and give Youlou's party the majority. In November 1958, the UDDIA maneuvered in the territorial assembly to oust Opangault and put Youlou in the position of vice-president of the Conseil de gouvernement.<sup>52</sup> The UDDIA further advanced its authority by moving the territorial capital from Pointe-Noire—where the PPC and MSA had a strong following—to Brazzaville.<sup>53</sup>

Even if the loi-cadre government only represented "semi-autonomy," its authority was significant enough to provoke increasingly fraught contests over who would control it. As discussed in the next chapter, this competition prompted deadly violence in Brazzaville in 1959 between Youlou's supporters and his opponents. Youlou emerged victorious from these contests and, over the next four years, set about securing his political dominance.

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<sup>50</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 275-78.

<sup>51</sup> Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 34. At the RDA congress in Bamako in 1957, there were eight hundred AOF representatives and only twenty AEF representatives.

<sup>52</sup> The constitutional coup in Congo was overseen by Christian Jayle, president of the territorial assembly. Jayle was a former high ranking Vichy government official and one Youlou's principle backers among the petits colons of Congo (see chapter 3). The scheme set the stage for another explosion of violence. On Jayle, see Bat, "La décolonisation de l'AEF selon Foccart," 80-81; Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 131-33.

<sup>53</sup> Just a few months earlier, Senghor and Dia orchestrated a similar transfer of Senegal's capital from Saint-Louis to Dakar, over the protest of opposition in Saint-Louis (see chapter 1).

# CHAPTER 3

## Congo 1959–1963: From Anti-Communism to les Trois Glorieuses

### Introduction

In the four years following the declaration of the Congolese Republic in 1959, Fulbert Youlou and his party, the Union démocratique pour la défense des intérêts africains (UDDIA), consolidated their power over rival political parties. During this time, Youlou's administration also launched a campaign to repress radical trade union, youth, and student activists who were organized outside of party politics. By 1963, opposition had been subdued, and Youlou was on the cusp of creating a single-party state with the collaboration of his erstwhile parliamentary rivals. Yet, when a general strike began on August 13 in Brazzaville, the plan began to quickly unravel. Two days later, on August 15, Youlou's government, along with nearly the entire existing political establishment, relinquished its authority in the face of mass demonstrations. The dramatic three-day strike became immortalized as les Trois Glorieuses.<sup>1</sup>

The first goal of this chapter is to unravel this seemingly contradictory turn of events: Why was Youlou's administration swept away at the moment when it seemed to be the most secure in its control? To answer this question, I will look at how Youlou and the rest of the Congolese political elite attempted to consolidate their power between 1959 and 1963. I will then explore why their unity

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<sup>1</sup> The demonstrations in Brazzaville in 1963 were followed just a few months later with similar protests in Dahomey. Events in Dahomey, however, ended in a military coup d'état. See Emmanuel Terray, "Les révolutions congolaise et dahoméenne de 1963: essai d'interprétation," *Revue française de science politique* 14, no. 5 (1964).

became a liability and how their apparently uncontested control crumbled in the face of an unexpected mass revolt.

Building on the work of Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga and Florence Bernault, I contend that the explosiveness of the protests in 1963 was rooted in the accumulation of popular grievances against the administration. Across a wide range of the Congolese population, wealth inequality, ministerial opulence, urban unemployment, the slow pace of Africanization, and the limitation of democratic rights were all prominent complaints. But discontent alone is rarely adequate to produce a revolt capable of bringing down a government. Such an uprising requires both a catalyst and a form of organization.<sup>2</sup>

The catalyst for the 1963 general strike in Congo was not a single event, but a series of escalating conflicts in the months beforehand. Ironically, Youlou's proposal to create a single-party state was the starting point for his downfall. In proposing the single-party state, he was supported by the leadership of his party as well as the country's other two major political parties: the Mouvement socialiste africaine (MSA) and the weaker Parti progressiste congolais (PPC). The self-assurance of this political class, as it moved to consolidate its own rule, appeared, to much of the Congolese population, as an arrogant disregard for popular grievances. This tension was exacerbated by the official state visit of Guinean president Sékou Touré to Congo in June 1963. By raising barely coded critiques of the Congolese government in public speeches, Touré galvanized urban opposition to Youlou. His visit was a turning point, and afterward, trade union leaders came together to form a united front challenge to Youlou's creation of a single-party state. When union leaders called a half-day political strike for August 13, 1963,

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<sup>2</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*; Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*. While *Les "Trois Glorieuses"* was written by Bazenguissa-Ganga under a pseudonym, he reprises much of this information in Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*. This chapter is also supplemented by Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, and many of the essays included in Théophile Obenga, *Histoire générale du Congo des origines à nos jours*, vol. 3, "Le Congo au 20<sup>e</sup> siècle" (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010). The work of Jérôme Ollandet plays a larger role in the next chapter but also enriched this chapter. See Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme* and Jérôme Ollandet, "Histoire du mouvement syndical congolais," in *Histoire générale du Congo des origines à nos jours*, vol. 3, ed. Théophile Obenga (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010). As noted earlier, Françoise Blum has recently placed the events in a comparative context, see Blum, *Révolutions africaines*.

they were transformed into leaders of the opposition to the government, and the strike became the vehicle for widespread urban grievances. Virtually the entire political ruling class backed the single-party proposal, and they were caught unable to relate to opposition in the streets. The protests consequently swept away not only Youlou's government but most of the rest of the political establishment as well.

The second goal of this chapter is to follow the trials and tribulations of radical oppositionists, up to the fall of the government in 1963. I argue that a relatively small group of outspoken activists—organized in trade union, youth, and student associations—played a decisive role in the fall of the government. During Youlou's rule, they persistently tried to give social discontent an organized form, and in the process, created space for their anti-colonial and Marxist-influenced principles to gain a larger hearing.

Youlou led the government from November 1958 until August 1963, a period when Congo-Brazzaville became first a republic within the French Community and then an independent nation in August 1960. During this time the Congolese government assumed an increasing amount of authority from French administrators. As this transition occurred, radicals in trade union, youth, and student organizations shifted the focus of their criticism from French colonialism and the Community to a denunciation of French neocolonialism. In their analysis, little had changed with formal independence, and Youlou had assumed the role of a "lackey" for the French government and French capital. As radicals directed an increasing amount of criticism toward Youlou's administration, the government responded with attempts to repress and outlaw their activities between 1960 and 1963. Though hit hard, these organizations never completely dissolved, and as social discontent grew under Youlou's administration, their persistent criticism of the government had again won them a wider audience by 1963.

Through the use of Congolese state security reports, I am able to paint an intimate picture of how the radical youth and trade union movements framed their criticism of the first government, and how



they maintained themselves during a difficult period of repression. Additionally, with the help of interviews, I am able to provide a history of the rise of the first domestic student union, which took place under Youlou and immediately found itself in conflict with the government. This history gives us insights into the moments when the radical Left was able to connect to a larger domestic audience (and when they could not), and what kind of international connections were important to sustaining their local activity.

Despite their tenacity, in the summer of 1963, the radical trade union, youth, and student leaders were still not influential enough to openly confront Youlou and his single-party proposal. These activists required the alliance of other forces to mount such a challenge. In the polarized environment that developed that summer, the radicals found a somewhat unlikely ally against Youlou's single-party proposal in the Catholic trade union federation of Congo, the Confédération africaine des travailleurs croyants (CATC). The CATC was the largest and most influential trade union federation in the country, and its political and religious connections made it immune to the accusation that it was harboring Communist ideas or leaders. The unions, and especially the Catholic CATC unions, could mobilize urban populations in Congo in a way that student and youth organizations (and especially students studying abroad) could not do alone.

The general strike was only possible because of the united front created between trade union leaders. And although union leaders orchestrated Youlou's resignation during the strike, they initially declined positions in the new government. Into this political vacuum, many of the radical activists who had most vociferously challenged the former government stepped up to assume leadership of what was quickly declared a "revolution." Thus, understanding the experiences of radical oppositionists under Youlou will allow us to better understand the dynamics of Congolese politics after les Trois Glorieuses.

### **Senegal and Congo in Comparison, 1958–1963**

Much of this history parallels what took place in Senegal during the same time period, as laid out in chapter 1. In both cases, the radicals who called for a “no” vote in the 1958 referendum lost badly, but their organizations grew in the period between 1958 and 1960, as they staked out a position in the debate over the meaning of independence. Calling for “real independence” in both countries, young radicals attempted to differentiate themselves from the political elite. Their vocal criticism of the new regimes, and their connections to Communist networks, prompted state leaders to harass and repress young radicals. Just as Senghor consolidated his authority through a new constitution in 1963, Youlou hoped to do the same. But whereas Senghor succeeded, Youlou overplayed his hand.

There are three main reasons for these contrasting outcomes. First, in Senegal, Senghor, Dia, and their allies had developed a robust political infrastructure around themselves since the late 1940s. They were already dominant by the time of the 1958 referendum. In Congo, Youlou had only been a major player in politics since 1956, and his party remained locked in a fierce competition with rival parties on the verge of formal independence. Second, Senghor had managed to secure the compliance of a section of the trade union movement—enough to make a coordinated general strike less likely. In Congo, by 1963, Youlou and his ministers had managed to alienate *all* of the trade unions, including his most natural ally: the powerful Catholic union federation, the CATC. Third, Senghor enjoyed the support of both the French and Senegalese militaries, as evidenced during the crises of both 1962 and 1968. When the uprising began in Congo in 1963, however, the Congolese military split over whether to support the besieged government, and in Paris, Jacques Foccart called off French troops. Youlou’s rapid rise in 1956 was thus mirrored by his precipitous fall in 1963.

# I. The UDDIA's Consolidation of Political Power

While Senghor and Dia had established political hegemony in Senegal by the time of the 1958 referendum, in Congo, electoral politics was at its most unstable. All political parties had endorsed a “yes” vote, and favored joining the French Community. But behind this show of unity the competition between the UDDIA and the MSA/PPC for control of the territorial administration was escalating.<sup>3</sup> Just more than a month later, UDDIA leaders organized a constitutional coup that removed the coalition government led by the MSA's Jacques Opangault and replaced it with a new government led by Youlou. In February 1959, tensions exploded in Brazzaville between supporters of the MSA and those of the UDDIA, leaving one hundred dead and at least two hundred injured in two days of violence. Youlou, as head of the government, profited by having Opangault arrested.<sup>4</sup> Bernault argues that the constitutional coup of 1958 had sent the message to MSA and PPC supporters that their parties would be completely removed from any position of authority. Most viewed Youlou's takeover through the colonial model of monopolistic state power, where space for legal opposition was not permitted. Thus MSA and PPC militants believed that only a violent struggle could settle the issue in their favor.<sup>5</sup> Youlou and his UDDIA deputies moved quickly to crack down on the opposition and monopolized access to firearms through

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<sup>3</sup> The MSA and waning PPC had formed a parliamentary alliance to attempt to defeat the UDDIA (see preface to this section).

<sup>4</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 287-88. Really a purely urban thing - but in 1960 fights would break out in Niari between partisans of the two main parties. In this case, all Bakongo, but with divided loyalties. See also Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 69, 75.

<sup>5</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 288. She also explains how these political conflicts are given an “ethnic” dimension by party leaders, but that ethnic conflict was not at the root of the violence, and was something new, original, and urban in 1959. See Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 288-91, 362.

another technique from the colonial lawbook: forbidding the sale of guns to MSA/PPC militants, while providing permits to UDDIA backers.<sup>6</sup>

In the aftermath of these deadly clashes, UDDIA leaders used their new majority position in the government to weaken their parliamentary opposition. At the behest of the UDDIA-led administration, Opangault was arrested. By doing this, the UDDIA effectively blamed Opangault and the MSA for the violence. With Opangault in jail, Youlou now had a bargaining chip in negotiations with the rest of the MSA leadership. Seeing the party in decline, two more MSA deputies in the National Assembly, including the highest-ranking African deputy, changed their affiliation to the UDDIA in April.<sup>7</sup> That same month, Youlou won approval to dissolve the National Assembly, through the support of the bureau of the assembly, presided over by his close French ally, Christian Jayle.<sup>8</sup> A new election was called for June 14, 1959.

The new parliamentary election was not a gesture toward greater democracy. UDDIA leaders, seeing the MSA in decline, saw the elections as an opportunity to increase their slim majority in the National Assembly. Before the election, Youlou's administration redrew electoral boundaries in the UDDIA's favor. The new parliamentary elections retained a regional "winner-take-all" format from the late colonial model. By consolidating the previous nine electoral regions into six larger electoral zones, the government effectively guaranteed that the UDDIA would take a majority in most of the new regions. The new mapping effectively set aside one new region for the MSA to win, where the UDDIA was weakest.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> As Bernault points out, the sale of guns to Africans was mostly banned under colonial rule. Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 314. On the repression of MSA, see also Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 70, 73.

<sup>7</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 291.

<sup>8</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 292.

<sup>9</sup> Bernault explains how this took place. Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 292.

As anticipated, the UDDIA trounced the MSA in the elections. The election results show how skewed the new electoral boundaries were: UDDIA took 58 percent of the popular vote but obtained 84 percent of the seats in the National Assembly. Out of sixty-one seats, the UDDIA won fifty-one, while the MSA list only got ten deputies for winning the new electoral region that the UDDIA had essentially sacrificed to their opponents.<sup>10</sup> The election results were not simply an expression of the UDDIA's gerrymandering. By winning over new regional clients from the PPC and MSA, the UDDIA's influence *had* grown in regions that were previously the strongholds of other parties. The administration's bullying of the opposition probably helped as well: Opangault, of the MSA, was kept in jail through the elections, unable to advocate for the party he led.

The June 1959 elections were a turning point in Congolese politics: Youlou and the UDDIA now unequivocally dominated their parliamentary opposition and began to embark on a process of eliminating multiparty governance. Upon independence on August 15, 1960, all the deputies elected to the National Assembly in June 1959 were automatically renewed, leaving the UDDIA with its continued majority.<sup>11</sup> By the spring of 1961, Youlou had managed to bring his former political opponents from both the PPC and the MSA under his patronage. Unafraid to use physical intimidation, Youlou reportedly drew his revolver and pointed it at his opponents from the MSA during a meeting of the National Assembly after they had proposed a motion of censure.<sup>12</sup> This "cycle of arrest, rehabilitation, and corruption" successfully wore down most opponents.<sup>13</sup> Opangault was perhaps the most obvious

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<sup>10</sup> No author, election results by circonscription, 14 June 1959, carton 10, PR, ANCB; See also, Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 292. Bernault reports the UDDIA received 198,815 votes for fifty-one seats, and MSA received 145,273 votes for only ten seats.

<sup>11</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 43.

<sup>12</sup> "L'ex-Président Youlou : un pistolet dans sa soutane," *Le Combat* (France), August 16, 1963, reprinted in *Révue de la Presse*, 19 August 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB; Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 51.

example: jailed in February 1959, he was only released in July, after the parliamentary elections. Finally pardoned by Youlou in May 1960, he was tapped to become a *ministre d'état* three months later.<sup>14</sup> He would remain a part of the government as a minister, and for a short period as vice president, until the government was toppled in August 1963.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Simon-Pierre Kikounga-Ngot, a former PPC deputy, who was arrested in May 1960, was finally pardoned by the president in January 1961. Like Opangault, he was then brought into the government as a minister, along with Germain Bicoumat, protégé of PPC founder Félix Tchicaya.<sup>16</sup> Youlou had now integrated his major parliamentary opponents into a new ministerial cabinet.

In March 1961, Youlou advanced another strategy to fortify his power: a proposal for a new constitution, which provided for a multiparty but strongly centralized presidential regime—a move replicated two years later in Senegal by Senghor. The constitution was not put up for public approval, but instead passed by the National Assembly on March 2, 1961, and signed into law by Youlou.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This is John Clark's term, see John Frank Clark, *The Failure of Democracy in the Republic of Congo* (Boulder, C.O.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008) *L'intégration-élimination* is the term used by Bazenguissa-Ganga. See Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 65.

<sup>14</sup> Opangault becomes minister on August 15, 1960. Présidence de la Communauté, "Republique du Congo : Géographie, Economie, Situation Politique," 1961, carton 170, 5 AG /FPR 170, ANF; see also, Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 303.

<sup>15</sup> Opangault was also made minister of public works and vice-president of the republic at various points between independence in August 1960 and August 1963. See: Letter from Le Ministre des Travaux Publics (Opangault) to Monsieur le Président de la République du Congo (Youlou), April 16, 1962, carton 4(1), ANCB; see also *Revue de Press*, April 7, 1962, and *Revue de Press*, April 17, 1962, carton 58, PR, ANCB. See also Assemblée Nationale, Compte Rendu de la séance du 4.7.63, carton 16, PR, ANCB.

<sup>16</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 303.

<sup>17</sup> A "référendum constitutionnel le 2 mars 1961" is referred to by Jean-Marie Melphon Kamba, "Naissance, indépendance, et gestion de la première république (1958–1963)" in *Histoire générale du Congo des origines à nos jours*, vol. 3, ed. Théophile Obenga (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), 47. However, primary sources seem to indicate that the constitution was passed by a vote of the assembly, not a popular vote. See "Note d'information. Objet : Opinion Publique a/s des élections présidentielles (Réactions – suite)," March 8, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB. Bazenguissa-Ganga also writes that the constitution was passed by a vote of the National Assembly. See Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 43. Previously, the republic had been run under a series of constitutional laws (November 28, 1958, revised June 4, 1960) after opting to become a republic within the

Youlou's integration of his official opposition allowed him to run unopposed in a new presidential election a few weeks later. Youlou and Opangault even toured the regions in the north of the country together, including in the MSA's most favorable turf, in a show of unity.<sup>18</sup> The two had signed an agreement to collaborate, and while many MSA militants would have liked to see Opangault run for president, most were satisfied knowing he would be heading for a prestigious position such as prime minister or vice president.<sup>19</sup> Thus, with the full backing of the political establishment, Youlou reportedly received a whopping 97.56 percent of the vote, with 88.4 percent of registered voters turning out on March 20, 1961.<sup>20</sup> As Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga has noted, the election marked a shift from the era of coalition governments to that of a dominant party.<sup>21</sup>

## II. The Growth of Social Discontent

Beneath the political elites' celebration of their newfound (though not entirely voluntary) unity, discontent simmered in Congolese society. As Bazenguissa-Ganga and Bernault have detailed, by 1963, frustration with the government had become pervasive throughout urban, and even rural, areas. As Bernault notes, since the investment of African political leaders with positions in France and the territorial government after World War II, "*la politique*" had become synonymous in Congolese urban

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French Communauté, which provided an overriding constitution. The first was passed the day of the walkout by the MSA. See Melphon Kamba, "La première république," 32-41.

<sup>18</sup> "Note d'information. Objet : Opinion Publique a/s des élections présidentielles (Réactions – suite)," March 8, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>19</sup> "Note d'information. Objet: Opinion Publique a/s des élections présidentielles," March 7, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>20</sup> Présidence de la Communauté, "Republique du Congo : Géographie, Economie, Situation Politique," 1961, carton 170, 5 AG/FPR, ANF; See also Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 44; Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 308.

<sup>21</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 44.

areas with dishonesty and corruption.<sup>22</sup> As Youlou subdued political rivals like Opangault and Tchicaya and invited them into the new regime—under his watch—popular skepticism flourished.

Brazzaville was both the center of state authority in Congo and the place where public opposition became the most vibrant. At independence, Congo may have been the most urbanized country in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa. In May 1963, researchers working in Congo reported that 29 percent of the Congolese population lived in the four major urban spaces in the Congo (Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, Jacob, Dolisie).<sup>23</sup> This rose to 38 percent of the population if all secondary urban areas were included.<sup>24</sup> Around the same time, French authorities estimated that more than half of the Congolese population lived in the districts surrounding Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire.<sup>25</sup>

The population of Brazzaville had tripled over the span of fifteen years from 1945 to 1960. Varying accounts estimate that it either doubled or tripled again in just three years between 1960 and the start of 1963.<sup>26</sup> This rapid growth was due to the arrival of young people in their teens and twenties from the

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<sup>22</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 326. See also Côte Manckassa, “Dans la misère, sachons garder notre dignité,” *La Semaine Africaine*, date unknown, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, October 26, 1962, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

<sup>23</sup> About 245,000 people out of total national population of 845,000.

<sup>24</sup> Including secondary urban areas brought the total urban population up to 320,000 people. “Quelles sont les causes et les conséquences de l’urbanisation au Congo-Brazzaville?” *La Semaine Africaine*, editorial from May 19, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, May 20, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

<sup>25</sup> Présidence de la Communauté, “Republique du Congo : Géographie, Economie, Situation Politique,” 1961, carton 170, 5 AG /FPR, ANF. Only Senegal exhibited equal urbanization rates to Congo-Brazzaville among former French colonies in Africa during this time period.

<sup>26</sup> This urbanization was the product of migration from the countryside, not the product of a proportional rise in the total national population, which remained around 800,000. It was estimated that the total population of the country may have risen to 845,000 by May 1963, but the rise in total population did not keep pace with the rise of the urban population. See Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 28, 51; Amin and Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Histoire économique du Congo, 1880-1968 : du Congo français à l'Union douanière et économique d'Afrique centrale*, 56. See also, “Quelles sont les causes et les conséquences de l’urbanisation au Congo-Brazzaville?” *La Semaine Africaine*, editorial from May 19, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, May 20, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB. Youlou was citing a population of 800,000 in 1960 “Reponses par Mr. Le President de la Republique aux interpellations a l'Assemblée Nationale du 15 June 1960. Seance du 20.6.60,” carton 16, PR, ANCB. The same numbers were being used by both French and Congolese authorities in 1961. According to



countryside who competed over limited school enrollments and income-generating activity. A more conservative estimate, from the weekly *Lettre de Brazzaville*, estimated that the population of Brazzaville had grown from 80,000 to 150,000 in those three years, and the population of Pointe-Noire from 35,000 to 70,000.<sup>27</sup>

Most newcomers to urban areas, including those who had completed elementary school, could not produce a stable income. A writer for the Catholic weekly *La Semaine Africaine* estimated the unemployed population of Brazzaville to be 20,000 to 26,000 in 1962. The author, while supportive of Youlou, attributed mass unemployment to the administration's fixation with unrealizable development projects and an inability to respond to people's basic needs. The employment situation was further strained by the arrival of nearly fourteen hundred people who had originated from the Congo-Brazzaville side of the river, expelled en masse from Congo-Léopoldville in the fall of 1962.<sup>28</sup> A year earlier, French authorities had already noted the growing problem of chronic unemployment as the most persistent problem for Youlou's regime.<sup>29</sup>

After independence the Congolese economy was based on the export of agricultural products (especially palm) and timber—the latter still controlled by foreign companies. Pointe-Noire had played a major role as a port city for the transport of goods in and out of the former AEF territories, but as new routes opened up after independence, its port traffic did not grow substantially. In the early 1960s, oil

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the Présidence de la Communauté in 1961, Congo had 795,000 inhabitants over 350,000km<sup>2</sup>, so 2.29 habitants au km<sup>2</sup>. Youlou also put the population at 800,000 in June 1961 and lists the area at 340,000km<sup>2</sup>. See Présidence de la Communauté, "Republique du Congo : Géographie, Economie, Situation Politique," 1961, carton 170, 5 AG/FPR, ANF. See also, "Compte Rendu de la séance du 4.7.63" (Assemblée Nationale), carton 16, PR, ANCB.

<sup>27</sup> *Lettre de Brazzaville*, May 7, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, May 14, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB. Boutet places the number lower, at 125,000 for Brazzaville in 1963. See Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 71.

<sup>28</sup> Côme Manckassa, "Dans la misère, sachons garder notre dignité," *La Semaine Africaine*, date unknown, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, October 26, 1962, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

<sup>29</sup> Présidence de la Communauté, "Republique du Congo : Géographie, Economie, Situation Politique," 1961, carton 170, 5 AG/FPR, ANF.

rigs were being developed by foreign companies onshore and offshore, although they had yet to produce a substantial quantity of crude oil to impact the direction of the economy. The growth of the economy was modest, but few new jobs were created in the private sector for urban newcomers of any educational level.

By the middle of the 1960s, roughly 42 percent of the Congolese population was under the age of fifteen.<sup>30</sup> Most of the new arrivals in Brazzaville were young and male. For many of these young men, the allure of the city, and Brazzaville in particular, was the opportunity for better education and the possibility of then gaining a place in the civil administration. Brazzaville had been the main city for training African colonial administrators in the former AEF, and therefore contained the bulk of French-language secondary schools in the region.<sup>31</sup> After successful campaigns for the expansion of education during the 1950s, Congo—along with Senegal—exhibited the highest rates of French literacy in all of Francophone Africa during the decade following independence.<sup>32</sup>

Brazzaville's long history as the capital of the AEF had made it a center for administrative state jobs, an image that lingered as the new government replaced the colonial bureaucracy with its own top-heavy apparatus. But the expansion of education had long surpassed opportunities for employment in the civil service. In early 1960, more than fifteen hundred young people from Brazzaville, holding degrees from primary schools or higher, applied for just ninety-two positions as trainees to become new state workers.<sup>33</sup> As Bazenguissa-Ganga notes, this new wave of school graduates felt blocked from

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<sup>30</sup> Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 217. Martin writes that 45 percent of the population in Brazzaville in 1961 were "children." Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 28.

<sup>31</sup> Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa*, 125.

<sup>32</sup> "Scolarisation en Congo-Brazza," *Marchés Tropicaux & Méditerranéens*, April 12, 1969; See also *Jeune Afrique*, December 15, 1970 and Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 152.

<sup>33</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 307.

gaining administrative and technical positions within the state and in the private sector.<sup>34</sup> As in Senegal, Youlou's government did not push for Africanization in the private sector, and preferred to establish a cooperative relationship with foreign companies rather than create state enterprises. By the early 1960s, state employment seemed closed to those without a direct connection to the increasingly insular political class.<sup>35</sup>

Youlou's government attempted to deal with this impending crisis in two ways. First, as in Senegal, the administration developed labor programs for young people. In 1959, the National Assembly created a mandatory civil service program for all unemployed youth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three, which already numbered at least 4,500 at that time.<sup>36</sup> The Congolese government had based the program on their study of Israeli state youth organizations and set aside one billion CFA francs for the first year of the new program—only to have it eventually flounder as youth avoided the unpaid mandatory labor.<sup>37</sup> By August 1963, Youlou was worried about his inability to hide the large unemployed youth population, and the administration tried to force unemployed youth to work on preparations for the planned festivities around the third anniversary of national independence. The program was illusory, with little work to be found for the number of people pressed into service and the promise of few hundred CFA francs to encourage participants to celebrate rather than protest on the anniversary. The

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<sup>34</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 69-70.

<sup>35</sup> M'Bokolo, "Comparisons and Contrasts in Equatorial Africa," 80; Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville* 46, 52, 55, 218, 33.

<sup>36</sup> Bernault discusses this program, though it is not clear if the program was geared to both men and women. Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 307. See also the documents in carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from L'Inspecteur général de l'administration de la République du Congo à Monsieur de President de la République Chef du Gouvernement (Youlou), December 22, 1962, carton 25, BA, CADN; Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 307. The success of these youth organizations in a settler-state like Israel may not have translated well to Congo, where forced labor had played such an important role in French rule and collective memory.

program was mocked by the Catholic press and ultimately proved futile when young people joined the protests that overthrew Youlou on the third anniversary of independence.<sup>38</sup>

Youlou's second approach was to pick up on the grandiose colonial dream to create a major electrical and industrial center in Congo through a major dam project. In February 1961 the government signed a contract with a French and German consortium to carry out the preliminary planning for a hydroelectric dam along the Kouilou River in western Congo.<sup>39</sup> The project and the affected areas were to be completely managed by the government, which would also control the sale of all subsequently produced electrical power.<sup>40</sup> The goal was to make the site the major industrial production center in the country. Among other projects, Youlou hoped to turn bauxite from Guinea into aluminum, prompting meetings between the presidents of the two countries in 1962 and 1963. However, the massive financial, technical, and human resources required by the project guaranteed that its development faltered and provided no relief for the unemployed.

In March 1963, an article in *Marchés Tropicaux* nervously reported that

in recent years, Father [l'abbé] Youlou's concerns lie at the social level. Because, when he took power, in Brazzaville over ten thousand idlers wandered the streets looking for a job that was not offered to them. . . . This is why Father Youlou sought to build the Kouilou dam and install an industrial complex in Pointe-Noire. . . . In the current political calm, the president is nagged by worries, knowing the excesses that unemployment is likely to lead the youth to.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*.

<sup>39</sup> "Loi n. 21/61 Approuvant le contrat concernant l'exercice des travaux préliminaires d'aménagement hydroélectrique du projet du barrage du Kouilou," February 25, 1961, carton 16, PR, ANCB.

<sup>40</sup> "Projet de loi déclarant d'utilité publique les travaux d'aménagement hydroélectrique du Kouilou et habilitant le gouvernement pour leur réalisation et leur exploitation," No date, carton 16, PR, ANCB.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted from a March 1963 article in *Marchés Tropicaux*, reprinted in "La Question à résoudre en priorité est celle du chômage," *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, n. 928, 24 August 1963, reproduced in Série B, ANCB. "Les préoccupations de l'abbé Youlou . . . se situent depuis quelques années sur le plan social. C'est que, à Brazzaville, quand il a pris le pouvoir, dix mille oisifs traînaient dans les rues à la recherche d'un travail qu'on ne leur offrait pas. Et voici que le chômage n'est pas résorbé, qu'au contraire, l'Union de jeunesses congolaises flirte avec le jeunesse du Congo-léo. C'est la raison pour laquelle l'abbé Youlou a cherché à construire la barrage de Kouilou et installer un complexe industriel à Pointe-Noire....C'est dans le calme

In Brazzaville, the *radio trottoir* (sidewalk radio) was regularly abuzz with reports of Youlou and his ministers' recent conspicuous consumption. Extravagant new clubs were opened by and for the political class and their children, while Youlou and many of his ministers lived openly with their mistresses, visibly chauffeuring them about the city on public funds.<sup>42</sup> Many of the rumors concerning Youlou's ostentatious behavior are difficult to confirm. But Youlou's supposed purchase of a golden bed was verified upon his downfall, and the bed was later placed in Congo's national museum.<sup>43</sup> Networks of redistributive patronage and nepotism surrounded the new executives, although such material connections did not sink deep roots. Bazenguissa-Ganga's interviews led him to conclude that the public funds misappropriated by state officials, although plentiful, rarely benefited anyone beyond family members and mistresses.<sup>44</sup>

The rumblings of discontent occasionally found their way into the state security services' reports on youth and labor opposition. In the run-up to the 1961 presidential election—in which Youlou ran unopposed—informants reported that “the unemployed and the jobless youth” were cursing the “political tricks of the president” as they waited impatiently for his industrialization plan on the Kouilou River to provide work.<sup>45</sup> High school students were heard complaining that Youlou was widely detested,

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politique actuel le souci lancinant du président de la République qui sait bien à quel excès le chômage serait susceptible de conduire la jeunesse.”

<sup>42</sup> Worth noting that many ministers did not live in the Centre, the business and colonial area of the city. Many still lived in the African *quartiers populaires* of Bacongo and Poto-Poto. Ironically, this made their consumption, extravagance, and domestic scandals all the more visible to the many thousand struggling Congolese in those neighborhoods.

<sup>43</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 68-71, 73.

<sup>44</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 69. See also Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 78.

<sup>45</sup> “Les chomeurs et les jeunes sans emploi” were cursing the “ruses politiques du Président” “Note d’information, Objet : Opinion Publique a/s des élections présidentielles (Réactions – suite),” March 8, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

and lamented that he would win by default and maintain a government of people concerned only with their own “personal interests.” Some were aggravated that another UDDIA deputy, Alphonse Massamba-Débat, had dropped his possible candidacy for president in 1961.<sup>46</sup> Students at Brazzaville’s institute of higher education protested that members of the National Assembly and Massamba-Débat were “cowards” who had caved to Youlou’s threats.

Youlou’s triumph in the presidential election of March 1961 signaled the end of official opposition parties, but even within his party not everyone was satisfied. A UDDIA “militant” was heard grumbling in the lead-up to the election that “It is quite possible that there [will be] abstentions because from various sides people say they are tired of voting, that it does not change anything unless you are the parent of a minister or deputy.”<sup>47</sup> The MSA, although though the official parliamentary opposition, seemed to offer no new solutions to the practical problems people faced. In June 1960, Jean Kembo, president of the MSA’s youth section (known as MESAN) made it clear that as much as he opposed the UDDIA, he was yet more dissatisfied with his own party’s leaders, whom he felt focused on their “personal interests” more than the “interests of the masses.”<sup>48</sup>

By July 1963, some members of the National Assembly raised concerns about the level of urban discontent. Municipal elections in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire had not been held in seven years (November 1956), since well before Congo had become a republic. The government had proposed holding them off for budgetary reasons, but a commission of the National Assembly initially rejected this decision. Jacques Opangault, in his position as a ministre d’état, replied that the government did not have money left in its budget to hold the elections, but if the National Assembly would like to pay for

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<sup>46</sup> “Note d’information. Objet : Opinion Publique a/s des élections présidentielles (Réactions – suite),” March 8, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>47</sup> “Note d’information. Objet : Opinion Publique a/s des élections présidentielles (Réactions – suite),” March 8, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>48</sup> “Note d’information. Objet: Vie Politique a/s du MESAN,” June 22, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

the elections out of its own budget, it could do so. Marcel Ibalico, head of the National Assembly, declared that the assembly was also in a deficit for the year, and, unable or unwilling to pick up the cost, the deputies agreed to postpone the question for another year and a half.<sup>49</sup>

Urban discontent was the most visible, but in rural areas people were becoming increasingly disillusioned with their elected deputies in the National Assembly. A state security services report noted, "The majority of deputies," who had used their prestige to different ends from what they had promised, "seem to have lost the confidence of their electors." But new elections for the National Assembly were not called again after 1959, even after the adoption of the new constitution in 1961, so the deputies remained in place until the parliament was dissolved after the 1963 uprising.

A French intelligence report hinted at the ever-present tensions after Youlou was reelected president in 1961: "This election is an evident demonstration of President Youlou's popularity, for which the political situation appears solid, despite the opposition he meets from the youth, the unemployed, and the trade unionists."<sup>50</sup> However, the balance between these forces was soon shown to be to the contrary: the popularity of Youlou and his government turned out to be quite shallow, while youth organizations, unemployed youth, and trade unionists proved to be capable of more than just vocal criticism. Youlou was not naïve about the possible threat of strikes and other popular mobilizations. As was true of Senghor, Youlou's fears of Communist incursion led him to see the machinations of "red imperialism" behind the actions of Congolese radicals.<sup>51</sup> And like his Senegalese counterpart, he tried to simultaneously bring his parliamentary challengers to heel *and* eliminate his opponents outside the realm of formal politics. Yet whereas Senghor initially succeeded on both fronts, Youlou opened up a conflagration that he could not master.

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<sup>49</sup> "Compte Rendu de la séance du 4.7.63" (Assemblée Nationale), carton 16, PR, ANCB.

<sup>50</sup> "Note d'information. Objet: Vie Politique," March 30, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>51</sup> Youlou, *J'accuse la Chine*. See also Bat, "La décolonisation de l'AEF selon Foccart," 66-90, 259-392.

### III. Popular Opposition and Repression, 1958–1960

#### The Exile of the Matsouanists

Youlou and the UDDIA first attacked the Matsouanists, the remaining community of followers of André Matsoua. As described in the introduction, Youlou's rise to prominence came in part from his ability to capture the support of a large number of Matsouanists, turning previous ballots cast for the deceased Matsoua into UDDIA votes. However, not all participants in the Matsouanist movement embraced Youlou and his party. Many thousands continued to act as they had under colonial rule: abstaining not only from voting for the UDDIA, but also from paying taxes, registering births, deaths, and trade licenses, and acquiring new national identity cards. Matsoua's followers had done the same under French rule, Youlou saw this as an open provocation, and many young UDDIA youth members began to harass or attack Matsouanists in the streets and markets of Brazzaville. In mid-April 1959, a dozen of the main leaders of the movement were ordered to leave Brazzaville but refused.<sup>52</sup>

Trying to escalate fervor for the UDDIA in the lead-up to the parliamentary elections in June 1959, Youlou gave tacit approval for attacks on Matsouanists. After the elections, Youlou's supporters went further, looting and burning more than two hundred homes of known Matsouanists in the Bacongo neighborhood of Brazzaville. Youlou eventually condemned the vigilante attacks on Matsouanists, but in the same pronouncement, continued to denounce Matsoua's followers for their acts of civil resistance. The message was mixed, and the attacks continued for the next three to five days.<sup>53</sup> Youlou had been more than willing to look the other way when his supporters targeted Matsouanists. Only when he feared losing control of the situation did he step in to condemn those who acted in his name.

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<sup>52</sup> Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 76-77.

<sup>53</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*; Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 48; Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 76-77.



Youlou's condemnation of all participants was disingenuous. The government made it clear that the Matsouanists were the main targets when, shortly after the election, eleven leaders were forcibly relocated to an abandoned factory in the industrial section of Brazzaville. There, according to René Gauze, they were observed and subjected to "psychological treatment."<sup>54</sup> Their families, fearing another round of attacks, soon joined them in the factory. Over the next few weeks, the makeshift prison was transformed into a Matsouanist holdout, a temporary home to as many as two thousand people. As their numbers grew, the prisoners began to apply their autonomous principles to the factory, refusing to permit the interference of police and guards. In the early morning of July 29, the government tried to again forcibly relocate the Matsouanists, this time to distant rural areas. When the group refused to cooperate, the police attacked, and as the crowd attempted to move, more than two hundred people were trampled, and thirty-six people died. Still, the police operation continued, and nearly seven hundred Matsouanists, mostly men, were exiled that day, while most women and children were allowed to return to their homes in Brazzaville.

Youlou used the situation to his benefit, appealing to the National Assembly to declare a state of emergency and give the president exceptional powers. The assembly granted Youlou his request unanimously.<sup>55</sup> The repression would continue over the course of the following year, and in June 1960, twenty-five Matsouanists were given six- to eighteen-month sentences and sent to remote prisons hundreds of kilometers north of Brazzaville.<sup>56</sup> Though the Matsouanist movement survived as a religious institution, it was effectively crushed as an urban political movement and marginalized through forced exile of its members to disparate rural areas. Youlou's strategy worked, and the Matsouanist movement was not able to reassert itself as a source of political competition after 1960.

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<sup>54</sup> Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 77.

<sup>55</sup> Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 78.

<sup>56</sup> "Note d'information, Objet: Divers a/s des matsouanistes," June 21, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB. The prisons were in Gamboma and Djambala.

## Congolese Politics and the Trade Union Movement

UDDIA militants had seen the Matsouanists as a long-standing barrier to the party's hegemony, but they were a threat that was already in relative decline when the administration decided to target them for repression. However, new organized social forces had emerged, most importantly, the trade unions. The salaried working class of the AEF territories was much smaller than that created under French colonial rule in AOF. Likewise, as noted in the introduction, the development of unions in AEF tended to trail their counterparts in AOF. Whereas the major strikes in Senegal had taken place in the 1940s, the Congolese trade union movement only gained momentum in the mid-1950s.

But among the AEF territories, Congo—and the cities of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire in particular—developed a significant working class relative to the small population of the territory after World War II. Pointe-Noire was the major port of entry and exit for products moving between the Congo, Oubangi-Chari (Central African Republic), and Chad, while Brazzaville was the administrative and educational hub of the federation. In 1957, salaried African workers represented 12.5 percent of the adult population, or about 8.5 percent of the Congo's total population. Based on an estimated national population of 795,000 around 1960, that meant that there were approximately 68,000 salaried workers in the Congo.<sup>57</sup> While the numbers may seem quite small, these salaried workers were concentrated in urban areas, where their organizational and political ties had a major influence on the people who relied on their incomes. Congolese unions quickly embraced strike tactics in the mid-1950s, and in 1957, 11,847 workers—nearly one-fifth of the country's waged workforce—participated in strikes, leading to 3,953 labor days lost to strikes.<sup>58</sup> Youlou's government had to grapple with this new challenge.

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<sup>57</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 15. See also Wagret, *Histoire et sociologie politiques de la République du Congo*.

<sup>58</sup> Wagret, *Histoire et sociologie politiques de la République du Congo*, quoted in Blum, *Révolutions africaines*, 68.

Congo's main trade union federations originated in the late 1940s and early 1950s as overseas extensions of the major French federations. Thus, the debates within and between different strains of the French trade union movement were transposed onto the Congo. The movement for Africanization that began to take hold in earnest in the mid-1950s changed both the make-up of certain labor sectors, as well as the leadership of workers' unions. By 1959, all of the Congolese federations had declared their autonomy, but they still carried the structural and ideological underpinnings of their origins.

By 1960, the largest federation in the Congo was the Confédération Africaine des Travailleurs Croyants (CATC). The CATC had begun in 1949 as a section of the French Federation of Christian Workers (Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens, CFTC) organizing teachers who taught for private Christian schools. The dearth of public colonial education meant that the vast majority of teachers in the territory worked in private Catholic or Protestant mission schools.<sup>59</sup> By early 1957, the CFTC sections in the colonies of AEF decided to form an autonomous regional union federation following the lead set by the West African CFTC sections a few months earlier. In their shift to autonomous unions, the African federations changed "Chrétien" (Christian) to "Croyants," (lit: believing) in an attempt to open their federations to non-Christian, and particularly Muslim, workers.<sup>60</sup> However, the CATC in the AEF did little to change its orientation and affiliations.<sup>61</sup> The federation remained closely connected to the CFTC in France, was funded by the Catholic Church, and joined the International Federation of Christian Unions (or Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Chrétiens, CISC, in French).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 33.

<sup>60</sup> Gilbert Pongault, interview with Héloïse Kiriakou and Venance Mania, 10 July 2010, Brazzaville.

<sup>61</sup> Brazzaville had a small but well organized Muslim population. More important in AEF was the Muslim population in Chad. See Bruce Whitehouse, *Migrants and Strangers in an African City: Exile, Dignity, Belonging* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*. I would like to also thank Alioune Kane for sharing his research and expertise on the Muslim population in Brazzaville.

Gilbert Pongault, a trade union leader from Brazzaville, chaired the CATC-AEF. Under his guidance, the CATC of the Congo was at the center of the autonomous reorganization of the Christian trade union movement across Francophone Africa.<sup>63</sup> The CATC dominated the trade union movement in the Congo in terms of adherents, workers' delegates, and organization. Historians of the Congo have claimed that the CATC represented about one-third of the union members in the country.<sup>64</sup> Their influence may have been more clearly dominant in the capital. Records from workers' delegate elections in March 1961 in Brazzaville shows that the CATC candidates captured over 60 percent of the votes.<sup>65</sup>

Publicly, CATC leaders held a principled position of neutrality when it came to political parties, rejecting any involvement in the government. But in practice many were deeply embedded in Congolese politics. The CATC was part of an entire infrastructure of organizations supported by the Catholic Church, one of the most powerful political forces in Congo.<sup>66</sup> Some leading CATC members were also pulled into political parties as the *loi-cadre* administration was created, notably the UDDIA.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, Bazenguissa-Ganga claims that their ostensibly apolitical and humanist approach appealed to a large number of workers, a subset of intellectuals, and even some rural farmers. They advanced slogans such as the right to strike, calls for better salaries, and a forty-hour workweek. They were not the only unions to raise these demands, but they were the largest and best organized. Perhaps most importantly, the CATC's basic tenets—respect for human dignity, the need for harmony in social

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<sup>62</sup> In 1964, a majority of the CFTC dropped its formal denominational allegiance, forming the Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT). The CISC did the same internationally in 1968, becoming the Confédération mondiale du travail (CMT).

<sup>63</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 37-38 Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 34-35 Pongault, 10 July, 2010. Boutet lists Pongault as 'Mbochi-Mbochi.' All the CGAT leaders were Kongo or Sundi.

<sup>64</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 34.

<sup>65</sup> "Note d'information, Objet: Vie syndicale, 30 March 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB; Also former CATC leader Gilbert Pongault, claimed that "En gros c'est que nous représentions à peu près 75% de entreprises. La force ouvrière représentait à peu près 15% et la CGT, 10%." See Pongault, interview.

<sup>66</sup> On the role of the Catholic Church in the social life of Brazzaville see Martin, *Leisure and Society*.

<sup>67</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 38. Bazenguissa-Ganga gives two examples: Biyoundi Jean and Bemba Fidèle. Also included in Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 34.

relations, and independence from political parties—had broad appeal in a country that had been seriously fractured by the politico-ethnic conflicts of 1958 and 1959.

In the shadow of the CATC, a smaller, but very vocal, federation also played a key role in Congolese politics. The Confédération générale africaine des travailleurs (CGAT) had begun as a local section of the communist-led French CGT in 1949, organizing commercial and industrial workers.<sup>68</sup> Like the CATC, the CGAT chose its new name and became autonomous in 1957.<sup>69</sup> Like UGTAN in West Africa, the leaders of the federation kept close connections to the CGT, called for the socialization of the means of production, collaborated with Communist organizations, and affiliated to the Soviet-led World Federation of Trade Unions.<sup>70</sup>

CATC leaders rejected collaboration with the CGAT, which they suspected of trying to turn other unions toward Communism.<sup>71</sup> In 1960, the CGAT was the smallest trade union federation in Congo, but according to Bazenguissa-Ganga was the most active.<sup>72</sup> The leadership was openly critical of Youlou's government, and its outspokenness attracted a small but growing group of young workers and jobless youth who were frustrated by the state of Congolese politics and the economy. As a result, the CGAT's audience increased over the following three years, despite state repression that initially derailed the growth of the federation. The leadership saw itself as part of the same movement as the Union Générale des Travailleurs d'Afrique noire (UGTAN) in West Africa, and campaigned vocally for the "no" vote in the 1958 referendum on the French Community. Initially, some CGAT members were active in the PPC, but

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<sup>68</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 31.

<sup>69</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 37-38. The CGAT should not be confused with the creation of the Confédération générale des travailleurs africains (CGTA) in 1956, though they had similar roots in the CGT.

<sup>70</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 33.

<sup>71</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 38. Likely drawn from Wagret, *Histoire et sociologie politiques de la République du Congo*.

<sup>72</sup> "La centrale la plus agissante." Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 33.

as its influence waned, and the party liquidated itself into the UDDIA, CGAT militants became increasingly independent from national political parties. After independence, the CGAT agitated for political reforms as well as economic nationalizations. Met with hostility from the government almost immediately, the CGAT redirected its efforts toward critiquing the existing regime outright, which union leaders characterized as being run by “parties subservient to neo-colonialism.”<sup>73</sup> The CGAT leaders also proposed joint action with the other union federations, and the fusion of the trade union movement, but were rebuffed by the CATC.

The third trade union federation in the Congo was the Confédération africaine des syndicats libres (CASL). CASL had the oldest roots of any federation in the Congo, but was the last to declare its autonomy from the French parent federation. The federation began as a section of the *Confédération générale du travail–Force ouvrière* (CGT-FO). The CGT-FO was formed in the late 1940s in France, as a split from the Communist-led CGT federation. The CGT-FO was rooted in the post-war anti-Communist politics of the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO, later, the Socialist Party). Started by European rail and radio workers, the CGT-FO in the Congo eventually grew to include more African members, and finally declared its autonomy in 1959, changed its name to the CASL, and aligned with the American-led International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (or, Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Libres, CISL, in French).<sup>74</sup> Although the CASL unions had branched out to include construction and lumber workers, they were late to move toward Africanization in their own ranks, which led to a decreasing membership. By independence, they had retreated back to their original strongholds: the railroad, and the port and municipal workers in Pointe-Noire.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> “...partis inféodés au néo-colonialisme.” Quoted in Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 33.

<sup>74</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 35; Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 37-38. The famous American anti-Communist union leader Irving Brown, played a major role in getting the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions going, likely with aid from the CIA.

<sup>75</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 37-38 Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 35-36.

Although an increasingly weaker force in the Congolese union movement, the CASL would still play a critical role in the direction taken by organized labor after independence. The CASL saw itself as both secular and independent from political parties, but in practice, this was not entirely the case. One of the early heads of the CASL was Maurice Ognami, Opangault's nephew, and some CASL leaders had positions in Opangault's party, the MSA. The connection between the union and the party was also historically rooted, as both the CASL and the MSA had come out of the politics and organizations of the SFIO. Although the MSA had also been founded with the SFIO's anticlerical position, this tension did not seem to seep into collaboration between the CASL and Catholic unionists. Jérôme Ollandet has argued that, for the most part, the CATC and CASL leadership initially saw themselves as allies, united by a "visceral anti-Communism that the clergy and business world inculcated in them in repeated doses."<sup>76</sup>

The CASL-MSA link began to weaken after independence. Between 1960 and 1963, the MSA's involvement in the UDDIA-led government gradually discredited the official opposition party. As government institutions in the Congo became more politically homogenous, some CASL leaders reflected the growing frustration of their members and sought other allies. This created the space for an entente between the CASL and the CGAT. The CGAT had approached both the CASL and the CATC to discuss the possibility of coordinated actions and even the merging of the different Congolese federations. Like the CATC, the CASL leadership had been initially antagonistic toward the CGAT's proposal. But in early 1960, the CASL leadership changed its position and issued a statement agreeing, at least in principle, to the CGAT's call for unity in action among unions in Congo and possibly for their fusion.<sup>77</sup> But before anything concrete came of this new alliance, CGAT leaders were arrested under the guise of a "Communist plot," and CASL leaders decided keep their distance.

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<sup>76</sup> Ollandet, "Mouvement syndical congolais," 425. "...l'anticommunisme visceral que les milieu de clergé et ceux des affaires leur inculquaient à doses répétées."

<sup>77</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 36.

## **Domestic Anti-Communism under the New Congolese Republic**

In the lead-up to the 1958 referendum, the most vocal proponents of a “no” vote were the CGAT and the Association des étudiants congolais (AEC), which grouped together Congolese students studying abroad in France. Although just barely more than two thousand “no” votes were cast in Congo, CGAT and AEC militants gained visibility through their opposition to joining the French Community—and the new Congolese government began to suspect them of Communist inclinations.

Yet for many young people and students in Brazzaville, the call for immediate independence was welcome. By 1958, the three official parties were locked in fierce competition, but the political differences between them had become less apparent; their conflicts seemed to be little more than a power struggle between factions of the political elite. Young people who looked to the activism of the CGAT and AEC saw Congolese political parties as accomplices to French neocolonial control of the new republic. Radical trade union and student leaders set their sights on a “true independence” that broke completely with any vestige of French control.

Youlou’s administration perceived the CGAT and AEC’s opposition to be the result of Communist influence. In the late 1950s, the Congolese government was entrenched in Cold War anti-Communism, in large part due to the influence of key French ministers and advisors. After the creation of the Congolese Republic in 1958, European administrators continued to play a major role in running the state and setting economic and financial policies through control of the ministries of finance and economic affairs.<sup>78</sup>

Perhaps most important among Youlou’s European advisors were Christian Jayle and Alfred Delarue. During World War II, Jayle was the director of the cabinet of the Ministry of Justice in Philippe Pétain’s Vichy government, and had fled to Congo just before the liberation of France.<sup>79</sup> There, he

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<sup>78</sup> Held by Joseph Vial and Henri Bru, respectively. Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 299. See also Bat, “La décolonisation de l’AEF selon Foccart,” 66-90, 259-392.



became a trusted leader of Youlou's party, the UDDIA, and was president of the territorial assembly during much of UDDIA's early rise to power, orchestrating the 1958 constitutional coup. His allegiance paid off, and Youlou made him minister of state in charge of Information.<sup>80</sup> From this position, Jayle was able to shape the intelligence reports that came to Youlou.<sup>81</sup> Also integrated into the UDDIA power structure was Albert Delarue, who held an ambiguous position as head of the "Documentation" service for the president.<sup>82</sup> Like Jayle, Delarue had collaborated with the Nazis as a high-ranking administrator in the prefecture of Paris. Arrested when Paris was liberated and condemned to twenty-one years of hard labor, he escaped in 1947. Imprisoned again shortly after, he was freed in 1956 and moved to Congo. There he became responsible for the training of party cadres in the UDDIA. Surrounded by advisors like Jayle and Delarue, Youlou took on a hard anti-Communist line.<sup>83</sup> In the summer of 1960, he said, "The only real danger for the future resides in the youth elements exposed to the temptation of Communism."<sup>84</sup> Youlou's embrace of former Vichy officials was also a liability which became evident in

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<sup>79</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 132.

<sup>80</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 131-32.

<sup>81</sup> Not surprisingly, after Youlou's administration was overthrown, Jayle was sought by the Congolese Army, but he took refuge at the United States embassy, while the French ambassador worked on quickly repatriating Jayle along with Youlou's other former French advisors, like Vincent, and possibly Mauriceau-Beaupre). Telegram 546-47 from Jean Rossard to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), August 17, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>82</sup> "Chef de service 'Documentation'" Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 52.

<sup>83</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 53. Boutet argues that French advisors purposely exploited fears about a Communist "threat" so as to convince Youlou that they were necessary members of the government. In an era of increasing calls for the Africanization of the government, this may have been true. But given the extent of the repression of Communists in France in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and the general level of increasing Cold War tensions, it may have been the case that French advisors in Congo truly believed that threat was real. See also Bat, "La décolonisation de l'AEF selon Foccart,". Bat explores the role of these personalities in great detail.

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 308. Youlou went so far as to create an association, Congo Asie Libre, as part of the Bureau Permanent de Liaison de la Ligue Anti-Communist en Afrique. See Dossier Mouvements de Solidarité, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

1963: figures like Jayle and Delarue were the enemies of Foccart and de Gaulle now at the head of the French government.

As in Senegal, the new government's first domestic clampdown in the name of anti-communism would take place before the republic had yet gained its formal independence from France. The AEC students abroad faced ongoing harassment, including the regular practice of suspending their scholarships. Additionally, in 1959, the UDDIA-led government put into place an electoral law mandating that voters had to live in Congo for more than two years preceding an election. This was a clear means to bar any Congolese students studying abroad from participating in elections or running for office.<sup>85</sup>

However, Congolese students abroad were not the main targets of Youlou's repression. The administration was concerned with those oppositional organizations that had a stronger foothold *inside* Congo. The CGAT was a natural target for state repression, but so was another organization whose growth frightened the administration: the Congolese Youth Union (Union de la Jeunesse Congolaise, UJC). The roots of both organizations stretched back to the French Communist Party: The CGAT was the product of the communist-led CGT union federation in France, and the UJC was the outgrowth of the French Communist Party's youth organization, transplanted to Congo. The CGAT and the UJC also both affiliated with international organizations considered to be under the control of the Soviet Union: the World Federation of Trade Unions and the World Federation of Democratic Youth, respectively.<sup>86</sup> Through these connections, leaders from both organizations traveled to the Eastern Bloc, the Soviet Union, and China for trainings, studies, and congresses. The UJC's organizational network became the main means for students abroad in the AEC to stay connected to events in Congo.<sup>87</sup> To the Congolese and French governments, the UJC appeared to be the AEC's local agent, and thus a point of Communist

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<sup>85</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 306; Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 54.

<sup>86</sup> In French, the Fédération Syndicale Mondiale and the Fédération Mondiale de la Jeunesse Démocratique, respectively. Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 67.

<sup>87</sup> Martin Mberi, interview with author, 15 October 2012, Brazzaville.

infiltration.<sup>88</sup> The fact that some young CGAT leaders were also UJC leaders only confirmed the administration's suspicion that they faced a threat.

### **The Union de la Jeunesse Congolaise (UJC)**

The UJC was started in 1955, originally as an extension of the Union of the Republican Youth of France (Union de la Jeunesse Républicaine de France, UJRF), the name of the French Communist Party youth organization between 1945 and 1956. As UJC leader Auguste Mahoungou recalled in 1959, the UJC had been founded with the goal of "the emancipation of Africans of all classes."<sup>89</sup> Aimé Matsika, the group's first president, was attributed with creating the organization and also became a leader in the CGAT. The UJC first found an audience in Brazzaville, where 35 percent of the population was under fifteen years old in the late 1950s and where the largest student population resided.<sup>90</sup> The organization spread and developed cells in the other urban areas of the country: Pointe-Noire, Jacob, and Dolisie.<sup>91</sup>

The group agitated for the "real independence" of Congo, which included not only formal independence but also the Africanization of private and public institutions and ending Congo's reliance on foreign imports. Observing that it took seventy-eight years of colonialism for the French to train one engineer in Congo, Matsika argued that preparation for independence must include the training of "capable cadres" to replace French managers.<sup>92</sup> To break Congo's dependence on imported food, Matsika proposed programs to support Congolese farmers. Echoing Kwame Nkrumah, the president of

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<sup>88</sup> No author, "Au sujet des organisations de jeunesses (non confessionnel)," est. between August and November 1963, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>89</sup> "...l'emancipation des Africains de toutes classes." No author, "Procès verbal de la rencontre des jeunesses U.J.C. / U.D.D.I.A. le mardi 15 Décembre à Bacongo," December 17, 1959, carton 10, PR, ANCB.

<sup>90</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 37.

<sup>91</sup> Jacob was later renamed Nkayi. Dolisie was renamed Loubomo in 1975, though it has since been changed back to Dolisie.

<sup>92</sup> A parallel to the concerns of Mamadou Dia (and his critics) in Senegal, see chapter 1.

Ghana, Matsika saw independence as a necessary step toward recovering “the African personality.”<sup>93</sup> He argued that the lack of an “African personality” caused many of the workers he organized through the CGAT to accept substandard wages from their bosses.

In 1959, UJC leaders were still enamored of the mythologized political unity that had been forged by the Parti Démocratique de Guinée (PDG), led by Sékou Touré, leading up to the territory’s “no” vote in the referendum of 1958.<sup>94</sup> Leaders like Matsika did not look to the PDG as an ideological model, but rather to the party’s apparent ability to unite the vast majority of the country behind it.<sup>95</sup> Like PAI militants in France and Senegal, UJC leaders hoped to achieve a similar degree of national unity through the creation of a new political party in Congo that could push for “real independence.”<sup>96</sup>

UJC leaders also adopted pan-Africanist principles and tried to forge relations with anticolonial organizations and parties elsewhere on the continent. In Congo-Léopoldville, the UJC developed links to both the Bakongo Alliance (Alliance Bakongo, ABAKO) and the Congolese National Movement (Mouvement National Congolais, MNC) of Patrice Lumumba. In early 1960, nine UJC leaders clandestinely crossed the river by pirogue to hold training classes with a fraction of ABAKO youth activists, an alliance that greatly alarmed Congolese security services in Brazzaville.<sup>97</sup> Members also vociferously opposed French nuclear tests taking place in the Sahara.<sup>98</sup> Beyond Africa, the UJC stressed

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<sup>93</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, “African Socialism Revisited,” in *Africa: National and Social Revolution*, ed. Kwame Nkrumah (Prague: Peace and Socialism Publishers, 1967).

<sup>94</sup> This national “unity” was always more myth than reality, and inasmuch as it was achieved, it required coercion and violence directed against the PDG’s rivals.

<sup>95</sup> All above information on UJC and Matsika from “Procès verbal de la rencontre des jeunes U.J.C. / U.D.D.I.A. le mardi 15 Décembre à Bacongo,” December 17, 1959, carton 10, PR, ANCB.

<sup>96</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 38. Some UJC leaders had been members of the PAI in France.

<sup>97</sup> No author, “Note,” February 16, 1960, carton 10, PR, ANCB.

<sup>98</sup> “Procès verbal de la rencontre des jeunes U.J.C. / U.D.D.I.A. le mardi 15 Décembre à Bacongo,” December 17, 1959, carton 10, PR, ANCB.

its commitment to “human liberties and democratic rights” around the world, and affiliated to the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), with Matsika serving on the executive committee.<sup>99</sup>

### **A Picture of the Congolese Radical Opposition**

Records from early 1960 show that the government had been tracking not only UJC and CGAT leaders but also a larger section of the membership of both organizations through a network of informants. Notably, the lists of opponents maintained by the UDDIA-led government did not include the members of rival parties, the MSA or PPC. Instead, the administration tracked youth and trade union members in the UJC and CGAT as their main opposition. Archival records are incomplete, but of the roughly 254 people that the government was monitoring in 1960, 172 were members of the UJC (68 percent), while at least sixty-seven were members of the CGAT (26 percent). Ten additional unionists and two student activists were also being monitored.<sup>100</sup>

This opposition was young, with at least a dozen of the tracked militants still in their teens. The government’s records on the birth years of CGAT and UJC militants were incomplete, and those that were known tended to skew toward older union opponents. Nevertheless, the information available shows a median age of twenty-five to twenty-six for the activists monitored by security services. The average age of UJC militants, taken alone, was younger still. Government surveillance also shows that

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<sup>99</sup> No author, “Note d’information. Objet: Vie politique a/s de l’U.J.C.” March 30, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB. ; Letter from Rolf Weissbach, Bureau du Secretariat de la F.M.J.D. (WFDY) in Budapest to the U.J.C., January 14, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB. The WFDY was a youth organization created in London in 1945 as World War II reached an end. Founded with the intention of convening antifascist youth organizations across political and geographical divisions, the WFDY was soon abandoned by governments who took an anti-Communist line. Based in Budapest, the WFDY became associated with “Communist” regimes, but it was the organization’s anticolonial positions that attracted sympathetic young Africans from across the continent. Like the UJC, the Senegalese Conseil de la jeunesse (CJS) was also an active affiliate.

<sup>100</sup> Statistics here and below compiled from documents in the folder “Sécurité intérieure: Notes d’information 1960-1962,” sub-folder “Note d’info (opposition)” [sic], carton 9, PR, ANCB. Although the government saw the UJC and CGAT as a united threat, the administration’s own lists show that there was perhaps very little overlap between the membership of the UJC and the CGAT. Out of 172 members of the UJC that the government was tracking in the middle of 1960, only five were also recorded as members of the CGAT.

female militants played an important role in the Congolese youth movement. Twenty-eight women were among those recorded as oppositionists, most of whom were members of the UJC, along with Véronique Bouesso, identified as a leader of the Union des Femmes Congolaises. Here, security reports may have been referring to the Union of African Women of the Congo (Union des Femmes africaines au Congo, UFAC), a women's organization that ran parallel to the UJC.<sup>101</sup> Another known leader of the UFAC under surveillance was Alice Badiangana, who was simultaneously on the executive committee of the UJC.<sup>102</sup> UFAC appears to have struggled to draw an audience of women beyond those active with the UJC; still, government surveillance records indicate that there were at least two dozen female militants in the UJC at the time of independence.<sup>103</sup>

### **A Possible Youth Alliance?**

When the UJC joined the AEC and CGAT in demanding immediate independence from French rule in 1958, they were part of a marginalized minority. But by the end of 1959, the terms of the debate had shifted dramatically. Swept along by initiatives in West Africa, like the Mali Federation, Congolese political authorities embraced a negotiated transition to formal independence. In this context, UJC militants were able to move out of the margins, and were seen by many young Congolese as the vanguard of the pro-independence movement. Congolese state intelligence reported that the UJC appeared to be growing after the formation of the republic, especially in the Brazzaville neighborhood of Moundali.<sup>104</sup> Even the youth in Youlou's UDDIA party were now more open to collaboration with the

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<sup>101</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 39.

<sup>102</sup> Alice Mbadiangana, interview with author, 14 April 2016, Paris.

<sup>103</sup> Gnali, *Beto na beto : le poids de la tribu*; Aimée Gnali, interview with author, 24 November 2012, Pointe-Noire. This is particularly noteworthy given the absence of women in secondary accounts of Congolese radical organizations during this period. Unfortunately, a lack of further documentation makes it difficult to trace their role in the history of opposition to Youlou.

UJC.<sup>105</sup> Taking advantage of this possible entente, the UJC reached out to the UDDIA youth, and in December 1959, the UDDIA youth hosted a handful of UJC leaders at their headquarters in Bacongo.<sup>106</sup>

In the meeting, UJC leader Auguste Mahoungou reminded the audience that the UJC only slowly came to see the need for full independence after the 1956 *loi-cadre*, but was practically alone in calling for such a demand at the time. Now, said Matsika, the UJC and the UDDIA youth could find common ground in calling for independence. According to Matsika, the two groups had different strategies, but agreed on the need for an end to all vestiges of colonialism and to liberate an African “personality.” He argued that the only way to do this was to win the entire population to the cause of independence. Such an effort would take a massive amount of collaborative outreach and base building between the organizations. Joseph Senso, speaking for the youth of the UDDIA (and a member of the National Assembly at the time), replied in full agreement, asking his members to forget their conflicts with the UJC from the 1958 referendum.<sup>107</sup> Another UDDIA speaker noted that whereas someone calling for independence had recently been deemed a “revolutionary” or “dangerous” person, now in the National Assembly and even in the government, the word was no longer “magic.”<sup>108</sup>

The leadership of the UDDIA and Youlou’s administration was greatly alarmed by this development. Delegates at the UDDIA congress that took place the following month were displeased that the party’s youth section had accepted the UJC’s gesture toward collaboration. Party representatives saw the meeting as a clear example of the UJC trying to influence the UDDIA youth. The final resolution of the congress ordered the UDDIA youth to not engage with the UJC except with the

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<sup>104</sup> No author, “Note,” February 16, 1960, carton 10, PR, ANCB.

<sup>105</sup> Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 52. Gauze claims that by 1960, the UJC had begun to “contaminate” the UDDIA youth.

<sup>106</sup> In this meeting Matsika announced that the UJC was reaching out to the youth of other parties, though surveillance records did not include a note on any other collaborations.

<sup>107</sup> He then turned to the question of independence, asking whether the model of Guinea (Conakry) or that of the Mali Federation would be best for Congo—a rare reference to the Mali Federation as a potential model in the former AEF.

<sup>108</sup> “Procès verbal de la rencontre des jeunesses U.J.C. / U.D.D.I.A. le mardi 15 Décembre à Bacongo,” December 17, 1959, carton 10, PR, ANCB.

approval of the ruling bodies of the party. The resolution then continued by confirming the party's commitment to remaining within the French Community, choosing to avoid any mention of the word "independence," opting instead for "liberty."<sup>109</sup> Following the congress, UDDIA youth leaders appear to have backed away from any further engagement with the UJC.

### **The "Communist Plot" and the Repression of Youth and Trade Union Opposition**

A few months after Mahoungou and Matsika were invited to speak to the UDDIA youth, they were arrested for their political activity. The arrests took place on May 9, supposedly for their role in a "Communist plot" against the government.<sup>110</sup> At least seven oppositionists were arrested that day, mostly known leaders of the UJC or the CGAT: Matsika and Julien Boukambou, who were leaders in both organizations, Abel Thauley-Nganga of the CGAT, and Alice Badiangana and Mahoungou of the UJC.<sup>111</sup> The government did not present evidence of the "plot," and their accusations were likely a veiled move to try to isolate and intimidate progressive and radical organizations that criticized the administration.<sup>112</sup>

Indeed, just two days after the arrests, the National Assembly passed a series of laws—first proposed in March 1960—which limited the democratic rights of oppositional groups. The laws required that the formation of associations and all political meetings be publicly declared to the government

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<sup>109</sup> "Résolution finale" from the third day of the U.D.D.I.A. Congress, January 17, 1960, in Djoumouna, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>110</sup> This is the date given by Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 308. The first documents in the Congolese National Archives relating to the arrests are security service reports on May 12, 1960, discussing the response to the arrests. No author, "Note d'information. Objet: Opinion publique a/s Réactions à la suite des opérations judiciaires faites à l'encontre des activités illégales de la CGAT-UJC," May 12, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>111</sup> The sixth arrest was Pierre Kikounga-N'Got, and possibly also Boniface Massengo. No Author, "Note d'information. Objet: Opinion publique a/s réactions à la suite des arrestations de Boukambou Matsika et consorts," May 14, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>112</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 65-66; Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 54. However, Boutet (p. 33), entertains the idea that after being rebuffed by all political and union forces, CGAT leaders tried to start, with the support of the PCF, "un parti révolutionnaire."



ahead of time and banned protests against the government and any publication calling for such protests. The ministerial cabinet could now expel or imprison anyone deemed to be a security threat by simple decree.<sup>113</sup>

The arrests and the new laws may have been inspired by the anti-communism of Youlou's European advisors, but it is unlikely that the advisors orchestrated the campaign. In January 1960, at the UDDIA national congress, delegates pushed for a thoroughgoing Africanization of the party and government. By February, a few months before the arrests, Youlou had removed Bru, Vial, and Jayle from his cabinet and replaced them with Congolese ministers.<sup>114</sup> Delarue was similarly sidelined as the UDDIA's European advisor.<sup>115</sup> Thus, it seems the arrests in May 1960 were the product of the Congolese government's own fears of radical opposition.

The timing of the arrests and the new repressive laws may also have been linked to the government's increasing concern about the CGAT's connections to Soviet-influenced networks. The three most prominent leaders of the CGAT—Julien Boukambou, Abel Thauley-Nganga, and Aimé Matsika—had all been courted and trained by the French Communist Party, or the communist-led CGT trade union in France. Through this connection, each traveled to the Eastern Bloc, and Thauley-Nganga was also invited to China. All three were arrested in May 1960.

For the Congolese government, Guinea was seen as the main liaison between unionists in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa and the Soviet Union or the French Communist Party. In early 1960, state security services reported that a trade union "university" was to be set up for at least two years in Conakry, led by two French CGT trade union leaders, one of whom was a leader in the Communist Party,

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<sup>113</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 308.

<sup>114</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 299.

<sup>115</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 323.

and the other a leader in the Soviet-aligned World Federation of Trade Unions.<sup>116</sup> The Congolese government believed that messages from one of these Communists were reaching the CGAT in Pointe-Noire via sailors and port workers. Additionally, security services were worried that Boukambou and Matsika would soon travel to Conakry, in order to set up workshops in Brazzaville led by French Communist trade union leaders.<sup>117</sup>

The clampdown on the CGAT and the utility workers strike was part of a more general attempt by the government to discipline and fracture the union movement, with the goal of setting up a “*syndicat unique*,” or single national trade union. Immediately after the 1959 elections, Youlou had begun talking about the opening of a period of national political unity and hoped to consolidation not only political parties but also the trade unions.<sup>118</sup> In order to create a single trade union federation under the umbrella of the state, Youlou ironically needed to first *break* existing alliances within the union movement. This required isolating the vociferous CGAT leaders who had been pushing to unite the federations outside of state control, while bringing the powerful CATC leaders onto the administration’s side. The arrests of May 1960 were likely a tactic to do this, and at first, the “Communist plot” accusation seemed to work. State security reports noted that trade union leaders from the Catholic CATC federation were quick to denounce the CGAT. The CATC propagated the government’s line that the goals of the arrested leaders were not unionism, but “illegal activities” under the cover of a union and youth association.<sup>119</sup> The third Congolese trade union federation, CASL, which

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<sup>116</sup> The school was called the Université Syndicale de Konakry.

<sup>117</sup> No author, “Note,” February 16, 1960, carton 10, PR, ANCB. The second, identified as Gabrielli, was a leader of the sailors and dockers unions, seen as heavily penetrated by the Communists since 1925, and used to transport Communist messages.

<sup>118</sup> Boutet notes that Nicolas Songuemas was proposed to lead this new single trade union, who was president of the Conseil Economique et Social. See carton 5, PR, ANCB and Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 54-55.

<sup>119</sup> No author, “Note d’information. Objet: Opinion publique a/s Réactions à la suite des opérations judiciaires faites à l’encontre des activités illégales de la CGAT-UJC,” May 12, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

had reached a tentative agreement with the CGAT over the question of unity not long before the arrests, quickly stepped back from this collaboration. The government had managed to sow division within the union movement along “Communist” and “anti-Communist” lines.

Archival records reveal that the timing of the arrests of CGAT leaders may have had an additional aim: to weaken and divide a strike then taking place among utility workers. The employees at UNELCO and Energie Electrique, both electrical companies, as well as CASP, the water distribution company, were on strike simultaneously. These privately managed French utility companies held a monopoly on the organized distribution of electricity and water across the country. As they supplied the entire national market, the strike had major ramifications, and the government stepped in to arbitrate. The strikers were not willing to accept the government’s negotiated offer of a 7 percent raise, and pushed for the strike to go on. State security services noted that the arrests of May 9 affected the strikers, some of whom were adherents of the CGAT.<sup>120</sup> The strikers, already fatigued, and now likely divided over the arrests, were pushed to accept the government’s offer and return to work. Workers initially held out in the face of legally binding requisitions, but the strike was quickly settled.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> One of the CGAT leaders of the strike was Benjamin Eckomband. See “Note d’information. Objet : a/s grève des personnels des services d’utilité publique : Energie Electrique – UNELCO – CASP,” May 16, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>121</sup> On Monday morning, the requisitions had not been as successful as the managers had hoped: At Energie Electrique, seven of the fifteen requisitioned workers appeared, but at UNELCO, the requisitions were a failure, with only one worker coming to work. Similarly, at CASP, seven employees came to work, but 130 remained out on strike. Some workers from UNELCO blamed their director (who was European), for the continuation of the strike, saying that he remained personally opposed to the raise being proposed by the government. See “A/s grèves C.A.S.P. et UNELCO,” May 13, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB. See also “Note d’information. Objet : a/s grève des personnels des services d’utilité publique : Energie Electrique – UNELCO – CASP,” May 16, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB. The strike was settled on Wednesday May 18. Unfortunately, I do not know what the specific goals of the strike were, except that security services noted that the goals were not achieved by the strikers. While smaller strikes flared up in Congo under Youlou, this was the last major strike under Youlou’s regime. There would be some smaller labor actions and strikes, for example, at Radio Brazzaville (see Dossier Révues journalières de la presse nationale et internationale, 1960–1962, carton 58, PR, ANCB), and the workers at the Cemetary of Tsiémé (Carton 408, Série C (Syndicats), AMB), in the sugar refinery (see Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 78), and among private school teachers (see Ollandet, “Mouvement syndical congolais,” 423) but this was the last ongoing strike in a major industry or utility until the general strike of 1963.

## IV. The Persistence of the Radical Opposition, 1960–1963

### The Impact of the Repression

The arrests polarized and disoriented the union movement, and had a similar effect on Congolese politics more generally. The supposed “Communist plot” re-isolated the radicals grouped around the CGAT and UJC, while pulling MSA and PPC deputies closer to Youlou’s government.<sup>122</sup> Though some UDDIA and MSA militants expressed concern about how the arrests were carried out, none seem to have publicly disagreed with the suppression of the UJC and CGAT leaders’ political activities. Support for banning the UJC and CGAT came from both parties, along with sensationalized claims about the Communist threat the organizations<sup>123</sup> posed.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> “Note d’information. Objet: Opinion publique a/s Réactions à la suite des opérations judiciaires faites à l’encontre des activités illégales de la CGAT-UJC,” May 12, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB. The National Assembly was “à l’ensemble favorables” to the arrests. Among the deputies was Joseph Senso, who just a few months earlier, as the leader of the UDDIA youth, had made a tentative alliance with Matsika and Mahoungou.

<sup>123</sup> Some UDDIA moderates thought the radical leaders should have been warned first, but others believed that the arrests were clearly justified on the basis that the arrested UJC and CGAT militants “had the intention of the bringing the Russians to the Republic of Congo” or could have prompted a conflict akin to the sectarian violence of 1959. Some in the UDDIA called for a permanent ban on the UJC. The youth of the MSA (MESAN) apparently felt the arrests were justified, as long they weren’t about trying to suppress unions—and agreed that Matsika wanted to “forcibly introduce communism to the Congo.” They furthermore hoped that similar organizations to the UJC in Chad, Gabon, and the Oubangi-Chari (soon to be renamed Central African Republic) would be equally “incapacitated.” But some in MESAN felt that it would have better to have asked the arrested militants to first cease their political activities. Other MSA militants argued that it would have been better to ban the UJC and CGAT rather than arresting their leaders. But anti-Communist sentiment ran strong among the MSA members, too, whose leaders reportedly feared that if the Communists took power, they would be “tough and ruthless” as in Guinea. Consequently, the MSA would not speak out against the arrests of UJC and CGAT leaders. -footnote below

<sup>124</sup> See “Note d’information. Objet: Opinion publique a/s Réactions à la suite des opérations judiciaires faites à l’encontre des activités illégales de la CGAT-UJC,” May 12, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB; And “Note d’information. Objet: Opinion Publique,” May 16, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB. Some UDDIA moderates thought the radical leaders should have been warned first, but others believed that the arrests were clearly justified on the basis that the arrested UJC and CGAT militants “had the intention of the bringing the Russians to the Republic of Congo” or could have prompted a conflict akin to the sectarian violence of 1959. Some in the UDDIA called for a permanent ban on the UJC. The youth of the MSA (MESAN) apparently felt the arrests were justified, as long they weren’t about trying to suppress unions—and agreed that Matsika wanted to “forcibly introduce communism to the Congo.” They furthermore hoped that similar organizations to the UJC

The arrests aroused the anti-communist fervor of both UDDIA and MSA militants, but the latter remained aware that state repression could target any opposition figure. The arrest of Simon-Pierre Kikounga-Ngot under the umbrella of the “Communist plot” was understandably troubling to MSA leaders. Kikounga-Ngot was a longtime opposition leader who had no recent leadership position in the UJC or CGAT. Though he was one of the original leaders of the CGAT in the late 1940s and early 1950s, he had become a mainstream political figure, bringing his small regional party into collaboration with the MSA and Jacques Opangault, and then becoming a deputy to the national assembly for the PPC.<sup>125</sup> MSA members suspected that Youlou had simply targeted him for being part of the parliamentary opposition to the president.<sup>126</sup> The imprisonment of Kikounga-Ngot further shows that the arrests had little to do with any sort of “Communist plot,” and were likely a general attempt by Youlou to discipline his opposition.

Reports from government informants also indicate that some UJC and CGAT members and sympathizers were hardened in their opposition to the government after the arrests.<sup>127</sup> UJC activists compared the arrests to the recent government assault on the Matsouanists and vowed not to be

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in Chad, Gabon, and the Oubangi-Chari (soon to be renamed Central African Republic) would be equally “incapacitated.” But some in MESAN felt that it would have better to have asked the arrested militants to first cease their political activities. Other MSA militants argued that it would have been better to ban the UJC and CGAT rather than arresting their leaders. But anti-Communist sentiment ran strong among the MSA members, too, whose leaders reportedly feared that if the Communists took power, they would be “tough and ruthless” as in Guinea. Consequently, the MSA would not speak out against the arrests of UJC and CGAT leaders.

<sup>125</sup> Martin Mberi, “L’ère du Mouvement Nationale de la Révolution (MNR), 1963–1968,” in *Histoire générale du Congo des origines à nos jours, vol. 3*, ed. Théophile Obenga (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2010), 64; Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 46.

<sup>126</sup> They were also worried that there would be a backlash in his Kikounga-Ngot’s home region of the Niari, though this doesn’t seem to have materialized. “Note d’information. Objet: Opinion publique a/s Réactions à la suite des opérations judiciaires faites à l’encontre des activités illégales de la CGAT-UJC,” 12 May 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>127</sup> See also Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 33.

cowed in their “struggle against the government.”<sup>128</sup> Two young civil service employees who were UJC activists quickly put out pamphlets demanding the unconditional and immediate release of their comrades. Another UJC member who worked for Air France went to Léopoldville to alert international allies about the arrests. He was only able to send three telegrams— to Beijing, China, to Conakry, Guinea, and to a CGT union local in Paris—before running out of money.<sup>129</sup> One young UJC sympathizer told a government informant that Matsika, Boukambou, “and consorts were arrested for having told the truth about the abolition of the colonial regime. They will arrest us all, but we will not cease to despise the colonialists and their valets. Never will the current government repress the UJC, who will struggle against the leaders who collaborate with the colonialists.”<sup>130</sup>

Yet, after the arrests, the UJC and CGAT both found it more difficult to organize. Not only were many leaders in jail, but some, such as Matsika, discouraged young UJC activists from relaunching local cells right away, instead asking them to wait to see how the judicial system and President Youlou chose to handle the situation.<sup>131</sup> Still, UJC and CGAT members agitated for the release of their imprisoned leaders and those arrested were finally freed after many months in prison. At the beginning of 1961, the CGAT leaders were suspected of trying to rebuild their organization, while limiting themselves to “purely union objectives”—so as to avoid further repression.<sup>132</sup> By late March, CGAT members were distributing

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<sup>128</sup> “Note d’information. Objet: Opinion publique a/s Réactions à la suite des opérations judiciaires faites à l’encontre des activités illégales de la CGAT-UJC,” May 12, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB. A CGAT militant who vowed to continue the “struggle against the government” was tracked by security services just after the arrests.

<sup>129</sup> “Note d’information. Objet: Vie Syndicale A/S de MIENANDI Fidèle,” May 16, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>130</sup> “Note d’information. Objet: Vie Politique a/s de l’U.J.C.,” June 23, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>131</sup> “Note d’information. Objet: Vie Politique a/s de l’U.J.C.,” June 28, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>132</sup> “...des objectifs purement syndicaux” “Note d’information. Objet: Vie Syndicale a/s de la CGAT,” January 10, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB. Matsika and Boukambou had also learned some important lessons, and were having most of their mail delivered outside of the normal postal service—much to the chagrin of state security services. See “Note d’information. Objet: Syndicale a/s de la CGAT,” March 30, 1961, carton 9, PR,

fliers in an attempt to convene CGAT delegates from across the country and reassemble the union's base.<sup>133</sup>

The CGAT's influence among workers was dealt an initial blow by Youlou's repression and attempt to "expose" them as supposed Communist agents. A CGAT union delegate on the docks in Pointe-Noire announced in no uncertain terms that he would be switching his affiliation to CASL, and strove to take the workers he represented with him.<sup>134</sup> In March 1961, when workers in Brazzaville elected their union delegates in private enterprises and public services, the CGAT's representation declined. The CGAT received 412 votes, whereas the CASL received about three times as many votes, and the CATC received about eight times as many.<sup>135</sup> Without statistics from previous or successive elections, it is hard to ascertain how severely the CGAT had been affected. However, state surveillance reports indicated that the CGAT had lost votes, most of which went to the CASL. Interestingly, the same report stated that the loss in votes was not due to workers' personal disaffection with the CGAT, but the fact that the leaders "could not prepare for the elections." The unmentioned but obvious reason for this was that the leaders had been jailed, and the union disorganized by government repression.<sup>136</sup>

That same month, as the new Constitution was adopted by the national assembly, state security services reported that unionists—and the CGAT in particular—raised "sharp critiques,"<sup>137</sup> referring to

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ANCB. One letter intercepted by the state was a letter from the Chinese Union Federation congratulating Boukambou, Matsika, and Thauley-Ganga on their release from prison. See "Note d'information. Objet: Propagande Etrangère a/s de la Fédération des Syndicats de Chine," March 3, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>133</sup> "Note d'information. Objet: Syndicale a/s de la CGAT," March 30, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>134</sup> "A/s de M. MAKOSSO Adelaïde," June 18, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>135</sup> "Note d'information. Objet: Vie Syndicale," March 30, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>136</sup> "Note d'information. Objet : Vie Syndicale a/s Election des délégués du Personnel," March 17, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>137</sup> "vives critiques" "Note d'information. Objet: Vie Politique a/s de la Constitution," March 15, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

the new government as a “monarchical regime,” and calling the new constitution “good for colonized countries where the most elementary democratic liberties don’t exist.”<sup>138</sup> According to a postal worker, the effect of the recent anti-communist witch-hunt had also taken its toll: “If the Constitution had been submitted for the approbation of the people, it would have been rejected, but the deputies [of the National Assembly] are scared for their position. Of course, those who don’t agree with [Youlou] would be called Communists.”<sup>139</sup> When Youlou subsequently ran as the sole candidate for president, state security services reported that the UJC and the CGAT were in no position to call for a boycott of the election.<sup>140</sup> Both organizations had been debilitated by the arrests the previous May: the UJC was now a banned organization and the CGAT was trying to rebuild itself as a “nonpolitical” trade union. Youlou even tried to bring the CGAT/UJC leaders, Thauley-Nganga and Matsika, into his fold though a familiar pattern of repression and rehabilitation. Once out of jail, both were given positions within the Economic and Social Council, an influential advisory body to the government.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Another complained that “The Deputies are narrow-minded and blind, they do not see Youlou’s politics clearly.” (“Les députés sont bornés et aveugles, ils ne voient pas clair dans la Politique de Youlou.”) “Note d’information. Objet: Vie Politique a/s de la Constitution,” March 15, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>139</sup> “Note d’information. Objet : Opinion Publique a/s des élections présidentielles (Réactions – suite),” March 8, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB. “Si la Constitution avait été soumise à l’approbation du peuple, elle aurait été rejetée mais les Députés ont eu peur pour leur situation. Bien entendu, ceux qui ne sont pas d’accord avec lui seront considérés comme communistes.” Also noted is that a postal worker claimed that the new constitution and Youlou’s unopposed election in 1961 would allow the president to act like a dictator, controlling the National Assembly, ending basic democracy in practice, and doing exactly what Léon M’Ba was doing in Gabon.

<sup>140</sup> “Note d’information. Objet: Vie Syndicale a/s de la CGAT,” January 10, 1961, “Note d’information. Objet : Opinion Publique a/s des élections présidentielles (Réactions – suite),” March 8, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB. The PAI did call for a boycott of elections around the same time in Senegal.

<sup>141</sup> The Conseil économique et social. Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 54. Not unlike the Cub Nation et Developpement started by Senghor after 1968, see Epilogue.



## The Birth of the Domestic Student Movement

In spite of Youlou's momentum, between 1961 and 1963, organized opposition to the government remained active. During this time, the underground activities of UJC and CGAT militants were buttressed by the creation of the first organization of secondary students in Congo, the Association scolaire du Congo (ASCO). Compared to similar organizations in Senegal created before independence, the ASCO was formed quite late—just a few months after the repression of the supposed “Communist plot.”<sup>142</sup> In part, this was a reflection of the belated development of secondary education, which did not keep pace with the major expansion of primary education in the 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>143</sup> In 1960, there were only four high schools in the country, three of which had been hastily upgraded from being middle schools (*collèges*) on the eve of independence: the secular Lycée Fédéral Savorgnan de Brazza, the Catholic Lycée Chaminade, and the vocational Lycée Technique in Brazzaville and the Lycée Victor Augagneur in Pointe-Noire.<sup>144</sup> Thus, in the early 1960s, there were no more than a few hundred students studying at the *lycées* of Congo—and many were still foreign-born students from across the former AEF or children of European parents who continued to reside and work in Congo. In 1960, only 120 Congolese students

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<sup>142</sup> It is worth noting that AGED and UGEAO, however were not national organizations; they were specific to the University of Dakar.

<sup>143</sup> Because of the expansion of primary education, Congo and Senegal exhibited the highest rates of French literacy in all of Francophone Africa during the decade following independence. On Congo, see “Scolarisation en Congo-Brazza,” *Marchés Tropicaux & Méditerranéens*, April 12, 1969; *Jeune Afrique*, December 15, 1970; Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 152.

<sup>144</sup> While Lycée Savorgnan de Brazza had been created earlier in the 1950s, the other three were converted to lycées at the very end of the decade, eg. in 1959, when the Collège moderne à Pointe-Noire was converted to the Lycée Victor Augagneur. Note that in Gauze, he implies that Lycée Svorgnan de Brazza had existed prior to the 1950s, but Ibiou says it was established in 1951. Gilbert Ibiou, “L'histoire de l'éducation au Congo,” in *Histoire générale du Congo des origines à nos jours*, vol. 3, ed. Théophile Obenga (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010); Paul Nzete, interview with the author, 23 October 2012, Brazzaville.

achieved the *brevet d'études du premier cycle du second degré* (BEPC) that allowed them to pursue study at a lycée.<sup>145</sup>

Congolese students who graduated from one of the country's few lycées were part of a small and select group: In 1956, only nine Congolese students in AEF passed the *baccalauréat*, and by 1960, that number had only risen to eighteen.<sup>146</sup> A former student from Lycée Chaminade, Martin Mberi, recounted that even in 1963, of the students in their final year (*terminale*), there were only about fifteen Congolese students. According to Mberi, simply making it to terminale was itself enough to grant you the title "Monsieur" and have it recognized that "you mattered."<sup>147</sup> In his preparation course for the baccalauréat, Mberi noted that the vast majority of the students were French. The Congolese students only numbered six, of whom only two or three passed. This small group was an increase over previous years where only "one or two" Congolese students had been accepted to prepare for the baccalauréat.

In 1959, a group of African students at the Lycée Savorgnan de Brazza created a union on their campus. The union's horizons expanded in December 1960, when they elected a *Comité directeur*, which then traveled to other schools in Congo (collèges and lycées) over the holiday break, in order to create a national committee with representatives from all secondary schools. Many of the original officers, like Martin Mberi and Ange Diawara, would play critical roles in Congo's political history over the following decade. However, in 1961, the ASCO's future was uncertain: it existed in a state of legal uncertainty, as the government would not grant it official recognition.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> "Nombre de diplômés qui sortiront chaque année jusqu'en 1960 des établissements secondaires et primaires de la Fédération," carton 30(1), PR, ANCB.

<sup>146</sup> "Nombre de diplômés qui sortiront chaque année jusqu'en 1960 des établissements secondaires et primaires de la Fédération," carton 30(1), PR, ANCB. These numbers, however, were much higher than in any of the other AEF territories.

<sup>147</sup> "Tu comptes." Mberi was elected president of the national ASCO in 1962. Mberi, interview, November 19, 2012.

The French ambassador suspected that the ASCO had been the product of the UJC's "active propagandizing" among secondary students.<sup>149</sup> Mberi Martin, who played a continual leadership role in the ASCO through his graduation in 1963, confirmed that the ASCO had been born of the milieu around "les activists communistes ou communistes" from the UJC and the CGAT.<sup>150</sup> The connection between the ASCO and UJC activists went in both directions. Paul Nzete, who would later become an important Congolese student leader in France, came to Brazzaville in 1958 after passing a competitive exam that gained him a spot at the Collège Chaminade where he lived at the boarding school (internat). He joined ASCO after its formation, and by 1961 became more and more critical of the clergy who ran the school and debated their teachings openly in classes. His outspokenness cost him his place in the boarding school, and he found a place to live in the neighborhood of Ouenzé.<sup>151</sup> There he became involved in the neighborhood UJC chapter. While he did not consider himself a communist, he participated in UJC reading groups on the writings of Marx, historical materialism, and religion. The ASCO's connection to the UJC also provided a link between the new student union in the Congo and the Marxist-inspired Congolese students studying abroad, grouped together within the AEC.

The nascent student movement in Congo was equally shaped by imperial and regional events. First, the small but vocal movement for immediate independence during the 1958 referendum influenced students like Mberi, who were still teenagers at the time. Second, the events of 1960 and 1961 across the river in the former Belgian Congo politicized many students. Members of the ASCO saw themselves naturally aligned with the nationalist aspirations of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, and when he was arrested in 1960, there was a movement of Congolese students to desert Lycée Savorgnan

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<sup>148</sup> "Note de Renseignements. N. 3.258. Objet : a/s de l'Association Scolaire du Congo (A.S.C.O.)" December 22, 1961, carton 25, BA, CADN; Mberi, interview, November 19, 2012.

<sup>149</sup> "Note de Renseignements. N. 3.258. Objet : a/s de l'Association Scolaire du Congo (A.S.C.O.)" 22 December 1961, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>150</sup> Mberi, interview, November 19, 2012.

<sup>151</sup> The director of the school told him that he was "un peu trop agité." Nzete, interview, October 23, 2012.

de Brazza.<sup>152</sup> Much to the chagrin of young students, Youlou was an enthusiastic ally of Moïse Tshombe, the Katanga secessionist leader involved in Lumumba's murder.<sup>153</sup> The ASCO never adopted a political platform, remaining officially a corporatist student union. However, in practice, the active members of the ASCO turned it into a group that openly contested Youlou's regime, and saw themselves as anti-imperialist and anticapitalist, though rarely Communist.<sup>154</sup>

The ASCO's first actions tended to focus on the state of the schools, especially the ongoing dominance of French administrators, teachers, and curriculum. In the spring of 1961, a student strike broke out among high school students in Brazzaville in protest of their treatment by the teaching staff. Students complained that teaching staff sent from France were generally the least qualified teachers and abused the African students. The students called on the government to replace many of the teachers and refused to go back to classes until the minister of national education Prosper Gandzion returned from a trip abroad.<sup>155</sup> Students were not the only ones frustrated—many African parents complained that the government had not taken steps to expel “the old colonists” who taught their children.<sup>156</sup> Parents reportedly felt that these holdovers from the colonial period had “changed their feathers, but not their character,” and remained hostile to black students. This did not stop the

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<sup>152</sup> Nzete, interview, October 23, 2012.

<sup>153</sup> See Charles Didier Gondola, *Villes miroirs: migrations et identités urbaines à Kinshasa et Brazzaville, 1930-1970* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), 326-332.

<sup>154</sup> Nzete, interview, October 23, 2012.

<sup>155</sup> “Note d'information. Object : a/s des incidents du lycée,” March 2, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB. Most likely at Lycée Savorgnan de Brazza, though I can't say for sure.

<sup>156</sup> “des vieux colons” “Note d'information. Object : a/s des incidents du lycée,” March 2, 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

government from responding to the strike by sending in police and gendarmes to arrest the students, beating many in the process.<sup>157</sup>

In 1960, French authorities created the Higher Education Center of Brazzaville (Centre d'Enseignement Supérieur de Brazzaville, CESB), borne from what had previously been a colonial school for training administrative and technical cadres. One year later, through a financial request to the United Nations, an Ecole Normale Supérieure d'Afrique Centrale (ENSAC) was established in Brazzaville to train teachers from the former AEF territories.<sup>158</sup> The opening of higher education institutions in Congo provided a much-needed outlet for a growing population of students who wished to continue their studies. But these new institutions remained dominated by European administrators, professors, and curricula. This state of affairs frustrated many students, who felt that the Africanization of education in Congo was long overdue. Many students at the institutes soon affiliated with the ASCO and connected to student leaders abroad in the AEC and UJC activists in Congo.<sup>159</sup> The birth of ASCO appears to have paralleled a revival of the UJC: The French embassy in Congo reported that despite its illegal status, the UJC had about eight hundred members and sympathizers in 1962, and still included some young CGAT workers.<sup>160</sup> If these numbers are correct, they indicate that youth and student organizations both grew in the early 1960s, even under conditions of illegality.

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<sup>157</sup> Initially a rumor began that one student was killed by the blows he received, but the government denied that had happened.

<sup>158</sup> A project in the works since the early 1960s, it was only in 1971 that the University of Brazzaville was finally created and opened in October 1972. See chapter 4.

<sup>159</sup> Atondi Lécas Momondjo, interviews with author, July 2010 and 13 October 2012, Brazzaville.

<sup>160</sup> Around thirty years old. No author, "Au sujet des organisations de jeunesses (non confessionnel)," est. between August and November 1963, carton 25, BA, CADN.

## V. The Turn toward the Single-Party State

Although opposition organizations persisted, by 1962, Youlou had turned his attention toward the greater consolidation of political control at the state level. After his election in 1961, Youlou was at the helm of a strongly presidential regime under the new constitution. He was, moreover, known for appointing weak ministerial teams and making many key decisions himself.<sup>161</sup> The creation of a single-party state had been one of Youlou's stated goals, first hinted at after the 1959 parliamentary elections.<sup>162</sup>

In 1962, Youlou traveled to Guinea at the invitation of President Sékou Touré. Touré's own quick move toward a single-party state was known among both supporters and detractors in Congo. Shortly after his return, in August 1962, Youlou again toured the north of Congo and on national radio announced his proposal for a single-party state, so as to "seal the national reconciliation and unity that has been achieved."<sup>163</sup> The responses from officials of the MSA and the PPC were not surprising: Opangault, leader of the MSA, replied that "the union can only be pure with the creation of a single-party" and that the MSA would back the proposal. Bicoumat, a minister in Youlou's government representing the PPC, announced that the "integrated" militants of the PPC warmly welcomed the initiative.<sup>164</sup> The National Assembly approved the principle of the parti-unique in May 1963, and it was

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<sup>161</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 48.

<sup>162</sup> After the parliamentary elections in June 1959, he gave a speech about how the outcome of the elections did not represent the victory of one party program over another, as in Europe, but the start of the chapter of national unity. This speech on June 17 was ironically delivered at the same time that UDDIA party youth were attacking and terrorizing the homes of known Matsouanists. Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 51.

<sup>163</sup> Quoted in Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 55. "...sceller [seal] la reconciliation et l'unité nationale réalisées."

<sup>164</sup> Quoted in Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 55. "...l'union ne peut être franche qu'avec la creation du parti unique," and "intégrés"

Opangault, Youlou's long-time nemesis, who gave the opening speech in favor of the new consolidation.<sup>165</sup>

In Francophone Africa, the first national leader to epitomize the parti-unique model was Sékou Touré. At the end of the 1950s, Touré was seen as the most brazen of the anticolonial political leaders in sub-Saharan Francophone Africa. As noted in the introduction, Touré led the strongest party in Guinea, the Parti Démocratique de Guinée (PDG), and called for a “no” vote shortly before the 1958 referendum. Guinea was the only colonial territory where voters rejected the French Community in the referendum, and thus, acceded to independence two years before any of France's other sub-Saharan colonies. For this intransigence, the newly independent republic paid a dear price. French authorities sabotaged the nascent Guinean government by abruptly removing equipment and documents necessary to the functioning of the administration, destroying industrial machinery, ordering administrators, teachers, doctors, and technical advisors back to France, cutting off aid, and freezing Guinean assets and credit. The French secret service even introduced counterfeit currency into the country in the hopes of provoking a total financial crisis.<sup>166</sup> Touré's willingness to work with allies from Ghana, the French Communist Party, and his embrace of radical nationalism and socialist themes had already marked him, in the view of the French government, as a dangerous figure. However, for young anticolonialists across Francophone Africa, he was lionized—elevated to the same category as Kwame Nkrumah, and later Patrice Lumumba.<sup>167</sup> The French rebuffed Touré's ongoing attempts to maintain good relations between the two states, and instead worked to isolate and undermine Touré's new government diplomatically.

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<sup>165</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 309.

<sup>166</sup> On French actions after the “no” vote in Guinea, see Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea*, 166-72; Claude Rivière, *Guinea : The Mobilization of a People* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977); Yves Person, “French West Africa and Decolonization,” in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization 1940-1960*, ed. Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 167.

<sup>167</sup> Person notes that Touré's call for a “no” vote “earned him, within the black world, an extraordinary prestige that his catastrophic domestic policy destroyed only gradually.” Person, “French West Africa and Decolonization,” 153, 68; Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea*, 7.

Ultimately, in order to prevent complete economic collapse, the Guinean government had to turn toward other potential allies, and was extended credit by Ghana, China, the Soviet Union, and Eastern Bloc countries.<sup>168</sup> However, as his government continued to falter, Touré moved to consolidate his power through the silencing of opposition, a practice the PDG had already established in the 1950s.

The creation of a single-party state was hardly Touré's innovation, and many leading Third World political figures made similar proposals at the time. The process moved more quickly in some new countries than others, but leaders from both sides of the Cold War political spectrum attempted to consolidate their power through this method. As noted earlier, Senghor's own *parti unifié* functioned increasingly as a *parti-unique* by the mid-1960s. Single-party governance was not crudely conceived as the means for a political clique or individual to centralize their control of the state. Single-party states were usually put forward as the organizational manifestation of desired "national unity." A single-party state would supposedly be inclusive of various elements of the existing political and economic elite in a country and look out for the interests of all those in the new nation, transcending class, ideological, regional, religious, or ethnic differences. This "unity," manifested in a single party was the proposed mechanism for propelling national development programs forward in the aftermath of colonial rule.

In August 1962, Youlou visited Guinea-Conakry as an official state guest at Touré's invitation.<sup>169</sup> On the surface, Touré and Youlou could not have appeared more politically at odds: one had been a noted Communist ally and the other a staunch anti-Communist. But both leaders had their own reasons for developing a cooperative relationship. The first was tied to economic development plans: Touré and Youlou hoped to arrange for an exchange of resources that would aid both countries. Youlou hoped to see the proposed hydroelectric dam along the Kouilou River come to fruition, and he sought allies that could provide the needed raw materials. One of these resources was bauxite, which was mined in

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<sup>168</sup> Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea*, 174.

<sup>169</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 71.



Guinea, and could be processed into aluminum. For Youlou, an alliance with Touré, if opportunistic, would help move the project forward.<sup>170</sup> For Touré, an agreement with Congo could allow Guinea access to processed aluminum at a cheaper price, while adhering to a pan-African principle of intracontinental industrial development. But both leaders had other objectives: Touré needed new allies in Francophone Africa in order to stabilize his government and Youlou hoped to learn from Touré's implementation of a single-party structure.

On June 4 and 5, 1963, Touré came to Congo-Brazzaville for an official visit.<sup>171</sup> Youlou decreed the two days of Touré's tour to be paid holidays in the cities that the Guinean president planned to visit. Youlou likely hoped that Touré's public appearances, sanctioned by the state, would lend Youlou anticolonial credibility. But Touré's presence also provided an opportunity for young radicals to embarrass Youlou. Touré was greeted in Pointe-Noire with placards saying, "*Vive le Président de l'Afrique*" (Long live the president of Africa) alongside others reading "*A bas l'Abbé Youlou*" (Down with Abbé Youlou).<sup>172</sup> Touré's mass public address in front of Brazzaville's city hall drew an eager crowd that included students, trade unionists, and other critics of the Congolese government. There, hundreds of young people, led by ASCO, raised placards critical of the government.<sup>173</sup>

The audience was not disappointed; Touré took the opportunity to critique the behavior of the government officials who had invited him, claiming that they not only benefited from their large salaries

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<sup>170</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 59-60.

<sup>171</sup> The text of the speech ("Discours d'accueil du président Fulbert Youlou au président Sékou Touré en visite officielle au Congo-Brazzaville," 4 June 1963) and the joint communiqué that followed ("Communiqué conjoint guinéo-congolais," 7 June 1963) can both be found in André Lewin, *Ahmed Sékou Touré, 1922-1984 : président de la Guinée de 1958 à 1984*, vol. 5 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), Ch. 55.

<sup>172</sup> Décret n 63/154 du 1er Juin 1963, "Déclarant ferriées, chômées et payées la journée du 4 juin 1963 a Brazzaville et Pointe-Noire, et celle du 5 juin 1963 a Dolisie, Loudima et Jacob," carton 1, PR, ANCB.

<sup>173</sup> Jean-Pierre Ngombe, "La jeunesse dans l'histoire du Congo, 1960 à 2010," in *Histoire générale du Congo des origines à nos jours*, vol. 3, ed. Théophile Obenga (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), 400; Mberi, interview, November 19, 2012.

but had also siphoned off public funds.<sup>174</sup> Reports of ministerial corruption had long been circulating through Brazzaville's radio trottoir, especially in Bacongo, the neighborhood that was home to some of Youlou's more unpopular and extravagant ministers.<sup>175</sup> To have the rumors validated by the Guinean president created an incredible buzz in the capital.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, Touré offered thinly veiled criticism of Youlou's single-party proposal, calling on Africans to sweep away regimes that exploit their own people.<sup>177</sup> A reporter from Léopoldville wrote that Touré's visit was received very favorably by the "popular masses" and his speeches had felt more like "political meetings": "In sum, for the man in the street who I met in Mougali, in Ouenzé, or in town or on the Avenue de Paris, Sékou Touré has stung the stinger in a festering internal wound . . . one already sees signs of malaise."<sup>178</sup>

Touré seems to have struck a different tone when he met with Youlou's government behind closed doors.<sup>179</sup> On friendly terms, he pledged to share Guinea's bauxite and iron ore to aid the Kouilou

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<sup>174</sup> Observateur, "Après la visite de Sékou Touré au Congo Brazzaville," *Courrier d'Afrique* (Léopoldville), June 11, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, June 12, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

<sup>175</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 67-70.

<sup>176</sup> "C'est ainsi qu'il aurait été constaté le disparition de près de 30 millions de Frs CFA à l'Assemblée Nationale, tandis que le coffre-fort du Ministère de l'Intérieur se serait vu amputer de 7 millions! Jusqu'avant le 3 juin, personne du haut lieu n'avait pipé mot sur cette grave affaire d'alors qu'à la cité, les mots: détournements, scandale public impuni...ne quittant plus les lèvres." Supposedly the "chef du Gouvernement" (Youlou) had confided in a special committee to investigate the 'détournements' in question and will wait for the results of the investigation before "mettre les manchettes [cuffs] sur les responsables" Observateur, "Après la visite de Sékou Touré au Congo Brazzaville," *Courrier d'Afrique* (Léopoldville), June 11, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, June 12, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB. The paper later received a brief message from the Haut-Commissariat à l'Information denying any misuse of public funds, and any investigation into supposed misuse of funds. "On nous écrit de Brazzaville," *Courrier d'Afrique* (Léopoldville), June 27, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, June 28, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

<sup>177</sup> "balayer" Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 64.

<sup>178</sup> "Après la visite de Sékou Touré au Congo Brazzaville," *Courrier d'Afrique* (Léopoldville), June 11, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, June 12, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB. See also an Italian report on Touré's visit in *Revue de la Presse*, June 24, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB. See also Darien Semoke, "Après la visite de M. Sékou Touré : Vague d'arrestations à Brazzaville," *Le Progrès* (Léopoldville), June 11, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, June 13, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

dam project, and the two governments reached other agreements for cultural and social exchanges.<sup>180</sup>

But a visit meant to solidify the new alliance between Touré and Youlou was undermined by the controversy created by Touré's public speeches. His supporters in the audience did not necessarily see Touré's own embrace of a single-party state as hypocritical. In the eyes of many young activists, there could be both progressive and reactionary single-party states. A progressive single party would work toward concerted state-led economic development, social equality, and the Africanization of all realms of society. A reactionary party was seen as a project to solidify neocolonial control of the country through the leadership of a small clique of *valets*. Though such distinctions were hardly clear cut in practice, many young Congolese saw Touré's project as an example of the former and Youlou's as the latter.

Touré's visit had not only stimulated a general "malaise," it also emboldened the nascent radical opposition of the UJC, ASCO, and CGAT militants. Youlou, aware of the change in mood, quickly moved to arrest a number of trade unionists in the wake of Touré's departure, hoping to stem any further opposition in the streets. Among those detained were three CGAT leaders, including Julien Boukambou, who had been arrested a few years earlier under the guise of the "Communist plot."<sup>181</sup> But the mood in the city had been dramatically altered, giving Youlou's opponents a newly heightened status. The French

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<sup>179</sup> As part of the many contradictions of Touré's position in this moment, it's worth noting that prior to visiting Brazzaville he had been in Gabon for an official meeting—working on similar agreements with a government that most Congolese radicals detested. (Notable though that Léon M'Ba was in France during his visit.) "L'Arrivée du Président Sékou Touré à Libreville," *Agence Congolaise d'Information* (ACI), reprinted in *Révue de la Presse*, June 8, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

<sup>180</sup> For the actual agreements, see Lewin, *Ahmed Sékou Touré, 1922-1984*, 5. See also an Italian report on Touré's visit in *Révue de la Presse*, June 24, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

<sup>181</sup> Darien Semoke, "Après la visite de M. Sékou Touré : Vague d'arrestations à Brazzaville," *Le Progrès* (Léopoldville), June 11, 1963, reprinted in *Révue de la Presse*, June 13, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB; "Après la visite de Sékou Touré au Congo Brazzaville," *Courrier d'Afrique* (Léopoldville), June 11, 1963, reprinted in *Révue de la Presse*, June 12, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB. Martin Mberi also recounts that François Gandou was among the arrested unionists after Touré's visit. Mberi, interview, November 19, 2012.

ambassador noticed a “great agitation in the population” after Touré’s visit.<sup>182</sup> Martin Mberi, a student leader in Brazzaville at the time, referred to Touré as the “*déclencheur*”—the initiator, or spark—of the Congolese revolution.<sup>183</sup>

Students in Congo clearly felt emboldened by Touré’s visit. Shortly after, Youlou planned to preside over the distribution of prizes for the students at Lycée Savorgnan de Brazza. But when Youlou arrived at the school, students began to heckle him. Youlou departed angrily and ordered a meeting with the leadership of ASCO. According to Martin Mberi, the meeting took place around the eleventh or twelfth of August at the Presidential Palace and included himself, Ange Diawara, and Gustave Aba-Gandzion—all ASCO leaders. Youlou and Prosper Gandzion, minister of national education, interrogated the students about the incident at the prize ceremony and demanded to know why they had cheered when Touré had critiqued the Congolese government. Youlou saw the ASCO, which he counted among his communist (or communist-influenced) opponents, as responsible for all expressions of student discontent, including past strikes. According to Mberi, the meeting was a clear attempt to intimidate the student organizers, and though they were not punished then, he left with a clear sense that they would be arrested shortly thereafter.<sup>184</sup> Yet within a week, the situation would be turned upside down: Youlou’s government would be overthrown, and the young ASCO leaders at the meeting—Mberi, Diawara, and Aba-Gandzion—would all go on to play crucial roles in the new government.

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<sup>182</sup> “grand agitation dans la population” from “Note a/s Politique française en Afrique après la Conférence d’Addis-Abeba,” July 5, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN. The report is mostly about tensions between UAM countries and Portuguese colonies. Specifically worried that in Congo, the visit of Touré had also opened new anger toward Portuguese settlers in Congo. French authorities worried that since Portuguese and French settler populations lived and worked together, that French citizens could also become inadvertent targets of any anti-Portuguese sentiment.

<sup>183</sup> Mberi, interview, November 19, 2012.

<sup>184</sup> Mberi, interview, November 19, 2012.

## VI. A Confrontation with the Trade Unions

Youlou sought to incorporate union leaders into a single, state-affiliated union federation that would exist as an appendage of the parti unique. Such a creation was not new in African states, and Sékou Touré had again provided Youlou with a model. After Guinean independence in 1958, the government placed the UGTAN trade union federation under the umbrella of the PDG. The move was contested by some union workers, especially by teachers and rail workers, but had some basis in the longstanding collaboration between Touré, the PDG, and Guinean unions in anticolonial agitation.<sup>185</sup>

In Congo, the consolidation of the trade union movement into the single party could hardly be justified on the basis of proven collaboration between union leaders and the UDDIA leadership. In general, Congolese unions and political parties never developed close links, as in Guinea or Senegal (see chapter 1). The union movement in Congo was smaller and grew more slowly than unions in much of AOF, and unions played less of a role in anticolonial agitation.<sup>186</sup> Both Simon-Pierre Kikounga-Ngot and Jacques Opangault had been members of the trade union movement, but their transition into politics did not result in union-party alliances.<sup>187</sup> Similarly, some members of the CATC had been leaders in the UDDIA, but Youlou—unlike Touré—had never been close to the union movement, and had long been

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<sup>185</sup> Touré had been a leader in both the trade union movement and the PDG since 1952. UGTAN (and its predecessor) collaborated with the party throughout the 1950s in strikes and anti-colonial activities. The colonial state's overlapping political and economic control in Guinea had led union militants and party militants to see their overlapping struggles as organically linked. Still, the left wing of the teachers and railroad workers unions resisted the consolidation of UGTAN into the structures of the single-party state in Guinea. After 1958, Touré was quick to repress strikes as they now challenged his regime, notably the teachers' strike of 1962. Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea*, 129 Rivière, *Mobilization of a People*, 53, 57-58; Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*; Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa*, 230.

<sup>186</sup> Ollandet, "Mouvement syndical congolais," 423.

<sup>187</sup> Ollandet claims that Opangault began as a "syndicaliste" though I haven't come across this elsewhere. Ollandet, "Mouvement syndical congolais," 419.

despised by its more radical leaders. By 1963, all the major union federations had pulled away from close association with any party, including UDDIA.

After Touré's visit, Youlou accelerated the drive for the single-party state, and this would eventually be the issue that cemented the opposition of the trade union movement as a whole. Just a few years earlier, the government had managed to divide the trade union federations along anti-communist lines: CGAT leaders were marginalized for their connections to the communist world, and CASL and CATC leaders were pulled temporarily toward the administration. But in the summer of 1963, the three union federations created a united front to oppose Youlou's *parti unique*. The trade union challenge to the proposal became the organizational basis for the general strike that unexpectedly brought down Youlou's government on August 15, 1963. This turn of events raises important historical questions. First, what allowed for the union leadership to temporarily unite across longstanding divisions and mount a *political* challenge to the government? Second, how did the trade unions provide structures that allowed for the organized expression of popular anger? And lastly, how did radicals from the CGAT, UJC, ASCO, and AEC transform this organized resistance into an open challenge to the government?

### **The Possibility of a United Response**

CGAT leaders had criticized Youlou's government since before independence, and their arrests in May 1960 and June 1963 only solidified this animosity. They loudly rejected any proposal for a single party or a single trade union federation that came from the existing government. CGAT leaders' opposition was explicitly political; they saw the current government as undemocratic, interested in its own self-enrichment over the well being of the mass of the Congolese population, and unable to break from colonial mindsets and relationships. But what brought the other two federations, the CATC and CASL, into the opposition? And why were the CGAT leaders willing to work with them?

The most important shift that took place was the CATC and its leadership openly opposing Youlou's proposals, and choosing to collaborate with the CGAT. The CATC dominated the Congolese workers' movement, and unlike the CGAT, could not be targeted for having Communist sympathies. Both Youlou and the CATC leadership had developed their influence through their relationship with the Catholic Church. This initially created a natural alliance between many members of the CATC and the UDDIA. Before being defrocked, Youlou had been the confessor for the head of the CATC, Gilbert Pongault, and the two traveled together to Rome.<sup>188</sup> But Youlou's political decisions as president quickly began to strain this relationship.<sup>189</sup> Once Pongault and the rest of the CATC leadership came out openly against Youlou's proposal, the balance of forces changed dramatically. Their size and their respectability as politically moderate union leaders lent the opposition a degree of mass appeal that the CGAT alone could not provide.

The CATC was opposed to Youlou's proposals for two reasons. First, it rejected *on principle* the creation of a single national trade union as envisioned by Youlou. CATC leaders had previously spurned the CGAT's invitation to create a unified federation, independent of the state, because they did not want to ally with Communist sympathizers. But CATC leaders rejected Youlou's proposal for a different reason: The leaders of the Catholic trade unions held strongly to the principle that religious associations (like the CATC) had the right to autonomy from state control. As would later become clear, leaders of the CGAT, and even some from the CASL were open to the idea of a government-associated trade union federation *if* the government itself had declared openly progressive principles regarding the rights and livelihoods of workers. But the CATC leadership opposed being assimilated into *any* state-associated trade union federation.

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<sup>188</sup> Pongault, interview.

<sup>189</sup> Pongault, interview.

Secondly, the CATC's relationship to the state began to change because of the changing situation of private religious school teachers in Congo. These teachers made up the largest base of members in the CATC.<sup>190</sup> Christian missions ran the vast majority of educational institutions in the new nation, a situation developed over decades of colonial rule.<sup>191</sup> Colonial state and religious authorities (especially the Catholic clergy) often found themselves competing for influence over the population of Congo.<sup>192</sup> But the colonial government heavily subsidized religious schools, which created a beneficial situation for both parties.<sup>193</sup> The colonial administration saved an enormous amount of money and labor by funding private educational institutions rather than setting up a public school system. At the same time, clergy from various denominations recognized that primary schools were their main means of acquiring new religious adherents from a young age. They were happy to accept colonial money in order to expand their educational efforts in the spirit of greater proselytization.

By independence, European-led missions were pressured to "Africanize" the private teaching staff in primary school.<sup>194</sup> However, part of the spirit of Africanization that swept through much of the waged workforce in French Africa in the 1950s was also the demand for parity of salary and benefits with white workers. In Congo, private school teachers compared their unregulated pay to that of teachers working in public schools, many of them still European ex-patriots. A state security report from June 1960

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<sup>190</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 30.

<sup>191</sup> Ibiou notes 286 private schools to 181 public schools in 1956. Ibiou, "L'histoire de l'éducation au Congo," 295.

<sup>192</sup> See Martin, *Leisure and Society*.

<sup>193</sup> Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*, 296; Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*.

<sup>194</sup> Youlou claimed in mid-1960 that all primary school instruction had been Africanized, though it is unclear if he was referring to both public and private institutions. "Reponses par Mr. Le President de la République aux interpellations a l'Assemblée Nationale du 15 June 1960. Seance du 20.6.60," carton 16, PR, ANCB. The push for Africanization is visible between 1960 to 1963 in everything from industry to parliamentary debates to Christian missions. See for example, Congolese Protestants calling for an African pastor to be made president of the Mission Evangelique Suedoise. "A/s de la mission evangelique suedoise," June 22, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB.



suggested that private school instructors were in favor of the government taking over the education system, ostensibly to rectify this inequality.<sup>195</sup>

In 1961, the private school teachers, mostly organized through the CATC, went on strike. With mission authorities unable to meet the wage demands of the strikers, the government intervened and took responsibility for paying the teachers' salaries. The colonial state had long subsidized religious education in Congo, but now the postcolonial state would manage teachers' salaries directly. Jérôme Ollandet writes that government intervention was initially a financial relief for the churches and missionaries.<sup>196</sup> But there was a contradiction in the new arrangement: the teachers were on the state payroll, but remained private employees. A law passed in February 1962 sought to resolve the situation by making the private school teachers members of the civil service (*fonction publique*).<sup>197</sup> As a result, mission administrators lost much of their practical authority over their own teaching staff. That same year, the private school teachers from Catholic, Protestant, and Salvation Army (*salutiste*) schools formed their own union, the National Union of Congolese Teachers (Syndicat National des Enseignants du Congo, SNEC), under the auspices of the CATC.<sup>198</sup>

The transfer of the teachers' payroll to the state budget was a bold move for Youlou's government. Private school teachers were largely hospitable to the change at first, as it brought the promise of increased salaries and better leverage for the unionized teachers. And ostensibly, teachers—the CATC's biggest constituency—were now tied to the fate of the government that paid them. The

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<sup>195</sup> "...étatisation totale de l'Enseignement" See "A/s de l'Enseignement privé," June 25, 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB. The document implies that this was already a proposal from Youlou, perhaps referencing the state take over of private teachers' salaries that would take place in 1961.

<sup>196</sup> Ollandet, "Mouvement syndical congolais," 423.

<sup>197</sup> Loi 15/62 of February 3, 1962, established all teachers "comme des fonctionnaires de l'Etat" according to Ollandet, "Mouvement syndical congolais," 423.

<sup>198</sup> SNEC "qui regroupait les maîtres des établissements privés des trois confessions religieuses qui tenaient des écoles dans le pays, à savoir : les Catholiques, les Protestants et les Salutistes." Ollandet, "Mouvement syndical congolais," 424.

CATC now grouped together the largest section of state employees. However, the new law ultimately did not work in Youlou's favor for two reasons.

First, the teachers were dissatisfied with the terms of employment that they gained from becoming civil employees (*fonctionnaires*). Ollandet's work suggests that the inclusion of private teachers in the civil service raised their expectations for pay and living standards higher than what the government could (or choose to) fulfill. Additionally, teachers were now organized in a union and grew more connected to other state workers who had grown frustrated with the regime. Ollandet claims that the Africanization of the civil service in Congo was a slow process, with many lower-ranking public employees becoming increasingly bitter that Youlou's advisors, ministerial cabinet directors, and even typists were still largely European holdovers from the colonial administration. The same law from February 1962 that brought the private teachers into the civil service also entrenched the position of these Europeans.<sup>199</sup> The European "technical assistants" were to be integrated into the civil service as well.<sup>200</sup> The official state employees (*fonctionnaires*) made attempts at organizing themselves in 1961, but were forbidden to join a union, which further frustrated many of them. The leaders of the three union federations in Congo were able to bring many of the radicalizing Congolese *fonctionnaires* into the opposition.<sup>201</sup> If Ollandet is correct about the high degree of frustration that existed among Congolese civil service employees, there is reason to suspect that this budding radicalization spilled over to the newly classified private school teachers.

Second, the CATC still relied heavily on the institutional support of the Catholic Church, which grew increasingly hostile to Youlou. The clergy who ran private schools were still the official supervisors of their teachers, but their authority was greatly undermined now that they did not control the

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<sup>199</sup> Loi 15/62 of February 3, 1962, which fixed the "statut général de la fonction publique."

<sup>200</sup> Ollandet claims that this was due in part to pressure from the French government, which could not absorb all of the returning state employees from colonial regimes. Ollandet, "Mouvement syndical congolais," 429.

<sup>201</sup> Ollandet, "Mouvement syndical congolais," 430.

teachers' salaries. Additionally, with teachers paid directly by the state, Ollandet notes that the mission schools lost their subsidies, which placed more financial constraints on the mission authorities.<sup>202</sup> Clergy connected to the CATC tended to blame Prosper Gandzion, Youlou's minister of national education and a former public school teacher.<sup>203</sup>

Lastly, a key factor in drawing the CATC together with the CGAT and the CASL was the unquantifiable growth of discontent among a large swathe of the Congolese population due to their lived experiences. As discussed earlier, untenable living situations, disconnect from elected officials, and visible signs of ministers' ostentation made for a ready opposition, especially in the streets of Brazzaville. Negotiations over the parti unique taking place in the National Assembly and Presidential Palace seemed to be entrenching the political elites whom many people held responsible for their situation. In this context, the critiques of the government that had been leveled by the CGAT, ASCO, and UJC over the previous years resonated with a growing audience, especially after Sékou Touré's visit.

In challenging Youlou's proposed single-party state, the CATC and CASL leaders could not bypass the CGAT, because of its record in opposing Youlou and connections to youth and student leaders. During this time, spokespeople from the CATC and CASL, who sought to address the discontent of their own memberships, often adopted the critiques previously leveled by radical trade union, youth, and student activists. At the same time, the CGAT was still far too small to wage an open fight with Youlou on its own. The CGAT leaders had always hoped to increase their influence through a united trade union movement, and they were happy to have the opportunity to ally with the CATC and CASL in order to reach a broader audience as they stepped out of their previously marginalized position. The result was an unlikely united front formed between the three federations.

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<sup>202</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 30.

<sup>203</sup> As noted earlier, Gandzion was simultaneously facing opposition from public school students for failing to Africanize secondary education in Congo.

## The Unions as Organized Center for Social Opposition

The alliance of the three union federations was significant because it created an organizational pole around which a wide range of government critics could gather. With parliamentary opposition integrated into Youlou's political project between 1959 and 1963, social discontent lacked an outlet for expression within the Congolese political system. The union leaders occupied an intermediate position: they no longer maintained alliances with political parties, but the administration wanted to include them in negotiations over the parti unique. By openly contesting Youlou's proposal, the unions were elevated to the position of representing the opposition of a massive swathe of Congolese society. In the process, they created the space—quite literally on the streets of Brazzaville—for radical youth and student activists to claim leadership of the young protesters who drove the upheaval of August 13 to 15.

Sékou Touré's visit prompted a series of meetings between the three major trade union federations at Brazzaville's Bourse de Travail between June 10 and July 2. Hoping to coalesce their opposition to the parti unique, the unions made two coalition attempts, the second of which—the Trade Union Fusion Committee (Comité de fusion des syndicats)—became functional. The coalition's leadership recognized both the CATC's dominant size and the CGAT's longstanding reputation as critics of the government. Pascal Okiemba-Morlende of the CATC became president, while Julien Boukambou of the CGAT became vice president.

In response to Youlou's proposal for trade union leaders to join negotiations over the single party, the Comité de Fusion released a Joint Union Declaration (Déclaration commune des syndicats). The declaration asserted a precondition for any discussion: The creation of a provisional government that reduced the number of ministers from the existing twenty down to eight.<sup>204</sup> But Youlou rebuffed the unionists' demand and publicly declared that the parti unique would be formed, and roundtable

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<sup>204</sup> From sixteen ministers and four ministres d'état down to eight ministers. Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 66.

discussions would began on August 3.<sup>205</sup> Talks were to include representatives from the three major political parties, the military, the bureau of the national assembly, the civil service (fonctionnaires), and the unions.<sup>206</sup>

In the negotiations, the unions were represented by Abel Thauley-Nganga from the CGAT and Okiemba-Morlende from the CATC, who both criticized Youlou's proposal.<sup>207</sup> Youlou began the negotiations with a meager attempt to compromise with his union critics, saying that he would consider reforms to reorganize the government. But he would only do so *after* the implementation of the parti unique, which was set to take place on August 15, on the third anniversary of Congolese independence.<sup>208</sup> The message was clear: Youlou had decided upon the timetable and the general outcome of the negotiations.

Three days after the opening of the discussions, Youlou again accused the unions of acting undemocratically and his government banned all large public meetings and all political gatherings that were "contrary to the principle of national indivisibility."<sup>209</sup> The provisional head of the French embassy, Jean de Garnier des Garets, speculated that Youlou's repressive response illustrated his desire for unchallenged authority over the formation of the single party, and his unwillingness to concede any

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<sup>205</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 66.

<sup>206</sup> No author, "Elaboration d'un Parti Unique au Congo-Brazzaville," *Le Monde*, August 8, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, August 9, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB. Boutet says that fonctionnaires were invited to have their own representatives. Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 67.

<sup>207</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 67.

<sup>208</sup> Telegram 463–64 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), August 10, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN; Letter/Report from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville), August 12, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>209</sup> "...un caractère politique ou contraire aux principes de l'indivisibilité nationale." Decree n. 63/244, August 6, 1963. See "Un soulèvement populaire renverse le gouvernement Youlou. Un gouvernement provisoire et mis en [sic]," *La Semaine Africaine*, August 18, 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, August 21, 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB; Letter/Report from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville), August 12, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN; Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 68.

ground to the trade unions.<sup>210</sup> Youlou had hoped that a firm rebuttal of the unions' demands would reopen divisions within the ranks of the union leaders and weaken the Comité de Fusion.<sup>211</sup> Reports from the French embassy noted that Youlou's rhetorical attacks on the unions, and his restrictions on their freedom of action, only confirmed for union leaders that he had no intention of considering their proposed reforms. Officially rebuffed by the regime, but with the weight of popular opinion behind them, union leaders decided to take a new initiative.

Negotiations over the single party were to begin again on Friday, August 9, and while the dialogue between the government and the unions formally continued, Youlou and the union leaders were now publicly at odds with each other. The same day, the Comité de Fusion called a mass meeting of workers at the Bourse de Travail in Brazzaville, to discuss their strategy and the possibility of a strike.<sup>212</sup> Those present chose the morning of Tuesday, August 13, for a half-day protest strike, to take place in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, and Dolisie, the three main urban areas of the country.<sup>213</sup> The unionists could not distribute tracts without facing repression, and no newspaper or radio program would announce their strike call—so they had less than three days to spread the strike call by word of mouth.<sup>214</sup> At the

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<sup>210</sup> Letter/Report from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville), August 12, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN. Jean Rossard, the *Haut Représentant* of France in Congo was not present in Brazzaville until the day after Youlou's resignation.

<sup>211</sup> « Il a craint sans doute de voir échapper, au profit de mouvements syndicaux qu'il ne contrôle pas, une partie de son autorité, de les voir prendre à l'intérieure même du parti unique une influence qui aurait combattu ou limité la sienne ; peut-être aussi a-t-il senti quelques dissensions parmi leurs dirigeants et a-t-il jugé le moment venu de briser ce pouvoir montant. » Letter/Report from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville), August 12, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>212</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 79-80.

<sup>213</sup> Telegram 463–64 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), August 10, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN; Telegram 466–68 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), August 12, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>214</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 69.

French embassy, des Garets felt sure that the Congolese government was not willing to budge, and by the time the strike had been called, he was becoming worried about a possible showdown.<sup>215</sup>

The protest was only planned for the morning of Tuesday, August 13—it was not called as an indefinite strike. Workers had been asked to assemble in front of the Bourse de Travail in their city. Thus, the strikers were neither to picket individual workplaces nor stay home. The public gathering was clearly, and purposely, an open challenge to the government's ban on "all public demonstrations of a political character until the parti unique has been put in place."<sup>216</sup> The decision to call a public gathering also allowed non-unionized workers, men and women who were unemployed, and students, to participate in the strike. The general strike became a gauge of whether the population of Brazzaville would back the unions in their action.<sup>217</sup>

The weekend before the strike was to begin, the unions named provisional leaders, in the event that the existing leadership was arrested before or during the strike. The head of the French embassy noted that it was both a precaution to make sure the strike could carry on, but perhaps also a reflection of the union leaders' own concern that they might be "overtaken by their troops."<sup>218</sup> The government for its part was also preparing for a showdown. The administration called a meeting between the heads of the military, the *gendarmerie*, and the police. The police were put on a state of alert, and the government prepared decrees for the requisitioning of workers essential to the public service.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Telegram 463–64 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), August 10, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>216</sup> "...toute manifestation publique de caractère politique jusqu'à la mise on place du Parti unique" Telegram 466–68 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), August 12, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>217</sup> Claude-Ernest Ndalla "Graille", interview with author, October 18, 2012, Brazzaville.

<sup>218</sup> "...d'être dépassés par leurs troupes." Telegram 466–68 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), August 12, 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

The French embassy in Brazzaville, represented by des Garets, seemed to see the danger of an open social conflict as more hypothetical than real.<sup>220</sup> Given the strong anticolonial sentiment directed at the Portuguese government, Portuguese embassy officials asked Portuguese storeowners to close their shops for the morning of the strike, as they feared their nationals would be targeted by protesters.<sup>221</sup> The French embassy did not issue such a decree, and reported that most French nationals in Congo, including the embassy staff, were unconcerned.

However, over the weekend, des Garets composed a lengthy letter that offers insights into the tense atmosphere that had enveloped Brazzaville.<sup>222</sup> While des Garets did not think that the strike would escalate into a mass social or political struggle, on the eve of the protest, he suddenly seemed unnerved by the possibility. He began his letter, “The situation here is degrading, the discontent has spread, it has been brought out into the open, it has benefited from the embryo of organization granted by the trade unions, which took the lead.”<sup>223</sup> Youlou led a “hated” regime (“*régime honni*”), des Garets continued, and by rejecting the unions’ demands for reforms, had put himself at the center of the “unpopularity and contempt” that had previously been directed at his ministers’ ostentation and incompetence. Adopting the union proposal and reducing the overblown size of his government would

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<sup>219</sup> Telegram 466-468 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 12 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN. Interestingly, des Garets did not see why such requisitions would be necessary for such a short strike, which seems to reflect a change in mood from what he wrote over the previous weekend.

<sup>220</sup> The official French ambassador to Congo, Jean Rossard, returned to his post the day after the fall of Youlou.

<sup>221</sup> The Portuguese had a much bigger reason to be concerned given Congolese sympathies for the ongoing independence movements in nearby Angola, and anger at the Portuguese dictatorship’s brutal repression. Telegram 466-468 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 12 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>222</sup> The letter was likely intended for someone at the Foreign Affairs Ministry or Jacques Foccart’s office. It was not sent as a telegram, so des Garets anticipated that it would not arrive until after the strike had begun.

<sup>223</sup> Letter/Report from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville), 12 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN. In scribbled pen at the top, it seems to say that it was “écrit le 10 & 11, partie le 12.”



have allowed Youlou to “sacrifice” some of his unpopular ministers and regain credibility, according to des Garets. He noted that the unions were not necessarily opposed to the single party, just Youlou’s insistence of dominance over it. Des Garets claimed that the unions would have likely supported a proposal to disband the existing government and constitution and allow the triumvirate of Opangault, Tchichelle, and Youlou to run the government until the creation of a single party could be negotiated. But Youlou had rejected all of these compromises. Now, the situation had become a powder keg where des Garets feared that any clashes between the police and the strikers would explode into a more general uprising: “A few brawls in the morning, during the day Poto-Poto and Bacongo rise up and the process takes off.”<sup>224</sup>

## VII. Les Trois Glorieuses

The night before the strike was to take place, the leaders of the Trade Union Fusion Committee met, first in secret at the Tsiémé cemetery on the edge of Brazzaville where they confirmed their alliance, and then at the Bourse de Travail<sup>225</sup> to make preparations for the following day. There, late at night, Congolese gendarmes rushed the building and arrested the three union leaders who remained inside.<sup>226</sup> According to Bazenguissa-Ganga, the white gendarmerie captain reported seeing three implicating slogans scrawled on a blackboard behind the union leaders: “Union unity is the life force of the nation,” “We don’t want a government of thieves,” and “We fight the government of thieves until the last

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<sup>224</sup> “Quelques bagarres le matin, dans la journée Poto-Poto et Bacongo se montent et le processus se déclenche.” Letter/Report from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville), 12 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>225</sup> Cemeteries have played an important role in Brazzaville politics. See examples in Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*.

<sup>226</sup> The three arrested were Adolphe Bengui, François Gandou, Abel Thauley-Ganga. The eldest of those arrested was Thauley-Nganga who had previously been arrested as in 1960 under the guise of the “Communist plot.” Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 81. The narrative that follows is a synthesis of that presented by Bazenguissa-Ganga (Boutet) and reports from the French embassy in Brazzaville during the events.

minute.”<sup>227</sup> Charged with defamation of the government, the unionists were held overnight at the Bourse de Travail before being taken to a prison across town early on the morning of the thirteenth. Unionists quickly tried to spread the word about their imprisoned comrades and announced a new meeting place outside of the main train station in Brazzaville, the Place de la Gare.

At 3am that morning, the police began to occupy the main routes of the *quartiers populaires*, key locations within the colonial city center, and the Bourse de travail. Nevertheless, by 6:30 am, more than seven thousand people had arrived at the Place de la Gare.<sup>228</sup> Shortly thereafter, a group of union leaders, including Pascal Okiemba-Morlende of the CATC raced from across town after trying to alert people in Brazzaville’s southern neighborhoods about the new meeting place. They were chased by gendarmes through the colonial city center, arriving at the gathering just as the gendarmes’ vehicles surrounded them. Led by French Colonel Alfred Jean, the gendarmes pulled the strike leaders out of their car. Upon recognition of the situation, the crowd turned on Colonel Jean and the gendarmes and began harassing them. The union leaders attempted to calm the situation, then Okiemba-Morlende stepped up onto a nearby barrel, expounded a critique of the government, and the protest began. By 9am, the demonstration began to move toward Brazzaville’s newly constructed City Hall, only to be met with the charges of mounted police and tear gas upon arrival. As the strikers held an impromptu meeting to decide what to do, many first found out about the arrest of union leaders the night before, as well as the arrest of two more union leaders that morning.

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<sup>227</sup> “La fusion syndicale est la force vive de la nation,” “Nous ne voulons pas d’un gouvernement de voleurs,” and “Nous combattons le gouvernement des voleurs jusqu’à la dernière minute.” Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 82.

<sup>228</sup> Des Garets reports one to two thousand in the morning, though it’s unclear what time he received this estimate, as the numbers increased throughout the morning. Telegram 472-473 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN. Also reported as seven thousand in “La Question à résoudre en priorité est celle du chômage” and “Les événements de Brazzaville,” in *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, n. 928, 24 August 1963, reproduced in Série B Congo Politique, ANCB.

Faced with police attacks, some strikers retreated, but thousands decided to continue on to the Maison d'Arrêt (jail) where they suspected that the arrested unionists were being held.<sup>229</sup> Upon arrival, the demonstrators found themselves immediately facing more police, and tensions began to escalate. In an important turn of events, a section of the military sent to guard the prison sided with the demonstrators, allowing Okiemba-Morlende and others to enter. Other military and police forces present initially backed away, but then began to throw tear gas at the demonstrators and opened fire with live ammunition. Three young strikers were gunned down: Raphaël Massamba, Gaston Lenda, and Pierre Tsiété.<sup>230</sup> The demonstrators, angered and undeterred, took control of the Maison d'Arrêt around 10:30am and released the 350 prisoners held inside, including some of their comrades.<sup>231</sup>

In the wake of events at the Maison d'Arrêt, some unionists called for a march on the Presidential Palace, but they received a message signed by Youlou, alerting them that the government had called upon the French military to intervene.<sup>232</sup> Hoping to avoid a direct confrontation with French forces outside the Presidential Palace, some unionists called for a march on the radio station instead, hoping to use it as a means of reaching a broader audience.<sup>233</sup> Upon arrival, the demonstrators were met by French troops, who agreed not to open fire if the protesters left the premises. For some union leaders

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<sup>229</sup> See also Telegram 472-473 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>230</sup> Des Garets however reported in a telegram sent shortly afterward that four or five protesters had been killed, with twenty hospitalized with wounds, and one police officer or Gendarme. Telegram 478-479 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>231</sup> Des Garets notes that most of the prisoners however, were "de droit commun" and not political prisoners. Telegram 478-479 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>232</sup> According to des Garets, Youlou had made the request almost as soon as the protesters had begun to leave the Place de la Gare. Telegram 472-473 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN

<sup>233</sup> Though some protesters argued that it would be better to burn the radio station to prevent Youlou from using it.

and demonstrators, the shootings by the Congolese military outside the Maison d'Arrêt, and now the possibility of an attack from French troops had a sobering effect. The Congolese military was composed of two thousand troops, but was clearly split over whether to support the demonstrators. The French military however, backed up with additional troops from the Central African Republic, numbered three thousand. The group at the radio station retreated to a nearby stadium, where they received an emissary from Youlou stating that the president was willing to entertain the unions' demands and reopen negotiations. This news seems to have provided some relief to the strikers, and the crowd dispersed, heading back toward the main African neighborhoods of the city.

But the events on the morning of the thirteenth simultaneously had the effect of escalating the conflict. Bazenguissa-Ganga notes that many people had come to the Place de la Gare, barefoot and in ragged clothing, because of frustration with their work or living situations. Union leaders had conceived the action as a political protest, to express opposition to the single-party proposal advanced by Youlou. These two concerns were not necessarily counterposed. Opposition to the single-party proposal, and now the demonstration itself, came to encapsulate the multiple grievances of participants. Simmering discontent with living conditions had already tarnished Youlou and his ministers in the eyes of many workers and the unemployed. The goal of the demonstration had been to force concessions out of the political establishment, though there were many interpretations of what kind of concessions would be adequate.

The administration's response to the strike altered the perspective of many of the participants. The arrest of the trade unionists the night before, the dramatic arrival of trade union leaders with the gendarmes in hot pursuit, the show of force on the streets by the police, and, finally, the killings outside of the Maison d'Arrêt intensified tensions dramatically. When the action was planned, it seems unlikely that anyone involved thought Youlou would be overthrown. But after the events on the morning of the thirteenth, radicals within the CGAT, UJC, and ASCO began to assert more urgent calls for the dissolution

of the government—and they found a receptive audience among the demonstrators. As des Garets noted in a telegram that afternoon, “French troops risk finding themselves in the following situation: providing support to legal authorities in the face of a de facto power [the unions], supported by a large fraction of the Congolese military forces and quasi-totality of the population.”<sup>234</sup>

As some demonstrators made their way back to their neighborhoods, they headed for the homes of ministers and members of the government. Protesters began to empty the villas, set some of them on fire, and graffiti the walls with messages mocking their inhabitants’ extravagance and referencing stolen public funds. French troops and Congolese gendarmes only managed to take control of the city around 3 pm. In the early evening a curfew and a state of emergency had been declared, banning any gatherings of three or more people, and cutting off all communication with Léopoldville. The state of emergency was extended to Dolisie and Pointe-Noire, where protests had also taken place as well, though without the escalation that occurred in Brazzaville.<sup>235</sup>

French military intervention was the decisive factor in halting the organized protests on the first day of the strike. Des Garets had been concerned about the political risks of intervention in the days leading up to the strike. The joint defense accords signed between France and most of its former colonies, including Congo, provided certain stipulations for the engagement of French military forces in the case that African governments were threatened. Though des Garets had seen an escalation as unlikely, he had been explicitly concerned about being drawn into a position of defending a highly

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<sup>234</sup> “Les troupes françaises risquent de se trouver dans la situation suivante: apporter leur soutien aux autorités légales face à un pouvoir de fait, appuyé par une large fraction des forces congolaises et la quasi totalité de la population.” Telegram 480-481 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>235</sup> Telegram 478-479 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

unpopular government, and in the process, “digging a ditch between us and those who in the future will most likely be at the head of the country.”<sup>236</sup>

By 11am on the first day of the strike, Youlou was at the French embassy demanding that the request for French intervention be rushed to Paris for approval. Youlou called for military help “to maintain and reestablish order” under the terms of the military accords signed by both governments at the time of independence.<sup>237</sup> As des Garets noted, “He was in extreme distress, claiming that the situation was catastrophic and that if, within five minutes, the French forces did not intervene, all was lost.”<sup>238</sup> De Gaulle quickly approved intervention, the requisition for French intervention was signed by des Garets at 12:15pm, and French troops were moved in action immediately.<sup>239</sup>

On the fourteenth, the military siege and perpetual curfew in Brazzaville made any sort of large demonstration unrealizable, though smaller groups continued to target the homes of ministers and their family members. Meanwhile, union leaders tried to establish negotiations with French and Congolese military officials, and secured a meeting with General Kergaravat, who was in charge of French forces. Kergaravat’s willingness to meet with union officials was notable in itself—no similar gesture was extended to Senegalese trade unionists in 1968—and presaged the French government’s decision to drop support for Youlou. Union leaders asked Kergaravat to withdraw his troops, asserting that the conflict in Brazzaville was strictly a Congolese affair.<sup>240</sup> Invoking the 1958 referendum, they argued that

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<sup>236</sup> Letter/Report from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French embassy in Brazzaville), 12 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN. “...in this country the reactions are terribly violent,” he noted un-ironically.

<sup>237</sup> Telegram 474 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>238</sup> “Il était dans un extrême désarroi, affirmant que la situation était catastrophique et que si, d’ici cinq minutes, les forces françaises n’intervenaient pas, tout était perdu.”

<sup>239</sup> Telegram 475-476 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>240</sup> It’s worth noting, as the strike leaders emphasized later, that no French nationals were targeted by the protesters.

the overwhelming vote to join the French Communauté did not grant the French the right to do as they pleased in Congo. To protect Youlou now, they argued, was to oppose the will of the people.<sup>241</sup>

Discussions with French authorities continued through the day but reached no resolution.<sup>242</sup>

At the French embassy, des Garets hardened his position. Wary of French military intervention in the days leading up to the strike, he now found himself clinging to Youlou's administration rather than face the prospect of a more radical government coming to power. He noted that if French forces had not surrounded the Presidential Palace immediately, the protesters, allied with a section of the Congolese military, would have overthrown the regime on the first day. Fearing a turn toward "extremism," he argued that "the removal of President Youlou is not desirable."<sup>243</sup> For the moment, Youlou had the backing of the French military and the French embassy, and in a public pronouncement, made it clear that he would not relinquish the presidency.<sup>244</sup> However, that evening Youlou announced that he would dismiss most of his ministers, and convene a government that could move the country toward reconciliation and the formation of a unified party in the future.<sup>245</sup> Unsure of how best to proceed, union leaders decide to call a public meeting in a *rond-point* in the northern part of the city for the following day, August 15, the third anniversary of Congolese independence.

Ironically, the day that marked the end of French colonial rule began with French troops occupying Brazzaville. But union, UJC, ASCO, and AEC activists had been traversing their neighborhoods

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<sup>241</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 102.

<sup>242</sup> Gilbert Pongault, CATC leader, recounted that he even went to Kinshasa to meet with the nephew of Yvonne de Gaulle, the wife of Charles de Gaulle. Pongault, interview.

<sup>243</sup> Telegram 485-487 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 14 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN. "L'élimination du Président Youlou n'est pas souhaitable."

<sup>244</sup> Telegram 494 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 14 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>245</sup> In calling for support, he symbolically quoted de Gaulle, "Aidez-moi, et je ne vous decevrai pas." He kept Opangault, Tchichelle, and Nzalakanda (the latter very unpopular) as ministers.

the night before, arguing that Youlou needed to step down. In the process they won over many members of both the UDDIA youth and the women's section of the party, the Femmes-Caimans. Rather than marching to the meeting at the rond-point called by union leaders, a large group of demonstrators from the southern part of the city headed directly to the Presidential Palace.<sup>246</sup> The palace had formerly housed the colonial governors of AEF, and this march on the anniversary of independence was an incredibly charged event. The protesters arrived at the palace to find French armored vehicles still guarding Youlou.<sup>247</sup> Protesters coming from the north of the city soon joined them, and chants of "*démission, démission*" ("resignation") began among the estimated crowd of ten thousand.<sup>248</sup> In this standoff, UJC leaders raised slogans and songs calling for Youlou to step down, while the trade union leaders, including Aimé Matsika, focused on negotiations with the Congolese and French military officers.

In an unexpected turn of events, the French military, with approval from de Gaulle, agreed to cease protecting the Presidential Palace around 11am. Youlou was offered sanctuary at the French embassy, but refused. With the permission of Congolese military officers, a handful of unionists—Aimé Matsika, Julien Boukambou, Okiemba-Morlende, Gilbert Pongault, and Salif Ndiaye—were able to enter the palace, where Youlou was meeting with Opangault and Tchichelle. The union leaders and the heads of the Congolese military requested Youlou's resignation, which he initially refused, placing a call to the

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<sup>246</sup> "Interventions Personnelles du Général Kergaravat auprès du Président Youlou au cours de la Journée du 15 Août 1963," carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>247</sup> French forces had been guarding the Presidential Palace since the first day of the strike. Telegram 480-481 from Jean de Garnier des Garets (French Embassy in Brazzaville) to Diplomatie Paris (Ministère des Affaires étrangères), 13 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>248</sup> That morning, around 10:30am, General Kergaravat went to the Presidential Palace to offer Youlou refuge in the French embassy, but he refused. "Interventions Personnelles du Général Kergaravat auprès du Président Youlou au cours de la Journée du 15 Août 1963," carton 7, BA CADN. For the 10,000 person estimate, see number, "La Question à résoudre en priorité est celle du chômage" and "Les événements de Brazzaville," in *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, n. 928, 24 August 1963, reproduced in Série B Congo Politique, ANCB.



Elysée in Paris. He spoke with Jacques Foccart and asked for the French military to protect him, but he was rebuked. Unable to speak with de Gaulle directly, he finally agreed to submit a resignation letter at 1pm. When French General Kergaravat arrived fifteen minutes later, acting as an emissary of de Gaulle, he again offered Youlou sanctuary at the French embassy.<sup>249</sup> This time, however, Congolese union and military officials rejected the move, worried that Youlou might be shepherded away under French protection before he could be held accountable for his actions as president. Instead, at 8pm, Youlou was taken to a military camp, formerly named Camp Tchad under French rule, but which the president had renamed in his own honor in 1961. In great irony, Fulbert Youlou was held under house arrest at Camp Fulbert Youlou.

## Conclusion

A new government was formed immediately after Youlou's resignation. The night that Youlou and many of his ministers were taken into custody, union and military leaders drafted a list of eight potential leaders for a provisional government. Bazenguissa-Ganga claims that Aimé Matsika, the UJC and CGAT leader who faced regular harassment at the hands of Youlou's administration, was on the list of eight.<sup>250</sup> Though he was not chosen, the inclusion of Matsika on the list—someone long accused of having connections to the Communist world—shows the degree to which radical leaders' fortunes had changed. After the three days of revolt, union and military officials recognized the need to set a dramatically different political posture. The leader of the provisional government was to be approved by a committee of strikers (the Comité de manifestants), and that evening they settled on Alphonse Massamba-Débat.

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<sup>249</sup> "Interventions Personnelles du Général Kergaravat auprès du Président Youlou au cours de la Journée du 15 Août 1963," carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>250</sup> Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 124-25.

Massamba-Débat was a UDDIA parliamentary deputy who had previously served as president of the National Assembly and then as Youlou's minister of planning. After a falling out between the two, Youlou left his ministerial post in May 1963, and returned to his home near Boko, south of the capital. At the time of the general strike, he had been nominated for the position of Congolese ambassador to France, but he never accepted the post. Before being elected as a deputy, he was an elementary school teacher, and he had cultivated a reputation as a modest and frugal devout Protestant. As noted earlier, the prospect of Massamba-Débat mounting a campaign for president in 1961, although it never came to pass, had intrigued many youth and student activists. The personal, geographic, and political distance that he kept from Youlou made him an ideal candidate in the eyes of many military and union leaders. He was part of the political establishment, yet had avoided negative association with the previous administration.

On the night of the fifteenth, Massamba-Débat was brought to Brazzaville, where union and military leaders presented him with a list of potential ministers—all candidates whom they felt the strikers would find acceptable.<sup>251</sup> At half past midnight, a new government was formed with a reduced ministry of seven people. Notably, union leaders did not nominate themselves as possible ministers. Mostly composed of young university graduates, the provisional government was presented as a technocratic administration. Though none of the nominees were completely new to administrative posts, neither were they tarnished by association with Youlou's government.

The new provisional government was named the Conseil National de la Révolution (CNR), and immediately declared a day of national commemoration for the victims of les Trois Glorieuses. On Saturday, August 18, thousands joined a solemn march, carrying the deceased from the general hospital in Brazzaville to the Tsiémé cemetery. The event was the provisional government's first formal display of authority, with the procession led by political, military, and religious leaders. The burial in the Tsiémé

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<sup>251</sup> Gauze, Thompson, and Adloff, *Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, 153.

cemetery was highly symbolic: the night before the strike began, union leaders had met in the cemetery to swear their allegiance to one other.

During the procession, the coffins of the three protesters shot outside of the Maison d'Arrêt were prominently displayed, but so too was the coffin of Honoré Dounga, a Youlou supporter and the husband of a UDDIA women's section militant. Dounga had reportedly died trying to protect his wife at the hands of anti-UDDIA protesters in Poto-Poto. The inclusion of Dounga was a gesture toward national reconciliation from the new administration toward Youlou's supporters. However, Dounga never gained the same martyr-like status attributed to Massamba, Lenda, and Tsiété—the three young men killed outside of the prison. Dounga was fifty-two, and inevitably seen by many as a supporter of Youlou. The other three martyrs were between the ages of twenty-nine and thirty-two, and had been shot down by troops defending the former government. In their death, they became representatives of a new political era, one defined by the importance of youth, and the voice of "the street."<sup>252</sup>

The burial was meant to provide a degree of closure after a violent week, but it also served as a symbolic pronouncement of this new political orientation. The CNR enjoyed widespread support, and had come about because of the mass protests of thousands of people, especially young men, in urban Brazzaville. The demonstrators had had a taste of their potential as a social force and would not easily relinquish that influence. As Bazenguissa-Ganga argues, les Trois Glorieuses were associated with the twinned symbols of the "youth" and the "street" from the beginning.

With Youlou suddenly gone, union leaders found their hastily formed unity cracking around long-standing political differences. Into the vacuum stepped those who had the closest association with the "youth" and the "street"—namely the cadres of the UJC, ASCO, and to some degree the younger CGAT activists. They had the experience, credibility, and education to assert themselves as representatives of

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<sup>252</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 93. This will be expanded on in chapter 4.

the “revolution.”<sup>253</sup> They were soon joined by university students associated with the AEC, who returned to Brazzaville hoping to assume leadership roles in an environment that was no longer hostile to their political views and connections. As the next chapter will show, these returnees from abroad were able to have a major impact on the political direction of the country because of the base that UJC, CGAT, and ASCO activists had already built. The tenacity of these local activists under the repressive conditions of Youlou’s rule was what ultimately made it possible to mobilize “youth” as an organized force in the months and years following the creation of the provisional government. Together with students returning from abroad, they immediately set about organizing neighborhood committees in defense of the “revolution.”

In the midst of the celebrations after Youlou’s fall, the revolution received an immediate repudiation from an unlikely source: Sékou Touré. The Guinean president condemned the overthrow of Youlou, claiming that, “the recent events in Congo-Brazzaville were decided outside of Africa.”<sup>254</sup> Touré’s collaboration with Youlou may have been opportunistic, but he was likely unnerved by the specter of a popular uprising overthrowing a fellow African president. Touré’s implication of imperial involvement, coming from one of the heroes of Congolese radicals, caused great frustration and disappointment in Brazzaville. But the newly installed leader of the provisional government, Massamba-Débat, seemed to brush off Touré’s accusation. When asked by a reporter to comment on Touré’s statement, Massamba-Débat smiled and replied, “If outside intervention took place, it could, in fact, be attributed to M. Sékou Touré himself, who, during his official visit to Brazzaville, largely opened the door to the Congolese revolution. The Congolese people are patient and they knew to wait for their moment, but, it can not be

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<sup>253</sup> It should be noted that youth and student leaders were obviously not the first people to frame the event of August 1963 as a revolution. The choice of the name Conseil National de la Révolution for the new provisional government set that tone from the beginning. Also, see quote below where Massamba-Débat refers to the “revolution” immediately afterward.

<sup>254</sup> “Les récents évènements du Congo-Brazzaville avaient été décidés de l’extérieur de l’Afrique.” See “Une interview de Président Massamba-Débat,” Agence Congolaise d’Information (ACI), 21 August 1963, reprinted in *Révue de la Presse*, 21 August 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

doubted that the popular uprising that toppled the former regime was nurtured and developed within our country.”<sup>255</sup>

Massamba-Débat’s statement was important for two reasons: first, it recognized Touré’s catalytic role in the unfolding of the movement against Youlou’s government, and second, it referred to the events taking place as the “Congolese revolution.” The new president had come from the ranks of the former administration, not the Marxist-influenced UJC or CGAT, but he used the term “revolution” from the very beginning of his tenure—as in the naming of the Conseil National de la Révolution. The idea that the country was in the midst of a revolution invigorated young radicals, whose moment of triumph had seemingly arrived. In the five years that followed, they dominated the struggle over what the “revolution” should entail and dramatically reshaped political and social life in Congo.

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<sup>255</sup> “Si intervention extérieure il y avait eu, elle pouvait, en fait, être attribuée à M. Sékou Touré lui-même, qui, lors de sa visite officielle à Brazzaville, a, dans un large mesure, ouvert la porte à la révolution congolaise. Le peuple congolais est patient et il a su attendre son moment, mais, il ne saurait être mis en doute que le soulèvement populaire qui a renversé le régime précédent a été nourri et a évolué au sein de notre pays.” See “Une interview de Président Massamba-Débat,” *Agence Congolaise d’Information* (ACI), 21 August 1963, reprinted in *Révue de la Presse*, 21 August 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB. See also chapter 10, “Une Révolution à suivre” for other responses from abroad, in Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 131-40.

# CHAPTER 4

## Congo 1963–1968: The Revolution and the Youth

### Introduction

The upheaval of August 13, 14, and 15 not only cast aside Youlou but nearly the entire political elite that had emerged from the electoral struggles of the late 1950s. Congolese party leaders and deputies had embraced the single-party project proposed by Youlou with near unanimity. Both the explosiveness of the general strike and the unexpected outcome were due in large part to the intense social polarization that had taken hold, especially in Brazzaville. With the established political leaders lined up behind Youlou, no opposition had emerged within parliamentary politics. After the strike, most political authorities were tainted by their relationship to the former regime, opening up a political vacuum. The former opposition party, the MSA, had embraced the single-party proposal, and the MSA's main leader, Jacques Opangault, remained at Youlou's side in the Presidential Palace on the final day of the strike.

The trade unions had become the representatives of a diverse urban population with a myriad of grievances—leading them to risk challenging the single-party proposal. Over the course of the protests, trade union leaders frantically negotiated with Congolese and French military officers and eventually secured Youlou's resignation. But the most visible participants in the protests had been unemployed young men and students, who occupied public spaces after years of being excluded from formal politics. As a writer for *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens* noted a week after the fall of Youlou, what made the events in Brazzaville unique was that, “This time, the idle youth, transformed by gnawing

propaganda, revolted against a government that it accused of ignoring its demands, and the pretext was the disparity between ministerial salaries and workers' wages."<sup>1</sup>

Hoping to intervene in the new political situation, a group of students and recent Congolese university graduates began to meet and define their vision for the revolution. Many were already leaders of Congolese student and youth organizations, and had been outspoken critics of Youlou's government. As documented in the previous chapter, many had faced harsh repression under Youlou, but after les Trois Glorieuses, were able to freely promote their ideas about Marxism and Third World solidarity.<sup>2</sup> They moved quickly to establish public visibility by organizing young men in urban areas in their teens and twenties—particularly the “idle youth”—at the neighborhood level.

This chapter makes two related arguments: First, that a small group of radical students was able to control the political definition of “youth” in Congo between 1963 and 1968. They promoted the “youth” as the vanguard of an ongoing revolution in Congo, and by mobilizing a base of supporters, successfully marginalized other groups of young people who did not share their idea of the revolution. Second, I argue that these new youth organizations became the dominant political force in Congo in the mid-1960s. None of the leaders in Congo's new government had played leading roles in the protests of August 1963. Thus, authorities initially allied with new youth organizations in order to bolster their popular legitimacy. Because radical students were able to mobilize large numbers of urban residents to take action, the government allowed youth organizations to manage their own projects without interference. This created a dynamic where the government relied on youth leaders, yet youth leaders

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<sup>1</sup> “La Question à résoudre en priorité est celle du chômage,” *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, n. 928, 24 August 1963, reprinted in Série B, ANCB. “Cette fois, la jeunesse désœuvrée travaillée par une sourde propagande s’est révoltée contre un gouvernement qu’elle accusait de n’avoir pas tenu compte de ses revendications et le prétexte en a été la disparité entre les traitement des ministres et les salaires des ouvriers.”

<sup>2</sup> Before 1963, Congolese student and youth organizations, both in France and in Congo, were part of the opposition to Youlou's government. Some student leaders worked closely with left-wing labor unionists, who helped lead the strike in August 1963. See Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*; Bernault, *Démocraties ambiguës*.

used their base of militant supporters to remain autonomous from the state. Youth leaders were propelled into positions of public authority, both official and unofficial, allowing them to alter the direction of national and regional politics.

In this chapter, I draw upon the work of Congolese scholars Jérôme Ollandet and Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga, who have emphasized how university graduates, whose political aspirations had been stifled by the former regime, capitalized on the new political opening and their reputations as untarnished technocrats.<sup>3</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga makes the particularly important argument that “youth” was a concept that had little to do with age; instead it was invoked as a category of political demarcation used by students and recent graduates.<sup>4</sup> The “youth” (*les jeunes*) counterposed their proposals for implementing “scientific socialism” to the “bantu philosophy” invoked by Massamba-Débat and other politicians (*les vieux*)—the latter being a form of “African socialism” that, like Senghor’s, implied a recovery of rural collectivist values and denied the need for class struggle. Both authors capture the complexity of the struggles for control of the state that define the period of 1963 to 1968—between the “youth” and their elders, but also between different groups of students and recent university graduates.

However, both authors underemphasize *how* radical “youth” leaders gained their initial social and political influence through the construction of youth organizations. As Pierre Bonnafé observed in the mid-1960s, the “youth” leaders in the government had developed an active base of organized supporters—largely young, unemployed men in urban areas. Inasmuch as youth organizations appear in their works, Bonnafé and Ollandet focus on their militarization, which as Ollandet argues, essentially created a second national army in Congo. While I agree with Ollandet’s conclusion, I show that militarization was uneven and only part of the story of the youth organizations. Youth organizations were not, as Ollandet and Bonnafé tend to portray them, just groups of young criminals looking to settle

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<sup>3</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*; Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*.

<sup>4</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 80. Here, Bazenguissa-Ganga is borrowing from the work of Pierre Boudieu and Pierre Bonnafé.



personal grudges. Abuses occurred, but should not divert our attention from the complex relationships developed within youth organizations, between youth militants and their neighborhoods, and between rank-and-file members and the leadership.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter offers an outline of how youth leaders and their supporters reshaped Congolese political life in the period between 1963 and 1968. It begins with the creation of new autonomous youth organizations almost immediately in the wake of *les Trois Glorieuses*, then traces the increasing influence of these groups and their leaders. The last part of the chapter looks at how the militarization of youth organizations both bolstered the authority of youth leaders and also led to the collapse of Massamba-Débat's government in 1968.

### **The New Political Terrain**

In the wake of Youlou's resignation, power temporarily passed to the Congolese military, which dissolved the existing government and the National Assembly. But Congolese military officers had split over whether to support the protests against Youlou, and were taken aback by the sudden collapse of the government. The highest-ranking Congolese military commanders, David Mountsaka and Félix Mouzabakany, were involved in the negotiations that led to Youlou's resignation<sup>6</sup> and the creation of new political institutions, but refrained from assuming any role in governance of the country.<sup>7</sup> Instead, two new bodies were created: first, a committee of union leaders and other key opposition figures, the

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<sup>5</sup> Héloïse Kiriakou's current dissertation research, which aims to provide a detailed spatial and social history of the revolution in Brazzaville, will make a significant contribution to our understanding of these relationships. See also Kiriakou, "La génération JMNR."

<sup>6</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 151-52. Mountsaka and Mouzabakany had been Youlou's appointments. See Melphon Kamba, "La première république," 54. On Mouzabakany's fate, see Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 133, 229, 33.

<sup>7</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 85.

CNR, and second, the provisional government called into being by the CNR, under the leadership of Alphonse Massamba-Débat.

Union militants had been the unquestionable leaders of the movement and now garnered enormous public support. However, they too had been swept along by the course of events, and had not entered into a struggle with Youlou with a shared vision of an alternative. The Catholic trade unionists held to their principle of separation between union and political activity, and hesitated to assume new roles in the state. When Massamba-Débat asked CATC leader Gilbert Pongault to become the minister of foreign affairs, Pongault refused on the basis that “we had made the revolution for the people, and not for getting appointments.”<sup>8</sup> Even the CGAT, whose leaders did believe in the same separation between trade union and political tasks, declined to take major positions in the new administration. CGAT leader Abel Thauley-Ganga was initially proposed to become prime minister, but declined, arguing that “people will say we have a Communist prime minister”; instead, Thauley-Ganga recommended Massamba-Débat.<sup>9</sup> However, CATC and CGAT leaders did not abstain from shaping the political direction of the new government. Pongault and others continued to be members of the CNR, some became new National Assembly deputies, and two became ministers in December 1963: CATC leader Pascal Okiemba-Morléné and the formerly jailed CGAT/UJC leader Aimé Matsika.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Pongault, interview: “Au début, il m'a proposé, d'être ministre des affaires étrangères. J'ai refusé car nous avons fait la révolution pour le peuple et pas pour avoir des postes. Nous avons fait la révolution dans l'intérêt du peuple.” Pongault claimed that he had been proposed to be the president of the provisional government, an offer that he turned down because he felt that if he joined the government, “the people would no longer have a leader” and his ability to be a “*leader d'opinion*” would be compromised. Pongault did, however, propose a larger role for unions within the new state, see “La Question à résoudre en priorité est celle du chômage,” *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, n. 928, 24 August 1963, reprinted in Série B, ANCB.

<sup>9</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 87. Note that Youlou had eliminated the position of prime minister, which was officially reinstated by the December 1963 constitution.

<sup>10</sup> Some were also on the CC of the MNR. Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 96.

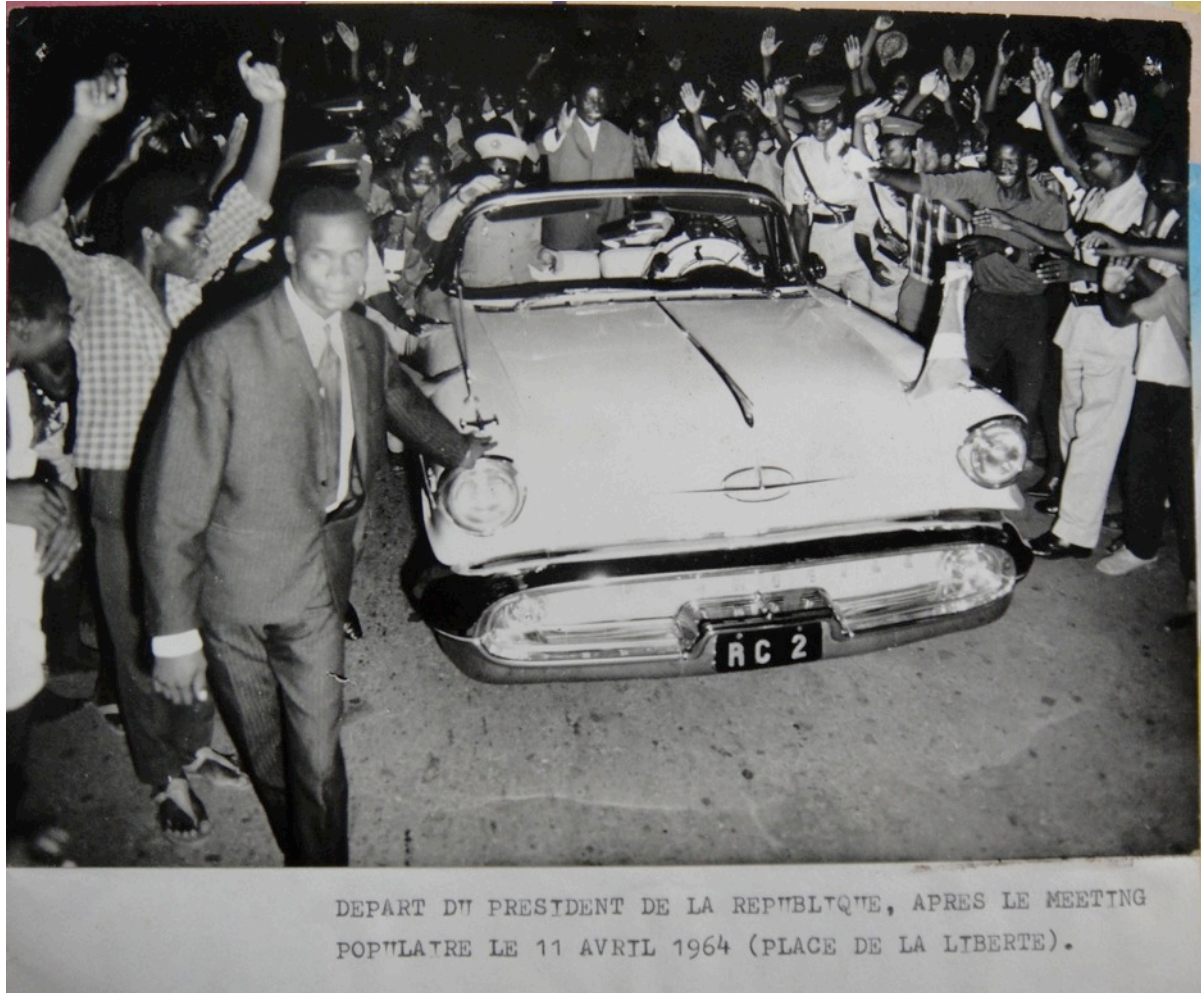
From their position in the CNR, trade unionists also oversaw the formation of the new provisional government, which they announced to a massive crowd gathered at the rond-point between the African neighborhoods of Poto-Poto, Ouenze, and Moungali in Brazzaville.<sup>11</sup> The provisional government composed of an almost entirely new group of ministers: besides Massamba-Débat, the only other nationally known political figure to remain was Germain Bicoumat, who had served as the minister of public works and then head of the ATEC and Kouilou dam project before he, like Massamba-Débat, fell out of favor with Youlou in the spring of 1963. The rest of the new ministers were between the ages of thirty and thirty-six. Most of them were university graduates who had been employed in their respective ministries at the time of Youlou's fall.<sup>12</sup> Portrayed as a group of young technocrats, most simultaneously embraced the idea that they were part of a "revolution."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 85.

<sup>12</sup> See Telegram 532-539 from Jean Rossard (French Ambassador to Congo) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 17 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN; "Un Soulèvement Populaire Renverse le Gouvernement Youlou. Un gouvernement provisoire et mis en place," *La Semaine Africaine*, 18 August 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

<sup>13</sup> Telegram 520-521 from Jean Rossard (French Ambassador to Congo) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 16 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN. For more on this, see Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 84-86, 90.



[Fig. 9: President Massamba-Débat leaving a mass meeting in Brazzaville, 1964.  
Source: Musée National du Congo à Brazzaville, reproduced by Matthew Swagler, 2010]

In recognition of public frustration with the lavish lifestyles of Youlou's ministers—and inheriting a state deficit of two billion CFA francs—Massamba-Débat declared that he and his ministers would assume their new positions while receiving only their *previous* civil servant salaries, with no additional indemnity.<sup>14</sup> One of the provisional government's first acts was to pardon all political prisoners from

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<sup>14</sup> Telegram 545 from Jean Rossard (French Ambassador to Congo) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 17 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN; "La Question à résoudre en priorité est celle du chômage," *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, n. 928, 24 August 1963, reprinted in Série B, ANCB. On 16 August, Massamba-Débat announced austerity measures for the government ("mesures d'austérité applicables aux

Youlou's era, and restore the "civil liberties" of the Matsouanists.<sup>15</sup> But the goals and political orientation of this "revolutionary" government were still to be determined. The new government spent the first week attempting to reassure the fears of the foreign capital and the French government: Massamba-Débat and the finance minister went to the Brazzaville Chamber of Commerce to lay out a plan for government financial austerity and ask foreign businesses to stay, while the minister of foreign affairs went directly to France to maintain existing cooperation agreements.<sup>16</sup> The CNR had been constructed to provide a political lead, but was a heterogeneous group with little to bind it together now that Youlou had been dislodged. In this vacuum, a group of students, university dropouts, and recent graduates—some within the provisional government, and many outside of it—began to actively shape the new political situation.

## I. Autonomous Youth Organizations and the Defense of the Revolution

### The Coming Together of Student Radicals

As noted in chapter 3, student radicals in Congo were a subset of a select group of Congolese—a few dozen per year—who completed schooling at a high school (lycée) in Congo or France.<sup>17</sup> Many had already acquired political training and organizing experience as members of Congolese student and

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ministres eux-mêmes"): "Chacun d'entre nous continuera à percevoir son seul traitement de fonctionnaire sans aucune indemnité supplémentaire." Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 90.

<sup>15</sup> Telegram 525 from Jean Rossard (French Ambassador to Congo) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 16 August 1963, carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>16</sup> Press review for 22 August 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB. Massamba-Débat and his minister of finance, Edouard Babackas, first went to the Brazzaville Chambre of Commerce to lay out a plan for government austerity and ask French businesses to stay. Foreign affairs minister, Charles Ganao went to Paris to keep French cooperation intact.

<sup>17</sup> As detailed in chapter 3.

youth organizations before 1963 such as the Association des Etudiants Congolais (AEC) in France, or the Union de la jeunesse congolaise (UJC) and Association Scolaire du Congo (ASCO) in Congo. Those who had studied in France had developed connections to Communist organizations and studied fundamental Marxist concepts. Like their peers in Senegal, Congolese student radicals called for “real” or “true” independence, by which they meant the expulsion of French troops; the end of foreign control of the Congolese economy and educational system; and the creation of a new regime committed to bringing “scientific socialism” to Congo. But in the wake of les Trois Glorieuses, these students wielded less influence on political life than the trade union leaders, the large Catholic organizations, and the Congolese military.

The political opening created after Youlou’s fall allowed various self-declared revolutionary militants to begin meeting across different generations of secondary students, university dropouts, and recent graduates.<sup>18</sup> I argue that three different subsets of young intellectuals came together to create the “youth” movement of 1963–1968 in Congo.

The first group was the students who studied in France at the end of the 1950s, arriving back to Congo at the time of independence, where they hoped to get jobs as functionaries and or managers in the private sector. Many had found their advancement blocked because the high number of European administrators and technicians maintained in both private and public sectors. Many of these new cadres had been a part of the Association des Etudiants Congolais (AEC), and its umbrella organization, the Federation of Black African Students in France (FEANF). In these groups, they were trained in a Stalinized version of Marxism through the influence of the French Communist Party, but also in Third World Marxist ideas by working with Vietnamese and Algerian students. Upon the downfall of the first government, these young technicians and intellectuals—already connected to radical trade unionists—were brought into the new government, where they had direct influence over its practices.

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<sup>18</sup> I have chosen to use the term “revolutionary” because of its historical accuracy in the context of Congo after 1963, but aware of the ambiguity it held then and now.

One of the well-positioned young technocrats in this group was Pascal Lissouba, who had studied in France and returned as one of the first technical cadres after independence in 1960. Lissouba, and others in his cohort, such as Claude Da Costa, Joseph Vanden Reysen, Lazare Matsocota, and Hilaire Monthault, were friends with Aimé Matsika and Julien Boukambou, who led the CGAT and UJC, and played an important role in the new government.<sup>19</sup>

Second, there was a slightly younger group of students who were still studying in France and the Soviet Union at the time of Youlou's fall and returned after the "revolution"—some putting their studies on hold to intervene in the fluid political situation. These returning students had also been trained in Marxism abroad, and though not yet part of the new government, they brought with them radical intellectual credibility. International connections they had forged through their involvement while abroad later allowed them to reach out to Communist governments around the world for resources. Many returned explicitly in order to intervene in the political process under way and saw the possibility for government employment that had been previously blocked under Youlou's administration because of their outspoken political criticism. Claude Ernst Ndalla—also known as "Graille" (crow) for his strong appetite—returned after studying in France and the Soviet Union along with Jean-Baptiste Lounda. Ambroïse Noumazalay and Aimée Gnali also returned from France, where they had overlapped with Lissouba, Matsocota, and Henri Lopés in the AEC and the FEANF.<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, there were the student leaders of the ASCO and UJC. The ASCO was led mostly by high school students, and had earned political credibility from the students' direct involvement in the opposition to Youlou. Martin Mberi, Ange Diawara, and Gustave Aba-Gandzion from the ASCO had mobilized students for the general strike as an "*arrière-garde*," and knew best the networks of young

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<sup>19</sup> See cartons 21 and 30, PR, ANCB. Some, like Matsocota, already held positions in the government under Youlou.

<sup>20</sup> See Gnali, *Beto na beto: le poids de la tribu*, 133.

underground militants that had persisted under Youlou.<sup>21</sup> It is worth noting that each of these three sections of the youth and student leadership were almost exclusively male. However, as the following chapter shows, women often became involved in the youth formations that were created after 1963.

As individual cohorts of students attempting to alter the political direction of the country, they would likely have been isolated, and their opposition neutralized—as occurred in Senegal over the course of the 1960s. But now the three subsets came together on the basis of their overlapping connections—for example, the ASCO leader Martin Mberi knew Ambroise Noumazalay, a university student who returned right after the fall of Youlou, and Noumazalay connected Mberi to Lissouba, a university graduate who had returned in 1960, and to his cohort. All born within a decade of each other, they ranged in age from about twenty-two (Diawara) to thirty-three (Lissouba) years old. The revolution had brought these young intellectuals together in Congo to confront the same political problems, under conditions that allowed them to organize openly in a way that had not been possible under either colonial rule or Youlou's regime.

The integration of these three subsets of young intellectuals formed the basis of a new association after the revolution: the Groupe de Mpila.<sup>22</sup> The group was never legally constituted, instead functioning as an informal meeting space for intellectuals, young technocrats, and some CGAT militants.<sup>23</sup> Although far from unified around any particular political orientation, all of the participants saw themselves as part of a new national leadership, committed to the marginalization of those associated with Youlou, the

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<sup>21</sup> Mberi, interview, 19 November 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Pongault, interview; Mberi, interview, 19 November 2012. Mpila is the Brazzaville neighborhood where the group often met, at the home of Pascal Lissouba or Antoine Maboungou. The original participants were largely from the group of former students trained in France around the same time as Lissouba, including Noumazalay, Ndalla, Claude Da Costa, Hilaire Monthault, Lazare Matsocota, Aimé Matsika, Maboungou-Mbimba, André Hombessa, and Kamanké. See Héloïse Kiriakou, "La "génération JMNR," 111.

<sup>23</sup> The private nature of the group did not mean that it was clandestine. In the aftermath of Youlou's fall, Gilbert Pongault, the Catholic trade union leader recalled that the existence of the group was well known. Pongault, interview.



development of a state-led economy, and collaboration with Communist governments and anticolonial movements.

The group initially read and discussed Marxist and anticolonial texts, but gatherings increasingly focused on how to intervene in the new political terrain. Most importantly, the group campaigned to place its own members, like Pascal Lissouba and Ambroïse Noumazalay, in top positions in the new administration, and to encourage the replacement of European or Youlou-allied functionaries with younger Congolese cadres.<sup>24</sup> In this way, the Groupe de Mpila operated between 1963 and 1965 as what José Maboungou has called “the true political brain (*“le véritable cerveau politique”*) of the new government.”<sup>25</sup>

### **New Forms of Visibility: Vigilance Patrols and Public Work**

The cross-fertilization that took place in the Groupe de Mpila produced a flurry of new initiatives aimed to capture the political imagination and allegiance of young people in Brazzaville. With over half of the country’s population under twenty years old, young people were a massive potential base of support for student leaders in the group. As noted in chapter 3, the populations of Congo’s main cities, Brazzaville

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<sup>24</sup> Because of the efforts of the group, Lissouba became the Prime Minister in December 1963, and Noumazalay became the head of the country’s new single party in 1964—and later took Lissouba’s post as Prime Minister.

<sup>25</sup> José Maboungou, “Faut-il brûler la Gauche Historique?,” *Rupture* (1994): 22. See also Mberi, interview, 19 November 2012, who called it “le grand cerveaux de la révolution.” Momondjo, interview, July 2010 called the “laboratoire” of the revolution, while Ollandet refers to it as the “cellule de réflexion chargé de la conduit du mouvement.” Ollandet, *L’expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 44. Within the *Groupe de Mpila* a number of overlapping subgroups formed. *Basili Ba Congo* was one of the most important, a secret group whose name meant “Workers of the Congo.” However, the name spoke only to the ideological commitments of the founders, not their social class, as all the known members came from the intellectual and student milieu. Formed by Noumazalay in 1962 while he was studying in Moscow, *Basili Ba Congo* members like Claude Ndalla “Graille” saw themselves as the political guardians of the revolution, attempting to steer it toward a Soviet-style socialist development program. Ndalla, interviews, 18 and 19 October, 2012.

and Pointe-Noire, had doubled in the three years since 1960, as young immigrants from rural areas arrived in search of wage labor.<sup>26</sup>

Groupe de Mpila members saw their immediate task as buttressing the new government, even as they tried to push it toward more radical positions. As Jérôme Ollandet writes, in this context, the idea of organizing and harnessing the “youth” was to both “give the country a new dynamic” and also to create a “popular base of support” (“*caution populaire*”) for the new government.<sup>27</sup> The months immediately following les Trois Glorieuses were uncertain for the new government.<sup>28</sup> The pre-1963 political parties had been widely discredited, their hold on power had been broken, and many of Youlou’s ministers were under house arrest.<sup>29</sup> But supporters of the former regime remained, among the clergy, sections of the military, and the old UDDIA organizations.<sup>30</sup> Some of Youlou’s former collaborators had escaped to Léopoldville (present-day Kinshasa), and student radicals feared they were smuggling guns to Youlou’s supporters in Brazzaville or planning an armed attack from across the river.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> In addition to the reference in chapter 3, see commentary from the era: “Quelles sont les causes et les conséquences de l’urbanisation au Congo-Brazzaville?” *La Semaine Africaine*, editorial 19 May 1963, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, 20 May 1963, carton 58, PR, ANCB; Côme Manckassa, “Dans la misère, sachons garder notre dignité,” *La Semaine Africaine*, date unknown, reprinted in *Revue de la Presse*, 26 October 1962, carton 58, PR, ANCB.

<sup>27</sup> Ollandet, *L’expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 81.

<sup>28</sup> See the telegrams from Jean Rossard (French Ambassador to Congo) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères in carton 7, BA, CADN.

<sup>29</sup> Many would later be jailed or tried in absentia after escaping the country. In 1967, Massamba-Débat pardoned many of the former government members. Note from the JMNR, “Information. Congo-Brazzaville, 4 ans après Fulbert Youlou,” est. August 1967, Série B Congo Politique, ANCB. On the anniversary of les Trois Glorieuses the government also released various political prisoners—including the former members of Youlou’s government.

<sup>30</sup> Taking place a few months after the military assassination of the first President of Togo, Sylvanus Olympio, other African leaders apparently feared a repeat attempt by the Congolese military to establish control. According to “La Question à résoudre en priorité est celle du chômage,” *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, n. 928, 24 August 1963, reprinted in Série B, ANCB.

<sup>31</sup> After Youlou’s government fell in August 1963, Léopoldville became a refuge for members of the former regime, like Marcel Ibalico. Youlou himself escaped there in 1964, and commando attacks on Brazzaville were

In response to these threats, both real and perceived, Groupe de Mpila leaders set about organizing neighborhood vigilance patrols (sometimes referred as the *quartiers jeunesses*). Through their call for young people to defend the revolution they recruited many members of existing youth organizations like the UJC and the Protestant youth, the Jeunesse Étudiante Protestante (JEP).<sup>32</sup> Initially unarmed, these groups of young men and women patrolled urban neighborhoods and the banks of the Congo River, looking for “suspicious” behavior.<sup>33</sup> They intercepted pirogues crossing from Léopoldville, set up checkpoints on major roads, and listened in on conversations in bars among pro-Youlou partisans. The vigilance patrols began with a specific defensive goal: to thwart coups against the new government, particularly those originating in Léopoldville. Thus, their activities were intended to complement those of the police and gendarmerie. However, the youth vigilance patrols increasingly controlled public space and became a visible new source of authority—at the expense of the police and gendarmerie.

Student radicals simultaneously initiated programs that mobilized volunteer labor in the name of “national development.” Their first project was “Operation Roll Up Our Sleeves” (*Opération retroussons les manches*), which gathered hundreds of young people on weekends to clean public spaces in Brazzaville.<sup>34</sup> In the months and years that followed they expanded to building schools and health clinics

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launched from Léopoldville on multiple occasions, reinforcing the fears of young radicals. These were not imaginary fears: Tshombe, and later Joseph Mobutu, gave refuge to Youlou and his supporters, who launched failed coup attempts against the new government in Brazzaville from their base in Kinshasa.

<sup>32</sup> These vigilance committees were organized by Ange Diawara, Andre Hombessa, and others who had been leaders of the pre-1963 student and youth organizations. They initially operated under no particular umbrella organization, but were likely formed from the neighborhood committees of the *Union de la Jeunesse congolais* (UJC). Martin Mberi, interview with the author, 15 October and 19 November 2012; Paul Nzete (former vigilance brigade participant), interview with the author, Brazzaville, 23 October 2012; Bernard Malamou (former vigilance patrol leader), interview with the author, Brazzaville, 24 October 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Nzete, a student at the time, recalled spending his nights along the banks of the Congo river with others from his neighborhood group in Ouenzé, looking for people crossing in pirogues from Léopoldville. Nzete, like many others who participated, were already organized through his neighborhood section of the UJC. Nzete, interview, 23 October 2012.

in rural areas and repairing roads in the wake of rainy seasons.<sup>35</sup> In tandem, young people were mobilized to plant bananas and coconut trees for the benefit of rural populations.<sup>36</sup> The *opérations* later became integrated into “*les Samedis Socialistes*”—Saturday afternoon programs of labor and popular education that attempted to engage other sections of the population beyond “youth.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Autonomous Political Forums: The Sunday Conferences and *Dipanda***

Long-harassed because of their proclivity for Marxism and suspected connections to Communist states, Groupe de Mpila members now found an open terrain on which to expound and refine their views publicly and in practice. Asserting themselves as the intellectual leadership of the revolution, they launched two particularly important forums aimed at influencing students and participants in the

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<sup>34</sup> The first mobilization took place on September 3rd, 1963, with a reported 200 “jeunes” cleaning up the Madoukou-Tsékelé river in Brazzaville. For some in the *Groupe de Mpila* the project was about instilling a strong work ethic in young people that could be carried over into national development projects. “Mardi 13, Mercredi 14, Jeudi 15, Août 1963. Révolution congolaise, ‘Les Trois Glorieuses,’” entry for 3 September 1963, carton 10, PR, ANCB. See also Ollandet, *L’expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 82.

<sup>35</sup> See for example, *Dipanda* n. 41, August 1964, photo page 4. Based on discussions in the newspaper *Dipanda*, and reports in cartons PR9 and Série B of the Congolese National Archives, *Opération retrouvons les manches* seems to have continued up to 1968. However, the problem of voluntary labor projects such as these quickly became evident, as initial clean up, construction, and maintenance required regular follow up, and *Opération retrouvons les manches* could not take the place of actual hired public workers. See “Nouvelles sous-préfectures,” ACI, 8 January 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN; “Nouvelles de la République du Congo. Ouverture du Congrès Constitutif de la Jeunesse du MNR,” 7 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN; “Note de Synthèse Annuelle, Année 1966,” by A. Ongagou, Directeur-Adjoint de Cabinet, Présidence de la République, carton 9, PR, ANCB; “Notice Mensuelle du Mois de Juin 1968,” 30 June 1968, Poste de Contrôle Administratif de Mabombo, District de Mouyondzi, Région de la Bouenza, Chef du P.C.A., Albert Pambot, Série B Congo Politique, ANCB; “Notices Mensuelles du Mois de Juin 1968. Chef de District, Sangouet, Sous-Préfet, District de Jacob, Région de la Bouenza,” 3 July 1968, Série B Congo Politique, ANCB.

<sup>36</sup> “Nouvelles de la République du Congo. Ouverture du Congrès Constitutif de la Jeunesse du MNR,” ACI, 7 August 1964, BA 25, CADN.

<sup>37</sup> “Note de Synthèse Annuelle, Année 1966,” by A. Ongagou, Directeur-Adjoint de Cabinet, Présidence de la République, carton 9, PR, ANCB. See also Extrait Synthèse n. 10/67, “Anniversaire de la création de l’U.R.F.C.,” March 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN. Claude Ndalla has argued that *Operation retrouvons les manches* had an associated goal, which was to challenge the accepted hierarchy that placed mental labor above manual labor in the cities, by inducing the *fonctionnaires* and students to take part in voluntary work efforts. See Ndalla, interview with Heloise Kiriakou, printed in Kiriakou, “La génération JMNR,” 135. This is a recurring theme in issues of *Dipanda*. See for example, “L’étudiant et la Révolution,” *Dipanda* 187, 16 July 1967.

vigilance brigades. The first were the Conférences du dimanche that took place each Sunday morning in the Salle d'Information, the large meeting room at the Ministry of Information. The meetings' physical location gave the impression of official approval, but they were carried out independently of the government by Groupe de Mpila leaders.<sup>38</sup> The presentations were often rooted in a Marxist worldview, and at least one presented an introduction to Marx's *Capital*. But most meetings were not meant to be trainings in Marxist theory and covered a range of political topics, from the Congolese economy and foreign policy to the state of Congolese women and critiques of the Catholic Church.<sup>39</sup> A second round of conferences in October and November 1964 attracted an audience of high-ranking politicians but remained led by student activists, who presented on topics like "the theoretical foundations of scientific socialism," the "foundations of an independent economy," and "violence and revolution." At the Sunday meetings, representatives from delegations abroad would also report on their travels to places like China and the Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup>

The Conférences du dimanche were consciously timed so as to occur on the mornings otherwise set aside for church attendance, and according to Claude Ndalla, became a new sort of "mass" for young

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<sup>38</sup> Those who played the biggest role in organizing and presenting the *débats* were already the familiar leadership of the *Groupe de Mpila*: Lissouba, Noumazalay, Ndalla Graille, Ekondy Akala, along with ASCO activist, Martin Mberi. It is worth noting that the new minister in charge of Information and Civic Education, Bernard Zoniaba was part of the new generation of political leadership, but he was not involved in the organizing of the Sunday meetings. As noted below, exiled radical students, especially the Cameroonian Osende Afana and Abdoulaye Yerodia from Congo-Léopoldville played important roles in these public political education meetings. Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 47; Nzete, interview 23 October 2012; Ndalla, interview 18 October 2012; Mberi, interview 19 November 2012; Maboungou, interview 9 October 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Aimée Gnali, former AEC activist, one of the new female deputies to the National Assembly elected in December 1963 presented the question of Congolese women. Gnali, interview with author, 24 November 2012, Pointe-Noire. Later presented in Aimée Gnali, "La femme et la Révolution," *Dipanda* 31, 6 June 1964. See also Nzete, interview 23 October 2012; Ndalla, interview 18 October 2012; Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 137.

<sup>40</sup> "L'éducation politique des militants du M.N.R., de la J.M.N.R. Clotûre provisoire hier matin d'une série de conférences données par le frère Yerodia dans le but de consolider la Révolution - le thème était "Violence et Révolution," ACI, 16 November 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN.

radicals.<sup>41</sup> But unlike religion, Ndalla claimed, “[We] tried to show that Marxism was not a dogma, but a guide to action. It was something we tried to master so we could apply it on the ground in Brazzaville.”<sup>42</sup>

As Ollandet notes, the Catholic clergy’s impression of the Conférences du dimanche as a competing ideological forum increased their hostility toward Lissouba and other radical leaders. That Lissouba, who became prime minister in December 1963, was allowing the meetings to take place in a government ministry building increased their suspicion of the new government’s Communist leanings.<sup>43</sup>

The second forum that emerged from the Groupe de Mpila was a weekly newspaper, *Dipanda*, meaning “independence” in Lingala.<sup>44</sup> The first issue appeared on October 25, 1963, and continued publication on a near-weekly basis until early 1968.<sup>45</sup> *Dipanda* played an important role in bolstering the positions of the student radicals organized around the CNJ and the Groupe de Mpila.<sup>46</sup> First, by polemicizing against the Catholic clergy, the Catholic trade union leaders, and the Catholic weekly paper, *La Semaine Africaine*; and second, in calling for the nationalization of educational institutions, the removal of French military bases, an end to the post-independence military and economic accords with France, and the nationalization of foreign-owned companies.<sup>47</sup> While *Dipanda*’s editors defended the paper’s autonomy, many eventually acceded to posts in the country’s new political institutions. The

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<sup>41</sup> Camille Bongou (former Congolese student activist), interview with author, 20 October 2012, Brazzaville.

<sup>42</sup> Ndalla, interview, 18 October 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Ollandet, *L’expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 47.

<sup>44</sup> Mberi, interview 15 October 2012, claimed that the *Dipanda* group formed even before the Groupe de Mpila

<sup>45</sup> Ndalla, interview 18 November 2012. See also Ollandet, *L’expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 87-89.

<sup>46</sup> The paper never involved any regular women writers or editors, though single articles by women sometimes appeared, such as “Le femme et la Révolution” in June of 1964, by Aimée Gnali, note above, which referenced Engels, Marx, and Lenin. Most of the articles on women’s rights and women’s place in the revolution were written by the male intellectuals of *Dipanda*’s staff.

<sup>47</sup> Initially focused on the nationalization of agricultural and commercial companies, not simply industry. Ollandet, *L’expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 87-88.

paper backed Massamba-Débat publicly through its last issue, even as the editors found themselves increasingly in conflict with his government.

From the beginning, the new provisional Congolese government had an ambiguous relationship with the paper's editors. Initially, the paper was granted office space through the assistance of the Ministry of Information. But by early December 1963, Charles Ganao, the new minister of foreign affairs, complained that although the paper had a "limited audience" the paper's views were often mistaken for the official government position, causing him problems in establishing diplomatic ties with certain countries already wary of Congo's "revolution."<sup>48</sup> As *Dipanda* supported the new government, and had published a piece by Annette Lissouba, the wife of new prime minister Pascal Lissouba, Ganao noticed that readers in Léopoldville and Paris tended to mistake the paper's articles for "la pensée officielle." When Massamba-Débat sent some of the initial copies to David Dacko, president of the Central African Republic, he was horrified. Dacko replied to Massamba-Débat that the paper threatened to undo the diplomatic work of the provisional government and—as the French ambassador in Bangui paraphrased—the country would be "quickly plunged into a state of permanent revolution."<sup>49</sup>

According to the French ambassador Jean Rossard, the provisional government was eager to "se débarrasser de cette caution compromettante." But Ganao reported that he was rebuffed when he had met with Ndalla and Mberi, asking them to moderate the tone of the paper. Their response, according to Rossard, was that the government could repress the journal or imprison the editors if they did not

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<sup>48</sup> The confusion was perhaps fostered by Ndalla's role as a director of state television and radio simultaneous to acting as the editor-in-chief of the paper. Similarly, Mberi was a young deputy in the National Assembly who had helped draft the 1963 constitution. See Telegram n 900-901 from French embassy in Brazzaville (no name) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 2 December 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN. See also Mberi, interview 15 October 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Telegram n 324 from Barberot (Bangui) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 26 November 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN.

approve of the paper.<sup>50</sup> The paper was not repressed, but in December, the *Dipanda* editors were forced out of their government-granted offices and took up a new space in Poto-Poto. By that time, ongoing conflicts between the political director of the paper, Jean-Baptiste Lounda, and the *attaché de presse de la Présidence* had grown severe enough that even Massamba-Débat had been angered enough to dismiss the *Dipanda* staff from its original office.<sup>51</sup> However, Massamba-Débat seems to have understood the difficult balancing act he needed to maintain with the editors of *Dipanda*. Inasmuch as the paper voiced support for the provisional government, it also sought to reshape it, and influence the ideas of the most active youth, student, and trade union militants.<sup>52</sup>

Although they had briefly enjoyed office space courtesy of the provisional government, *Dipanda's* editors never sought funding from the government or other political institutions created in Congo after 1963.<sup>53</sup> The editors of *Dipanda* found other patrons willing to support the paper. Instead, much to the chagrin of French officials, they solicited support from international Communist allies.<sup>54</sup> The initial editorial staffs of 1963–64 combined the different generations and experiences of the post-1963

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<sup>50</sup> Rossard noted that Ganao and Massamba-Débat had been in discussion about how to use “diverses mesures” to make it impossible for the paper to continue publishing. But Rossard also expressed skepticism about the implementation of these measures. See Telegram n 900-901 from French embassy in Brazzaville (no name) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 2 December 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN

<sup>51</sup> Telegram from Jean Rossard (French ambassador in Brazzaville) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 14 November 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN; Telegram from Jean Rossard (French ambassador in Brazzaville) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 17 December 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN; Mberi, interview, 15 October 2012.

<sup>52</sup> Ndalla, interview, 18 October 2012; Mberi, 15 October 2012; Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 89.

<sup>53</sup> The paper did not receive funding from either the government or the new single party created in 1964, the MNR. Though *Dipanda* has been sometimes confused for the official paper of the JMNR, it was never adopted as an official party or organizational organ. Even as some of the editors became major political figures in the years that followed, *Dipanda* often suffered regular financial difficulties. Ndalla, interview, 18 October 2012; Mberi, interview, 15 October 2012.

<sup>54</sup> Mberi, interview, 15 October 2012; Telegram from Jean Rossard (French ambassador in Brazzaville) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 14 November 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN; Telegram from Jean Rossard (French ambassador in Brazzaville) to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 2 December 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN.



student leadership: Martin Mberi, Ange Diawara, and Gustave Abba-Gandzion had been secondary student leaders in Congo, while Claude Ndalla, Jean-Baptiste Lounda, and Ambroise Noumazalay had studied abroad.<sup>55</sup> The latter used their links to Communist networks to organize a month-long mission to North Korea and China, during which they convinced those governments to provide funding for the paper.<sup>56</sup> This allowed them to sell a regular issue of the paper at twenty-five CFA francs in Congo, without reliance on advertisers, even though the paper's printer charged 105 CFA francs to print each copy.<sup>57</sup>

The editors maintained an early print run of about two thousand copies per issue and *Dipanda* became the most recognizable articulation of the demands of the revolution, surpassing the efforts to establish an official state newspaper.<sup>58</sup> The print run cannot be understood as a cap on readership, as

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<sup>55</sup> The paper was initially organized around the team of Martin Mberi (Directeur), Claude Ndalla (Rédacteur en Chef), Jean-Baptiste Lounda (Directeur Politique), and Ambroïse Noumazalay. Ange Diawara was briefly a Rédacteur en Chef Adjoint, but only until December 1963, when he was replaced by another ASCO leader, Gustave Abba-Gandzion. Only Mberi, a leader in the ASCO, was present in the Congo for the general strike. As Ndalla, Lounda, and Noumazalay returned to the Congo within a month following *les Trois Glorieuses*, Mberi claims to have approached them with the idea of starting a publication. Mberi, interview 15 October 2012.

<sup>56</sup> Mberi claims that as the director, he never received any directives from their funders, and that the Chinese and North Korean governments knew little about the Congo and were not in a position to interfere. However, the editors of *Dipanda* did campaign for the opening of diplomatic relations with China and North Korea, which had been closed under Youlou. Mberi, interview, 15 October and 19 November 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Ndalla, interview 18 October 2012. It seems that the funding was not regular, however. When this money dried up, and a local African business man, Loba Sebet payed for a mimeograph machine that allowed them to produce most of *Dipanda*'s 1965 issues themselves.

<sup>58</sup> The French ambassador, Jean Rossard, reported that of all the journals that appeared since the events of August, *Dipanda*, "a rencontré le plus d'audience." Not only was the paper anti-French and anti-American (according to Rossard), but it was immediately seen to carry "les tendances nettement Marxist des solutions qu'ils préconisent en matière politique intérieure." Letter from Jean Rossard (French ambassador in Brazzaville) to Maurice Couve de Murville, Direction des Affaires Africaines, French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 15 November 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN. Attempts to create an official state (or party) paper that could supersede *Dipanda* fell short. After the new single-party (MNR) was formed, a paper was created, *La Voix de la Révolution*. Political authorities claimed that it did not catch on among "les masses congolaises" because it confusingly shared the name of the national radio program. In 1966, at the recommendation of the editorial staff, the name was changed to *Etumba* (tran: "struggle" in Lingala). But only after *Dipanda* ceased publication in early 1968 did *Etumba* become the dominant national journal. "Le journal 'Voix de la

often one copy of the paper would be passed through many hands in a neighborhood vigilance committee or at a youth gathering, and as the French ambassador noted, “it is eagerly discussed by youth movement and trade union supporters.”<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the opinions expressed in *Dipanda* could be heard across the country as Claude Ndalla, its editor in chief, was also named the director of national television and radio. This gave the activists around *Dipanda* and the CNJ access to a much larger audience, as Ndalla and Martin Mberi became regular fixtures on state radio programs.<sup>60</sup>

## II. From Defensive to Offensive: The Youth as Vanguard

*Dipanda*, the Sunday morning debates, Opération retroussons les manches, and the vigilance brigades were all overlapping initiatives meant to buttress the new government. But Groupe de Mpila members also used these actions to coalesce a new source of social power that they could lead—outside of government control. Hoping to consolidate and continue the success of these initiatives, student radicals created the Conseil national de la jeunesse (CNJ)<sup>61</sup> a few months after les Trois Glorieuses. They

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Révolution’ prend le nom de ‘Etumba,’” 2 April 1966, ACI, carton 25, BA, CADN. In 1966, the JMNR executive committee talked about creating a month “journal de la Jeunesse” and a weekly internal JMNR paper, with the assistance of Mberi and Ndalla from *Dipanda*, but neither new publication seems to have been established. Notes, JMNR Comité Exécutif, Réunion du 11/1/1966, 11 January 1966, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Jean Rossard (French ambassador in Brazzaville) to Maurice Couve de Murville, Direction des Affaires Africaines, French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 15 November 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN; Maboungou, interview, July 2010; Nzete, interview, 23 October 2012.

<sup>60</sup> Claude Ndalla hosted a number of radio shows: “Youth and the Revolution,” “Culture and the Revolution,” and “The Congolese Orchestra Corner” on the national radio station. These and other radio programs were sometimes then reprinted in the pages of *Dipanda*. Ndalla, interview 18 October 2012; Mberi, interview, 15 October 2012.

<sup>61</sup> The UJC had come out of illegality after the fall of Youlou and was growing again, but student leaders sought to do more than re-organize existing radical activists—they sought a way to create and lead a national body that could encompass *all* youth organizations, particularly christian groups. Mberi, “Mouvement Nationale de la Révolution (MNR),” 70.

presented the CNJ as an umbrella group for the more than seventy youth organizations in Congo.<sup>62</sup>

However, the CNJ leaders' claim to represent all "youth" faced a multitude of challenges, first from young supporters of the former president, Fulbert Youlou.

Tensions came to a head on February 7, 1964, when a group of young men began marching toward where Youlou was being held under house arrest in Brazzaville, calling for him to be restored to power.<sup>63</sup> The police and gendarmes refused to intervene, but the vigilance brigades, backed by Congolese army troops, turned back the crowd, saving the new government.<sup>64</sup> The following day, a thousand people participated in a mass rally called by the CNJ in the Brazzaville neighborhood where the showdown had begun.<sup>65</sup>

Through their display of numbers and force, the vigilance brigades and CNJ leaders demonstrated their ascendancy over other groups of young people and over the shaky provisional government itself. Many of Youlou's supporters were around the same age as those who had turned them back. The outcome of the events on February 7 were significant because they asserted the dominance of a certain definition of "youth": one that backed the "revolution" and its political representatives but were not

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<sup>62</sup> "Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R," Agence Congolaise d'Information (ACI), 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.

<sup>63</sup> Youlou was a native Lari language speaker, and some young radicals saw the Lari-speaking population in Brazzaville as a source of domestic reaction. It was from the predominately Lari neighborhood of Bacongo that the pro-Youlou crowd initially gathered on February 7, 1964. However, support for Youlou did not form along clear ethno-linguistic lines. Many of Youlou's opponents, including labor unionists like Julien Boukambou and Aimé Matsika, were also native Lari speakers. Student leaders had developed a strong base among Lari speakers, and Bacongo had been one of the strongest areas of rebellion against Youlou's regime during *les Trois Glorieuses*. "Note d'Information. Objet: Opinion Publique A/S Réactions à la suite des opérations judiciaires faites à l'encontre des activités illégales de la CGAT-UJC," 12 May 1960, carton 9, PR, ANCB; "Note d'Information. Objet: Vie Politique a/s de l'U.J.C.," 22 February 1961, carton 9, PR, ANCB; See also Boutet, *Les Trois glorieuses*, 32.

<sup>64</sup> Through early 1964, most of the military still supported the new government, and by extension, joined forces with the vigilance patrols on February 7, 1964. Later that year, however, distrust developed between the government and military commanders, who were implicated in coup attempts.

<sup>65</sup> Bulletin Particulier de Renseignements, "Objet: Manifestation du 7 Février 1964 à Brazzaville," carton GR 10 T 647, Deuxième bureau, Armée de Terre, Military Archives, Service Historique de la Défense (France).

beholden to them. Though the Congolese army was still the most important armed force, the new youth organizations proved they could mobilize fighting contingents quickly. President Massamba-Débat recognized the dominance of the student radicals' definition of "youth" three days later, when he appointed one of the radical student leaders, André Hombessa, to be the high commissioner for youth and sports.<sup>66</sup> The following year, February 7 was inaugurated as the annual "National Day of the Youth."<sup>67</sup>

By organizing young men and women to defend the new government and the "revolution," student leaders sought to universalize a certain definition of "youth": as the vanguard of a revolutionary process that would liberate all oppressed segments of society. Hombessa proclaimed in 1965 that, "We saw the classic revolutionary process completely upended. Whereas until now the working class has always played the role of the vanguard, a unique phenomenon in this revolutionary process, in our country this role is played by the youth."<sup>68</sup> Initially, Massamba-Débat affirmed the vanguard identity of radical youth organizations by referring to them in their own chosen descriptor: the "fer de lance" (spearhead) of the revolution—a term borrowed from the military wing of the African National Congress.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Hombessa was the newly elected president of the ASCO and leader of the JEP.

<sup>67</sup> "Mardi 11 Fevrier 1964," Report, carton 10, PR, ANCB; Bulletin de Mercredi 3 Fevrier 1965, Nouvelles de la République du Congo, "A partir du jeudi 4 Février jusqu'au 8 fevrier journées nationales de la Jeunesse," ACI, 3 February 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>68</sup> "Nouvelles nationales- n.1. Ouverture solonelle de la première réunion du Comité Central de la JMNR," ACI, 10 September 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>69</sup> Student leaders had adopted this term from the military wing of the African National Congress (South Africa), called Umkhonto we Sizwe, meaning "spear of the nation" in Zulu.

### Controlling the Definition of “Youth”: The New Party and the Exclusion of Catholic Leaders

By early 1964, student radicals had successfully asserted their claim to being the leaders of the “youth.” The CNJ had buttressed the new government, but was organized *outside* of official government structures. The autonomy of the CNJ and its leaders vis-à-vis the government (and its advisory body, the CNR) had allowed the self-proclaimed “youth” leaders to set the political tone for the direction of the “revolution.”<sup>70</sup> But autonomy was a double-edged sword for youth leaders who sought to implement state-led development plans. Many sought to bring the CNJ and vigilance brigades into closer integration with the state in order to better influence official policy.

As their influence grew, youth leaders were elevated to positions as ministers and parliamentary deputies. When the CNR proposed a single electoral list for a new national assembly, deputies from the previous parliament were forbidden from running (with the exception of Massamba-Débat), opening space for the nominations of unionists and youth militants.<sup>71</sup> For example, among the new deputies were Martin Mberi, an ASCO leader and *Dipanda* editor. In June 1963, Mberi passed the *baccalauréat*, and just a few months later, found himself proposed for a seat in the National Assembly at the age of twenty-three. Further, Mberi was chosen to sit on the Constitutional Commission tasked with composing a new constitution.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See the speech of André Hombessa, “Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R.,” ACI, 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.

<sup>71</sup> The elections of December 1963 had already set the tone, when the provisional government and the CNR proposed a single electoral list for the parliamentary elections and a single presidential candidate, Massamba-Débat. The list was called the Mouvement Nationale de la Révolution, a preview of the single-party to come. The list included representatives from all of the major union federations: “Publication de la composition de la liste unique pour les prochaines élections législatives au Congo-Brazzaville,” AFP (Agence France Presse), 27 November 1963, carton 8, BA, CADN. Bazanguissa-Ganga argues that of the 165 major political personalities connected to the state under Youlou, by August 1964, only fourteen continued to occupy their positions. Bazanguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 78-79.

<sup>72</sup> Mberi, interviews, 15 October and 19 November 2012. The new parliament also included female deputies (three) for the first time, one of whom was Aimée Gnali, a twenty-seven year old teacher who had been involved in the AEC as a student in France and participated in the Sunday morning conferences, as noted

Building on these newfound positions, and following the confrontation with Youlou's supporters in February 1964, youth leaders began to call for the creation of a single-party (*parti-unique*) in Congo.<sup>73</sup> In June 1964, they succeeded; the Mouvement national de la révolution (MNR) was established by a vote of the new National Assembly deputies. Groupe de Mpila and the CNJ leaders were highly visible at the party's constitutive congress: the secretary of the proceedings was Andre Hombessa and the first secretary of the party, behind Massamba-Débat, was Amboise Noumazalay, one of the editors of *Dipanda*.<sup>74</sup> This initiative could be viewed as paradoxical: just months earlier, many of the new youth leaders had engaged in a bitter struggle against Fulbert Youlou's proposal for a single-party state. But they had not opposed the *form* of the single party but rather the *political content* such a party would have taken under the Youlou-led government. With the country adopting a new political direction, youth leaders saw a single mass party as the most effective means to draw the entire population into the project of creating a socialist nation.

One month later, a youth section of the party was formed, the Jeunesse du Mouvement nationale de la révolution (JMNR), for men and women ages eighteen to twenty-five.<sup>75</sup> In essence, the creation of the JMNR invested the newly established "youth" leaders of the CNJ with state-sanctioned authority. Radical students hoped to use the JMNR as a means to impose their vision of the revolution on the leadership of the party. However, there was an inherent tension between the JMNR leaders' aspirations to be a vanguard, and the JMNR's role as an inclusive mass youth section. Whereas the CNJ had been a

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above. See Gnali, interview; Gnali, *Beto na beto : le poids de la tribu*. Léon Angor, the president of the National Assembly was a former CASL leader.

<sup>73</sup> As early as October 1963, the CNJ leadership came out in favor forming of a *parti unique*. "Mardi 13 Mercredi 14 Jeudi 15 Août 1963. Révolution Congolaise 'Les Trois Glorieuses,'" entry for 21 October 1963, carton 10, PR ANCB.

<sup>74</sup> "Nouvelles de la République du Congo. Ouverture du Congrès Constitutif de la Jeunesse du MNR," 7 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN. Massamba-Débat was elected General Secretary of the party.

<sup>75</sup> As in other countries, the JMNR sought to organize school-leavers and graduates over age eighteen. "L'Editorial. Le Congrès de la Jeunesse du M.N.R.," ACI, 6 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN.

coalition of youth organizations, the JMNR aimed to bring these diverse groups into a single organization with a single leadership and set of political principles.<sup>76</sup>



[Fig. 10: Youth rally at Stade Eboué in Brazzaville, date and speaker unknown, circa 1963–1967. Source: Musée Nationale du Congo à Brazzaville, reproduced by Héloïse Kiriakou]

But young people in Congo were in no way uniform in their interests or political convictions, even among those who had supported the movement against Youlou's government. Most critically, Catholic youth and trade union representatives opposed the new single-party project on the same basis that they had opposed it under Youlou: as a restriction of their right to autonomy.<sup>77</sup> This conflict had been

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<sup>76</sup> As Hombessa later said, reflecting on the coalition-like structure of the CNJ, that all the CNJ could do, was "agir par tâtonnement sans ligne maitresse d'action clairement définie. Quand même il l'eût aperçue, comment pouvait-il l'imposer à chaque association restée malgré tout assez jalouse de ses caractéristiques et notamment de son autonomie." This lack of unity ('autonomy') was a "handicap" according to Hombessa, and the only way to overcome it was to have the youth all be in one organization "assez unifié pour créer précisément l'unité. Les résistance et les passions qui s'en suivirent furent très vives." "Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R.," ACI, 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.

exacerbated by youth leaders' demand that schools—a stronghold of the Catholic Church—be nationalized and secularized. As Mberi points out, the student radicals still viewed the clergy as the lynchpin within a conservative Catholic hierarchy, with the clergy being either Europeans or answerable to Europeans—even if that was not always the case. Moreover, the long running anti-Communism among Catholic leaders who were both supporters and opponents of Youlou immediately set them at odds with the young radicals.<sup>78</sup>

Tensions came to a head at the JMNR founding congress, where Catholic organization delegates walked out in protest.<sup>79</sup> CNJ leaders now found themselves in a difficult situation. The JMNR wouldn't be able to assert dominance over the Catholic youth organizations, if the latter was only composed of existing radical youth groups. Crucially, the congress retained the adherence of the Protestant youth organizations, which shifted the balance of power away from the Catholic leaders. Although many protestant youth delegates had been hesitant about folding into the JMNR, they were persuaded to stay

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<sup>77</sup> The major groups were the Jeunesse Étudiant Catholique (JEC) and the CATC. Both had joined the movement against Youlou, and as noted in chapter 3, the CATC was the largest trade union federation in the country at the time of Youlou's resignation. Ollandet comments: "En fait, ils travaillaient en étroite collaboration avec le syndicat chrétien, la CATC qui soufflait aux jeunes, les comportements à tenir dans la salle." He says that the Catholic Church always advised the organizations "évoluant sous son obédience" to boycott meetings as a sign of protest. But notes that this "politique de chaise vide tourna chaque fois contre ses intérêts." Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 97.

<sup>78</sup> Mberi, interview, 19 November 2012. For more on these tensions see the letter from CATC leader Jean-Aimé Makosso, "Lettre ouverte : le député Makosso Jean-Aimé a Monsieur le Président de l'Assemblée Nationale du Congo-Brazzaville," in "Revue de la Presse Locale du 21 November 1964," *La Semaine Africaine*, 21 November 1964, carton 61, PR, ANCB. Makosso was later tried for "subversive intrigues." See "Reprise des audience du Tribunal Populaire," likely ACI report, 23 July 1966, carton 37, PR, ANCB.

<sup>79</sup> "Communiqué" from the Catholic groups who walked out of the JMNR founding congress, August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN. The tactic of boycott was one that was promoted by the Catholic Church clergy in Congo for all of its associated organizations during the formation of new party and state institutions. See Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 97.



when the presidency was given to one of their own leaders, André Hombessa.<sup>80</sup> The delegates voted to create the JMNR, with an executive committee largely composed of CNJ leaders.<sup>81</sup>

Hombessa's election as the head of the JMNR, however, only further pushed away Catholic youth and trade union leaders, who now saw the authority of four Protestants—Hombessa (head of JMNR), Lissouba (prime minister), Noumazalay (second in command of the MNR), and Massamba-Débat—as proof of an effort to marginalize Catholicism and promote those with Communist links.<sup>82</sup> After the congress, hostility grew between the new JMNR leaders and Catholic organizations. Under pressure from student radicals in late 1964 through 1965, representatives from Catholic organizations and trade unions were purged from the government: trade union deputies from the CATC were removed from the MNR's central committee and expelled from the National Assembly; Catholic trade union headquarters were taken over by JMNR militants; and Louis Badila, the editor of the Catholic newspaper *La Semaine Africaine*, was arrested.<sup>83</sup> Most dramatically, a youth vigilance patrol captured the Catholic trade union leader Fulgence Biyaoula, dressed as a woman, trying to flee Brazzaville. Biyaoula was likely fleeing in

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<sup>80</sup> Hombessa was a compromise candidate. On being president of the ASCO, see Note d'information, "Objet: Activité [sic] Sociale. A/s. de la création de l'Association Scolaire du Congo (A.S.C.O.) à Ouessou," 13 January 1964, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>81</sup> Including Firmin Matingou, Martin Mberi, André Hombessa, and Ange Diawara. Télégramme from René Lalouette (French Embassy in Congo) to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 11 Aug 1964, carton 25, BA CADN; Télégram from Jean Rossard, (French Embassy in Congo) to Maurice de Couve de Murville, French Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Direction des Affaires Africaines et Malgaches, "A/s Congrès constitutif de la Jeunesse du M.N.R.," 19 August 1964, carton 25, BA CADN.

<sup>82</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 98. Conflict had existed since Massamba-Débat appointed Lissouba to be Prime Minister in Dec 1963—but more so over his Communist connections. See Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 47.

<sup>83</sup> Telegram n. 1181-1183 from Rossard (French Embassy in Congo) to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 November 1964, carton 25, BA CADN; Note de Renseignements n. 004/CM/S from Le Chef d'Escadron Baillif, Conseiller Militaire in Brazzaville, "Objet: Formation des brigades de la J.M.N.R. au Congo," 2 April 1965, carton 25, BA CADN. JMNR leaders attempted to recruit Catholic youth into the JMNR, however, noting that their "aspirations" and religious practices as Christians were in no way in conflict with the ideas of the JMNR. See speech by André Hombessa recorded in "Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R.," ACI, 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.. See also Pierre Bonnafé, "Une classe d'âge politique: la JMNR de la République du Congo-Brazzaville," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 8, no. 31 (1968): 363..

the face of increasing physical attacks and repression against Catholic representatives who refused to embrace the institutions of the new state. But for JMNR leaders, Biyaoula's attempted flight validated their fears about a plot to restore Youlou to power. But the arrest also served as a point of pride for youth radicals and a photo of Biyaoula trying to pass as a woman was splashed all over the cover of *Dipanda* (see Fig. 11).<sup>84</sup> Over the course of 1964, JMNR leaders defined their conflict with pro-Youlou partisans and Catholic organizations as one between "revolutionaries" and "counterrevolutionaries."<sup>85</sup> To be labeled "counterrevolutionary" was to essentially lose one's position as a representative of the youth—regardless of one's age.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See *Dipanda*, 55, 1 December 1964; Paul Nzete, Interview, 23 October 2012. However, it is worth noting that the CATC still had its congress in Congo in September 1964, and continued to operate as a federation even after the formation of the single trade union. Pongault was aided by Massamba-Débat in taking exile in France, but was later tried in absentia for purported involvement in a failed coup attempt. "Deux condamnations a la peine de mort : Gilbert Pongault (par contumace) et Felix Mouzabakani," ACI report, 26 July 1966, carton 37, PR, ANCB.

<sup>85</sup> Gnali, interview. Archives show that the "revolutionary" / "counter-revolutionary" dichotomy became increasingly common in *Dipanda* articles and in JMNR leaders' speeches beginning in 1964.

<sup>86</sup> Thus, as Remy Bazenguissa-Ganga notes, and archival records confirm, it was not uncommon for "youth" leaders associated with the JMNR to be over thirty years old. One's ability to *speak for* the "youth" in the Congo was determined by one's political ideas and alliances. Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 75-116.

**NOUS VAINCRONS - CAR NOUS SOMMES FORTS**  
 N° 55. — 1<sup>er</sup> Décembre 1964. HEBDOMADAIRE LE NUMERO - 25 FRANCS C.F.A.

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**LA FEMME QUE VOUS VOYEZ N'EST AUTRE QUE BIYAOLA FULGENCE UN DES LEADERS DE LA CONTRE-RÉVOLUTION LORS DE SON ÉVASION MANQUÉE**




**ARRESTATION D'UN LEADER DE LA CONTRE-REVOLUTION ET SES ACOLYTES EN SOUTANE**

**LES IMPÉRIALISTES YANKÉES ET LEURS SATELLITES ONT MASSACRÉ LE PEUPLE CONGOLAIS**

*La République Populaire d'Albanie a 20 ans*

[Fig. 11: "The woman that you see is none other than Biyaoula Fulgence, one of the leaders of the counter-revolution, during his failed escape." Dipanda, n. 55, 1 December 1964, reproduced by Matthew Swagler]

The creation of a single-party state with a youth section took place in many African states after independence.<sup>87</sup> However, in most new nations, these youth sections were subordinated to the party. Congo's history is unique because the roles were reversed: It was the youth section that set the political

<sup>87</sup> As in other countries, the JNMR sought to organize school-leavers and graduates over age eighteen. "L'Editorial. Le Congrès de la Jeunesse du M.N.R.," ACI, 6 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN.

direction for the party.<sup>88</sup> This was due to two factors. First, the youth leaders of the JMNR put forth a more ideologically cohesive vision of the revolution than the increasingly divided “elders” who ran the party.<sup>89</sup> Second, the vigilance brigades and the CNJ predated the creation of the party, and had allowed youth leaders to develop public authority through their autonomous organizing in urban neighborhoods.<sup>90</sup> Membership in the JMNR was voluntary, not mandatory, and many young people kept their distance. However, the JMNR, building on the base of the vigilance patrols and the CNJ, grew to several thousand members and became a major social and political force.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Because of the role that youth militias played on 7-8 February 1964, that date became the symbolic founding date of the JMNR, even though it was not formed until months later. In later years this was repeated nearly as fact, and created the impression the JMNR had been formed before the party itself. See for example, Hombessa’s speech: "Apothéose hier après-midi au stade de la Révolution où s'est tenu l'imposant meeting qui a été le plus haut moment du 3ème anniversaire de la jeunesse congolaise," 12 February 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>89</sup> Compared to the JMNR, the political bureau of the MNR was made up of more moderate political leaders. Apart from Ambroise Noumazalay, a youth leader (later named prime minister from 1966-68), the bureau included allies of Massamba-Débat such as Aubert Lounda, and union leaders Maurice Ognamy and Julien Bouckambou, who generally opposed the JMNR leaders.

<sup>90</sup> Ollandet argues that “the street” saw Lissouba, Noumazalay, Ndalla, and Claude DaCosta, many of the primary organizers of the Groupe de Mpila and the “youth” initiatives, as the ideological “fathers” of the socialist direction of the party. A direction which Ollandet refers to as “imported.” Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 137.

<sup>91</sup> According to French embassy authorities, twenty thousand people attended the JMNR’s mass rally and exhibition football match on National Youth Day in 1967. See, Telegram n. 102/105 from Picquet (French Embassy in Congo), likely to French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 13 February 1967, carton 25, BA CADN. In spite of its official status, JMNR sections outside of cities and larger town often faced hostility from older political authorities and grew unevenly compared to urban sections. “Nouvelles nationales- n.1. Ouverture solonelle de la première réunion du Comité Central de la JMNR,” ACI, 10 September 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN.



*[Fig. 12: JMNR leaders at a mass youth meeting, location and date unknown. Cuban style fatigues suggest between 1965 and 1968. Left to right: Prosper Matoumpa-Mpolo, Nicholas Okongo, Ange Diawara, likely Claude-Ernest Ndalla "Graille" (face partially covered), Martin Mberi, Propser Abba-Gandzion. Source: Musée National du Congo à Brazzaville, reproduced by Matt Swagler, 2012]*

As a result, the JMNR maintained a strong degree of independence in action. In 1967, the French ambassador in Congo, Louis Dauge, described the JMNR "as a virtually autonomous political force."<sup>92</sup>

The JMNR even had its own anthem, which was sung at youth events—to the exclusion of the national

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<sup>92</sup> Telegram n. 418/424, from Louis Dauge (French Ambassador in Congo) to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24 July 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN.

anthem or party anthem.<sup>93</sup> The JMNR stipulated in its statutes that it was the “vanguard” of the revolution, and all party decisions of importance were first cleared by the JMNR leaders.<sup>94</sup> As former JMNR officer Martin Mberi recalled, he never aspired to a leadership position in the party itself, feeling that being a leader in the youth section gave him clearer influence over party policies.<sup>95</sup>

### III. Youth Politics in Power

As young radicals secured their positions within the government and the JMNR, they built their demands around the call for “true” (*véritable*) or “real” (*réelle*) independence—<sup>96</sup>much like their counterparts in Senegal. The JMNR’s founding statutes committed it to fighting for “*real* political independence of the Congolese nation as a precondition for the restoration and unhampered development of the national economy, for the triumph of progress by scientific socialism, democracy, and the vital interests of all the people.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> "Journée Mondiale de la jeunesse contre le colonialisme le 24 Avril 1967 à l'Alliance Française," ACI, 22 April 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN; "Apothéose hier après-midi au stade de la Révolution...," ACI, 12 February 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.

<sup>94</sup> The idea of the youth as vanguard was embedded directly in the JMNR statutes: “Naissance de la Jeunesse de M.N.R. (J.M.N.R.), ACI, 10 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN; Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 98.

<sup>95</sup> Mberi, interviews 15 October and 19 November 2012.

<sup>96</sup> Youth activists described this overall situation as neocolonialism, defined by one writer in *Dipanda* as, “the continuation of colonialism through intermediary national servants. Youth activists had regularly referred to Youlou as a “servant” (valet) and “puppet” (fantoche) of foreign governments and foreign capital. “Naissance de la Jeunesse de M.N.R. (J.M.N.R.), ACI, 10 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN; Note from the JMNR, “Information. Congo-Brazzaville, 4 ans après Fulbert Youlou,” est. August 1967, Série B Congo Politique, ANCB; “L'Veuil de Pointe Noire Bulletin Quotidien d'Informations, Nouvelles de Pointe Noire,” 5 December 1964, *Eveil de Pointe Noire*, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>97</sup> Emphasis mine. “...indépendance politique réelle de la patrie congolaise, condition indispensable à la restauration et à un développement sans entrave de l'économie nationale, pour le triomphe du progrès par le socialisme scientifique, de la démocratie et des intérêts vitaux de tout le peuple.” See “Naissance de la Jeunesse de M.N.R. (J.M.N.R.), ACI, 10 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN.

Most urgently, youth leaders worried that French troops on Congolese soil might put Youlou back in power, especially after the French military helped Youlou escape to Léopoldville in 1964 and intervened to restore Léon M'Ba as president of Gabon that same year.<sup>98</sup> In April 1965, JMNR leaders pushed through a bill in the National Assembly to remove all French troops and bases from Congo.<sup>99</sup> French military officers responded bitterly, destroying supplies and equipment, and dumping unexploded munitions into rivers.<sup>100</sup>

A few months later, youth leaders argued that control of Congolese schools needed to be removed from the hands of foreign administrators and Christian missionaries.<sup>101</sup> As noted in chapter 3, private mission schoolteachers had already been integrated into the ranks of state civil service under Youlou, following a strike for better pay. However, in the highly polarized setting after les Trois Glorieuses, the move to nationalize education focused on the banning of teaching catechism during school hours and the creation of a common national curriculum. After a raucous debate in the National Assembly, JMNR deputies Martin Mberi and Lambert Galibali pushed through a law to rapidly nationalize the entire education system.<sup>102</sup> Simultaneously they launched a government-sponsored program of

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<sup>98</sup> "Nouvelles de la République du Congo. Ouverture du Congrès Constitutif de la Jeunesse du MNR," 7 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>99</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 162-64.

<sup>100</sup> Telegram n. 1060-1062 from Jean Rossard (French Embassy in Congo) to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24 October 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN; "L'éducation politique des militants du M.N.R., de la J.M.N.R. Clotûre provisoire hier matin d'une série de conférences données par le frère Yerodia dans le but de consolider la Révolution - le thème était "Violence et Révolution," ACI, 16 November 1964, carton 25, BA CADN; "Note à l'attention de l'Ambassadeur. A/s Brigades de vigilance," 22 October 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN; Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 163-64.

<sup>101</sup> "Télégramme des membres de la brigade de vigilance n. 49 au bureau politique," 30 November 1964, carton 25, BA CADN; Telegram/Letter n. 295 from Jean Rossard (French Embassy in Congo) to Maurice de Couve de Murville, Minstre des Affaires Etrangères, Directions des Affaires Africaines et Malgaches, "A/s Congrès constitutif de la Jeunesse du M.N.R.," 19 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>102</sup> See the folder "Projet de loi portant organisation de l'enseignement," 1965, in carton 16, PR, ANCB. In protest, mission teachers began to desert their schools, rather than be integrated into the new system, as had been hoped. Priests in Dolisie even burned their school's books. The 1965-1966 school year was virtually

“people’s education” (*éducation populaire*), under Mberi’s leadership, calling on students and JMNR activists to act as instructors. In addition to offering adult literacy classes in French, JMNR volunteers ran *collèges populaires* in urban neighborhoods, which taught students who had fallen behind in classes, young mothers, and those who had aged out of school.<sup>103</sup> Quickly, both nationalized and popular education programs faltered from a lack of resources, but Congo still saw an increase in education rates during the 1960s.<sup>104</sup> By the end of the decade 90 percent of eligible children were attending primary or secondary school, with a higher proportion of young girls participating than in any other Francophone African country.<sup>105</sup>

Youth leaders had also pushed the MNR to adopt *socialisme scientifique* as the party’s official doctrine. Officially, “scientific socialism” was a middle road between capitalism and Communism, and the government was nonaligned in the Cold War. Nevertheless, youth leaders counterposed the doctrine to Massamba-Débat’s vision of a “*philosophie bantu*” rooted in the supposed communalism of Bantu village life.<sup>106</sup> The difference in opinion between advocates of the two positions was murky. But

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sabotaged by this mass exodus, but the JMNR and the government held firm to the need to weather the disruption and train new teachers. On this crisis, see “Note d’Information. Objet: A/S de l’Enseignement,” 15 October 1965, Série B Congo Politique, ANCB; “Note d’Information. Objet: A/S de la nationalisation de l’Enseignement,” 13 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; “Note d’Information. A/S rentrée scolaire 1965,” 12 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; “Note d’Information. Objet: a/s nationalisation Ecoles privées,” 7 October 1965, Série B, ANCB.

<sup>103</sup> On the initial surge and then collapse of *éducation populaire*, see carton 9, PR, ANCB, and “Note d’Information. Objet: A/S de la J.M.N.R., section 20, Fédération 4,” 15 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; See also the “Notices Mensuelles du Mois de Juin 1968.” Série B, ANCB. Women played a role as teachers in the *éducation populaire* programs. Alice Mbadiangana, interview.

<sup>104</sup> Notably, when the promised compensation for the JMNR activist-teachers failed to materialize, retention of instructors suffered.

<sup>105</sup> *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, “Scolarisation en Congo-Brazza,” April 12, 1969; *Jeune Afrique*, December 15, 1970.

<sup>106</sup> As noted in the introduction, Massamba-Débat likely borrowed the term, and some of the principles from the 1945 work of Placide Tempels, a Franciscan missionary who worked in the Belgian controlled part of the Congo, “La Philosophie Bantu”—although Massamba-Débat’s conception was an amalgam of other frameworks, including his Protestant background. *Socialisme scientifique*, on the other hand specifically



what differentiated scientific socialism for Lissouba and leaders of the JMNR was its emphasis on the development of socialism as the product of intensive state intervention into the economic and social realms.<sup>107</sup> This intervention, far from being based in “tradition” was to be based on “universal” laws of modern state planning of production and distribution of services and commodities.<sup>108</sup>

In an about-face from the anti-communist orientation of Youlou’s administration, the new Congolese government opened up diplomatic relationships with Communist countries. JMNR leaders were often the main proponents of new alliances, which granted them more direct connections to international Communist networks. In February 1964, the Congolese government recognized Mao’s China. An embassy and copies of *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* soon followed. By the end of 1965, Congolese military and political cooperation was established not only with China and the Soviet Union, but also with Cuba, North Korea, Egypt, Algeria, Vietnam, and Eastern Bloc countries, including Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria.<sup>109</sup>

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differentiated the MNR not only from the philosophie bantou, but also from the MSA and its links to French social democracy.

<sup>107</sup> We will return to the ideas of “scientific socialism” at great length in the post-script. The Congolese conception of the 1960s should not be confused with “scientific socialism” of Marx and Engels time— it was essentially the type of state-run capitalism that was strived for in much of the Third World. See Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972).

<sup>108</sup> Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 98. This was laid out in the first issues of *Dipanda*, which, in calling for nationalization of foreign companies, linked market economies to colonialism. The paper focused from the start on the need for the economic development of the Congo on a different basis, not simply through nationalization, but also equitable salaries, free education, the creation of state farms and cooperatives for peasants and artisans, and the advancing of interest-free credit for peasants and artisans to buy equipment. Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 87-88.

<sup>109</sup> “Releve des presentations des letter de créance depuis la revolution,” mid-1965, Folder 9, Série B Congo Politique, ANCB; “Dates de la présentation des lettres de créance des Ambassadeurs accrédités au Congo à Son Excellence M. le président de la République,” late 1966/early 1967, Folder 9, Série B Congo Politique, ANCB.



*[Fig. 13: JMNR militants marching in Brazzaville 15 August 1967, bearing placards with images of Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara. Source: Musée National du Congo à Brazzaville, reproduced by Matthew Swagler]*

As JMNR leaders were quick to point out, they did not wish to break all ties with “Western” countries—notably France. Instead, they wanted to equalize alliances with different countries that could provide support for new national development projects.<sup>110</sup> Between 1963 and 1968, the government

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<sup>110</sup> JMNR leaders continued to ask French cooperation for scholarships and training, even as they criticized the French government’s cooperation priorities. See, for example, “Note d’Information. Objet : A/S des Professeurs Français,” 12 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; Letter n 0425 from C.E. Claude-Ernest Ndalla, JMNR Commission Culturelle, Union Nationale des Ecrivains Artistes et Artisans Congolais (UNEAC), to le Directeur du Centre Culturel Français à Brazzaville, 9 May 1968, carton 25, BA CADN.

initiated a dozen new national industries—funded by allies across the Cold War spectrum—and used JMNR militants to start collectivized farms.<sup>111</sup>

Pressure from youth leaders eventually overcame Massamba-Débat's hesitations, and in June 1967, the government nationalized the utility companies that held a monopoly over the distribution of water and electricity.<sup>112</sup> The move opened up the possibility for additional large-scale nationalizations, which took place over the course of the following decade. However, most new state industries failed from a lack of financial and technical resources.<sup>113</sup> Policies pushed by youth militants, like nationalization, were neither uniformly successful nor always well received. Yet when initiatives failed, JMNR leaders used their credentials as youth leaders to blame those in the government who they considered to be insufficiently committed to the revolutionary ideals of "scientific socialism."<sup>114</sup>

### **Congo as a Staging Ground for Regional Rebellion**

For JMNR leaders, Congo's "real" independence was impossible without the liberation of all people under colonial or neocolonial control. As Hombessa emphasized in a speech to JMNR members, "the

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<sup>111</sup> The collective farm project was called the *Action de Renovation Rurale*. "Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R.," ACI, 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN; "Notes, JMNR Comité Exécutif, Réunion du 11/1/1966", 11 January 1966, carton 25, BA CADN; "Decret n 65/147 du 25 Mai 1965," ACI, carton 25, BA, CADN; Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 88; Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 98-99. Cuba sent doctors to train Congolese medical students, Chinese funds supported the construction of a state textile factory, and the Soviet Union built a new hotel and a maternity center in Brazzaville. See also Note from the JMNR, "Information. Congo-Brazzaville, 4 ans après Fulbert Youlou," est. August 1967, Série B Congo Politique, ANCB.

<sup>112</sup> On resistance from Massamba-Débat to nationalizations, see Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Voies du politique au Congo*, 98-99. For more on the nationalizations, see *Dipanda* 184, 25 June 1967, and the files in carton 61, BA, CADN.

<sup>113</sup> On the failure of state industries, see Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 246-50.

<sup>114</sup> "Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R.," ACI, 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.

national revolution is inseparable from the global revolutionary movement.”<sup>115</sup> Congolese foreign relations were as important, *if not more important* to youth leaders’ attempts to define the “revolutionary” youth. Being on the “correct” side of international conflicts became a way for young militants to establish their political credibility.

JMNR leaders saw the new regime surrounded by antagonists: Portuguese troops in Angola, unfriendly regimes in Gabon, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic, and most importantly, hostile governments in Léopoldville under Moïse Tshombe, and later, Joseph Mobutu. The assassination of Congo-Léopoldville’s first prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, had been a turning point in the radicalization of many future JMNR leaders.<sup>116</sup> Revelations that Belgian and US governments assisted Moïse Tshombe’s troops in killing Lumumba raised the specter of neocolonialism over the region. When Tshombe became the prime minister of Congo-Léopoldville in 1964, he was seen as a genuine threat to the “revolutionary” government in Brazzaville.<sup>117</sup> Tshombe had been a close ally of Youlou, and allowed the former president to take refuge in Léopoldville when he escaped house arrest in 1964.<sup>118</sup> Multiple covers of *Dipanda* portrayed Tshombe with fangs and clawed hands, working in collaboration with the United States to steal the wealth of Congo-Brazzaville [see fig. 14]. Youth leaders’ feared that forces of

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<sup>115</sup> “L’Anniversaire de la J.M.N.R. à Brazzaville,” AFP 17, 13 February 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>116</sup> Lecas Atondi Momondjo, interview with author 13 October 2012; Ange Edouard Pongui, interview with author, 27 November 2012.

<sup>117</sup> Note d’Information. “Objet : A/S de la situation politique au Congo-Léopoldville,” 16 October 1965, Série B, ANCB. Likewise, As Phillipe Marchat wrote in early 1965, from Tshombe’s perspective, the presence of the CNL just across the river from Léopoldville was “a pistol aimed at the neighboring capital. Phillipe Marchat, “Réflexion sur une révolution,” *Revue de la Défense Nationale*, January 1965: 67, quoted in Kiriakou, “La génération JMNR,” 97.

<sup>118</sup> On relations between the two Congos in 1964, see Gondola, *Villes miroirs*, 335-345.

reaction were gathering on the other side of the river were affirmed when an unsuccessful coup attempt was launched from Léopoldville in 1965 against the MNR government.<sup>119</sup>

**NOUS VAINCRONS - CAR NOUS SOMMES FORTS**

N° 44. — 5 Septembre 1964. HEBDOMADAIRE LE NUMERO : 25 FRANCS C.F.A.

**DIPANDA**

Hebdomadaire de la Révolution Congolaise  
 Rédaction — Administration — Publicité  
 Boîte Postale : 791 — Téléphone :  
 C. C. P. : 29 - 35 — Compte S. G. B. C. : 702 — BRAZZAVILLE

ABONNEMENTS	1 an	6 mois	3 mois
	Afrique Equatoriale .....	1.200 »	600 »
France, États de la Communauté et autres Pays (par avion) .....	3.500 »	1.800 »	1.000 »

Directeur : BERI Martin.  
 Secrétaire Administratif : M. KAMANKE  
 Directeur Politique : J. B. LOUNDA  
 Rédacteur en Chef : NDALLA Cl-Ernest  
 Réd. en Chef-Adj. : ABBA-GANDZION

Mû par l'impérialisme US, TSHOMBE menace le Congo-Brazza. Deux heuress mais...

**Le frère Miehankanda fait le point de la situation**

[Fig. 14: Depiction of Moïse Tshombe attacking Congo-Brazzville on behalf of the United States. Dipanda, n. 44, 5 September 1964, reproduced by Matthew Swagler]

<sup>119</sup> Note d'information, "Objet: A/S de la situation politique au Congo Léopoldville," 13 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; Note d'Information, "Objet : a/s de la normalisation des relations entre Léopoldville et Brazzaville," 9 November 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN; "Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R.," ACI, 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.

Facing threats from neighboring countries—both perceived and real—JMNR leaders turned Congo into a hub for leftist opposition movements from the region. They organized volunteers to fight the Portuguese in Angola, and pushed the government to allow the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) to set up its headquarters in Brazzaville just two months after the fall of Youlou.<sup>120</sup> The MPLA leadership, previously based in Léopoldville, had been banned and its leaders arrested after the fall of Lumumba. As Piero Gleijeses has argued, the revolution in Brazzaville resurrected the MPLA at a crucial moment in its early history.<sup>121</sup> MPLA representatives regularly addressed JMNR events, while Congolese youth leaders printed the MPLA's communiqués in *Dipanda* and Claude Ndalla provided the Angolan rebels with a regular program on national radio.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ndalla, interview, 19 October 2012. Massamba-Débat met with MPLA representatives just two months after Youlou's fall.

<sup>121</sup> Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 82.

<sup>122</sup> See for example, Note de Renseignements n. 128, "Objet: Journée Mondiale de la Jeunesse contre le Colonialisme," 28 April 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN; "Commemoration de la Journée Mondiale du Colonialisme," ACI, 25 April 1966, carton 25, BA, CADN; *Dipanda*, 4 February 1966; Ndalla, interview 19 October 2012.



[Fig. 15: The former headquarters of the MPLA on the edge of the neighborhood “Angola Libre” in Brazzaville. Photo Matthew Swagler ©2012]

Congo also became a refuge for militants from the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC) and Lumumba’s followers in Conseil national de libération (CNL) of Congo-Léopoldville, much to the chagrin of Congolese diplomats trying to work in these countries.<sup>123</sup> Tshombe was furious that the government in Brazzaville was hosting his opponents just across the river. As tensions escalated, Tshombe declared he could conquer his neighbors in just two hours. Ultimately, Tshombe backed away from the threat of direct military intervention, but continued to host opponents of the new government in Brazzaville. And

<sup>123</sup> Relations between JMNR and CNL members inside Congo-Brazzaville were often contentious, with each accusing the other of criminal activity. Note d’Information, “A/s C.N.L. Lumumba (Comité National de Libération),” 15 October 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN; Note d’Information, “Objet: A/S de la J.M.N.R., section fluviale,” 15 October 1965, Série B Congo Politique, ANCB.



in another act of retaliation, Tshombe expelled nearly twelve thousand Congolese who originated from the Brazzaville side of the river, but had been living on the Kinshasa side<sup>124</sup>.

UPC exiles had been repeatedly forced to move as their hosts in Ghana, Guinea, and Egypt tried to develop diplomatic relations with the Cameroonian government. As with the MPLA, the UPC was given another chance because of the revolution in Congo—and this time in a country that bordered Cameroon. The Congolese government, which also sought to make diplomatic amends with Cameroon's president, Amadou Ahidjo, never officially granted the UPC refuge. However, with the assistance of Congolese youth leaders, a group of 185 UPC militants was able to arrive under the sponsorship (*sous l'étiquette*) of the MPLA and create an official leadership committee in exile.<sup>125</sup>

Some expatriates in Brazzaville played a long-term role in providing political education to JMNR militants, particularly Abdoulaye Yerodia from Congo-Léopoldville and Osendé Afana of the UPC.<sup>126</sup> Brazzaville became a meeting place for MPLA representatives and their Cuban patrons. And when Che Guevara arrived in Africa in 1965 to help organize a guerrilla movement in Congo-Léopoldville, he first came to Brazzaville.<sup>127</sup>

Political exiles from these organizations played a critical role in the ideological education of new youth militants in Congo. Osendé Afana and René Jacques N'gouo Woungly-Massaga, from Cameroon, had both been students in France in the 1950s and played leading roles in the FEANF. Coming out of the same milieu as Congolese radicals like Lissouba and Noumazalay, and Senegalese militants like Amady Aly Dieng, Afana, and Woungly-Massanga, they became leading members of the UPC, traveling

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<sup>124</sup> Gondola, *Villes Miroirs*, 338-343.

<sup>125</sup> Note de Renseignements, "Objet : A/S de Mr. Joseph Ngakou, ressortissant camerounais, militant de l'UPC, 7 September 1967, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>126</sup> Yerodia and Afana's role as teachers was indicated during interviews with former JMNR members Claude Ndalla, Martin Mberi and José Maboungou. See also "L'éducation politique des militants du M.N.R. , de la J.M.N.R..." ACI, 16 November 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN; Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 47.

<sup>127</sup> Jihan El Tahri, "Cuba, an African Odyssey," (France2007).



extensively to try to develop alliances across the continent. Not surprisingly, both came to Brazzaville in the wake of the revolution. Both were highly educated—Afana earned a PhD in economics, and Woungly-Massanga received his doctorate in mathematics—and were considered intellectual assets to the revolution. One of the key players in the CNL was Abdoulaye Yerodia, who had been born in Léopoldville, but had moved to Brazzaville with his father before independence. Afana and Yerodia gave lectures at the Conférences du dimanche, and both went on to play a formative role in the creation of the Institut de formation idéologique (IFI), a school of political and education (“*formation idéologique*”) created in 1964, aimed at training the militants of the JMNR.<sup>128</sup> The space later doubled as a school for both the political and military training of youth militias.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Mabougou, interview, 9 October 2012; Ndalla, interview 1 8 October 2012; Nzete, interview 23 October 2012; Mberi interview 19 November 2012; Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 47; “L'éducation politique des militants du M.N.R. , de la J.M.N.R. Clotûre provisoire hier matin d'une série de conférences données par le frère YERODIA dans le but de consolider la Révolution - le thème était "Violence et Révolution," ACI, 16 November 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>129</sup> Mberi, interview 19 November 2012. The IFI was based in a camp on the southern end of Brazzaville that the JMNR seized from Catholic trade union leaders (the Union panafricaine des travailleurs croyants (UPTC), the Christian trade union federation that had been led by Gilbert Pongault before the revolution). See chapter 3, and Blum, *Révolutions africaines*, 129-45.



*[Fig. 16: After a meeting at the Institut de formation idéologique (IFI), 1965, with many of the main “formateurs,” left to right: Osendé Afana (UPC), Ambroise Noumazalay (Dipanda, JMNR, later Prime Minister), Jean-Baptiste Lounda (JMNR), Abdoulaye Yerodia (CNL). Source: Personal collection of José Maboungou, reproduced by Matthew Swagler, 2012]*

The exiled leaders from Cameroon, Congo-Léopoldville, and Angola had varied—and often vague—relationships to the international Communist movement. Nevertheless, in the context of the Cold War, their presence in Brazzaville, coupled with the “revolutionary” regime’s new openness toward Communist countries made it more difficult for Massamba-Débat and youth leaders to proclaim their “nonalignment.” There were two major results, the first of which was the US government’s decision to

break diplomatic ties with Brazzaville. JMNR militants were publicly hostile to the US government, which they saw as a neocolonial power. The JMNR regularly hosted North Vietnamese or National Liberation Front delegations during the US war in Vietnam.<sup>130</sup> They were also critical of racism in the United States, and *Dipanda* published photos of police brutality against African Americans and printed translated interviews with Malcolm X.<sup>131</sup> Facing this animosity from the ruling party's youth section, the US government ended diplomatic relations with Congo-Brazzaville in 1965, settling into a friendlier relationship with the new regime of Joseph Mobutu across the river in Léopoldville.<sup>132</sup> In many ways, the US government's decision to abandon Brazzaville in the midst of the mounting influence of Communist countries indicates that the United States did not see the small country as a genuine regional threat. But for JMNR representatives, the departure of the embassy was a victory.

## IV. The Militarization of the Youth

The strength of "youth" leaders in Congo initially rested on multiple pillars: their skill as organizers, their growing popular base, and the relative clarity of their political ideas in the midst of confusion after the fall of Youlou's government in 1963. But most of the rank and file of the new youth organizations was students or unemployed young men with little economic or political power.<sup>133</sup> As Pierre Bonnafé

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<sup>130</sup> Vietnamese delegations were often present at major JMNR events. See "Message of Solidarity to Vietnamese youth" from the Comité Centrale of the JMNR Brazzaville, ACI Flash, 17 April 1967, carton 25, BA CADN. The message was greeted with five minutes of spontaneous applause before the JMNR members stood up to sing "The Internationale."

<sup>131</sup> See, for example, *Dipanda*, n. 45, 12 September 1964.

<sup>132</sup> Diplomatic relations between the United States and Congo-Brazzaville did not resume until 1977.

<sup>133</sup> Mabougou, interviews, July 2010 and 9 October 2012; Bernard Malamou (former Défense civile member), interview with author 24 October 2012, Brazzaville; Alex Dazbana Ibacka, (former JMNR & Défense civile member), interview with author, 14 October 2012, Brazzaville.

observed just after the formation of the JMNR, what gave the “youth” its influence in the final instance was the possible use of force.<sup>134</sup>

JMNR leaders worried that Congolese and French military officers had close links and could not be trusted to back the “revolutionary” government. Mistrust grew when commanders from the Congolese military, and particularly the gendarmerie, were implicated in coup attempts launched by former members of Youlou’s government. The first failed coup in 1964 prompted JMNR leaders to create armed militias (*milices populaires*) as a counterbalance to the military.<sup>135</sup> At first, the Congolese military provided arms and basic training to young militants, perhaps hoping to integrate them into the Congolese army’s command chain.<sup>136</sup> However, tensions began to escalate between the two forces, and soon JMNR leaders turned to their own international connections to secure arms and trainers, without the approval of Congolese military leaders: first from Algeria and Egypt, then Czechoslovakia, China and the Soviet Union.<sup>137</sup>

Though most militias were composed of men, a few dozen young women joined the *brigade féminin*, armed women’s militias that were trained by JMNR leaders. As elsewhere in Africa, women were invited into the ranks of the youth section of the party, but men dominated the leadership, and

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<sup>134</sup> Bonnafé, "Une classe d'âge politique."

<sup>135</sup> “Nouvelles de la République du Congo. Ouverture du Congrès Constitutif de la Jeunesse du MNR,” ACI, 7 August 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN; Some accounts claim that arms were first brandished by the vigilance brigades on February 7, 1964 in response to the march of pro-Youlou partisans. See “Rétrospective. On the formation of early post-independence state youth militias in Guinea, Zanzibar, and Mali, see Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution*; Burgess, "To Differentiate Rice from Grass"; Gregory Mann, "Violence, Dignity and Mali's New Model Army, 1960-68," *Mande Studies* 5(2003).  
Déclaration du Frère Boukambou Julien Membre du Bureau Politique à l'occasion du Troisième anniversaire de la journée nationale de la Jeunesse Congolaise,” ACI, 13 February 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>136</sup> Mabougou, interview, July 2010.

<sup>137</sup> Note d’Information, “Objet: A/S des Ministres Hombessa, N’Dalla et de l’A.P.N.,” 16 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; Note de Renseignements N. 004/CM/S from Le Chef d’Escadron BAILLIF, Conseiller Militaire in Brazzaville, “Objet: Formation des brigades de la J.M.N.R. au Congo,” 2 April 1965, carton 25, BA CADN; “République du Congo. Activités des J.M.N.R.,” report, January 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN; José Mabougou, interview, July 2010; Ange Edouard Pongui (former JMNR student leader), interview with author, 27 November 2012, Brazzaville.

“youth” often became synonymous with maleness.<sup>138</sup> It was, however, in the realms of vigilance brigades and armed patrols that young women became more visible as actors in the “revolution.”<sup>139</sup> The women’s section of the party, the Union Révolutionnaire des Femmes du Congo (URFC), organized its own vigilance brigades in Brazzaville in collaboration with the JMNR.<sup>140</sup> But the URFC tended to attract married women, while unmarried younger women often participated in the JMNR with men, and joined the brigade féminin [see fig. 17].<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> On the lack of success in bringing young women into the JMNR, see: "Editorial. 2è Congrès JMNR. Bulletin d'Information," Marie-Thérèse Bongo in collaboration with Goma-Foutou, Banzouzi, Ndalla, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>139</sup> On the arming of women: "Nouvelles Nationales n. 2. Les Festivités de l'an 5 de l'U.R.F.C.," ACI, 9 March 1970, carton 25, BA, CADN; "Congo-Brazza. 3e anniversaire de la "Jeunesse MNR," ACI, Speech by Massamba-Débat, carton 25 BA, CADN; "Nouvelles nationales- n.1. Ouverture solonelle de la première réunion du Comité Central de la JMNR.," ACI, Speech by André Hombessa, 10 September 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN; "L'Eveil de Pointe Noire. Bulletin Quotidien d'Informations. Nouvelles de Pointe Noire," 5 December 1964, carton 25, BA CADN.

<sup>140</sup> On women’s patrols see, for example, "Procès-Verbal. Vigilance du 23.7.65 de 11h20 à 15h15 conduite par Mme Kailly," 23 July 1965, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>141</sup> The origins of the brigade féminin seems to be in January 1965, see "République du Congo. Activités des J.M.N.R.," Report, January 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN.



[Fig. 17: *Brigade féminin marching in Brazzaville, 15 August 1967. Source: Musée Nationale du Congo à Brazzaville, reproduced by Matthew Swagler, 2010*]

The vigilance patrols created after les Trois Glorieuses had policed a broad definition of “revolutionary” morality in urban neighborhoods, claiming the prerogative to apprehend late-night inebriates, suspected prostitutes, and abusive spouses.<sup>142</sup> Fines were often exacted—sometimes

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<sup>142</sup> On the intervention into spousal abuse, see “Note d’Information. Objet: A/S de la J.M.N.R.,” 13 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; This could include border control as well, see “Pour la défense de la révolution, collaboration des forces de l’ordre avec les forces vives de la nation,” ACI, 8 Jan 1965, carton 25, BA CADN; On the increase in check points at the time of the French military departure, see “Note à l’attention de l’Ambassadeur. A/s Brigades de vigilance,” 22 October 1964, carton 25, BA CADN; Letter N.190/C from Consul Adjoint, (R. Chaillet) Gérant le Consulat Général de France à Pointe-Noire to Ambassadeur de France, Brazzaville (Rossard), “Objet: Activités des milices,” 19 September 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN.

through threats of violence—as a way for the young vigilantes to piece together a living.<sup>143</sup> When the brigades became armed, these practices became yet more violent. Further, militia members often clashed with Congolese police and gendarmes.<sup>144</sup>

With the creation of the militias, autonomous armed groupings operating in urban and rural spaces multiplied, and in February 1965, three high-ranking members of the government were assassinated.<sup>145</sup> Though the assassinations were not traced back to the JMNR leaders or their militias, the crisis prompted an attempt to reign in vigilantism.<sup>146</sup> However, JMNR leaders did not want to disarm their youth militants but to discipline them. Here, the presence of exiles from Angola and Congo-Léopoldville again became important. In January 1965, Che Guevara visited Brazzaville, and after meeting with representatives from the MPLA and CNL, agreed to send Cuban military trainers to Congo to train these exile movements.

However, once Cuban trainers arrived in Brazzaville, JMNR leaders convinced them to allow Congolese youth militia members to train with the MPLA and UPC exiles. Congolese volunteers then joined UPC incursions into southern Cameroon and sent volunteers to fight alongside the MPLA in

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<sup>143</sup> A suspect might spend a night in a school classroom or other space claimed by the vigilance brigades as their headquarters (later, these became the JMNR's *état-majors*), subject to verbal taunting or physical abuse, including one account of a rape.

<sup>144</sup> Note de Renseignements N. 264, 29 November 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN; Note de Renseignements N. 267, "Rapports entre police et J.M.N.R.," 15 December 1964, carton 25, BA, CADN

<sup>145</sup> The Attorney General, the head of the Supreme Court, and the director of the Congolese Information Agency were assassinated. Mystery still shrouds the killings, but accusations have most often been made against a "Groupe Choc" organized by allies of the president and Prime Minister, Pascal Lissouba. On this accusation, see Note d'Information, "Objet: A/S de Mabouka," 13 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; Note d'Information, "Objet: A/S de la J.M.N.R. section n. 36 à Bacongo," 13 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; Note d'Information, "A/s Voyage du Président Massamba-Débat," 13 October 1965, Série B, ANCB. On the growing tensions between the government and JMNR militias see: "République du Congo. Activités des J.M.N.R.," Report, January 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN; Telegram n.13. From French Consulate (Pointe-Noire) to French Embassy in Brazzaville, 1 March 1965, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>146</sup> Note d'Information, "Objet: A/S de la création de l'Armée Rouge," 14 October 1965, Série B, ANCB; See also Massamba-Débat's speech to the JMNR, "Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R.," ACI, 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.



northern Angola.<sup>147</sup> With the help of Cuban trainers, most of the youth militias in the capital were consolidated into a single armed youth force, the Corps national de la défense civile (CNDC).<sup>148</sup> With support from the government, the Défense civile created military encampments, allowing commanders better control over militia members' activities and training.<sup>149</sup>



[Fig 18: *Défense civile* marching in Brazzaville, 15 August 1967. Source: Musée Nationale du Congo à Brazzaville, reproduced by Matthew Swagler, 2010]

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<sup>147</sup> Beginning with only seventeen UPC members, Woungly-Massanga was able to work with Congolese youth organizations to develop a fighting force of over two hundred that began incursions into Cameroon. See André-Hubert Onana Mfege, "L'armée de libération nationale Kamerunaise et sa stratégie 1959-1970," *Outre-mers* 92, no. 348 (2005). The program of sending volunteers to Angola was described by Claude Ndalla, interview, 19 October 2012.

<sup>148</sup> "Notes, JMNR Comité Exécutif, Réunion du 11/1/1966," 11 January 1966, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>149</sup> Militants were spread across six camps around the capital and battalions in Pointe-Noire and Dolisie. The heads of the vigilance brigades were integrated into the Défense civile. See Note d'Information, "Objet : Activités Politiques A/S Réunion publique tenue le 9-10-65 à 14h40 au C.E.G. d'Impfondo par les membres du Comité Central de la J.M.N.R.," 13 October 1965, Série B, ANCB. This attempt to control armed "youth" was seen as successful by the French Ambassador in Brazzaville. See Telegram n. 418/424 from Louis Dauge (French Embassy in Congo) to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24 July 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN.



As former Défense civile militants recounted to me in interviews, there were frequent clashes between Cuban trainers and Congolese youth leaders, often stemming from misunderstandings due to the Cubans' lack of fluency in French. But Congolese youth leaders generally adopted the spirit of their Cuban trainers in dress, language, and politics, seeing Congo's revolution as increasingly analogous to Cuba's. When Che Guevara was killed in 1967, youth leaders hosted a massive funeral procession through the streets of Brazzaville.<sup>150</sup>

What made the Défense civile so important was that it operated under a command structure that was entirely autonomous from the Congolese military. Funded separately from the army, its budget came directly from the general treasury of the MNR—not the government.<sup>151</sup> In effect, the Défense civile was the military extension of the JMNR: funding was decided upon by the former JMNR president, André Hombessa, and in 1967, Ange Diawara was also made head of both the Défense civile and the JMNR.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> "Nouvelles Nationales N. 3. Veillée Funebre Samedi soir à la permanance de la J.M.N.R. en memoire de "Che" Guevara dont le souvenir et les enseignements ont été exaltés par les révolutionnaire congolais," ACI, 23 October 1967, Série B, ANCB.

<sup>151</sup> The Défense civile eventually operated with a budget of 80 million CFA francs by 1967-1968.

<sup>152</sup> "Rapport d'inspection du Corps National de la Defense Civile," 26 April 1968, carton 23, PR, ANCB; Martin Mberi, interview, 19 November 2012.



*[Fig. 19: Trained Défense civile commanders, circa 1965–1967. Source: Musée Nationale du Congo à Brazzaville, reproduced by Héloïse Kiriakou]*

Although the Défense civile was under the control of JMNR leaders, President Massamba-Débat still counted on it as security against the threat of a military coup d'état.<sup>153</sup> On the third anniversary of the National Day of Youth in 1967, Massamba-Débat rode into Brazzaville's largest stadium leading a parade of five hundred Défense civile members.<sup>154</sup> With 1,345 militants in the Défense civile battalions by 1968 and up to two thousand more remaining in the milices populaires, youth leaders controlled a

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<sup>153</sup> Telegram n. 418/424 from Louis Dauge (French Embassy in Congo) to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24 July 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN. Défense civile members saw their organization playing this role as well. See "2è Congrès JMNR. Bulletin d'Information," 19 July 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN; "Editorial. 2è Congrès JMNR. Bulletin d'Information," Marie-Thérèse Bongo in collaboration with Goma-Foutou, Banzouzi, Ndalla, carton, 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>154</sup> "Apothéose hier après-midi au stade de la Révolution où s'est tenu l'imposant meeting qui a été le plus haut moment du 3ème anniversaire de la jeunesse congolaise," 12 February 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN.

military force that rivaled the Congolese army in size and equipment.<sup>155</sup> The presence of Cuban military officers working with a rival armed force infuriated Congolese military officers, who demanded the integration of the *Défense civile* into the army.<sup>156</sup> However their attempt to involve just a single Congolese Army officer in the running of the *Défense civile* was rebuffed by Diawara.<sup>157</sup> The increased discipline and organization of the *Défense civile* reduced public frustrations with vigilantism, but with two national armed forces operating independently of each other, tensions arose between the government and army commanders.

## V. The 1968 Putsch and the Revolution's Uncertain Future

Growing tensions between the government and military commanders were exacerbated by increasing strife between the JMNR and party elders. Conflicts had long simmered over the pace of social reforms, the arming of youth militants, and the failure of state enterprises. By the time of the second congress of the JMNR in 1967, Massamba-Débat and youth leaders were at loggerheads.<sup>158</sup>

In his opening speech to the congress, Massamba-Débat criticized JMNR militants for their quickness to blame problems on others without first taking stock of their own mistakes. The president singled out the JMNR for becoming a talk shop, characterizing meetings as consumed by “intrigues,

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<sup>155</sup> “Rapport d'inspection du Corps National de la Defense Civile,” 26 April 1968, carton 23, PR, ANCB; Mberi, interview, 19 November 2012; Maboungou, interview, July 2010; and Malamou, interview, 24 October 2012 all provided similar number and estimated an average age of 20 or 21. See also Kiriakou, “La génération JMNR,” 63.

<sup>156</sup> Note de Renseignement, “Objet : A/S Attitude des officiers A.P.N. Origine : E/K.S.S.A.,” 6 May 1967, carton 9, PR, ANCB. Cuban trainers were often blamed by the government when the *Défense civile* was accused of carrying out exactions or abuses. See “Note de Synthèse Annuelle, Année 1966,” by A. Ongagou, Directeur-Adjoint de Cabinet, Présidence de la République, carton 9, PR, ANCB.

<sup>157</sup> Momondjo, interview 20 November 2012; Maboungou, Interview, 8 October 2012.

<sup>158</sup> Telegram n. 418/424 from Louis Dauge (French Embassy in Congo) to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24 July 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN. Described as an “epreuve de force” (a showdown) between the president and youth leaders in the words of the French ambassador.

useless oratorical contests, untimely declamations, [and] the outrageous passions that too easily create a hell where one leaves dazed or bitter or disillusioned, consoling oneself a bit with a small pile of mundane resolutions and wishful thinking.”<sup>159</sup>

Much like Senghor’s angry address to students a year later during the strike in Dakar, Massamba-Débat derided those young militants who based their authority on piecemeal familiarity with Marxist quotations. And as Senghor would do, he used a quote from Mao to drive home his point, in this case from 1937’s “On Practice,” mocking the “ridiculous ‘know-it-alls,’ armed with occasional, fragmentary knowledge, who consider themselves ‘above the rest,’ [but] are just demonstrating their immeasurable conceit.”<sup>160</sup> He contrasted workers and peasants “who get their hands dirty every day” with youth leaders’ urban decadence, asking “How many of us have picked up a hoe, or even a broom?”<sup>161</sup> In a rhetorical move that would also be repeated by Senghor in 1968, he argued that being legitimate socialists required becoming “good workers like our friends the Soviets, Chinese, Koreans, and all the socialist countries.” “To work,” the president said to the congress, “is to cut the grass from under the feet of the counter-revolution.” He reminded the audience that Lenin did not say, “‘Critics and theorists of the world, unite!’ He said, ‘Workers and proletarians of the world, unite!’”<sup>162</sup> Massamba-Débat counterposed urban youth to the volunteers at the collective farming villages of the Action de

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<sup>159</sup> This quotation and all below from Massamba-Débat’s speech transcribed in “Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R.,” ACI, 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.

<sup>160</sup> “...ces ridicules qu'on appelle les "je sais tout", qui forts de connaissances occasionnelles, fragmentaires, se considèrent comme "supérieurs à tout", ce qui témoigne tout juste de leur fatuité incommensurable.”

<sup>161</sup> Youth in urban spaces who “se déplacent beaucoup et jour et nuit, et parlent à longueur de journée” focused on trivialities, intrigues, and luxury items. Further, he derided youth leaders for their supposed nationalist and anti-imperialist fervor, while craving products that came from Europe.

<sup>162</sup> “...censeurs et théoriciens du monde unissez-vous! Il a dit: travailleurs et prolétaires du monde unissez-vous.” This slogan originates with Marx and Engels, not Lenin, but Massamba-Débat attributed to the latter, perhaps for a particular effect.

rénovation rurale and the cadres of the Défense civile that were sent to work at the state-owned textile factory at Kinsoudi.<sup>163</sup>

But most importantly, Massamba-Débat had lost patience with the JMNR's autonomous practices. He concluded by arguing that a "good society" was marked by cohesion in its ranks and respect for hierarchy. He asked JMNR members to subordinate themselves to the party, to stop fetishizing "ultra-democracy" and cease "constituting a sort of party apart."<sup>164</sup> In the wake of this provocation, the congress became rife with conflicts. When the vote for president of the new board of the JMNR took place, Martin Mberi—who had submitted his candidacy at the last moment—defeated the government's preferred incumbent, Hombessa.<sup>165</sup> The congress was split and the MNR, under Massamba-Débat, annulled the elections and instead appointed Ange Diawara, head of the Défense civile to run the JMNR.<sup>166</sup> The collapse of the congress and the decision of the MNR bureau to impose a leadership signaled the potential weakening of the JMNR as an autonomous political force. As French ambassador Louis Dauge noted at the time, appointing Diawara may have been Massamba-Débat's attempt to integrate the Défense civile into the ruling party and into the national army.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Hombessa, following Massamba-Débat, did the same, emphasizing how the revolution inspired young people "who had already acquired a number of tastes, accustomed to certain pleasures, to laziness and to the law of least effort" became conscious of the need to return to the land. Hombessa had touted the Action de Rénovation Rurale at the mass gathering of youth in February 1967 as well. See "Congo-Brazza. 3e anniversaire de la "Jeunesse MNR," Newspaper clipping on the 3rd anniversary of the national youth day, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>164</sup> "...de ne jamais donner l'impression, sous le coup de l'ultra-démocratisme, de faire comme un peu à sa tête, ou de constituer une sorte de parti à part." "Nouvelles Nationales, N.1-N.16. Ouverture du Deuxième Congrès de la J.M.N.R," ACI, 20 July 1967, carton 25, BA CADN.

<sup>165</sup> "Congrès Houleux," 20-21 August 1968, *Le Tribune* (Congo-Kinshasa), reprinted in folder 15, Série B, ANCB. See also Mberi, interviews, 15 October and 19 November 2012; interviews; Ndalla, interview, 19 October 2012.

<sup>166</sup> "Important Communiqué du Bureau Politique," ACI, 24 July 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>167</sup> Telegram n. 418/424 from Louis Dauge (French Embassy in Congo) to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24 July 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN.

In July 1968, the Congolese student union created after the revolution, the Union générale des élèves et étudiants congolais (UGEEC), met for its annual congress. Led by the demands of students studying abroad, the UGEEC became the first group to openly call for Massamba-Débat to step down.<sup>168</sup> Students were furious that Massamba-Débat had eliminated the position of prime minister at the beginning of the year and was clamping down on the JMNR.<sup>169</sup> Some students had experienced the upheavals of May and June 1968 in France firsthand; others had followed news of the events in France and the nearly simultaneous strike in Dakar. The UGEEC militants hoped to see the revolution in Congo renewed by similar mass social protests.<sup>170</sup> Following the lead of the Défense civile, UGEEC had created its own student militias in July 1967.<sup>171</sup>

In the summer of 1968, the tensions within the military merged with the conflict between the “youth” and the government. Over the previous four years, youth leaders had argued that the Congolese officer army corps needed to be “politicized”—trained in the goals of the revolution—as a way to assuage fears that a conservative section of the military might move to overthrow the government. A small group of young officers around Captain Marien Ngouabi had embraced the call to radicalize the military. However, Massamba-Débat saw Ngouabi as a threat and had him demoted in 1966, then arrested in 1968. After his supporters in the army freed him in July 1968, they organized a military action to topple the government, collaborating with a subset of youth leaders, young soldiers, and the passive support of much of the Défense civile. Ngouabi, twenty-nine years old at the time, presented himself as someone who could break through the conservatism of the government on behalf of the youth. Many youth leaders, frustrated with Massamba-Débat, formed an alliance of convenience

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<sup>168</sup> “Extrait du Cahier n.2 (Février, Mars, Avril 1968) de l'Association des Etudiants Congolais,” carton 25, BA, CADN; Bongou, interview; Pongui, interview.

<sup>169</sup> Mberi, interview, 15 October 2012.

<sup>170</sup> Pongui, interview; Ndalla, interview, 19 October 2012; Mberi, interview, 15 October 2012.

<sup>171</sup> “2è Congrès JMNR. Bulletin d'Information,” 19 July 1967, carton 25, BA, CADN.

with the young military officer, while others remained skeptical.<sup>172</sup> For weeks, it remained unclear who would lead the state. The conflict over what would become of the “revolution” would last another five years.

## Conclusion

The events of 1963 and 1968 in Congo are reminders of the instability of the country’s new political institutions and alliances coming out of colonial rule. As noted above, the turmoil in Congo in the 1960s contrasts with the relative stability of Senghor’s entrenched political rule in Senegal. The volatility of Congolese politics during this time period offered both risks and opportunities to different historical actors. For student radicals, les Trois Glorieuses provided the opening to organize the growing youth populations in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. Between 1963 and 1968, the vigilance brigades, CNJ, JMNR, and Défense civile maintained a complex balance between integration with the government on the one hand, and autonomy from it on the other. The leaders of these organizations sought positions in the government and the single party, so as to influence the practice of the regime directly. However, when they could not shape state politics how they wished, or state projects faltered, they became critics of the regime in their role as youth organization leaders. By positioning themselves as simultaneously “inside” and “outside” the regime, they could access resources (including from international sources) that helped them maintain an independent base of young supporters.<sup>173</sup> And perhaps most importantly, following the ethnic tensions of the late 1950s, the youth organizations of 1963–68 were notable for their ability to recruit adherents from across ethno-linguistic populations.

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<sup>172</sup> Maboungou, interview July 2010.

<sup>173</sup> The autonomy practiced by these youth organizations resulted in violent abuses committed in the name of the “revolution”, but autonomy was not the *cause* of violence—the Senegalese government proved it was capable of greater centralized violence in the torturing of PAI activists, and the deadly attacks on protesters in 1963 and 1968 in Dakar.

Drawing on their insider-outsider position, young radicals were able to advance reforms that brought them closer to their conception of “real” independence: the removal of French troops, the nationalization of the education system, the expansion of state industries, and a “nonaligned” foreign policy. Many of these changes were demanded by radicals in Senegal at the same time, and harkened back to the vibrant debates from the late 1950s about what “independence” meant (see introduction).

Moreover, Congolese youth leaders were able to transform the country into a hub for exiled anticolonial and radical political movements from across Central Africa. Just as Brazzaville under Félix Eboué had become a refuge for Free France, now, under the influence of youth leaders, it became the much-needed sanctuary for groups like the MPLA.

The youth organizations that flourished in Congo during these five years offered the potential for democratizing political life in Congo but had crippling limitations. Most student leaders did not create mass youth organizations as a means to bring about socialism through the democratic participation of Congolese people in the country’s political decision-making. Instead, young intellectuals saw their organizations as springboards for bringing socialism through the enlightened dictates of the most “revolutionary” leaders. Since the JMNR leaders claimed to hold a monopoly on the political role of “youth,” those youth organizations that didn’t agree with the JMNR’s political goals were effectively denied their own autonomy, as occurred with Catholic organizations. As Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba writes of the Congolese student radicals of 1963–1968: “Their understanding of the transformation of the state from within was driving ‘non-socialists’ out of the state apparatus. Struggles in the state were reduced to struggles by ‘socialist elements’ to occupy ‘strategic’ state places.”<sup>174</sup> As a result, youth organizations—and recourse to violence—were increasingly instrumentalized as a means for a handful of student leaders to ascend to positions of power in the new state.

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<sup>174</sup> Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, “The Experience of Struggle in the People’s Republic of Congo,” in *Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa*, ed. Peter Anyang’ Nyong’o (London: Zed Books, 1987), 105.



But the history of youth organizations during this time period in Congo is more than one of individual political aspirations and threats of violence. As the student radicals of 1963 were elevated into party and government posts, they often found themselves operating under constraints that forced them to temper or betray the demands they had raised as youth leaders. In the process, the next group of youth leaders behind them (whether in age or influence), critiqued their actions and took control of the ongoing political redefinition of “youth.” In large part, this constant renewal took place because youth leaders put a great deal of effort into the political training of JMNR rank-and-file members. Advanced schooling was no longer the only path to intellectual authority; new youth leaders from various backgrounds developed their own political perspectives and tried to apply them in practice. Reading groups, organized debates, public works programs, literacy classes, and military training brought thousands of young people into Congolese political life.<sup>175</sup> The claims to autonomy made by JMNR leaders were picked up by young critics within their ranks. Ultimately, it was this opening up of new political possibilities that made 1963–1968 one of the most dynamic periods in Congo’s history.

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<sup>175</sup> Atondi Lecas Momondjo, a student in Brazzaville in 1963, recalled that at a mass youth meeting shortly after the fall of Youlou, he heard a student who had recently returned from abroad quoting Mao’s expression “the imperialists are paper tigers” and describing the “dictatorship of the proletariat”—concepts that Momondjo and his friend had never heard before: They “left a very strong influence on [us]...they were words that shocked [us].” Yet in a few years, Momondjo himself was discussing Marxist concepts as a leader of the JMNR, the UGEEC, and later, the PCT. Momondjo, interview July 2010.

# EPILOGUE

## 1968–1974

Throughout this work I have argued that many of the positions of trade union, student, and youth activists during the 1960s in Senegal and Congo originated in debates about the meaning of “real” independence and socialism that developed in the 1950s. As shown in the previous four chapters, young radicals continued to advance similar demands both before and after formal independence. At the same time, their actions produced different results in Senegal and Congo, leading activists in each country toward specific demands. Faced with Senghor’s consolidation of power, student associations, the PAI, and some trade unions in Senegal asserted the right to take “political” positions and exist independent of any ties to the state. In Congo, youth organization leaders positioned themselves to influence, and even participate, in the running of a new government after 1963, allowing them to begin implementing aspects of “real” independence and “scientific socialism.”

Despite these different trajectories, events in 1968 were pivotal for politics in both Senegal and Congo. In Senegal, university students had become the catalysts for a general strike and urban rebellion that presented the most serious challenge to Senghor and the UPS since independence. In Congo, most youth leaders in the JMNR and the Défense Civile welcomed the fall of Massamba-Débat, and were poised to play an even more significant role in setting the direction of the next phase of the “revolution.”

Yet in neither Senegal nor Congo was it clear whose fortunes were on the rise. Following the strike in Dakar, Senghor was forced to make numerous concessions to students, unionized workers, dissidents in the UPS, and Senegalese business owners—all of whom remained emboldened sources of potential opposition. But Senghor had weathered the uprising and remained securely at the helm of the state. In

Congo, the future was even more uncertain. A loose coalition of students, JMNR and Défense civile leaders, and the group of military officers around Marien Ngouabi had united in their desire to oust Massamba-Débat. But it remained unclear whether they could agree on who would now govern and to what end.

In both countries, the next five years were marked by uncertainty as national politics continued to be shaped by the actions of trade union, youth, and student organizations. During this time, these groups continued to engage in confrontations with the state, many of which ended in repression. By 1974, the radical leaders and organizations of 1960s had been largely subdued—through a combination of violence, imprisonment, and co-optation. Thus, the era of radical activism that began in Senegal and Congo via common roots in the late 1950s ended with a shared demise in the mid-1970s. The following epilogue outlines the tumultuous events after 1968 in each country, providing a bridge to conclusions that synthesize the experiences of young radicals in Senegal and Congo.

## **I. Political Reorientations in Senegal after 1968**

### **The UPS Rebuilds**

In spite of the formidable challenge to Senghor's regime in 1968, he remained secure in his position as head of state and the ruling party. The crisis confirmed that he could count on the support of both Senegalese military commanders and the French government. Senghor responded to the upheaval of 1968 through a combination of repression and co-optation of opposition activists and trade unionists. This was the same overarching strategy he had used to great benefit during the previous decade, but the struggles of 1968 to 1971 forced him to approach the situation anew.

The immediate concessions granted by the government to workers and students after the 1968 strike succeeded in momentarily calming the situation, particularly among the trade unions.

Immediately following the agreement reached with the trade unions on June 12, 1968, Senghor announced that the gains made by workers would cost two billion CFA francs.<sup>1</sup> One week later, the Senegalese government, in the midst of a groundnut crisis, was bailed out to the tune of 2.15 billion CFA francs by the European Development Fund. Although Senghor inveighed against the United States during the strike, in June 1968 the US government agreed to fund the construction of eight hundred units of new “middle-income” housing in Dakar.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Bathily argues, much of the social crisis was deflected by an influx of funding from Western allies.<sup>3</sup>

As noted in chapter 2, Senghor also recognized that the legitimacy of the regime had been tainted by the indulgences of UPS leaders, and he implemented new austerity measures limiting the expenditures and incomes of parliamentary deputies. The government also moved to secure the allegiance of Senegalese business owners who, in the wake of the strike, registered their own grievances about the dominance of French firms. In June 1968 two existing organizations of Senegalese business owners fused and called for the “sénégalisation” of the economy via various reforms including greater representation in the Chambers of Commerce and increased availability of credit through national banks.<sup>4</sup> Catherine Boone notes that while the power of the Chamber of Commerce was declining, “throughout the 1960s the Dakar Chamber of Commerce retained regulatory and administrative powers in a key domain: it allocated import licenses and quotas. These powers were used to guarantee the

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<sup>1</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 122.

<sup>2</sup> This led to the creation of the Dakar neighborhood of Patte d'Oie Builders.

<sup>3</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 122.

<sup>4</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 184-85; Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 22-25, 146; Laurence Marfaing and Mariam Sow, *Les opérateurs économiques au Sénégal : entre le formel et l'informel, 1930-1996* (Paris: Karthala, 1999), ch. 4. The new organization was the Union des Groupements Economiques du Sénégal (UNIGES). UNIGES was soon undercut by the creation of a new group in August 1968 with closer links to the regime, the Conseil Fédéral des Groupements Economiques du Sénégal (COFEGES). The two merged in 1960 to form the Groupement Economique du Sénégal (GES), which became a go-between from the UPS to the business world.

French trading firms' monopoly over imports that competed with the products of local industry."<sup>5</sup> In 1968, only five of the twenty-nine members of the board of the Chamber were Senegalese. The following year, new elections took place and Amadou Sow became the first Senegalese president since the creation of the organization in the nineteenth century, replacing Henri Charles Gallenca, the influential French businessman and president of the Chamber since 1954.<sup>6</sup> Sow—like others elevated by the restructuring of the Chamber of Commerce—had clear links to the regime. He served in the Ministry of Commerce and was president of the Union Senegalaise de Banque (USB), a majority government-controlled bank that focused on industrial investment.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1970s, the government took greater control of the banking sector and nationalized key utilities—a demand raised by trade unions in 1968.<sup>8</sup> The Banque Nationale du Développement du Senegal (BNDS) was re-oriented to foster Senegalese businesses, a stark turn from 1967, when Senegalese only received about 3 percent of the twenty-two billion CFA francs of credit dispensed by the BNDS to private entities.<sup>9</sup> In the 1970s the government used international credit to buy out Senegal's foreign-owned electricity and water utilities<sup>10</sup>, nationalize groundnut oil processing, and invest heavily in cotton, phosphate, and iron ore mining companies.<sup>11</sup> Bathily and Boone both argue that this new

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<sup>5</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 124. After the "Senegalisation" of the Chamber in 1968–69 these powers were transferred to the Ministry of Commerce. See Boone, 181.

<sup>6</sup> On the history of the Chambers of Commerce see Marfaing and Sow, *Les opérateurs économiques au Sénégal*, 137-40; Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 124, 84. Unlike in Dakar, there had been a Senegalese president of the Saint-Louis Chamber of Commerce since 1964, El Hadji Momar Sourang. On the position of Lebanese traders, see Boone, 64, 124-25.

<sup>7</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 184.

<sup>8</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 175fn.

<sup>9</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 169fn. See also the UNIGES statement reprinted in Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 22-25 On the reorientation of the banks, see Boone, 175-76.

<sup>10</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 175.

direction was a direct product of the political and social crisis of 1968, but Boone points out that it was equally a response to the Sahelian drought, trade deficits, and the recession of the early 1970s, which made Senegal a net exporter of capital to Europe.<sup>12</sup> The BNDS, parastatal companies, and other government banking initiatives were ostensibly intended to build the Senegalese economy on a new basis, but became circuits of kickbacks and corruption. UPS leaders used these institutions and foreign loans to develop patronage networks by providing allies with new management posts and credit.<sup>13</sup>

In parallel, Senghor and UPS elders developed new forums to integrate younger Senegalese intellectuals. This was not only a response to the student strikes of 1968–71, but also the disaffection within the youth section of the UPS, as noted in chapter 2.<sup>14</sup> In 1969, the UPS facilitated the creation of the Club Nation et Développement, under the guidance of the thirty-six year old UPS deputy, Daouda Sow. The organization was created to bring together civil servants, professionals, and young intellectuals—especially those who felt blocked by the entrenchment of the UPS old guard—to discuss the political and economic direction of the country. The Club spent the rest of the year developing a proposal that called for an increase in the rate of Africanization of the government and university administration, and a restoration of some basic elements of parliamentary government in Senegal, including the reinstatement of the position of prime minister.<sup>15</sup> In 1970, Senghor began to integrate

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<sup>11</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 174-75; Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 147.

<sup>12</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 172-73.

<sup>13</sup> Boone, *Merchant Capital*, 195; Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 148-49.

<sup>14</sup> Senghor also attempted to bring in some older dissident intellectuals, like Khalilou Sall, a former PAI leader who had gone to Guinea in 1958 and became head of the national railways there until he and other PAI cadres left Guinea in 1962. In 1968, Senghor invited him to manage Senegal's railways, an offer he accepted. Similarly, Doudou Gueye, a founder of the RDA, who had left Senegal for Mali after the breakup of the Mali Federation, (and had been sentenced to death in absentia), was brought in as an advisor to Senghor in 1968. See Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 140-41; Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 403.

<sup>15</sup> Sheldon Gellar, *Democracy in Senegal : Tocquevillian Analytics in Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 141-42.

some of the emerging UPS leaders from the Club into the higher echelons of the state, appointing thirty-five year old Abdou Diouf as the country's first prime minister since the arrest of Mamadou Dia in 1962. Diouf's first governments integrated a number of ministers also drawn from the Club, including Daouda Sow, Alioune Sène, and Babacar Ba.<sup>16</sup>

### **Divisions in the Student and Trade Union Movements**

The partial closing of the University of Dakar in 1968–69 and the political unrest of the previous school year initially resulted in an 18 percent decline in the student population. This was largely due to a sharp drop in the number of French students and students from other Francophone African countries. The closing of some departments (at least for third- and fourth-year students) also forced many Senegalese to pursue their studies elsewhere. Nevertheless, the arrival of a large number of first-year students pushed the number of Senegalese students *higher*, from 979 in 1967–68 to 1247 in 1968–69, making up half of the student body for the first time in the history of the university.<sup>17</sup> From that point forward, Senegalese students would make up the majority of the student body, even as the number of students from other Francophone African countries quickly recovered.<sup>18</sup> The departure of French faculty in 1968–69 also resulted in an influx of new African instructors and professors. UNESCO reported that 70 percent of teaching staff in 1968–69 were African—up from just 35 percent of the faculty the year prior.<sup>19</sup> While

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<sup>16</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 143. The prime minister position was reinstated by a constitutional referendum in 1970.

<sup>17</sup> "Statistiques Universitaires 1975–1976, Bulletin n. 1," Bureau des Statistiques, Rectorat de l'Université de Dakar, UCAD.

<sup>18</sup> The number of French students, however, slowly decreased over the next decade. See "Statistiques Universitaires 1975–1976," UCAD; Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 44.

<sup>19</sup> UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 38.

Bathily indicates that this number had dropped back down to 47 percent in 1970, the number of African faculty increased steadily over the course of the 1970s.<sup>20</sup>

While some students from Dakar traveled to France for the 1968–69 school year, a small number flowed in the opposite direction. West African students who had been studying in France in the spring of 1968 and were influenced by the debates and tendencies in the French Left arrived at the University of Dakar with perspectives that were not welcomed by all UED leaders.<sup>21</sup> Some students returning from France insisted that the UED take up the FEANF's call (*mot d'ordre*) for students to integrate with workers and peasants, and join "vanguard organizations."<sup>22</sup> This prompted a debate within the UED that drew the organization inward until the faction promoting the FEANF's line backed down in January 1969, paving the way for new UED elections.<sup>23</sup>

Many secondary students also felt that their grievances had not been properly addressed during the negotiations after the 1968 strike, and they continued their agitation. In March 1969, one year after the first warning strike of the 1968 movement, twenty-five engineering students were expelled from the École Nationale des Cadres Ruraux de Bambey for "indiscipline."<sup>24</sup> Their expulsion not only triggered a strike at the school, but as in 1968, solidarity strikes quickly spread across secondary schools around the country. Secondary students called on university students to join the strike, prompting debates within

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<sup>20</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 45; UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 38. UNESCO reports only seventy-eight total faculty for 1968–69, but Bathily then reports 192 faculty in 1970. It seems likely that there are discrepancies between the statistics used by UNESCO and those Bathily received from the University de Dakar.

<sup>21</sup> Many in the UED's national organizations already felt frustrated that the strike had narrowed around the issues of Senegalese students.

<sup>22</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 125. Bathily notes that students from Dahomey were the most adamant about joining "organisations d'avant-garde."

<sup>23</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 128-29. Bathily claims that this dispute and the 1968 strike took a toll on the health of the UED President, Samba Baldé of Guinea, who died of cardiac arrest in January 1969.

<sup>24</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 130. Camara says eighteen "élèves fonctionnaires" were expelled. Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 195.



the UDES and the UED. Campus student leaders from that year noted in interviews that the rank-and-file showed little enthusiasm for embarking on another strike.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Bathily, president of the UDES in 1968–69, and a group of supporters called a strike on the premise that secondary students had supported university students the year before, and that solidarity should be returned. The government promptly expelled striking students from the university—this time without resistance. When the strike was officially called off in October 1969, the government did not agree to the re-organization of exams and 1968–69 became a lost year (*année blanche*) for students at the university.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, frustrations among union workers began to erupt again. Aspects of the agreement reached in June 1968 were not implemented by the government and individual employers.<sup>27</sup> And in the months following negotiations, the government raised income taxes and the price of rice.<sup>28</sup> Strikes began in May 1969 with the postal, telegraph, and the telephone service workers, followed by workers from the national groundnut commercialization agency.<sup>29</sup> On June 2, the country's banking employees walked out. The UNTS of Cap-Vert backed the bank workers strike, (which was largely over contract negotiations), arguing that the 15 percent increase in the minimum wage scale put in place after the 1968 strike had already been negated by the rising cost of rice and new taxes.<sup>30</sup> UNTS leaders called for a forty-eight hour general strike which, intersecting with the student strike, portended a possible revival of 1968.

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<sup>25</sup> Ba, interview; Diallo, interview; Mbaye Diack, interview 9 July 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 130.

<sup>27</sup> For example, the nationalization of utilities and insurance, and the creation of a state pharmacy.

<sup>28</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 194.

<sup>29</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 195. Camara argues that both strikes were limited, to forty-eight hours and seventy-two hours, respectively) but took place without the explicit approval of UNTS leaders.

<sup>30</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 195. Camara says this statement came out 4 June, but the UNTS did not officially back the strike until 8 June. According to Bathily, Senghor called the strike "illegal and anti-national." Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 135.

However, some key factors had changed. First, the student strike, this time led by secondary school students, was not organizationally connected to the workers' strikes, as had been the case in 1968.<sup>31</sup> Second, the government took a hard line against the strikers and quickly fired eighty-three bank workers. Third, the government was more prepared to take control of the city and implemented a state of emergency that effectively shut down the general strike before it could start.<sup>32</sup>

Lastly, on the eve of the planned general strike, Doudou Ngom, the UPS's favored trade union leader, held a public meeting with government officials announcing his resignation from the UNTS, and the formation of new trade union federation, the Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal (CNTS).<sup>33</sup> Ngom, who was the general secretary of the UNTS and had negotiated the end of the 1968 strike, now denounced his own federation stating that it "is increasingly becoming a forum that the disgruntled and opponents of all persuasions have turned into a turn into political tribune."<sup>34</sup> The implication was clear: Ngom had been unable to control the rest of the leadership of the UNTS, at least in Cap-Vert, and failed to bring the federation into a closer partnership with the ruling party through what the UPS called "responsible participation."<sup>35</sup>

The CNTS was created explicitly to facilitate this collaboration with the UPS.<sup>36</sup> As Amadou Cissé Dia (president of the National Assembly) made clear at the CNTS founding congress, the new federation was created to do away with the UNTS, a trade union federation "whose demagogic and destructive

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<sup>31</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 195.

<sup>32</sup> The Bureau politique of the UPS declared the strike to be a "grève politique." Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 196.

<sup>33</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 196.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 196. The UNTS "devient chaque jour davantage un forum que les mécontents et opposants de tous bords transforment en tribune politique."

<sup>35</sup> "Participation responsable." Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 193.

<sup>36</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 135 notes that the founding CNTS congress on 31 August 1969 was attended by numerous UPS dignitaries.

action was in flagrant contradiction with its doctrine and its original orientation.”<sup>37</sup> Shortly thereafter, the government dissolved the UNTS and transferred its materials and funds to the CNTS.<sup>38</sup> The government used the CNTS, like the Club Nation et Développement, as a means of creating new cadres for the party and embedding trade unions leaders into the UPS government. Ngom, for example, became minister of technical education and professional training in 1970 in Abdou Diouf’s first government. Bathily notes that the CNTS was referred to by critics as the “eighth region of Senegal” because it was granted a number of reserved posts in the government, the National Assembly, and in the formal bodies of the UPS.<sup>39</sup>

### **The PAI and New Directions in the Student Movement**

Many PAI militants landed in jail during the 1968 strike; but the strike also reinvigorated the party. Leaders of the 1968 student strike had been involved in the PAI’s autonomous student section, the MEPAI, but were only peripherally connected to the party at the time of the strike.<sup>40</sup> Yet the strike threw up important questions for young radicals. Most crucially, many asked how Senghor’s regime and its seemingly ingrained neocolonial relationship with the French government could actually be dislodged. When PAI militants in Senegal held a Conférence Nationale Rectificative in 1967 to revive the party, two recent University of Dakar student leaders, Birahim Diagne and Samba Diouldé Thiam, had been elected to the provisional Central Committee.<sup>41</sup> Following the 1968 strike, Thiam reached out to MEPAI-affiliated students in the UDES leadership, notably Mbaye Diack, Moussa Kane, Moktar Diack, and Abdoulaye

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<sup>37</sup> *Dakar Matin*, September 2, 1962, quoted in Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 135-36 “Centrale dont l'action démagogique et destructive était en contradiction flagrante avec sa doctrine et son orientation originelle...”

<sup>38</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 196.

<sup>39</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 136; Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 196.

<sup>40</sup> Mbaye Diack, interviews 9 July and 24 July 2012; Moktar Diack, interviews 1 July and 12 July 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 182.

Bathily (UDES president 1968–69), who became more involved in the party.<sup>42</sup> When the party held its second congress in 1972, Mbaye Diack, Kane, and Bathily were all elected to the new Central Committee.<sup>43</sup>

Some young radicals however, rejected the Soviet-orientation of the PAI. This was particularly true for those African students who had been in France during and after 1968, where the longstanding forces of the Left, notably the French Communist Party had come under harsh criticism from student radicals for their role in ending the strike in France.<sup>44</sup> The Senegalese couple Marie-Angélique and Landing Savané came back to Dakar after 1968 and began building a Maoist movement on campus.<sup>45</sup> Even students who had joined the PAI were soon unhappy with the party's relationship to the Soviet Union: shortly after being elected to the Central Committee in 1972, Mbaye Diack and Moussa Kane, along with three other PAI members, formed a faction within the party that accused the leadership of subordinated itself to directives from Moscow. Expelled by the rest of the Central Committee, the five went on to form a new organization, the Ligue Démocratique.<sup>46</sup>

Omar Blondin Diop, who had also taken part in the protests in Paris in 1968 and been expelled in 1969, returned to Senegal and established a small group around anarchist and Situationist

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<sup>42</sup> Mbaye Diack, interview 24 July 2012; Abdoulaye Bathily, interview with author 27 July 2012, Dakar; Moktar Diack, interviews 1 July and 12 July 2012.

<sup>43</sup> For an account of the congress, see Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 198-204.

<sup>44</sup> On the French left after 1968, see Daniel Singer, *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013); see also Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> Landing Savané, interview with author, 30 July 2012, Dakar; Hendrickson, "Imperial Fragments," 274, 76. Landing Savané had initially tried to build a pro-Chinese breakaway from the PAI, the Senegalese Communist Party, in 1965, before he left for France. Upon returning, he formed Reenu-Rew (Roots of the Nation) in 1973 in clandestinity and then And-jëf/Mouvement Révolutionnaire pour la Démocratie Nouvelle in December 1974. Savané was jailed in 1975 and released in 1976. The party was legally registered in July 1981.

<sup>46</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 203-04.

perspectives.<sup>47</sup> In anticipation of a visit from French President Georges Pompidou in 1971 the “*frères Blondin Diop*” (as they were known colloquially) set fire to the French Cultural Center in Dakar, as well as the Department of Public Works and Department of Motor Vehicles. After they attempted to throw molotov cocktails at Pompidou’s entourage during his public procession through Dakar, members of the group were rounded up and tried.<sup>48</sup>

Although UNTS trade union members had not played a role in the initial fires set by the *frères Blondin Diop*, the government nevertheless used them as a pretense to finally dissolve the UNTS trade union. Ten UNTS leaders were arrested, three of whom, including general secretary Abdoulaye Thiaw, professor-activist Iba Der Thiam, and PAI leader Mbaba Guissé were given three-year prison sentences and 150,000 CFA franc fines for the distribution of tracts critical of the government.<sup>49</sup> Shortly thereafter, the government reformed the laws governing public workers for the first time since 1961 in order to ban wildcat strikes, sit-down strikes, and “political” strikes.<sup>50</sup>

Immediately on the heels of Pompidou’s visit, another strike broke out at the University of Dakar. Following the 1968 strike, students had negotiated for a place on the new commission established to oversee the reform of the university. Following the expulsion of students in Bambey and the subsequent strike in 1969, student representatives on the commission resigned in protest. With students no longer present a reform was passed, to go into effect in 1970–71. Students mocked the timidity of the proposed changes, calling it a “reformette.” But they were also unhappy with the addition of new mid-

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<sup>47</sup> On his influences in France, see Hendrickson, “Imperial Fragments,” 272.

<sup>48</sup> Diallo, interview. For an overview and analysis of these events, see Hendrickson, “Imperial Fragments,” ch. 7.

<sup>49</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 136; Hendrickson, “Imperial Fragments,” 257. On Guissé in the PAI, see Camara, *L’épopée du PAI*, 190, 212.

<sup>50</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 137. On 1 March 71, the government reformed the “interdisant les grèves sauvages,” les grèves “sur le tas” et les grèves “politiques.” These restrictions were used in 1973 to ban one of the few independent unions, the Syndicat des Enseignements du Sénégal after they launched a strike.

year exams that would take place in March. Habituated to the end-of-the-year exams and unhappy about being saddled with another intensive period of preparation, university students went on strike again in the lead up to the March exams in 1971. Senghor responded with yet greater hostility this time, dissolving both the UDES and the UED, expelling forty-nine students, and forcibly enlisting twelve Senegalese student leaders into the national army.<sup>51</sup> Some refused orders and spent much of their eighteen-month service in prison. One who did not, Alhousseynou Cissé, was killed near the border of Guinea-Bissau by Portuguese colonial troops, prompting another eruption of student protests.<sup>52</sup>

With student leaders conscripted into the army and the UED and UDES banned, the student movement at the University of Dakar floundered.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the environment on campus remained explosive. Few students had embraced the tactics and Situationist ideas promoted by the Blondin Diop circle in 1970 and 1971.<sup>54</sup> But by the time Omar Blondin Diop died under suspicious circumstances in prison in May 1973, he had become an icon, especially among younger students, and a renewed wave of student protest broke out in Dakar.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Legalization of Political Opposition**

By 1973, Senghor had, on the one hand, created new avenues to funnel young intellectuals, trade union leaders and Senegalese business owners into collaboration with the UPS, while on the other hand he

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<sup>51</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 131; Mbaye Diack, interviews 9 July and 24 July 2012. The UDES and the UED were banned in February 1971.

<sup>52</sup> Becaye Blondin Diop, interview with author, 11 May 2012, Dakar, Senegal; Bachir Diop, interview with author, 8 July 2012, Dakar, Senegal.

<sup>53</sup> Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 303.

<sup>54</sup> Diallo, interview.

<sup>55</sup> Bachir Diop, interview; Hendrickson, "Imperial Fragments," 270-71.

eviscerated independent student and worker organizations that had not agreed to cooperate.<sup>56</sup> The suppression of the latter mirrored similar events in Congo, leaving both country's largely devoid of independent radical organizations by 1973.

Nevertheless, as Aminata Diaw and Mamadou Diouf argue, in 1973 it remained uncertain whether Senghor's strategy would work.<sup>57</sup> A new drought in 1973 and the persistence of student and trade union upheavals since 1968—including the 1973 scandal over the death of Omar Blondin Diop—provided no sense of stability to the UPS regime. The 1973 general elections, with only one legal party, officially turned out over 95 percent of registered voters. However, scholars have questioned these official statistics, and Senghor seems to have sensed that the UPS's formal hegemony remained fragile.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, in 1974 he began embarking on a series of gradual and controlled reforms to reintroduce legal parliamentary opposition. Mamadou Dia and his companions were released from prison, followed by jailed PAI militants.<sup>59</sup> The following year, the government introduced the concept of allowing three (later, four) parties based on distinct "schools of thought" (*courants de pensée*): liberal, social democratic, and Marxist or Communist.<sup>60</sup> In 1976, the UPS became the Parti Socialiste (PS), representing social democracy, while a dissident section of the UPS led by Abdoulaye Wade became the Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS), and was allowed to represent the liberal *courant*.

The decision about what party would represent what *courant* was up to Senghor, and he used his control of the process to fragment the radical opposition. Majhemout Diop, the former head of the PAI,

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<sup>56</sup> On the new direction of the student movement after 1973, see Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj, "Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais," 304-08.

<sup>57</sup> Diaw and Diouf, "The Senegalese Opposition," 123-24.

<sup>58</sup> Diaw and Diouf, "The Senegalese Opposition," 123 Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 144.

<sup>59</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 212.

<sup>60</sup> A few years later, a "conservative" current was added, represented by the Mouvement Républicain sénégalais (MRS), led by Boubacar Guèye.

in exile since 1960, had entertained discussions about joining the UPS since the late 1960s.<sup>61</sup> Senghor chose Diop in 1976 to represent the “Marxist” current. However, PAI militants in Senegal had suspended Diop at the party’s Conférence Nationale Rectificative of May 1967, and he was officially expelled in 1972 at the party’s second congress.<sup>62</sup> Thus, in one of the stranger twists in Senegal’s political history, Diop was chosen by the regime to lead a party he had not been a member of for nearly a decade. But Diop took the opportunity to return from exile as the figurehead of the legalized version of the PAI, known as the PAI-Rénovation.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, PAI militants in Senegal remained officially banned, and took the name PAI-Sénégal to differentiate themselves from Diop’s formation.<sup>64</sup> Further, other left opposition parties, such as Cheikh Anta Diop’s Rassemblement National Démocratique (RND) continued to be excluded from legal political life.

By the time of the legalization of the parties representing the three “schools of thought” in 1976, the radicals of the 1960s were increasingly fractured. The two different PAI’s were at odds with each other as well as the Ligue Démocratique and new Maoist formations. Nevertheless, multiple initiatives sought to bring together various radical organizations. The first was the opposition newspaper *Andë Sopi*, a collaborative effort between Mamadou Dia and leaders of the PAI-Sénégal begun in 1977 and lasting five years.<sup>65</sup> Formal coalitions were created, notably the the Coordination de l’Opposition Sénégalaise Unie (COSU), which briefly grouped together much of the illegal opposition under the slogan “Senghor démission!” (“Senghor, step down!”), and called for greater democracy and the expulsion of

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<sup>61</sup> This is Sadio Camara’s claim, see *L’épopée du PAI*, 178.

<sup>62</sup> Camara, *L’épopée du PAI*, 182.

<sup>63</sup> Majhemout Diop would go on to receive less than 0.3 percent of votes in the 1978 presidential elections.

<sup>64</sup> Sadio Camara notes that Senghor made offers to the PAI-Sénégal to come out of illegality in 1970 and 1973, but they rejected the terms. Camara, *L’épopée du PAI*, 212.

<sup>65</sup> Camara, *L’épopée du PAI*, 215-16; Diaw and Diouf, “The Senegalese Opposition,” 128.



French troops.<sup>66</sup> The PAI-Sénégal also opened discussions with Wade's PDS during this period<sup>67</sup> and some radical trade unionists joined a new labor federation linked to the PDS, the Union des Travailleurs Libres du Sénégal.<sup>68</sup> But as Diaw, Diouf, and Camara note, within these coalitions, dividing lines between groups—some old, others new, and many shifting—made it hard for them to work together effectively.<sup>69</sup>

While opposition activists persisted in challenging Senghor's rule, his resignation in 1980 was likely due to the government's deteriorating financial situation. As Mamadou Diouf has argued, the state's growing debt opened the door to the intervention of international financial institutions and hastened Senghor's decision to handoff the leadership of the regime to Abdou Diouf. Diouf promptly allowed for the legalization of opposition parties in 1981, but it would take two more decades before the PS was unseated in the presidential and legislative elections of 2000 and 2001, respectively, bringing the PDS to power under Wade.

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<sup>66</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 145 The COSU was under "la direction morale" of Mamadou Dia, with participation from And jëf, Ligue Democratique, PAI-Sénégal, Organisation pour la Démocratie Prolétarienne (ODP) led by Abdoulaye Ly, Socialistes autogestionnaires, Union pour la Démocratie Populaire. Camara argues that the PAI-Sénégal pulled out of COSU because it was dominated by "gauchists" who were hostile to collaboration with the PDS. Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 217. Diaw and Diouf also mention the importance of the Association of Senegalese Democrats. Diaw and Diouf, "The Senegalese Opposition," .

<sup>67</sup> Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 218.

<sup>68</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 138; Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 220.

<sup>69</sup> Diaw and Diouf, "The Senegalese Opposition," 128; Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 220

## II. The Congolese Revolution in Question

### A New Leadership for the Revolution

Ngouabi's intervention into the crisis swirling around Massamba-Débat and the MNR in 1968 marked the arrival of military officers on the stage of national politics.<sup>70</sup> However, Ngouabi did not make a claim to authority based on his military leadership, but rather based on his qualifications as a revolutionary. While his elevation to head of state in 1969 positioned the military to play a greater role in national politics, he did not initially lead a "military" government. The army officers who became involved in his regime remained a minority in the decision-making structures of the new government. The leaders of the JMNR, the UGEEC and the Défense Civile played an equally important role in Congo's new state institutions.

From 1969 to 1974, Ngouabi's tenure as head of state was troubled by the ongoing activity of youth and student activists. As noted earlier, the alliance that brought down Massamba-Débat's government involved former JMNR and Défense Civile leaders, students from the UGEEC, and young army officers around Ngouabi. While they agreed that Massamba-Débat needed to be replaced, this loose coalition was rife with division. Youth and student leaders remained wary of the military officers' intentions, while factions also developed among former youth organization leaders.<sup>71</sup>

For much of August 1968, both Massamba-Débat's fall and Ngouabi's rise remained uncertain. From August 5 to 14, representatives met from the MNR, the government, the army, the Défense Civile, and the "mass organizations" of youth (JMNR), trade unions (CSC), students (UGEEC), and women's

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<sup>70</sup> As noted in chapter 4, the heads of the Congolese military in 1963, David Mountsaka and Félix Mouzabakany, had facilitated the negotiated resignation of Youlou. Both abstained from playing any major role in national politics in the period of 1964 to 1968—although they faced accusations of meddling under the MNR.

<sup>71</sup> See Maboungou, "La Gauche Historique."

organizations (URFC).<sup>72</sup> The resulting provisional authority, the Conseil National de la Révolution (CNR) took the same name as that which had formed after the fall of Youlou in 1963—a symbolic indication that the new regime would be a continuation of the revolutionary ideals expounded after les Trois Glorieuses. Massamba-Débat, although still head of state, was now subordinated to the forty-one-person central committee and the twelve-person directory of the CNR.<sup>73</sup> Although he was a member of the directory, Massamba-Débat was now surrounded by those who had been his fiercest critics and whom he had attempted to sideline through harassment and even arrests over the course of 1968. In addition to imprisoning army officers including Nguoubi and Félix Mouzabakani during the crisis of 1968, Massamba-Débat had disbanded the JMNR; dismissed former youth leader Ambroïse Noumazalay from the position of prime minister; abolished the position of prime minister altogether; and dissolved the Congolese National Assembly and the bureau of the MNR. It was precisely his “radical” critics among the military, JMNR, students, and Défense Civile who now held a disproportionate amount of authority in the CNR. Unwilling to become a figurehead president, Massamba-Débat resigned less than a week after the formation of the CNR, and returned to his home village of Boko—almost exactly five years after he had been called from Boko by the CNR of 1963 to lead the post-Youlou government.<sup>74</sup>

Although Massamba-Débat stepped aside, the CNR’s authority was far from secure. An alliance between Nguoubi’s circle and some of the radical youth organization leadership had brought the CNR into being, but it had the effect of splitting the former youth and student cadres. Some were active leaders in the CNR, some supported it without becoming involved, and others refused to accept its authority. For example, many in the Défense Civile and youth militias defended Massamba-Débat—at least as a preferable option to the ascent of the allegedly “revolutionary” military officers like Nguoubi,

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<sup>72</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 230.

<sup>73</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 232.

<sup>74</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 234.

whom they did not trust. With Nguabi now at the head of the CNR, a group of Défense Civile members from Camp Lumumba, Camp Lenin, and Camp Biafra gathered at the latter location (the general headquarters of the Défense civile) in support of Massamba-Débat and the MNR. A showdown with the national army was imminent, and the group surrendered after a bloody siege on August 30–31. Andre Hombessa, the erstwhile JMNR head was rumored to be behind the resistance, and the CNR moved quickly to dismiss the leadership of the “mass organizations” of 1963-1968: CSC, the JMNR, and the URFC.<sup>75</sup>



[Fig. 20: Marien Nguabi, circa 1974. Source: Archives nationales du Congo (Brazzaville), reproduced by Matthew Swagler, 2012]

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<sup>75</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 235.

One of the first goals of the CNR was to oversee the integration of youth militias and the *Défense Civile* into the ranks of the Congolese army. Both youth and military leaders hoped to ease the conflict that had nearly erupted into a civil war in 1968, between, in essence, two competing national militaries. Many youth militants were wary of surrendering their autonomy, but this was not simply a maneuver by military leaders to neutralize the independent militias and the *Défense Civile*. Youth leaders had argued throughout the mid-1960s for the “politicization” of the military. In a revolutionary situation, they had argued, there was no such thing as a neutral military—especially one in which many officers had been trained in French military schools and the colonial army.<sup>76</sup> For many *Défense Civile* leaders, their integration into the military would provide them with a means to influence and radicalize the ranks of the national army, to make it a tool in defense of the socialist aims of the regime, rather than a reactionary threat.<sup>77</sup> A long series of negotiations eventually resulted in a huge influx of former *Défense Civile*, student, and youth militia members joining the ranks of the military. This integration, rather than smoothing over tensions between military leaders and the former youth leaders, led to a new confrontation just a few years later in 1972.

### **The Death of Pierre Mulele**

But the CNR faced its first challenge from young activists in Brazzaville in late 1968, following the death of Pierre Mulele. Mulele had been a minister in Patrice Lumumba’s government, and after Lumumba’s assassination in 1961 he had become one of the main leaders of the multivalent movement that proclaimed to be acting in the spirit of Lumumba’s ideals. This movement was committed to carrying out a rebellion against the leadership of the national governments under Moïse Tshombe (1964–65) and

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<sup>76</sup> Ngouabi and his circle had been among the few officers to embrace the idea of “politicizing” the army by training them in the political goals and personal moral code espoused by the JMNR and MNR. See Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, ch. 3, 5, and 6.

<sup>77</sup> On the integration process, see Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 241-42; Maboungou, “La Gauche Historique,” 27.

Joseph-Désiré Mobutu (1965–97). Mulele had been a leader of the exiled coalition of Lumumbists, the Conseil National de Libération (CNL) which, as noted in Chapter 4, was based in Brazzaville under Massamba-Débat's government.

In 1964, Mulele's rebellion in the Kwilu province of western Congo suffered the same defeat as the concurrent Simba rebellion in the eastern part of the country, and Mulele went into hiding until Mobutu offered the rebel leaders amnesty in 1968. As a safeguard, Mulele first went to Brazzaville, where the CNR had just been created a month earlier. After negotiations between the two Congolese governments, Mulele agreed to return to Kinshasa on the promise that he would not be harmed. Safety did not await the former rebel, however, who was executed (and likely tortured) shortly after his arrival.<sup>78</sup>

Young radicals in Brazzaville had harbored longstanding contempt for the governments of Tshombe and Mobutu in Kinshasa, which had been consistently aligned with the United States and hostile to the "revolution" across the river. Mulele was an iconic figure in the Lumumbist movement, and young protesters immediately took to the streets in Brazzaville after the announcement of his death and sacked the embassy of the neighboring Congo. JMNR leaders and UGEEC students angrily accused Nguabi of delivering Mulele to his death.<sup>79</sup> On October 9, 1968, Nguabi attempted to mollify the protesters with a statement accusing Mobutu of deceit and the murder of a "revolutionary."<sup>80</sup> The declaration further announced the suspension of diplomatic relations between the CNR and the regime

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<sup>78</sup> Gondola, *Villes Miroirs*, 351.

<sup>79</sup> See "Déclaration de la Commission nationale exécutive des jeunes sur l'affaire Mulele," Commission exécutive nationale de la JMNR, 7 October 1968 and "Déclaration de protestation contre le Général Président adoptée par les élèves et étudiants congolais au meeting populaire tenu le 6 octobre 1968 dans l'affaire Mulele," Folder 1, "Affaire Pierre Moulélé," Series B, ANCB.

<sup>80</sup> "Déclaration du Conseil National de la Révolution Faite par le commandant Marien N'Gouabi le mercredi 9 octobre 1968 à l'annonce de l'exécution du patriote Pierre Mulele," Folder 1 Affaire Pierre Moulélé, Series B, ANCB.

in Kinshasa.<sup>81</sup> The CNR weathered this domestic crisis, but for some young activists Mulele's death only deepened their mistrust of Ngouabi.

### **The "Marxist-Leninist" Party**

Over the course 1969, the CNR, a provisional body by definition,<sup>82</sup> moved toward the creation of new political institutions. As Jérôme Ollandet points out, the CNR continued to face a crisis of legitimacy. The collapse of the MNR government in 1968 had been the product of internecine political conflict within the former regime, but CNR leaders were not in agreement about what the political principles of the new government should be. Thus, when a new *parti-unique* was formed at the end of 1969, the Parti Congolais du Travail (PCT), the party leadership presented itself a continuation of the MNR.<sup>83</sup> At the founding congress of the PCT, the MNR was lauded for the creation of state enterprises, the nationalization of education and utilities, and the expulsion of French troops. But delegates at the PCT congress accused the MNR of having failed to live up to the terms of its 1966 charter. The charter, pushed through by youth leaders in the JMNR, had committed the party to pursuing "scientific socialism" through nationalizations and the creation of state enterprises. The capital accumulated from these ventures was to be used to advance further development, raising living standards and breaking dependency on foreign aid. The delegates at the PCT's founding congress, dominated by radical students from UGEEC, argued that the former ruling party had failed at this because it was too willing to

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<sup>81</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 238-40 See also the tense letters between Alfred Raoul and Joseph Mobutu in the folder Correspondence 1968 (a/s P. Mulele), PR 5, ANCB. As Gondola points out, formal channels of cross-river travel were cut off until 1970, as were official relations between the two countries. See *Villes Miroirs*, 351.

<sup>82</sup> The paramount authority of the CNR was affirmed when Ngouabi, as head of the CNR Directory, was also made head of state on the last day of 1968. Captain Alfred Raoul, the acting head of state, then became prime minister.

<sup>83</sup> The PCT's name, which translates to the Congolese Labor Party, was chosen over the Congolese Worker's Party, so as not be confused with another party that held the French initials PTC: the North Korean Workers Party. Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 254.

accommodate the demands of foreign capital and the French government. Further, PCT founders argued that the former party had never seriously embarked on educational projects to popularize the precepts of socialism among the general population.<sup>84</sup>

Ultimately, the PCT founding congress adopted “Marxism-Leninism” as the party’s official doctrine. Throughout 1967 and 1968, URFC, UGEEC activists and writers in *Dipanda* had been calling for a shift from “scientific socialism” to “Marxism-Leninism.”<sup>85</sup> But what did they mean by this? Marxism-Leninism in Congo did not signify a new political direction, or a break with basic tenets of “scientific socialism.” Rather, it represented a change in form: the ruling party would no longer be a “mass party,” but a “vanguard party.” The failure of the MNR to live up to its tasks was blamed on its inherent limitations as an all-inclusive national party. PCT founders argued that a party that sought to include all social groups and their perspectives could not be consistent in either ideology or action. Instead, they believed that the ideals set forth in the charter of 1966 could only be achieved by a party whose membership was limited to those who were “totally committed to the ideals of the proletariat and their allies, the peasants, the revolutionary intellectuals, and the lumpen-proletariat.”<sup>86</sup> The idea that the new government needed to more explicitly embody Congo’s socialist alignment since 1963 resulted in a number of other institutional changes: the country was renamed the People’s Republic of the Congo; a red flag was adopted with a yellow hammer and sickle and single yellow star encircled by green palm fronds; the term “comrade” was adopted within the party to replace the use of “brother” or “sister” previously introduced by Massamba-Débat in 1966; and the national anthem was first changed to

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<sup>84</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 244-46, 51.

<sup>85</sup> Report, “Anniversaire de la création de l’URFC,” Extrait Synthèse n. 6/69, Folder URFC 1970–79, carton 25, BA, CADN; Charles Bikubimba, “Pour le triomphe du Socialisme au Congo,” *Dipanda*, September 2, 1967; “Déclaration de Politique Intérieure,” UGEEC Tchecoslovaquie, Folder JMNR 1964–67, carton 25, BA, CADN.

<sup>86</sup> From the official report of the PCT founding congress, quoted in Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 253-54. “[Être] acquise totalement aux idéaux du prolétariat et ses alliés qui sont les paysans, les intellectuels révolutionnaires et le lumpen-prolétariat.”



“L’Internationale” and then in 1970 to a new hymn, “Les Trois Glorieuses.” The lyrics of the new anthem were penned by Henri Lopès, the thirty-two year-old minister of national education and former FEANF leader. “Les Trois Glorieuses” evoked the memory of the protests of 1963 and pronounced “the people” as the country’s “guide” and “genius.” The party’s oft-chanted slogan encouraged members to do “everything for the people, only for the people.”<sup>87</sup>



[Fig. 21: Child speaking at podium emblazoned with PCT logo, circa 1974. Source: Archives nationales du Congo (Brazzaville), reproduced by Matthew Swagler, 2012]

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<sup>87</sup> “Tout pour le peuple! Rien que pour le peuple!” Ollandet, *L’expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 254-55.

The new rhetoric and outward appearance of the PCT proved to be quite inspiring to Eldridge Cleaver and a contingent of the Black Panther Party based in Algiers. When they visited Congo in 1971 shortly after the creation of the PCT, Cleaver wrote of the regime in grandiose terms:

Once again freedom has a toe-hold in black Africa...What the Soviet Union meant to Europe, what China meant to Asia, and what Cuba meant to Latin America, the People's Republic of Congo means to Africa and to black people everywhere...For the first time in history, Africa and the Black World have...a centre of people's power.<sup>88</sup>

Yet behind this new outward appearance, there were few significant social changes under the PCT. The new constitution declared the end of privatized ownership of land, including the prohibition of chiefs' right to determine usufruct. However, Ollandet argues that this reform had limited applicability to existing forms of land use in Congo, and was rarely policed. Instead, he claims that it allowed state leaders to cynically assert control over land on the edges of Brazzaville on behalf of "the people."<sup>89</sup> State industries and nationalizations were expanded under the PCT, but as under the previous government, they were kept afloat largely by foreign loans. As in Senegal in the 1970s, these enterprises faltered and the country fell deeper into debt.

### **The 1971 Student Strike and the Party Purge**

The country's new constitution placed the PCT squarely at the head of the state; for example, Congo's president was now chosen at party congresses, not through a popular vote.<sup>90</sup> But the new party was not

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<sup>88</sup> Eldridge Cleaver, "Revolution in the Congo," (London: Stage 1 for the Revolutionary Peoples' Communications Network, 1971), 47. Moreover, Cleaver asserted, Congo-Brazzaville would again allow Black Americans to look to Africa for inspiration in their own struggles. Cleaver, p. 9.

<sup>89</sup> The first PCT constitution declared that "La terre est propriété du peuple. Nul droit foncier ou coutumier ne saurait être valablement opposé à toute initiative de mise en valeur de la terre par l'Etat ou par des collectivités locales. Chacun dispose librement du produit de la terre, fruit de son propre travail. L'Etat, au nom du peuple, règlement en cas de besoin la jouissance individuelle ou collective de la terre." Quoted in Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 256.

<sup>90</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 255.

necessarily easy to join. At its founding, the PCT only had 164 members, and implemented a code of conduct that required every member to be a “convinced militant” (*militant convaincu*) of Marxism-Leninism—which was an amalgam of Stalinist and Maoist theories. To be a party member not only demanded a political commitment to these ideas, including atheism, but also to frugality and upstanding personal comportment. New PCT members were to be drawn from the militants who met these standards within the party’s organizations of women, workers, and youth.<sup>91</sup> The code of conduct was used by party leadership to keep many of the radical youth leaders of 1963–68 *out* of the PCT. Many former JMNR and Défense Civile militants were associated (whether accurately or not) with various misdeeds of the previous regime, and they found themselves pushed aside by a younger group of student radicals whose reputations were not yet tarnished.

Ngouabi was also relatively new to national politics and did not yet have a clear record. This was one of the main reasons Ngouabi was chosen to lead the PCT in 1969. Some young party members doubted his “Marxist-Leninist” credentials and worried about a military takeover. Nevertheless, he was seen by many in the PCT as one of the few people who could oversee the integration of the military and the youth militias, and could keep together the tenuous coalition that had unseated Massamba-Débat.

Just months after its founding, the fledging party survived its first assault. In March 1970, a former Congolese military officer, Pierre Kinganga, launched an attempted coup d’état against the PCT regime. Kinganga, like Ngouabi, was young—just thirty-three at the time of the coup. Previously jailed for his involvement in an attempted coup led by the French mercenary Jacques Debreton, he had fled across the river to Kinshasa after being released in July 1968. Relations between the two Congos remained tense after the Pierre Mulele affair, so when Kinganga arrived with a small group of commandos from Kinshasa, the population of Brazzaville viewed it as an attack from the neighboring Congo, and responded with demonstrations, the singing of patriotic songs, and the chasing down of the attempted

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<sup>91</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 258.

coup-makers.<sup>92</sup> The events became a moment of unity and strength for the new regime, but also ratcheted up fears of a more serious internal or external attack. In the aftermath, a special party congress took place which sought to re-integrate some of the key youth leaders of 1963–68 who had been kept out of the founding congress.<sup>93</sup>

The party's attempt to keep control of potential opponents also led Nguabi to replace the JMNR with a new youth organization, the Union de la Jeunesse Socialiste Congolaise (UJSC). Unlike the JMNR, the UJSC operated under tight party control. JMNR and student activists resented the loss of autonomy, causing many to keep their distance from the new youth organization.<sup>94</sup> Further, Mulele's execution had left many young radicals skeptical of the new regime. Secondary and tertiary students in particular, organized under the UGEEC, remained mistrustful of the military leadership of the PCT—even though the PCT itself was composed largely of young intellectuals who had come from the ranks of the UGEEC just a year or two before.

Brazzaville's institute of higher education, the Centre d'Enseignement Supérieur de Brazzaville (CESB), was not yet a university like that of Dakar. But it too became a site of regular protests at the end of the 1960s. In 1969, students at the CESB went on strike to protest the discriminatory distribution of scholarships for students who wished to complete their studies abroad. The following year students (both tertiary and secondary) expressed their disaffection with the conclusions of a conference on education in Brazzaville by launching another strike. These tensions exploded in November 1971 when CESB students refused to accept their scholarships after they had not been paid for several months. The UGEEC called a strike, which soon spread to other higher education institutions and Brazzaville's secondary schools. Ollandet recounts that "the streets of Brazzaville were transformed into parades of

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<sup>92</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 264.

<sup>93</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 267. Also three months later, Nguabi and Mobutu met on the Congo River and agree to reopen diplomatic relations.

<sup>94</sup> Maboungou, "La Gauche Historique," 28.

children and adults hostile to authorities and singing iconoclastic songs.”<sup>95</sup> Students effectively triggered an urban rebellion among young people not unlike the one provoked by the 1968 strike in Dakar.

The strike demands, however, were not limited to the problem of scholarships. Echoing many of the grievances brought up by students in Dakar in 1968, they called for improvements to school facilities, urban transport, and cafeteria food, as well as the implementation of family allocations for fathers who were students, better oversight over grading, student participation in administration, and revisions of curricula. Furthermore, they took up demands around their future employment and called for higher salaries for civil service workers.<sup>96</sup>

The student strike arose in the context of a wave of labor activism, including strikes at Congo’s large sugar processing plant in 1970 and at the Pointe-Noire docks in 1971. Students expressed their support for the dockers, who had launched a wildcat strike challenging the state trade union federation.<sup>97</sup> The situation recalled that of 1963 in Brazzaville: Ngouabi did not oversee a longstanding regime, nor could he count on the backing of foreign troops. His response was measured, acknowledging the legitimacy of the student demands, and pinning blame for the revolution’s shortcomings on the “lackeys of imperialism that lurk in government and work with the firm intention of sabotaging the revolutionary process. These agents of neocolonialism and imperialism are the real cause of the crisis.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 269. “Les rues de Brazzaville furent transformées en de véritables colonnes de défilés de bambins et d’adultes chantant des chansons iconoclastes et hostiles au pouvoir.”

<sup>96</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 269.

<sup>97</sup> Anatole Kondho (former General Secretary of the CSC, negotiator with the Pointe-Noire dock workers), interview with Héloïse Kiriakou, 1 June 2015, Brazzaville, Congo.

<sup>98</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 270. “...valets de l’impérialisme qui se cachent dans les administrations et travaillent avec la ferme volonté de saboter le processus révolutionnaire. Ces agents du néo-colonialisme et de l’impérialisme sont les véritables responsables de la crise.”

Nevertheless, Nguabi brought in the military to retake the streets and forcibly close secondary and tertiary institutions for the next two weeks while he negotiated with student representatives.<sup>99</sup> Unlike Brazzaville in 1963, or Dakar in 1968, most trade unions remained on the sidelines, and a more generalized disruption to social and economic life was averted. Nevertheless, many in the PCT leadership believed that the student's anti-government criticisms had been enflamed by more dangerous opponents of the new regime.<sup>100</sup>

Following the strike, Nguabi addressed a massive crowd gathered in downtown Brazzaville, where announced that there were insidious opponents of the "people" inside the PCT, including the upper ranks of the party. It was time, he declared, to determine "who in the PCT is revolutionary and who is not?"<sup>101</sup> He invited militants from the party and its affiliated organizations to report on the behavior of their superiors and comrades—including the managers of state enterprises. The speech ignited an organized purge of the party as comrades reported the number of houses, bungalows, cars, and mistresses held by fellow comrades. The use of fetishes, membership in religious sects, and polygamy (considered a crime against women), were also singled out. Some party members were expelled or removed from their posts, while others were merely given warnings.<sup>102</sup> The purge, which ostensibly sought to "purify" the ranks of the party, nevertheless undermined its own authority. The PCT had been founded on the basis of limiting party membership to the true revolutionaries, and before the

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<sup>99</sup> Following the strike, Nguabi agreed to create a University in Brazzaville, pay student stipends, and clean up facilities.

<sup>100</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 272-73.

<sup>101</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 277. "Qui dans le Parti congolais du travail est révolutionnaire et qui ne l'est pas?"

<sup>102</sup> A PCT membership list from 1971 that appears to be from after the purge only lists 116 names. Membership list compiled by the Parti Congolais du Travail, Bureau Politique, Folder PCT 1971 Reglement Intérieur, PR 10, ANCB.

student strike, Ngouabi had stressed the solidity of the party.<sup>103</sup> The idea that the PCT had deviated from its own principles in less than two years shook public confidence, while the purge created a new population of discontented former party members. Only a few months later, the party would yet again be ripped apart by yet another form of dissent.

## **M22: From Youth Leaders to Guerillas**

The student strike of November 1971 had offered a disenchanted section of the party the opportunity to tap into the energy of an urban rebellion. However, the former youth and student leaders in the PCT who were mistrustful of Ngouabi and other army officers did not extend their solidarity to the student strike. Most still believed that the PCT was the best vehicle for bringing socialism to Congo, and the students strike risked bringing the government down entirely. Rather than back the strikers, this group of disgruntled youth leaders attempted to fight for control of the ruling party.

The critics of Ngouabi and his circle were soon entangled in the purge of the party that followed the strike. Ange Diawara, the former head of the Défense Civile was dismissed from his ministerial post, and the PCT's Bureau was reduced from ten members to five.<sup>104</sup> Diawara, and others dissatisfied with Ngouabi's leadership and their fates after the purge, organized a military action to take control of the PCT regime. The rebellion relied on the influence of former youth militia leaders who were now integrated into the officer corps of the military, including Diawara, Camille Bongou, Jean-Baptiste Ikoko, and Prosper Matoumpa-Mpolo. However, drawing from the lessons of 1963, they planned to coordinate their action with an urban insurgency, to be organized by Elie Itsouhou, a member of the

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<sup>103</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 275-80.

<sup>104</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 283-84.

PCT's Central Committee, along with a circle of artists, notably the musician Franklin Boukaka.<sup>105</sup> They hoped to organize a student strike that would then spread to the workers of the capital city.

The intended uprising, launched February 22, 1972, and commonly known as M22, quickly fell into disarray.<sup>106</sup> Although the rebels took the radio station early in the morning, the anticipated student strike never materialized, and military leaders hostile to the takeover quickly asserted control over the situation. All of the actors involved—from Nguabi to those who sought to displace him—claimed to be acting on behalf of the “revolution” and called for people to support the PCT.<sup>107</sup> Over the following four days, hundreds were swept up in arrests; some like Itsouhou and Boukaka were executed extra-judiciously in the immediate aftermath of M22. Less than ten, including Diawara, fled and escaped to the forests southeast of Brazzaville. Nearly two hundred people were sentenced by the special court martial created in the aftermath of M22: forty were condemned to life in prison, and two dozen were sentenced to death—half of whom were on the PCT's Central Committee.<sup>108</sup> The arrests particularly targeted the former JMNR and Défense Civile leaders of 1963 to 1968.<sup>109</sup>

Despite the harshness of the sentences, Nguabi was cautious in his characterization of the failed putsch; he and other party leaders did *not* condemn Diawara and his co-conspirators as counterrevolutionaries, as had been the case in so many other conflicts since 1963. The purge that took place just a couple months earlier had ostensibly cleared the “counter-revolutionaries” out of the

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<sup>105</sup> However, this popular element was greatly subordinated to the military component, see Maboungou, "La Gauche Historique," 28.

<sup>106</sup> M22 stood for Mardi (Tuesday) 22 February.

<sup>107</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 289.

<sup>108</sup> See “Verdict de la cour martiale après le putsch manqué du 22 février 1972,” Service Nationale de Documentation, 31 March 1972 and “Décret présidentiel relatif à destitution des officiers complices au coup d'état du 22 février 1972,” ACI, Folder Les Audiences du Tribunal Populaire, Condamnation, PR 37, ANCB.

<sup>109</sup> Martin Mberi, interview 19 October 2012. The young secondary students who provided support from Brazzaville were also tried, see Pierre Eboundit and Henda Diogène Senny, *Le M22, une expérience au Congo: devoir de mémoire* (Paris: CCINIA Communication, 2009).



party—but now a large fraction of the Central Committee had taken part in the rebellion. Trying to square this apparent contradiction, a party communiqué acknowledged that the rebels were “revolutionaries,” but accused them of “revolutionary mistakes” and having become “degenerate revolutionaries.”<sup>110</sup> Further, many in the party were unhappy with the long list of death sentences, and Nguabi commuted these punishments to life in prison in the interest of holding the fragile regime together.<sup>111</sup>

Diawara and his companions retreated into the forests outside of Brazzaville, near Ngome Tsé-Tsé, where they attempted to create a maquis that could keep the rebellion alive. Through a network of supporters in the student movement, the military, the police, and among local residents, maquis leaders secured weapons, food, and medicine.<sup>112</sup> Their attempts at local recruitment ultimately brought in about fifty young men between the ages of thirteen and twenty, but few older adults. Most of the *maquisards* and their accomplices in Brazzaville were gradually picked up through military incursions and state intelligence, but Diawara and a handful of others remained at large for more than a year. When they were finally captured, Diawara and Ikoko were summarily executed, and their bodies were displayed in Brazzaville’s largest stadium, the Stade de la Révolution.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 297.

<sup>111</sup> Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 296, 98.

<sup>112</sup> See Eboundit and Senny, *Le M22*; Etienne Mokondji-Mobe (secondary student who participated in M22), interviews with author 17 November, 19 November, and 22 November 2012, Brazzaville; Joël Souamy (secondary student who participated in M22), interview with author, 24 November 2012, Pointe-Noire, Congo. According to Ollandet, the police were reorganized afterward after being accused of helping the *maquisards*. Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 309.

<sup>113</sup> Diawara and Ikoko attempted to flee across the Congo River, where they were captured and returned to Brazzaville in exchange for prisoners. They were then taken southeast of the city and killed, so as to claim that they die in battle. Ollandet, *L'expérience congolaise du socialisme*, 307-08. See also extract from “Congo: La Mort du Camarade Ange,” from *L'Express* (Paris), n. 1138, 30 April–6 May 1973, Folder Les Audiences du Tribunal Populaire, Condamnation, PR 37, ANCB.

## The Aftermath of M22

Diawara's execution was highly controversial in Brazzaville, where his funeral procession prompted a massive demonstration of young supporters in Brazzaville.<sup>114</sup> Before the elimination of the maquis, Diawara and three other leaders had written a text, the *Autocritique du M22*, which was clandestinely circulated among supporters in Brazzaville.<sup>115</sup> The work provided a critical assessment of the mistakes that the radical youth leaders of 1963–1968 made in their alliance with military officers, as well as critiques of the practices of the revolution—many of which they had initially supported.<sup>116</sup> Diawara and the *Autocritique* became iconic among those who had provided solidarity with the maquisards. Both young students and former youth organization militants from 1963–1968 saw their support for Diawara as a necessary response to the growing authority of military officers.<sup>117</sup>

However, the failure of M22 also points to critical break that had occurred between the student movement in 1972 and the former leaders the JMNR and Défense Civile. Just a few months before M22, Diawara had worked to bring the 1971 student strike to an end, rather than throw his support behind it. The strike had appeared as a threat to the PCT, an institution he still believed would be best changed from within. As a result, many UGEEC leaders in 1972 remained mistrustful of Diawara and the rebels of M22, and thus were not easily provoked to strike on their behalf.

UGEEC leaders continued to fight for their autonomy from the PCT in the coming years, increasingly criticizing the influence of military officers in the leadership of the PCT, and grew mistrustful

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<sup>114</sup> Eugène André Ossete, interview with author, 16 November, 2012, Brazzaville.

<sup>115</sup> To avoid persecution, young supporters of M22 would glue the pages of the *Autocritique* onto the pages of more innocuous-looking books. Mokondji-Mobe, interview 19 November 2012. See also Eboundit and Senny, *Le M22*, 78.

<sup>116</sup> Ange Diawara et al., *Autocritique du M22: le mouvement révolutionnaire du 22 février 1972 au Congo-Brazzaville* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011) Maboungou, "La Gauche Historique," 29.

<sup>117</sup> See Eboundit and Senny, *Le M22*; Etienne Mokondji-Mobe, interviews 19 November and 22 November 2012; Joël Souamy, interview 24 November 2012.

of their commitment to Marxism-Leninism.<sup>118</sup> The University of Brazzaville was created in 1971 and students launched a strike in 1974, denouncing the regime and calling for the “democratization” of the university.<sup>119</sup> The retaliation was quick and firm: the campus occupation was cleared by force, one hundred students were arrested, and the UGEEC was banned. Fifty Congolese students in Paris responded by occupying the embassy there, which put international attention on the situation, leading to the release of many of the students. However, over a hundred remained under surveillance and twenty were forcibly conscripted into the military.<sup>120</sup> The outcome was thus similar to the 1971 strike in Dakar: independent student union(s) were banned and the most visible student leaders were sent into the army where they could be more closely controlled. But in Congo, the irony was more tragic. The outlawed student union, the UGEEC, had been the first organization to call for the removal of Massamba-Débat in 1968 and had provided many of the militants and leaders of the PCT. The continuity of the youth and student organizations of 1963–1968 came to an end with the banning of UGEEC in 1974. The former youth leaders had gone in different directions: some had been killed by the new regime, others imprisoned, while yet others enjoyed comfortable positions within the ruling party.

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<sup>118</sup> See "Vive l'UGEEC!" (Paris: Association des Etudiants Congolais, 1974)

<sup>119</sup> Created under Nguabi's presidency following the student strike of 1971, the University bears his name today.

<sup>120</sup> Specific details are provided by John Frank Clark and Samuel Decalo, *Historical Dictionary of Republic of the Congo*, 4th ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012).



*[Fig. 22: Second Congress of the PCT, December 1974. Marien Ngouabi is seated in the center, next to statue of Lenin (likely a gift) underneath photos of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin, and Ngouabi. Source: Archives nationales du Congo (Brazzaville), reproduced by Matthew Swagler, 2012]*

Political developments in Senegal and Congo between 1968 and 1974 share a number of similarities. First, the events of 1968 in each country strained the unity of radical youth and student movements. The gains following the strike in Senegal and the overthrow of Massamba-Débat's government in Congo provided young activists in each country with a shared sense that they achieved a partial victory. The possibilities—and the stakes—were raised, and youth and student activists now debated how to realize the revolutions they had long called for. Disagreements about strategies and goals emerged, in part reflecting divisions within the international Communist movement more broadly.

But youth and student organizations in Senegal and Congo had less room to maneuver than they hoped. Regimes under Senghor and Ngouabi preyed on divisions between radicals, and swooped in to

eliminate independent organizations when their actions faltered. In parallel, Senghor and Ngouabi attempted to develop a stronger economic and political base for their governments, through greater state intervention into the economy and the expansion of political patronage networks—notably of young intellectuals. Despite the ostensible ideological differences between Ngouabi’s “Marxist-Leninist” state and Senghor’s anti-Communism, they adopted many similar strategies to isolate independent youth and student organizations by 1974.

# CONCLUSION

## Identifying Radical Currents—and their Blurred Boundaries

Youth and student-led movements in Senegal and Congo reshaped politics in those countries between 1958 and 1974. Throughout the 1960s, PAI, labor, and campus activists continually prevented Senghor from establishing dominance over organizations of workers and students—thereby maintaining space for oppositional organizing. The results of their efforts appeared in the early 1970s with the increased Africanization of the University of Dakar and the gradual reestablishment of democratic rights.

In Congo, the changes implemented after the 1963 revolution at the behest of youth activists were more immediate and more thoroughgoing: the political elite of the 1950s was ousted; French troops were expelled; mission schools were nationalized; new state enterprises were launched and foreign companies nationalized. Further, Congo became a refuge for radical exiles from across Central Africa and youth leaders created new forums for popular political engagement.

In this work I have argued that histories of post-colonial radicalism in Senegal and Congo are best understood as a process emerging from the anti-colonial movements of the 1950s. Radical currents were formed through debates over two essential questions: What are the qualities of sovereignty and in what framework is sovereignty desirable? And what should be the place of Marxism in Africa? The issue of sovereignty produced a division in Senegal and Congo between political leaders who wished to remain in a federal structure with France and advocates of an “immediate” break with any such formation. The former position was held by Senegalese and Congolese leaders like Senghor, Dia, and Youlou, while the latter position came to define their radical opponents. In Senegal, radicals *agreed* with Senghor and Dia that former colonial territories would not be economically viable on their own, and thereby risked being pulled into a subordinate relationship with a more powerful patron state. Senghor

and Dia aspired to keep the former AOF territories together as a federation within a larger supra-federal association with France. Such an arrangement was intended to put African territories on a stronger footing in their relations with France, while also shielding them from the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. For young radicals in Senegal, however the prerequisite for creating a new African federal structure free of foreign domination required complete independence from France.<sup>1</sup>

As Senegal and Congo gained greater autonomy and eventually became formally independent in 1960, the debate over sovereignty evolved. As noted throughout the previous chapters, young radicals continued to challenge Senghor, Dia, and Youlou in the 1960s by calling for “real” independence—putting forward a series of criteria aimed at eliminating lingering forms of foreign (particularly, French) influence in their countries. In the eyes of young radicals, the Senegalese and Congolese government were not simply guilty of cracking down on their opponents, but also of actively facilitating French neocolonialism. Not surprisingly, when Youlou’s government was toppled in Congo, youth and student leaders began referring to the date of his demission, August 15, 1963, as the genuine date of Congo’s independence from colonial rule.

The second feature of the radicals’ political perspective was the desire to create a state based on Marxist principles. The role of Marxism in Francophone African politics had been debated since the 1940s, fueled largely by the issue of whether or not to ally with Communist organizations—and specifically, the PCF. Whereas young radicals looked to international Communist networks as a natural source of support, Senghor was wary and Youlou was openly hostile. After 1958, both used exaggerated threats of a Communist intervention to justify their repression of radical organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> Radicals in Congo adopted this position as well—but in Congo, there was no debate that paralleled the one that took place in Senegal. None of the leaders of Congo’s three political parties proposed federal relations among the former AEF territories.

Yet on the issues of independence and Marxism, the distance between Senegalese and Congolese politicians and their radical opponents could vary greatly over time. When Francophone African students first began to call for immediate break from France, Senghor rejected such a future. Yet just a few years later, in 1958, Senghor's position had moved much closer to that of his radical critics. Similarly, as shown in chapter 1, Dia adopted the theme of "real" independence touted by radicals following the 1958 referendum. Senghor also called for "African socialism," proposing his interpretation of Marx's writings as an alternative to that of his young critics.

Yet those unwilling to work toward "real" independence and "African socialism" at the pace and in the manner defined by the UPS soon found their organizations banned and leaders harassed or arrested. By the time Dia himself was arrested in 1962, it was already clear that the UPS leadership was no longer willing to tolerate radicals' demands. In 1968, Senghor re-invoked his credentials as a Marxist in a speech meant to outflank student protesters. He also abruptly attempted to take control of students' longstanding campaign for the Africanization of the University of Dakar (but which Senghor insisted be a *Senegalization* of the university). In these moments throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Senghor and Dia closed the distance between radical demands and their own positions, although often for opportunistic reasons.

In Congo, Youlou and his radical critics were at odds throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s over the issues of "real" independence and Marxism. But after 1963, the new government became much more open to youth leaders' positions. As young activists rose into official roles within the new regime, they continued to be critical of Massamba-Débat and other MNR leaders' evocations of "Bantu philosophy," which they contrasted with their call for "scientific socialism." But as Massamba-Débat followed through on youth leaders' demands for the expulsion of French troops, the nationalization of the education system, and the hosting of expatriate rebels, the differences between young radicals and the rest of the MNR leadership became blurrier. When Marien Ngouabi emerged from the ranks of the



military to claim that he would carry forward the ideals of the 1963 revolution by creating a Marxist-Leninist regime, the youth leaders of the JMNR and Défense civile split over whether to support him. By 1968 in Congo, the line between who was “radical,” and who was not, was no longer discernible. Therefore, while the key tenets of radical politics remained consistent from the mid-1950s through the 1960s, competing political actors could—and did—simultaneously claim to represent them.

### **The Coupling of “Youth” and Radical Politics**

In both countries, radical demands became closely linked to the social category of “youth.” This association was initially due to the preponderant (but not exclusive) role played by student and youth organizations across Francophone Africa in campaigns for immediate independence in the late 1950s. After the 1958 referendum, the specific relationship between radicalism and youth changed in both countries. In Senegal, youth organizations came to play a lesser role in the mobilization of young people and radical organizing became increasingly centered at the University of Dakar. This was due in part to the growth of the international campus, but was also caused by the Senegalese government’s crackdown on opposition organizations outside of the university. As a result, radical politics increasingly became associate with a very specific group of youth—university students.

The situation developed very differently in Congo. Secondary and tertiary education lagged behind Senegal, and there was no university in 1960. Until late 1960, there was also no African student union that attempted to link secondary students across Brazzaville or the rest the country. Instead, students and non-students were organized together in an independent youth organization, the UJC. Although UJC activists faced repression at the hands of Youlou, when he was overthrown in 1963, the neighborhood infrastructure of the UJC provided the basis for new youth organizations. These groups, described in chapter 4, from the vigilance committees to the CNJ and the JMNR, followed the same model of merging students and non-students.

Congolese youth organizations were led primarily by students, but the large rank-and-file of school dropouts and young workers—organized by neighborhood in urban areas—allowed them to exert influence over the direction of national politics. This was in contrast to students at the University of Dakar whose reach remained relatively confined to campus. In Congo, radical youth leaders mobilized their followers through large public demonstrations, public works projects, and militias. Through these displays of force, JMNR leaders argued that their political positions were representative of the desires of “youth” in general. As noted in chapter 4, this was a means to isolate other youth groups—notably Catholic organizations—who disagreed with the politics espoused by the JMNR. Young radicals thereby succeeded in establishing the boundaries of who was, and was not, part of the “youth.” The definition was a political one, only nominally linked to age.

At the University of Dakar, supporters of the UPS were few in number. Nevertheless their existence serves as an important reminder that there was no unified “youth” position—just as there were older activists from the 1950s in trade unions and the PAI who continued to share most of the perspectives of university radicals. Thus, the conflicts of the 1960s in both countries were not produced by generational divisions between the “youth” and their “elders,” but by political divisions that crossed generations.

### **Women and Radical Organizations**

In both Congo and Senegal, young men occupied the ranks of the leadership of youth and student organizations and were the most publicly visible members.<sup>2</sup> Although women’s equality was touted by many African heads of state, most young women were ultimately expected to focus their efforts on

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<sup>2</sup> Following the 1963 revolution in Congo, many borrowed heavily from the rhetorical and sartorial styles of other male “revolutionaries” around the globe, notably Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara. Yet Raymond Suttner’s investigation of the African National Congress’s underground military organization points to the flexibility of masculine identities in the midst of political mobilization that displays important parallels with the youth militias of Brazzaville in the 1960s. Raymond Suttner, *The ANC Underground in South Africa, 1950-1976* (Boulder, CO: FirstForumPress, 2009).

childbearing and social reproduction. Nevertheless, women played key roles in student and youth organizations—particularly in Congo—even if they have remained nearly invisible in writing on Senegal and Congo in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

In the early 1960s, Congolese security services tracked at least twenty-eight female UJC militants, and as noted in chapter 4, young women participated in vigilance brigades that patrolled Brazzaville and other cities after 1963, looking for signs of political subversion or policing immoral behavior. Some later joined the armed *brigade féminin*—a women’s militia formed in the mid-1960s as the youth movement became increasingly militarized. In each case, these women operated under the public shadow of male leaders, and often under their authority in youth organization hierarchies. The influence of these women—Mambou Aimée Gnali, Ramatoulaye Diop, Jeanne Ibata, Adelaide Yvonne Mougany, Alice Mbadiangana, the singer Marie Bella, and others—on Congolese politics has yet to be fully documented. In Senegal, the role of Marie Angélique Savané in the student leadership of the University of Dakar beginning in 1969 is well known, but seemingly, an anomaly. Little has been recorded about sites of female participation, notably the striking female students from the Lycée John F. Kennedy in 1968. Further research is needed to bring out these experiences, which will surely provide new perspectives on the histories presented in this work.

### **Episodic Time and the Problem of Continuity**

I have argued that radical currents developed over the course of decades, but what did this process look like? Even under ideal conditions, organizations of students and “youth” can only be sustained through a regular influx of new leadership and the eventual departure of aging or graduating members. In the 1960s, this process of turnover was exacerbated by repression and political crises. In my interviews with former activists, it became clear that most had been cut off from their immediate predecessors and successors. As the previous chapters describe, upturns in activism often prompted renewed state

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<sup>3</sup> For an important exception to this, see Mambou Aimée Gnali’s memoir, *Beto na beto*.

repression. Organizations were debilitated as members went into exile, ceased their activity, or decided to join the ruling party. Groups split, dissolved, went underground, merged, and changed their identities in response to both state harassment and new political opportunities. The resultant breaks in radical organizing produced a series of episodic experiences for participants.

Nowhere was this clearer than within the student movement at the University of Dakar. The regular turnover of the student body, combined with Senghor's banning of student organizations on multiple occasions, the expulsions of foreign students in 1966 and 1968, the partial closing of the university through 1968–69, and the ejection of Senegalese students again in 1971 resulted in an almost constant disruption of relationships among student activists. Thus, the UDES leaders of the 1968 strike—although they had links to previous campus leaders like Birahim Diagne and Samba Diouldé Thiam—were entirely different from those who had called the protests in 1966 that resulted in the creation of the UDES. In turn, the founders of UDES in 1966 had only tenuous connections to last of the UGEAO leaders from just two years prior. Not surprisingly, when I asked longtime Senegalese radical Amady Aly Dieng if there was any connection between those who campaigned for the “no” vote in 1958 and those who led the 1968 strike, he replied definitively in the negative.<sup>4</sup>

In Congo, the upheaval of 1963 and the political imbroglio of 1968 were also episodes that interrupted relationships between radicals. Up to 1963, the leaders of the UJC, who had been largely drawn from the ranks of trade unionists and protestant youth groups, quickly ceded leadership of the “youth” to the students and recent graduates who went on to form the JMNR. Likewise, with the formation of the PCT in 1969, former JMNR and Défense civile leaders were supplanted by a new group of students. Each shift created lines—both political and social—between groups that were formed just a few years apart, but had different experiences of the Congolese revolution.

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<sup>4</sup> Amady Aly Dieng, interview with author, 8 June 2012, Dakar.

However, when this period is observed holistically, links between different episodes start to emerge. Despite the repression and upheaval faced by student, youth, and trade union activists, they found ways to generate continuity. Interviews and memoirs reveal that during times of retreat, small groups of individuals transmitted the accumulated experiences of past struggles to new people—often their friends, children, siblings, or younger students—who became part of new organizations. Thus, the JMNR in Congo would have been unthinkable without the infrastructure created by the UJC, just as the UED and the UDES at the University of Dakar drew heavily upon the legacy of the UGEAO.

Beginning this study at the turning points—1963 in Congo or 1968 in Senegal—would have obscured the long accumulation of conflicts between radicals and state authorities (both French and African) that produced these mass upheavals. Instead, placing these events within a series of connected episodes shows the threads of continuity that allowed radical organizing to persist from the 1950s through the early 1970s.

### **Local Origins and Transnational Contributions**

A major component of radical continuity was the links that radicals had developed with Third World, Communist, and Francophone student networks in the 1950s. New activists in the 1960s still drew upon many of their predecessors' international connections to develop their political ideas and secure resources. Radical ideas had been forged in the 1950s in the context of events taking place within the space of the French Union and French Community, leading young radicals to build relationships with the PCF, other sections of the French Left, and radicals from parts of the Francophone world. Yet they also established partnerships beyond that framework—for example, with the International Student Union, and the Soviet and Chinese governments.

Formal independence in 1960 did not end the close ties that African students had to the PCF and other organizations in France. As discussed in chapter 2, Françoise Blum and Burleigh Hendrickson have been particularly successful in documenting the parallels and connections between the 1968 uprisings in

France and Senegal. As their work has shown, the struggles led by students to change the French university system, whether located in Paris or in Dakar, were closely related. The prospect of revolutionary change in the former metropole created by the French *Mai 68* bolstered the confidence—and impatience—of radicals from Senegal and Congo. The momentum of events in Paris helped push forward the student revolt in Dakar. But it was really in the aftermath of the French uprising that its impact was felt in Senegal and Congo. At the university of Dakar, students returning from France brought with them the ideas that had animated the young French Left, notably Maoism, anarchism, and Trotskyism. And as noted in chapter 4, Congolese students came back to Brazzaville calling for a revolt against Massamba-Débat.

But in this work I have argued that the upheavals of 1968 in both Senegal and Congo were not impelled by events in France (or elsewhere). Rather, they were built on a series of prior episodes that pitted young radicals against Senghor and Massamba-Débat over the course of years. The actions of youth leaders in Senegal and Congo in 1968 were not the *product* of a new era of global revolt that marked the late 1960s. Instead, they flowed from the goals and international relationships developed by their antecedents in the anti-colonial movements of the previous decade.

### **Visions of Revolution**

To make sense of the strategies adopted by young radicals in Senegal and Congo in the 1960s, it is necessary to examine how radicals believed they would achieve their goals. Given the divergent situations faced by young radicals in Senegal and Congo after 1963, it is difficult to compare their activities, or the outcome of their actions. Criteria for “real” independence, such as the expulsion of French troops, became concrete, agitational demands for youth organizations in Congo, whereas in Senegal, such a demand was little more than a talking point.

Yet despite the differences in young radicals’ immediate prospects, their goals were still undergirded by a similar desire to create a socialist society that reorganized social, economic, and

political life. Within the Communist movement internationally, there were longstanding debates about how a society became “socialist” and how it was to be governed. Particularly relevant to activists in Senegal and Congo was the issue of whether Marx’s vision of socialism could be realized outside of the countries with the most advanced capitalist economies. Specifically, did a society have to pass through a phase of capitalist political and economic rule before it could achieve the productive capacity that would allow for socialism?

Largely through the influence of PCF networks, young African radicals in the 1950s came to understand the question through Joseph Stalin’s framework. With his theory of “socialism in one country” Stalin had oriented the Soviet state onto the drive for internal economic development, via massive intervention into production, in order to develop greater national income and “catch up” with the capacity of Western economies. To export “socialism in one country” to the colonized world, Stalin began promoting two linked concepts in 1926: revolution by stages and the “bloc of four classes.”<sup>5</sup> These theories argued that since the creation of an indigenous bourgeoisie had been stifled by colonial rule, nations coming out of colonial rule first needed to pass through a “bourgeois-democratic” (or “national democratic”) stage of development. This required Communists to forge a strategic bloc that brought together intellectuals, peasants, workers, and the emerging nationalist bourgeoisie.<sup>6</sup> Michael Löwy argues that the principles of revolution by stages and the bloc of four classes “became so strongly rooted in the thinking of non-Western communist parties that, after Stalin’s dissolution of the

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<sup>5</sup> See Michael Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2010), ch. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Intended to guide for the actions of Chinese Communists, it resulted in the subordination of Communist activists to the nationalist movement of the Kuomintang in the 1920s, with deadly consequences for Communist workers. Nevertheless, the principles of revolution by “a series of preparatory stages” and the bloc of four classes was universalized in 1928 and applied among Communist groups across the colonized world. See Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2010 [1938]); Löwy, *Theory of Permanent Revolution*, 83-84.

Comintern in 1943, they remained accepted theory even by those communists such as Mao and Ho who departed from them in practice.”<sup>7</sup>

After Stalin’s death, his theory was replaced with the concept of the “non-capitalist path to development,” which like Mao Zedong’s theory of “New Democracy” sought to soften the distinctions between the “national democratic” stage and the implementation of socialism.<sup>8</sup> However, the concept of “stages” of development and the necessity of an alliance with the “national bourgeoisie” remained strongly embedded in the frameworks of Senegalese and Congolese radicals.

Student and youth leaders in both countries thereby argued that they first needed to pass through a “democratic national” stage of development. In this stage, the economic legacy of colonialism could be countered with government intervention aimed at breaking the economic dominance of foreigners, while facilitating capital accumulation in the hands of a “nationalist bourgeoisie.” The harshest aspects of this accumulation would be mitigated by state regulations and social services. Only on this basis did most radicals believe that Senegal and Congo could transition to socialism.

As a result, while young militants defended their right to associate with Communist organizations and governments, they consistently rejected being labeled “Communists.” In part, they did so in an attempt to deflect government repression targeting alleged Communists in Senegal and Congo (before 1963). But radicals in both countries also spurned the label because they believed that their countries had not yet passed through the necessary stage of “national democracy.” This position was

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<sup>7</sup> Löwy, *Theory of Permanent Revolution*, 75-76. Trotsky mocked Stalin’s “stages” theory as “the idea of fixing an order of succession for countries at various levels of development by assigning them in advance cards for different rations of revolution.” Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution & Results and Prospects*, 226. Quoted in Löwy, *Theory of Permanent Revolution*, 98.

<sup>8</sup> Steffi Marung, “African Socialism through Soviet Eyes: The Africanists’ Perspective (1920s to 1970s),” (paper presented at the Socialismes africains/socialismes en Afrique conference, Paris, April 8, 2016). Sadio Camara notes that the PAI adopted this concept as its immediate objective at the party’s 1972 congress. Camara, *L’épopée du PAI*, 203.



repeated frequently by JMNR leaders and writers for *Dipanda* in Congo, and embraced by the Senegalese PAI Central Committee.<sup>9</sup>

Even after the advent of the Congolese revolution, youth leaders avoided the term Communism. Many were taken aback in 1964 when Stanislas Batchi, one of their own, first proposed that the MNR adopt “scientific socialism” as its official goal. Even the most adamant Congolese revolutionaries believed that it was still too early to push beyond the “national democratic” phase of the revolution.<sup>10</sup>

In *Dipanda*, writers frequently quoted Mao; celebrated the Cultural Revolution and Lenin’s birthday; and ran tributes to Che Guevara, Kim Il Sung, and Ho Chi Minh. But they always refuted the idea that they advocated Communism.<sup>11</sup> Instead, they claimed to accept the government policy that supported the “coexistence of capitalist and socialist elements in development.”<sup>12</sup> Young radicals also feared that identifying as Communists could alienate them from potential supporters. Most, for example, saw no contradiction between their religious beliefs and Communism, but worried that others might. Former JMNR leader Claude-Ernest Ndalla recounted that Communism was widely misconstrued in the popular imagination in Congo: “People said that [under communism] all would be held in common except for the toothbrush.”<sup>13</sup> Accenting the eventual goal of communism before people understood it,

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<sup>9</sup> Thus, the PAI did not call for communism, but instead for a “independent state of national democracy.” See PAI, “Problèmes du parti n.5,” 6 April 1964, quoted in Camara, *L'épopée du PAI*, 95-96. And in Congo, see “Editorial,” *Dipanda* 187, 16 July 1967. The editorial proclaims, “Le mouvement étudiant joue un rôle d'avant-garde dans le lutte pour la démocratie nationale.” See also, André Missamou, “Appuyons-nous sur la charte...sinon nous serons des arbres sans racines,” *Dipanda* 182, 4 June 1967; Maboungou, interview July 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Ndalla, interview 18 October 2012.

<sup>11</sup> For the examples listed see *Dipanda* no. 22 (1964), 172 (1967), 49 (1964), 175 (1967), and 176 (1967). Writers also paid regular homage to the pro-Chinese government in Albania, see “L’Albanie dans la lutte,” *Dipanda* 48, 3 October 1964.

<sup>12</sup> N.B. Damz, “Les Congolais étudiant [sic] dans les pays de l'Est vous parlent,” *Dipanda* 33, 20 June 1964. See also, “Les Etudiants du Congo-Léo en Belgique et ceux du Congo-Brazzaville en U.R.S.S protestent” and “Association des Etudiants Congolais,” in *Dipanda* 56, 12 December 1964.

was to risk closing the door to the possibility before the radicals had yet opened it. Mberi Martin put it another way: “The problems that we had to resolve did not require Communism. Even if it passed through our heads, on the ground, it wasn’t necessary. For example, the problems of French [military] bases in the Congo—getting rid of them did not require calling for communism.”<sup>14</sup>

Correspondingly, before 1968, most youth and student leaders in Congo and Senegal hesitated to align themselves with any single competing Cold War ally. *Dipanda* editors frequently emphasized their neutrality in articles like the one emphatically entitled: “Neither pro-Chinese, pro-Soviet, nor pro-French, BUT CONGOLESE.”<sup>15</sup> As noted in the epilogue, it was only in 1967–1968 that Marxist and Leftist affiliations became more openly claimed in both countries. In Congo, the impetus came primarily from debates between MNR and youth leaders, but also from Congolese students in France. Many student and youth activists became frustrated with the “mass” party structure of the MNR and its political ambivalence, leading them to call for a state led explicitly by a “vanguard” party committed to “Marxism-Leninism.” Among Senegalese student leaders, debates over Marxism were driven increasingly by the divisions within the international left following the global events of 1968. Aside from an ephemeral Maoist split from the PAI in the mid-1960s, it was only *after* 1968 that student radicals became organized into rival camps.

### **Intellectuals and the Question of Revolutionary Leadership**

The frameworks that young Congolese and Senegalese radicals adopted for understanding socialism had concrete effects on their actions throughout this period. Both Stalin and Mao’s models tended to “equate statification with socialism.”<sup>16</sup> Young radicals saw state intervention as the determining factor in

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<sup>13</sup> Ndalla, interview 19 October 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Mberi, interview 15 October 2012.

<sup>15</sup> *Dipanda* 182, 4 June 1967 (emphasis in the original). See also, JB Ikoko, “Le Fiasco du 23 Juillet ou la Révolution embourbée,” *Dipanda* 192, 2 September 1967; André Konda-Mambou, “Observons la Charte et luttons contre les conceptions erronées,” *Dipanda* 187, 16 July 1967.

<sup>16</sup> See Hal Draper, “The Two Souls of Socialism,” *New Politics* 5, no. 1 (1966): 57.

the political, economic, and social orientation of the country. But who was to control the socialist state? Drawing on Stalinist and Maoist models, most young African radicals believed that socialism could be implemented by placing committed socialist revolutionaries in positions of authority. Students and recent graduates in Congo and Senegal, who saw themselves as the most steadfast socialists, tended to envision the implantation of socialism through their own elevation into the state apparatus—even if it had to come via armed struggle, as it had in China, Cuba, and Vietnam.

Senegalese and Congolese radicals were not alone in adopting this perspective. As Mahmood Mamdani writes:

“[W]hether in power or in opposition, the intelligentsia in post-independence period Africa has tended to have a profoundly anti-democratic orientation. This is basically summed up in the widely-shared perspective that African societies need to be transformed from above. For the tendency has been to see social transformation not as the outcome of a popular process, but as the result of a state initiative. The oppositional intelligentsia shared this statist conception with the state intelligentsia.”<sup>17</sup>

In Congo, the experience of 1963 to 1974 validates Mamdani’s point, as the struggle for socialism became increasingly reduced to “socialists” trying to remove “non-socialists” from positions of authority. Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba argues that the leaders of JMNR “had only one political project: to enter into the state apparatus and transform the state from within.”<sup>18</sup> Mamdani’s and Wamba-dia-Wamba’s critiques are useful for understanding the limitations of the radical youth and student movements in Congo and Senegal during this period.

Yet, there was also a large component of radical organizations’ activities that focused on building a mass base of opposition from below. Activists fostered a culture of reading, debate, and “popular” education that had the effect of bringing larger numbers of young people into political life. In Senegal, state repression made any kind of long-term public organizing by radical student and PAI

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<sup>17</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, "The Intelligentsia, the State and Social Movements in Africa," in *Academic Freedom in Africa*, ed. Mahmood Mamdani and Mamadou Diouf (Oxford: CODESRIA, 1994), 253-54.

<sup>18</sup> Wamba dia Wamba, "Experience of Struggle," 103.

leaders almost impossible outside of the University of Dakar. Yet their commitment to developing allies was evident in the fitful, but long-term commitment of students at the University of Dakar to offer free classes and tutoring to adults and young dropouts attempting to gain their primary and secondary school certificates. As noted in chapter 3, student leaders also participated in courses with union workers on political economy. The PAI, while never able to reach a large audience, nevertheless undertook multiple intensive political education campaigns among its militants, regardless of their background, most notably in 1959, 1964, and 1972. The party's attempts to translate Marxist concepts into vernacular languages was also the result of their aspirations to reach a wider audience. Thus, while PAI and student leaders saw themselves as the potential vanguard of a socialist revolution, they also attempted to train wider layers of people in political ideas.

This was even more evident in Congo after 1963, when new youth organizations like the JMNR and the Défense civile ushered thousands of young people into national politics. As noted in chapter 4, the members of these groups had multiple opportunities to engage in reading groups, lectures, and debates. In the process, many developed greater confidence and became more vocal about what they thought their organizations should be doing. As youth leaders became deputies, ministers, and administrators, the rank-and-file of the JMNR did not hesitate to critique their performance.<sup>19</sup> In the process, new youth leaders emerged to challenge those who were often just a few years older than them. Therefore, in both countries, most young radicals promoted a "top-down" approach to socialism, but simultaneously recognized the necessity of developing new radicals in greater numbers.

### **"Unity" as Liability**

The history of radical organizations in Senegal and Congo not only helps us understand the importance of their activities, it also serves as a reminder that their successes (or failures) were tied up in aspects of

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<sup>19</sup> Perhaps most evident during Pascal Lissouba's tenure as prime minister from 1964–66. Appointed prime minister at the age of thirty-two, Lissouba was one of the older "youth" leaders at the time. When Ambroise Noumazalaye took his place as prime minister in 1966, he too was thirty-two years old.

political life that were outside of their control. One such element was the vulnerability of Youlou's and Senghor's single-party states. By 1963, Youlou had recently established his dominance in Congolese politics and sought to create a brand new party through negotiations with the rest of the political elite. By creating a single-party state with his former rivals he hoped to formalize the subordination of potential competitors. Enfeebled MSA and PPC leaders gladly jumped at the opportunity to secure a seat at the table after facing years of repression and marginalization.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, in Senegal, Senghor and Dia demanded that other parties dissolve themselves into their party, the UPS. The transformation of the UPS into a *parti-unifié* was a gradual and prolonged affair only consolidated in 1966 after the acquiescence the PRA-Sénégal. As noted in chapter 1, some opposition parties attempted to hold out in order to gain better leadership positions when they finally agreed to disband and enter into the UPS.

But neither of these forms of achieving "unity" within the political elite automatically gave ruling parties legitimacy among the broader population. This was most obvious in Congo in 1963, where the attempted merger of the major parties only served to highlight their disconnect from urban residents. Even in Senegal, where Senghor and his allies had worked since the late 1940s to foster a stable base of supporters, UPS leaders were taken aback when the population of Dakar rose up to challenge them. In both cases, the eradication of electoral competition turned the political elite inward, as they jockeyed for their place within the single-party state. In the process, the single-party became disconnected from popular grievances that festered in cities like Brazzaville and Dakar. The rebellions of 1963 and 1968 abruptly highlighted the limits of the political "unity" forged by Youlou and Senghor.

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<sup>20</sup> Following the 1963 revolution in Congo, youth leaders attempted to avoid repeating this mistake. Even as they pushed for a single-party state and jockeyed for positions in the new government, they reserved their right to criticize the government in their capacity as youth leaders. They changed hats as needed in an effort to maintain legitimacy among the rank-and-file of youth organizations. However, as noted in chapter 4 and the epilogue, this complicated balancing act eventually provoked conflicts with military officers that eventually cost many youth leaders their influence—and their lives.

Why then did Youlou fall in the face of mass protest while Senghor did not? As shown in the previous chapters, there were three decisive factors: the relative stability of Senghor and Youlou's regimes, their relationship to the French government, and the position taken by trade union leaders.

Senghor had a long history of electoral experience both in Dakar and the metropole, pushing for colonial reforms as an African representative in Paris through the 1940s and 1950s. With allies like Mamadou Dia, he built a broad base of supporters by winning the allegiance of regional and religious authorities in Senegal. By 1958, Senghor and Dia had established their political supremacy. When competing camps developed around these two Senegalese leaders, Senghor was able to remove Dia and his supporters, and in the process buttress his own authority. Youlou, on the other hand, was still a newcomer in 1958, having run for office and formed his first political party just two years prior. Senghor's authority had been consolidated by 1968 to a degree that Youlou's had not in 1963.

The disparity between the two leaders produced key differences in moments of crisis. Perhaps most crucially, Senghor was able to put down the 1968 rebellion through the loyalty of Senegalese military commanders, whereas Congolese military officers abandoned Youlou in the thick of the protests in Brazzaville. But, it was not only Youlou and his party that were uprooted in 1963—so too were the other major Congolese parties, the MSA and PPC. This was a reflection the relative inability of the Congolese political elite to establish longstanding legitimacy within Congolese society. As described in the preface to part II, electoral politics in Congo had no equivalent to Senegal's long history of African mobilization in the *quatre communes*. Even after World War II, colonial reforms were implemented more slowly in Brazzaville than in Dakar, and parties grew on the basis of newly constituted, and regularly shifting, regional and ethnic alliances. For many *brazzavillois*, the decision of MSA and PPC leaders to join Youlou's single-party appeared to be an opportunist ploy to secure personal advantages.

Another key difference was Senghor's success in securing French military and diplomatic support in 1968 from de Gaulle and Jacques Foccart. As noted in chapter 3, Youlou, on the other hand,

had surrounded himself with de Gaulle and Foccart's rivals from the former Vichy administration. Thus, it was not surprising that the beleaguered Congolese president was rebuffed when he requested French military intervention to save his government.

A final important factor to consider was the role played by trade unions. Although the previous chapters have focused predominantly on youth and student organizations, as documented in chapters 2 and 4, African trade unions were crucial to the ability of student and youth activists to press for their demands. The waged working classes in Senegal and Congo made up just about 10 to 15 percent of the "economically active" population<sup>21</sup>—mostly based in the major cities. But the trade unions often commanded a much larger audience than just the workers themselves. This was particularly evident in 1963 in Congo when trade unions became *the* urban representatives of opposition to Youlou's single-party state. Similarly, the 1968 student strike in Senegal became a threat to the stability of the regime only when the Dakar trade unions called their members onto the streets as well.

Both Youlou and Senghor were wary of a long-term confrontation with workers whose labor was crucial to the functioning of the state, banks, schools, ports, and industry. In both cases, union activists faced state violence, but were ultimately able to shift momentum in favor of youth and student radicals. But the degree of trade union cohesion played a role in the outcome. In Congo, the three trade union federations united in a campaign against Youlou in 1963, whereas in Senegal trade union leaders outside of Dakar and the national leadership of the UNTS were split over the strike. While Youlou faced a united front, Senghor could exploit the disagreements that existed among trade unionists. Unlike Youlou, Senghor had developed trade union allies over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, like Ibrahima Sarr, Doudou Ngom, and David Soumah, who worked actively to discourage the general strike.

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<sup>21</sup> Estimated at sixteen percent in Congo by 1970, see West Africa Department International Development Association, *The Economy of the People's Republic of Congo: Recent Evolution and Prospects* (Washington DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), 1971). In Senegal, 9–10 percent, see UNESCO, "Senegal Education 1969," 4-5,9; International Development Association, *Economy of Senegal 1973*, 1, 51.

### **Discarding and Reclaiming the Youth Radicalism of the 1960s**

Despite the divergent outcomes of struggles against Youlou and Senghor, by 1974, the independent youth and student organizations that had been the driving force of radical demands in the 1960s had been thoroughly repressed in both countries. As discussed in the epilogue, former allies had split into competing camps or turned on each other, most violently in the aftermath of M22 in Congo. In the process, the lines of continuity that had linked radical currents back to the 1950s were severed.

However, recent popular struggles, largely led by young people in the streets of Dakar and Brazzaville, have echoed many of the grievances raised by radicals in the 1960s—particularly their challenges to undemocratic rule. But while the youth activism of the 1960s is seen as part of the legacy of present-day movements in Senegal, this is not the case in Congo. The reasons are rooted in the collapse of the Soviet Union and Congo's bloody civil wars of the 1990s.

By the late 1970s, politics in Senegal and Congo again began shifting in different directions. The rapid expansion of off-shore oil extraction in the 1970s allowed the PCT bureaucracy in Congo to establish a degree of political and economic stability. When Marien Ngouabi was assassinated in 1977, it cleared the way for other military officers to assert greater control over the party. While space for public opposition became increasingly limited in Congo, in Senegal, most opposition parties were finally granted legal recognition in 1981 following Senghor's resignation. The slow democratic opening in Senegal allowed former student radicals like Abdoulaye Bathily and Landing Savané, and their parties, to challenge Abdou Diouf and the Parti Socialiste in elections starting in the 1980s. At the same time, the Senegalese government struggled financially, becoming increasingly beholden to foreign creditors and eventually triggering a series of structural adjustment agreements in the 1980s and 1990s.

The pro-democracy movements in Eastern Europe and fall of the Communist Bloc in 1989–91 spurred a crisis for long-entrenched African regimes. Congo was one of the many countries where long-simmering disaffection with single-party rule and the effects of structural adjustment produced a wave



of strikes and protests in 1990. Under pressure from within the PCT, the president, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, agreed to the formation of a Conférence Nationale Souveraine that would reintroduce multi-party politics to the country. Sassou-Nguesso lost the open elections of 1992 to none other than Pascal Lissouba, a former student leader from the 1960s and the first prime minister following the 1963 revolution. However, after two civil wars, Sassou-Nguesso reclaimed control of the government in 1997. The bloody fighting, much of which occurred in and around Brazzaville, effectively shut down expressions of popular resistance to Sassou's return. With echoes of the 1950s, the civil wars created ethno-regional political alliances that overshadowed other forms of urban mobilization.<sup>22</sup>

In Senegal, students and popular protests continued to play important roles in challenging the effects of structural adjustment and currency devaluation in the 1980s and 1990s, and helped bring about an end to the forty-year reign of the UPS/PS in 2000.<sup>23</sup> Abdoulaye Wade, leader of the PDS, was elected president on a wave of enthusiasm in 2000. But by the end of his first term many of his young supporters had already grown disillusioned, opening up a protracted popular struggle over his decision to seek a third term in 2012, and eventually leading to his defeat and resignation after the 2012 elections. The student and youth movements that came out of the 2012 election, like the Y'en a marre hip-hop and media collective, have drawn on the legacy of independent politics represented by the student movement of the 1960s.<sup>24</sup>

Writing in 1992, Abdoulaye Bathily lamented that while multi-party elections were restored in many African countries in just a few months following the political upheavals across the continent in

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<sup>22</sup> Florence Bernault, "The Political Shaping of Sacred Locality in Brazzaville, 1959-1992/97," in *Africa's Urban Past*, ed. David Anderson and Richard Rathbone (London: James Currey, 2000).

<sup>23</sup> Mamadou Diouf, "Urban Youth and Senegalese Politics: Dakar 1988-1994," *Public culture* 8, no. 2 (1996); Leo Zeilig, *Revolt and Protest: Student Politics and Activism in Sub-Saharan Africa* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> On Y'en a marre, see Rosalind Fredericks, "'The Old Man is Dead': Hip Hop and the Arts of Citizenship of Senegalese Youth," *Antipode* 46, no. 1 (2014).

1989-90, the process had dragged out over decades for the Senegalese opposition.<sup>25</sup> The trajectories of Senegal and Congo since 1992 provide an interesting lens to reassess Bathily's observation. While Congo's rapid return to multi-party politics and the fall of the existing regime in the 1992 may have been cause for envy in Senegal at the time, the equally rapid collapse into civil war showed the fragility of the democratic opening.

In Senegal, when Wade was faced with popular opposition in the late 2000s, he adopted many of Senghor and Diouf's tactics of repression. Yet Senegal's long history of popular mobilization was a touchstone for a successful new movement. The 1968 strike has become an exemplar in the country's record of popular struggles for democratic rights, and has been regularly revisited in public forums and journalistic reviews since the legalization of opposition parties in the 1980s.<sup>26</sup> These commemorations were particularly important around the time of the fortieth anniversary of the strike, in 2008, as a new movement emerged to protest Wade's decision to seek a third term.

Yet while the youth radicalism of the 1960s has acquired a degree of respectability and memorialization in Senegal, the same cannot be said for Congo. From its founding, the PCT had emphasized the supposed failure of the MNR and JMNR, and downplayed the important actions of youth organizations from 1963 to 1968. The PCT leadership saw the mass party structure of the MNR government and the autonomy of youth organizations as a weakness. Thus, a collective silence about the initiatives taken by young men and women in the Congo during the mid-1960s developed during the 1970s and 1980s. This tendency was exacerbated by M22, which resulted in the public disgracing of many key student and youth organization leaders of the JMNR-era.

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<sup>25</sup> Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar*, 139-40.

<sup>26</sup> A sample of these reviews and remembrances are available in the folder Sénégal, Dossiers Généraux 1968, Dossier Sénégal: Evénements 17-18/12/62, 1966-67-68, Sénégal Bibliographie, Centre de Documentation, ANS.

Congo's National Conference in 1991 was crucial for removing the stranglehold of the PCT's political power as well as its monopoly on official history. All former presidents, including Youlou and Massamba-Débat were to be "rehabilitated" as venerated national figures. Likewise, those Congolese who suffered repression under each regime were to be honored equally. At the same time, the conference produced a new sort of erasure of history—the flag, anthem, the name of the country and military, official state doctrines, and major streets and schools (named after people like Lenin and Lumumba), were all returned to their pre-1963 status.<sup>27</sup> In the 1980s, the PCT's archives *were* the archives of the state, and were held at the National Assembly. But in the upheaval during the ousting of the PCT in the early 1990s, protesters removed and destroyed the PCT archives.<sup>28</sup>

Up to 1991, the PCT had claimed to be the true heir of *les Trois Glorieuses* and the Congolese revolution. But as the PCT was disgraced and moved to distance itself from its "Marxist-Leninist" past, the revolution itself was also officially discarded.<sup>29</sup> The revolution of the 1960s had become a moment of original sin, rather than something to be claimed as a source of legitimacy.<sup>30</sup> However, the political opening created by the National Conference also created the possibility for many of the former

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<sup>27</sup> Séverin Andzoka, "La conférence nationale souveraine et la relance du processus démocratique au Congo (1991–1997)," in *Histoire générale du Congo des origines à nos jours: le Congo au 20e siècle*, ed. Théophile Obenga (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Today, the archives of the *Palais du Parlement* are effectively an archive for the National Conference, as the flow of "official" history was again disrupted in the late 1990s by the civil wars that eventually restored Sassou-Nguesso to power.

<sup>29</sup> Most young activists in Senegal and Congo today have a completely different relationship to Marxism than their predecessors. With the abrupt demise of the Soviet Union and China's gradual embrace of capitalism, most of the radicals of the 1960s became disoriented. Following the demise of the Soviet Union, the Marxist-inspired parties in Senegal that had come out of the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s kept their names, but abandoned their programmatic commitment to revolutionary socialism. Similarly, in Congo, the PCT's relationship to Marxism became increasingly obscure in the 1980s, and all pretense was abandoned at the time of the National Conference in 1991. (However, the PCT has kept its name, retained the emblem of the former "Marxist-Leninist" flag, and Ngouabi's motto "Tout pour le peuple, rien que pour le peuple"—largely to draw on the party founder's legacy.)

<sup>30</sup> In 2013, the fiftieth anniversary of *les Trois Glorieuses* passed without any official acknowledgement or commemoration.

participants in the JMNR, *Défense civile*, and the student movement to present complex accounts of the 1960s without going into exile or using pseudonyms, as had previously been the case.<sup>31</sup> While this conversation was sidelined by the civil wars of the 1990s, the discussion has re-opened in the 2000s. In 2015 and 2016, as Sassou-Nguesso meddled with the constitution to allow himself a longer tenure as president, opposition parties, students, and thousands of young people, took to the streets of Brazzaville. While Wade stepped down in Senegal, however, Sassou-Nguesso has held on to power through the use of violence and intimidation. The new movement, with its hash-tag “#Sassoufit”—a play on the president’s name and the French expression “ça suffit” (that’s enough)—remains in its early phases. It is yet to be seen whether the leaders of the current opposition to Sassou-Nguesso’s reign will reclaim aspects of *les Trois Glorieuses* and the youth movements of the 1960s as part of their own inheritance.

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<sup>31</sup> The short lived journal *Rupture* was an important venue for these discussions in the years immediately following the National Conference.

# GUIDE TO SOURCES

## ARCHIVES

### SENEGAL

#### *Archives nationales (Senegal) (ANS)*

- Vice-Présidence et Présidence du Conseil du Gouvernement du Senegal, 1956-1962 (SVP)
- Fédération du Mali, 1959-1962 (FM)
- Centre de documentation (CD)

#### *Service Régional des Archives de Dakar (RAD)*

- Série Correspondances Générales (Cor)
- Série B (B)
- Série 1D (1D)
- Série 5D Renseignements généraux 1945-1967 (5D)

#### *Archives du Rectorat de l'Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal (UCAD)*

### CONGO

#### *Archives nationales du Congo (Brazzaville) (ANCB)*

- Fonds de la Présidence de de la République (PR)
- Série B "Congo Politique"

#### *Agence Congolaise d'Information (ACI)*

#### *Archives municipales de Brazzaville (AMB)*

- Série C (Syndicats)
- Série D (Études Politiques)

### FRANCE

#### *Archives nationales (France) (ANF)*

Série AG, Papiers des chefs de l'État. Fonds de la Président de la République, Secrétariat Général aux Affaires africaines et malgaches (Offices of Jacques Foccart), 5 AG Foccart:

- Foccart Publique (5AG FPU)
- Foccart Privée (5AG FPR)

#### *Centre des archives diplomatique nationales (CADN)*

Archives des postes diplomatiques, consulaires, culturels et de coopération:

- Brazzaville (ambassade) (BA)
- Dakar (ambassade) (DA)

# INTERVIEWS

## SENEGAL

Birahim Ba, Dakar, 3 July 2012  
Abdoulaye Bathily, Dakar, 27 July 2012  
Ousmane Camara, Dakar, 2 July and 19 July 2012  
Mbaye Diack, Dakar, 9 July and 24 July 2012  
Moktar Diack, Dakar, 1 July, 12 July, and 24 July 2012  
Ibou Diallo, Dakar, 12 July 2012  
Amady Aly Dieng, Dakar, 8 June and 24 July 2012  
Bachir Diop, Dakar, 8 July 2012  
Becaye Blondin Diop, Dakar, 11 May 2012  
Charles Gueye, Dakar, 17 July and 26 July 2012  
Moussa Kane, Dakar, 5 July and 17 July 2012  
Ousmane Ndiaye, Dakar, 28 July 2012  
Mame Samba (Diack), Dakar, 30 July 2012  
Landing Savané, Dakar, 30 July 2012  
Fatoumata Signate, Dakar, 29 June 2012  
Magatte Thiam, Dakar, 20 July and 27 July 2012

Research in Senegal was aided by additional conversations with Omar Gueye and Ibrahima Thioub.

## CONGO

Camille Bongou, Brazzaville, 20 October 2012  
Kader Diawara, Brazzaville, 21 November 2012  
Aimée Gnali, Pointe-Noire, 24 November 2012  
Alex Dzabana Ibacka, Brazzaville, 14 October 2012  
José Maboungou, Brazzaville, July 2010; 8 October and 9 October 2012  
Bernard Malamou, Brazzaville, 20 October 2012  
Alice Mbadiangana, Paris, 14 April 2016  
Jean-Martin Mbemba, Brazzaville, 27 November 2012  
Martin Mberi, Brazzaville, 15 October and 19 November 2012  
Etienne Mokondji-Mobe, Brazzaville, 17 November, 19 November, and 22 November 2012  
Atondi Lecas Momondjo, Brazzaville, July 2010; 13 October and 20 November 2012  
Claude-Ernest Ndalla "Graille," Brazzaville, 18 October and 19 October 2012  
Ida Victorine Ngampolo, Brazzaville, 29 November 2012  
Paul Nzete, Brazzaville, July 2010; 23 October 2012  
Eugène André Ossete, Brazzaville, 16 November 2012  
Ange Edouard Pongui, Brazzaville, 27 November 2012  
Eugène Sama, Brazzaville, 13 November 2012  
Joël Souamy, Pointe-Noire, 24 November 2012

Research in Congo was aided by additional conversations with Jérôme Ollandet, 16 October and 17 November 2012, and Martin Mberi's presentation at the Institut Français du Congo, 3 October 2012. I

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