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Building a New Image of Africa

“Dissident States” and the Emergence of French Neo-colonialism in the Aftermath of Decolonization¹

Alexander Keese

An Interventionist Regional Power that does not Intervene

- 1 In the second half of September 1958, territorial French administration in Guinea became pure chaos. The Constitutional referendum was close. Everyone among the French officials who was somehow realistic knew that in Conakry the game was lost. At least, one had to consider it, if the French administration did not directly intervene into the process, in some way or another (Bart 1992: 378-378; Benoist 1982: 410-411, 413-417; Chafer 2002: 173-177; Charles 1997: 111-113; Mortimer 1969: 314-318; Schmidt 2007: 170-172).
- 2 There was indeed some activity carried out by the French administrative services. If someone had observed what was going on in the Conakry headquarters of the local postal services, he would have probably been surprised by such a considerable amount of activity. The civil servants in the territorial Post Office were carrying out an ingenuous scheme elaborated by the Director of the Postal Services, Bidault. In a sort of nocturnal action, African and French employees of the office evacuated stamps worth 250 Millions cfa. Those stamps were thus prevented from falling into the hands of a coming new independent regime, which would in that way be deprived of a small financial asset!².
- 3 But that was all. Apart from such rather derisory activity, French officials did not act in these unruly days. Undoubtedly, there *might have been* other fields in which the French could have set the tune. A telegram from Koundara, thirteen days before the referendum, reported severe attacks of the ruling party's shock troops against the adherents of the opposition in that region. Sékou Touré, future dictator and strong man of the territory, showed that he would not accept any opposition against his course. “All the huts of the Fula inhabitants are burning”, remarked the French Governor Jean Mauberna dryly. This would have been a good pretext to intervene with armed French police forces and to disperse the rioters. The French territorial government could have demonstrated to the supporters of a future of Guinea's inside of the French orbit that the still-colonial power

would not leave its “loyal” populations unprotected. However, the responsible French officials in Conakry and Dakar decided not to act³.

- 4 Some thousand miles away, in the narrow West African territory of Togo, the situation was similar, at least at first glance. Togo had been, since 1919, a trusteeship territory of the League of Nations and of the United Nations, but administered by the French, who did not care a lot about international control and who governed the territory according to the standards of direct administration in the other French overseas territories. In the first half of the 1950s, international pressure for more self-government in Togo was growing, but the French did not give way (Michel 1986: 97-100). A crucial turning point was the elections of 27 April 1958, in which the outwardly pro-French territorial government of Nicolas Grunitzky was beaten by the opposition party Comité d'Union Togolaise (CUT). The CUT had for years demanded autonomy or even independence for Togo, and its electoral success, five months before the referendum about the future of the other French territories in sub-Saharan Africa, was thus a major precedent (Michel 1988: 313-314). Consequently, the world held its breath and waited if the French government would accept the defeat of its crony Grunitzky. Three days later, it became obvious that the French Overseas Services and French diplomacy as well would acknowledge the legitimacy of the result⁴.
- 5 Obviously, the French officials did not have many options. The international public observed the situation in Togo closely for some time in 1958, so there was no easy justification for further French intervention in Lomé governmental affairs. However, after international attention had turned away from the now-autonomous territory, the French administrators who had remained in the field could have undermined the authority of the CUT. This did not happen. The further evolution remained to be worlds away from a French attempt to topple the new Olympio government in favour of its former clients.
- 6 To the contrary, on 2 January 1959, the French army general in Cotonou, Dahomey, decided to send paratroopers to Lomé to defend the regime against a possible coup d'État of leftist groups supported from Ghana. While the US American *Time* magazine, obviously informed through a leak in the French High Commissariat in Cotonou, reported about a French “invasion” in a colonialist style, the opposite was true. Sylvanus Olympio himself had invited the French troops to come to Lomé. Hence, French military detachments were helping out a statesman the French overseas ministry had considered a dangerous element only a short period before⁵.
- 7 These two stories concerning “dissident territories” are in plain contradiction to what scholars commenting on the French transfer of power in sub-Saharan Africa generally assume. When writing about the French engagement in sub-Saharan Africa after the independence of the former colonies, most scholars have manipulation, intervention, economic interest, and patronage for brutal dictators in mind (Péan 1983; Michel 1999). In fact, these elements are indeed aspects of what is called French “neo-colonialism” in sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, the non-intervention of French officials in the two cases mentioned above is striking, as the challenge to French interest was so obvious. The whole issue is more complex than it seems at first glance, and we would thus attempt to understand what the examples of the French encounter with “dissident states” tell us about the mindset of French African policy specialists in the first decade after decolonization. They also clarify the nature of relations between African elite members

and French officials, and will help us describe more generally the mechanisms of French neo-colonialism in its early phase.

Involuntary Processes: Communist Fear, Panic, and Strategies

- 8 To understand French behaviour in the Togo and Guinea crises of 1958 and in their aftermath, it is necessary to highlight two aspects of the reform process inside of the decolonizing French empire in sub-Saharan Africa. Those two aspects have formerly been interpreted in a way that is relatively simplistic, as the standard interpretation does not explain many processes of the 1950s, *i.e.* of the period leading to decolonization.
- 9 Most scholars assume that the French, learning from defeat in Indochina and North Africa, had simply decided to let the Black Africans go. However, they would have undertaken their retreat in the framework of a manipulated decolonization. This scheme would have left the former colonies weak and dependent on French help (Nugent 2004: 48-49)⁶.
- 10 Yet, for the average French official, what was most important in the 1950s was to prevent what those officials regarded as a “Soviet takeover” of Africa. Ever after the riots in some West African territories in the late 1940s, caused frequently by the activities of a regional party then connected to the French Communist Party, the French civil servants saw Communists everywhere. This was not mere rhetoric. For the French administrator-in-the-field, including most Black administrators, the Communist threat was simply a reality⁷. Thus, one had to find ways to convince African politicians that it was more profitable for their career to co-operate with the local French governors than to “work for Moscow” (Keese 2007: 140-144).
- 11 The *loi-cadre* of 1956 seemed to be an answer to the problem. The subsequent decrees enlarged the power of the territorial assemblies in local questions and promoted the creation of councils of the governor, executive councils into which the assembly deputies sent their own elected representatives. Those executive councils were particularly formed to give potential Black partners satisfying posts. Many French administrators were doubtful when considering the implications of the law. Nevertheless, they admitted that reform legislation was a reasonable measure in the fight against a Communist infiltration of French Black Africa⁸. What the makers of the *loi-cadre* and the French administrators did not see was that the law did not give the French governor any legal authority to command his new councillors. He could not force them to follow his opinions. The whole system was built upon the belief that Black Africans would follow the governor anyway⁹.
- 12 This assumption was a crucial error. The new African ruling parties would not follow the French authorities at all. The vice-presidents of the councils of the governor attempted to create themselves their own private realms, they struggled to control the public services. In most territories, until 1958, the police got into their hands, and they could utilise or, at least, neutralise this force when terrorising the opposition through rapidly created party militia (Charles 1992: 367-369). Under those circumstances, the French authorities did frequently not dare to directly confront the strong men of the African parties. The most engaged of these challengers of French power was Sékou Touré, although it is possible that he in particular was pushed into his position by activists at the grass-roots of his party, as Elizabeth Schmidt holds it¹⁰.
- 13 Other African leaders were less aggressive in their rhetoric and in the way they treated the French governor. They attempted to convince the French high administrators to co-

operate *with them*, now that the law had unexpectedly reversed the balance of power. One of these more “polite” leaders was Nicolas Grunitzky, becoming the first African prime minister of Togo—which resembled the role of the vice-president of the council of the governor in the regular French overseas territories, Togo being formally a United Nations trusteeship territory with a particular status (Amenumey 1989)¹¹. However, for his apparent compliance, Grunitzky and his circle of friends demanded more and more rights from the French. Also, they intended to make sure that the opposition party around Sylvanus Olympio would never again get a foothold in Togo¹². When the acting district commissioner Humann attempted to protect the pro-CUT inhabitants of the surroundings of Atakpamé from the activities of pro-government marauders, the Grunitzky government pressured the French to remove the young official¹³. While thus the Grunitzky regime was not “pro-Communist” and utilised a mostly pro-French rhetoric, French authorities were not entirely happy with the behaviour of government members. It was not quite clear if they were “real friends of the French Republic”.

From Strategist to Arch-enemy:

Sékou Touré and the Negative Interpretation of Defiance

- 14 As we have seen, the results of the referendum in Guinea were a serious shock for the French belief in a renewed and reinforced bond between the French Republic and its African colonies. The question for the involved French officials was how to interpret this particular event. In this context, a clear opinion only formed in the course of the first two years after the referendum. This fact delayed a consistent plan for the strategy to be chosen.
- 15 First of all, for the French there were several reasons to topple Sékou Touré as president of the new independent state. The sensation that he had betrayed the generous offers of the French Republic prevailed. The facts, that the Touré regime had terrorised the opposition to win the referendum and that numerous arrests had taken place without any proper legal procedure, nor any consent of the French governor, were generally known among French African policy specialists¹⁴. Intervention would thus have been defensible. However, it did not happen. It is remarkable that such measures were even rarely discussed.
- 16 Direct French military intervention was impossible, given the fact that the world looked at Conakry in the days of the referendum. But a de-stabilisation of the regime from inside would have been feasible. In N'Zérékoré, the Guerze populations already showed signs of unrest in November 1958¹⁵. Macenta and the mine regions were also subject to internal conflict¹⁶. In the Pita district, first protests were manifest in November 1958 and then again in January 1959, with many inhabitants of the region fleeing beyond the borders¹⁷. Particularly, Liberia would host a large community of Guinean immigrants whose attitude towards the new regime had normally not been friendly, and became even worse after three months of independence¹⁸. Part of this group were recent exiles, such as a notable from Guéckedou, who actively prepared armed guerrilla in the west of the country¹⁹. Next to Fouricariah, local populations refused to pay the raised tax rate; in the mine city of Fria, workers rioted against the introduction of a lower salary scale; in Beyla, the cattle owners were furious about a new tax on their livestock²⁰. A tendency of resisting the new independent regime was thus widespread, but it was in urgent need of financial and logistic support from outside²¹. However, while the French High Commissioner in Dakar, Pierre Messmer, and the French Overseas Minister, Bernard Cornut-Gentille, considered

lending support to “pro-French” groups in the country, those plans were never effectively implemented²². The opposition stood alone.

- 17 Even the threats of the Touré regime against French settlers did not provoke any decisive French action. In December 1958, the Political Director of the French Overseas Ministry, Léon Pignon, finally planned for a potential massive invasion of French troops, which would have been meant to protect French citizens. However, these measures were in the end not necessary. The Touré regime conceded in the last possible moment to a more conciliatory course, thus making French officials renounce coercive action²³.
- 18 The explanation for this contradictory French behaviour is to be found in the fact that the French had, in the beginning, difficulties to interpret the nature of the new regime. Even more, they refused to admit the loss of a Black African territory. Had not the referendum in general been a sweeping success in sub-Saharan Africa? While some French officials already claimed the Guinean evolution to be a Communist takeover, others still hoped for a coming to terms with an independent Guinea, which would then “somehow” remain a part of the French ensemble. In the beginning, most observers directly concerned by the Guinean issue saw Sékou Touré as a simple autocrat, himself playing with radical notions, but only as a vehicle to bring his troops into the line²⁴. They also hoped for the influence of young, moderate, French-educated politicians such as Nabi Youla, who was at the time the Guinean envoy to Paris²⁵. French settlers in the territory protested against what they considered a naive optimism in French government circles²⁶. This optimism was indeed prevalent inside the team sent to Conakry to negotiate the terms of effective Guinean independence. Paul Risterucci, the new French High Commissioner, emphasised that the leaders of the new regime in Conakry were “simple autocrats”, as to be found in all the African territories, and no Communists at all²⁷. Risterucci was so conciliatory towards the Touré regime that even his direct superiors criticised him sometimes to be an “ambassador” of French good will rather than a representative having to negotiate on hard terms with the Conakry regime²⁸. Raymond Barges, leading the French diplomatic mission in Conakry, was more adamant but mostly absent from Guinea²⁹. In contrast, the effectually responsible official for relations with the Guinean Government, Brouin, regarded a “realistic” course as inevitable. Such a realistic course meant concentrating on issues of trade and infrastructure, and accepting that the Touré regime was simply as authoritarian as any other African government that would have received the same opportunities³⁰. The *Mission d'aménagement*, a joint French-Guinean body elaborating a course of activities that suited both sides, was the visible proof for a pragmatic French course³¹.
- 19 However, this pragmatic course eroded slowly, and with occasional loops, in the years 1958 to 1960. This was mostly due to the behaviour of the President Sékou Touré himself. Touré had to compensate for a bleak economic perspective, and such compensation was most easily achieved by political discourse (Barry 2002). In his speeches and, particularly, in the context of alleged or real conspiracy against his regime, he attacked the French as neo-colonial schemers³². In December 1959 the *Mission d'aménagement* was expelled from Guinean territory³³. French company personnel and teachers were constantly confronted with widespread hostility, which normally was a direct product of the regime's rhetoric³⁴. The whole of the Guinean unique party, the Parti démocratique de la Guinée, was built on the theme of anti-colonial and anti-French propaganda³⁵. When in April 1960 a number of Senegalese residents in Conakry was arrested by the Guinean police, this happened under the charge that they had plotted, relying on funds paid by the French embassy, for a coup

d'état against the Touré regime³⁶. The Guinean secret services even sent an *agent provocateur* to the French troops in neighbouring Ivory Coast, whose activities were to deliver the proofs for the eagerness of the French army to support anti-government plots in Conakry³⁷.

- 20 The anti-French behaviour of the Touré government gave those elements in the French administration the upper hand that had from the outset believed in the Communist nature of the regime. Rhetorical radicalism and repression were here set as equal to plans for the creation of a People's Republic. In 1959, the French officials reported increasingly about what they regarded a Soviet infiltration of Guinea. They pointed mostly to an—allegedly—dangerous and growing number of Eastern Block specialists in the country and to the re-building of the local economy with reference to Communist forms of organisation³⁸.
- 21 Rumours about Guinea made the round, and what the French in the country observed as the course of the Touré government was not very reassuring. The country was restructured via a centralisation and nationalisation of trade networks, the banking sector and the production industry³⁹. The party used its militia against striking school teachers and pupils who were severely beaten up⁴⁰. Occasionally, Sékou Touré had one of his outbursts of rage against the capitalist West⁴¹. These issues fortified the image of Guinea as a Communist vanguard until 1965.
- 22 In the reality, the course of the regime remained as contradictory as before. From time to time, an engaged French Ambassador attempted to improve the relations with the Guinean ruler⁴². The acting Ambassador Koenig reported in 1964 about relaxed talks with Sékou Touré in the President's suburban villa, and he even managed to re-establish a Mixed Commission for joint affairs for some months⁴³. However, all these projects were respectively skipped by the Guineans after a short time. Normally, at the next major internal crisis the regime reinforced its anti-French propaganda to satisfy party militants who still waited for a socio-economic miracle that did not come. The latter desperately needed a scapegoat for the regime's lack of economic success⁴⁴.
- 23 On the other side, the French administrators had also desperately needed a scapegoat for what had happened in 1958. With the behaviour of the Sékou Touré regime, they finally *had* their explanation for the defeat of the Communauté project. It was not a lack of loyalty of the Africans to the virtues of the French Republic and thus of the French *mission civilisatrice*, but rather a perfidious Communist subversion that had cost the French parts of their old empire. Guinea had been lost because of Soviet infiltration. Moreover, this Cold War scenario—which also made it difficult to imagine the French invasion of an already “completely lost state”—gave a meaning to the failures in the transfer of power. It provided former administrators who continued to work in African affairs with a clear mission: to prevent the other Francophone African countries to be infected by the same virus; to fight Soviet subversion in Africa with all means; and to identify those African friends in whom the French Republic could trust⁴⁵. That “the Soviets” had plans for the rest of Francophone Africa was evident for the French from Guinean initiatives in former French West Africa. Moreover, Sékou Touré still controlled the former federal trade union, Union générale des travailleurs en Afrique noire. French officials wanted to secure that this organisation was neutralised in the other, now independent countries. In this objective, they met with the interest of the post-colonial African leaders. Those were all too happy to get rid of a potential opposition movement in their own countries⁴⁶. The interpretation of the Guinean blunder, which became increasingly consistent in 1959 and

1960, thus gave the French a model how to understand events in “their” part of Africa, and whom to regard as friend or foe.

Unreliable Friends: Sylvanus Olympio, Nicolas Grunitzky, and the Limits of African Veneration Towards Paris

- 24 Togo became one of the first test cases for this model. Most recent publications, in a rather polemic way, hold that the French were hostile to the Olympio regime from the start. They even speculate that French “neo-colonialists” were behind Olympio’s assassination in 1963 and the military takeover of power in 1967 (Labarthe 2005: 41-49; Verschave 1998). The reality was more complex. It was the model drawn from the Guinean experience that played for the French the decisive role in interpreting the Togolese evolution.
- 25 With the takeover by the CUT government, the French remained insecure how to treat Sylvanus Olympio. Different factors complicated the interpretation of the Togolese evolution. French officials regarded Olympio as an instrument of Kwame N’Krumah, the head of the independent government of neighbouring Ghana, seen as a convinced Communist⁴⁷. The Directorate of the Economic Division in the French Overseas Ministry consequently wondered, in 1958, if, under such circumstances, it was justified to make continuously a high contribution to the budget of now-autonomous Togo. French funding amounted to two third of the Togolese gross domestic product. Officials in Paris criticised that those funds rolled into the pockets of a regime of Communist fellow travellers?⁴⁸.
- 26 This negative first conclusion was reinforced by the fact that the French High Commissioner continued to treat the leading figures of the former Togolese government, Nicolas Grunitzky and Pierre Ajavon, as the country’s principal friends and allies of the interest of Paris. The High Commissioner Spénale was eager to give Grunitzky material support to continue his political work⁴⁹. In 1962, the former Togolese Prime Minister and former French civil servant Grunitzky, now in exile, even struggled to get a higher pension out of the French budget...⁵⁰.
- 27 However, in the years 1958 to 1960, the French specialists for African policy started to revise their interpretation of the CUT regime. Much of this turn had to do with what they regarded as Olympio’s personality. Secret reports about the Togolese head of state continued to present him as Anglophile and pro-Independence, but they also described him as strictly anti-Communist⁵¹. French observers were completely surprised by the hostilities between Olympio and the Ghanaian government since late 1958. In this conflict, the Togolese government pleaded for French support; and the French conceded to Olympio that he was an ally against the demands of “Soviet-backed” Ghana⁵². Moreover, the younger, more radical, and rhetorically Marxist members of Olympio’s coalition partner Juvento broke with him at the end of the same year. From this point, French officials emphasised that it were the Juvento “Communists” around Aithson who constituted the real danger for French interest in Togo⁵³. To the contrary, the Government itself was no longer suspect⁵⁴. Thus, while the makers of France’s African policy became increasingly convinced, in 1959, that Sékou Touré and the new Guinean regime were Communist and hostile, the vision of Sylvanus Olympio and the Togolese regime changed into the opposite direction.
- 28 Henri Mazoyer, the new French Ambassador in Togo in 1961, put it like this: As everywhere in Africa, democracy did not stand a chance, even not with Sylvanus Olympio, who was not a Communist at all, but a “liberal bourgeois”. According to this vision, the

young (potential) Communists hid in the background, and attempted to infiltrate the unique party, with success:

“Même dans ce Togo gouverné par un bourgeois libéral, la liste unique, l’intimidation, le matraquage qui va jusqu’au meurtre, ne laissent pas grande chance à l’opposition. Celle-ci se réfugiera dans la clandestinité, ou bien au sein du parti unique et triomphant pour le noyauter. C’est vers quoi tendent certains jeunes Turcs gagnés au ‘socialisme africain’. Ces jeunes, mûrissants, ayant déjà en mains des leviers administratifs puissants, ne sont pas communistes, mais les structures économiques de leurs vœux, s’harmoniseraient plus facilement avec celles des pays de l’Est qu’avec les nôtres. Si nous ne faisons pas preuve d’imagination pour aménager des structures d’accueil pour ce ‘socialisme africain’, il sera aiguillé vers le communisme”⁵⁵.

- 29 There are no real proofs that the French were behind the crisis that Togo went through in early 1963. In January 1963, a coup d’État overthrew the Olympio regime. Mutinying officers assassinated the President who had fled on the ground of the American Embassy. Suspicions point to French involvement, but we do not have any concrete clue that either the French Foreign Ministry or the Secretariat of African Affairs attempted actively to topple the Togolese government, as studies based on journalistic investigation try to prove. We cannot be certain that the French Ambassador Henri Mazoyer *did not* encourage leading army officers to get rid of Olympio, but there is no documentation indicating that the Ambassador received any instructions or support for such an activity from the Quai d’Orsay or from Jacques Foccart. What is even more striking, however, is that the adherents of Olympio, organising themselves in a *Comité de salut public* after the mutinying army forces had arrested the majority of the ministers, do not mention any French involvement in the incidents at all. The CUT leaders accused Ghana to pay the mutineers, to sabotage the country and to terrorise the members of the once-ruling party⁵⁶. If Mazoyer was believed to be the grey eminence behind the putsch, would he not have been severely attacked by the followers of Olympio?
- 30 French officials were not entirely happy with economic diversification, which the Olympio government had tried to promote, and had attacked what they regarded as a missing effort of the Togolese to co-ordinate themselves with France’s African policy⁵⁷. However, we have no indications that the French actively intended to force Togo into another direction, by liquidating the acting government. Also, the influence of their former client Grunitzky, although protected by the French and equipped with some French money privileges, was relatively small. After an assassination attempt against the former Togolese Prime Minister and his family in April 1962, the French suspected the “Communists”; which means they saw no need to enter in a dispute with the Olympio government concerning the issue⁵⁸. Finally, Grunitzky’s behaviour in the 1950s had been ambiguous enough and many a French official doubted if he was to be qualified as a reliable friend of the French nation.
- 31 Nicolas Grunitzky got his second chance to win French grace as head of state of Togo from January 1963, and he attempted at his best to convince the French and, particularly, President de Gaulle and “the shadow man” Jacques Foccart, that he had to be counted among the most reliable friends of the French Republic. Grunitzky needed as well the continuance of French contributions to the Togolese budget and French military support⁵⁹. However, the French Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Co-operation retained their doubts concerning Grunitzky, and showed no enthusiasm to maintain the number of French specialists and magistrates in the country, and, even more, to finance the regime’s

costly industrialisation projects⁶⁰. The President Grunitzky and Méatchi, president of the coalition partner of the governmental party, protested towards Foccart against the reluctance of both involved French ministries to help out the Togolese partners⁶¹.

- 32 The cleavage between the Foccart Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs became more visible when in late 1966 first signs of instability inside the Grunitzky government became evident. Jacques Foccart declared himself for Grunitzky and assured the president he would protect the latter's rule⁶². Claude Roustain, the French Ambassador in Lomé, was not at all positive to such a course. He was much more sceptical about Grunitzky's personality and refused to require French troops against the rioters in the streets of the capital. Finally, in January 1967, the Ambassador accepted a coup d'État of the Togolese army general Etienne Eyadéma against the president. Grunitzky was, as the French official interpreted it, a rather unreliable friend of the French nation (if really a friend at all), and not preferable to an army leader who was said to be clearly pro-French⁶³. Thus, Army General "Gbassindje" Eyadéma became the French man in Lomé.
- 33 French attitudes towards "secessionist states" show that the involved French officials—those who "stayed in the African business" after the transfers of power—desperately needed an explanation for why the colonial partnership under French leadership had gone wrong. They found their explanation after initial struggles in the first months after the referendum. From what French officials experienced concerning Guinea, they drew the model that what happened in sub-Saharan Africa was a fight between good and evil, pro-French and anti-French, anti-Soviet and pro-Moscow. The final criteria for judging if one of the new African governments was to be considered friend or foe, was the personal relationship of its African leader with leading French officials, and the French interpretation of his reliability and his behaviour *before* independence.
- 34 Thus, Guinea served as the ideal negative case. In the future, every "mischief" occurring in the former French colonies in sub-Saharan Africa would be interpreted as Soviet activity, executed by the "Communist regime" in Conakry. In that way, the hostile French behaviour only strengthened the position of Sékou Touré. He could claim to be a victim of French neo-colonialism and thus justify the activities of one of the most brutal dictatorships on the African continent.
- 35 In Togo, the evolution was different. This was due to the fact that a "leftist" opposition emerged exactly during the phase when the French finally made their decision how to view the Olympio regime in Lomé. The conflict between Olympio and his former Juvento allies, and the tensions between "Communist" Ghana and "liberal bourgeois" Togo helped the president to achieve some credit as a friend of France. However, this friendship was too ambiguous to guarantee an effective protection of the regime in the moment of crisis in early 1963 that led to the assassination of the head of state. The "friendship" between the French Republic and Olympio's successor Grunitzky was likewise uneasy, because Grunitzky had exerted strong pressure on the French and occasionally threatened with a Togolese road to independence in 1957. The French would not pardon this. Finally, in 1967, they preferred a general educated in France as president to the "bickering", "unreliable" politicians. The dictatorship of Eyadéma thus found its origins in the fact that neither of the possible candidates in Togo could claim a friendship with France that was strong enough to make the French help him out in situations of crisis.

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NOTES

1. A former version of this article has been held in May 2005 as a seminar lecture in the Imperial History Seminar of the Historical Research Institute, London. I am grateful particularly to William-Gervase Clarence-Smith, Andrew Porter, David Killingray and Tony Chafer for their stimulating remarks, and I wish to thank Mairi MacDonald for the inspiring conversation on the subject. Research on the topic was made possibly through grants of the German Historical Institutes in London and Paris (GHIL and DHIP), and of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).
2. Archives diplomatiques du ministère des Affaires étrangères français, Paris (MAE), direction Afrique-Levant (DAL), Guinée 9, Patault, member of Cabinet of French Overseas Ministry, *Note pour Monsieur le Ministre [Cornut-Gentille]* (without number), without date.
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4. MAE, DAL, Togo 5, French Foreign Ministry, Directorate Afrique-Levant, Sub-Directorate of African Issues, *Aide-Mémoire: les récentes élections au Togo et leurs conséquences éventuelles sur les responsabilités du département* (n° 76/AL), 30 April 1958, pp. 1-2.
5. MAE, DAL, Togo 5, French Embassy in Ghana to Sébilleau, Directorate Afrique-Levant, French Foreign Ministry (without number), 21 January 1959, pp. 1-3.
6. See the most important counter-argumentation in CHAFER (2002: 227-229).
7. This side of the Cold War influence plays only a minor role in the new important case study on Guinea-Conakry by Elizabeth SCHMIDT (2007: 34).
8. See, particularly, the remarks of the Governor of the Chad, Ignace Colombani, in CAOM, FM1AffPol/493, Colombani to Chauvet, Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa (n° 393/AG.AP.CF), 27 October 1953, p. 3. On French misperceptions in the process of the elaboration of the *loi-cadre*, see also KEESE (2003: 41-44).
9. CAOM, FM 1AffPol/493, Note of Plantey, Technical Advisor of the French Overseas Ministry, to Pignon, Director of Political Affairs, French Overseas Ministry (without number), 5 August 1958.
10. Schmidt's ideas are challenging, but the cornerstones of her interpretation rely rather exclusively on oral material, collected during the very particular 1991 situation. It will be open to discussion if this is sufficient grounds to construct an opposition between a formerly moderate and collaborationist Sékou Touré and the "impatient young men" of what Schmidt regards as the party left; this being followed by Touré's reluctant change of position (SCHMIDT 2007: 143-144).

11. On the legislative evolution of Togo under French rule, see LUCHAIRE (1957).
12. CAOM, FM 1AffPol/1012, *Réunion du 27 Juillet 1954 chez M. de Villelongue* (without number and date, without signature), p. 3.
13. CAOM, FM 1AffPol/3322/1, Telegram from Spénale, French Commissioner of Togo, to Jacquet, French Overseas Minister (n° 166), without date (noted as “1958”).
14. Archives nationales françaises, Paris (ANF), Fonds Foccart, “Fonds Privé” 197, Prost to Foccart, Technical Advisor of Charles de Gaulle (without number), 15 June 1958, p. 1; ANF, Fonds Foccart, “Fonds Privé” 197, Prost to Foccart (without number), 16 November 1958, p. 3.
15. MAE, DAL, Guinée 11, Farret, French Military Commander in Guinea, Troupes AOF-Togo, État-Major, 2^e Bureau, *Bulletin de renseignements sur la situation en Guinée* (n° 5/2/CHG./RENS.), 7 November 1958, p. 1.
16. MAE, DAL, Guinée 11, Service d’espionnage et contre-espionnage (SDECE), *Guinée: Informations sur l’Intérieur* (without number), without date, p. 1.
17. MAE, DAL, Guinée 11, French Overseas Ministry, Studies Department, *Renseignements sur la Guinée* (n° 2492/B.E.), 21 November 1958, pp. 1-2; MAE, DAL, Guinée 14, De Noyelle, Secretary for Communauté Issues, French Foreign Ministry, *La République de la Guinée et la France* (without number), 16 January 1959, p. 5.
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20. MAE, DAL, Guinée 6, Jean Rolin, member of Studies Department, French Overseas Ministry, *Transmission de renseignements: République de Guinée: période du 5 au 14 Février* (n° 353/B.E), 27 February 1959, p. 34.
21. MAE, DAL, Guinée 6, Huré, acting French High Commissioner in Conakry, to French Foreign Ministry, *Direction Afrique-Levant* (n° 109/AL), 16 March 1959, p. 4.
22. MAE, DAL, Guinée 12, Telegram from Messmer, High Commissioner of French West Africa, to Cornut-Gentille, French Overseas Minister (n° 808), 4 October 1958.
23. CAOM, FM 1AffPol/2181/7, Pignon, Director of Political Affairs, French Overseas Ministry, to Cornut-Gentille (n° 314), 23 December 1958, p. 2.
24. ANF, Fonds Foccart, “Fonds Privé” 197, French Overseas Ministry, *Note d’Information: Sékou Touré* (n° 82/B.E.), 10 January 1958, p. 1.
25. ANF, Fonds Foccart, “Fonds Privé” 197, Allegret to Foccart, Technical Advisor of Prime Minister Charles de Gaulle (without number), 13 December 1958, p. 2; CAOM, FM 1AffPol/2181/7, Telegram from Youla, substituting Touré, to Cabinet of de Gaulle, 13 January 1959.
26. ANF, Fonds Foccart, “Fonds Privé” 197, Prost to Foccart (without number), 4 October 1958, pp. 1, 3.
27. CAOM, FM 1AffPol/2181/7, Telegram from Risterucci, French High Commissioner in Guinea, to Cornut-Gentille (n° 480-483), 15 October 1958, pp. 1-2.
28. ANF, Fonds Foccart, “Fonds Privé” 197, Cornut-Gentille, *Instructions pour le haut-commissaire en A.O.F.* (without number), 10 October 1958, pp. 1-2.
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32. MAE, DAL, Guinée 6, French Foreign Ministry, Directorate Afrique-Levant, Sub-Directorate of African Affairs, *Note: Guinée* (without number), 8 April 1959, p. 4; MAE, DAL, Guinée 14, Telegram from Huré, French Ambassador in Guinea, to French Foreign Ministry, Directorate Afrique-Levant (n° 297), 6 May 1959, pp. 1-2; MAE, DAL, Guinée 14, Huré to French Foreign Ministry, Directorate Afrique-Levant (n° 205/AL), 13 May 1959, pp. 1-2.
33. MAE, DAL, Guinée 14, Telegram from Siraud, French Ambassador in Guinea, to French Foreign Ministry, Directorate Afrique-Levant (n° 911), 18 December 1959.
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37. MAE, DAL, Guinée 43, Siraud to French Foreign Ministry, Directorate Afrique-Levant (n° 614/AL), 24 June 1960, p. 2; MAE, DAL, Guinée 43, Agence Guinéenne de Presse, *Nouvelles de la République: Révélations sur l’Affaire du Complot Anti-Guinéen* (without number), 28 July 1960.
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44. MAE, DAL, Guinée 50, Telegram from Koenig to French Foreign Ministry, Directorate Afrique-Levant and Directorate of African and Malagasy Affairs (n° 730-733), 16 November 1965, p. 1.
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53. Which was an old position, because the particular danger coming from Juvento had already been emphasised by French officials under the first Grunitzky premiership, see CAOM, FM 1AffPol/2182/6, Géorgin, Chief Official of External Security of Togo, to the Direction of Cabinet of the Commissioner of Togo (n° 875/SE), 8 November 1957, pp. 2-3.
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57. ANF, Fonds Foccart, “Fonds Privé”, 285, Mazoyer, *Note* (without number), 19 August 1963.
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59. ANF, Fonds Foccart, “Fonds Privé”, 285, Grunitzky, President of Togo, to Foccart (without number), 7 July 1963, pp. 1-2.
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RÉSUMÉS

Bâtir une nouvelle image de l’Afrique: les “États dissidents” et l’émergence du néocolonialisme français au lendemain de la décolonisation. — En 1958, l’État français perdit le contrôle de deux de ses anciens territoires africains, la Guinée et le Togo. Dans un premier temps, cette perte de contrôle fut totale mais les dirigeants togolais établirent rapidement une relation de travail avec Paris. Survenus entre la promulgation de la loi-cadre et la mise en place du nouveau gouvernement de Charles de Gaulle, ces événements furent un choc pour les dirigeants français. Ces derniers devaient toutefois s’adapter aux nouvelles circonstances politiques, et ils firent le choix d’adopter une nouvelle politique plutôt que d’intervenir directement. L’attitude de la France face à ces “États dissidents” devait influencer sensiblement la manière dont ces responsables politiques français allaient interpréter la situation en Afrique sub-saharienne. Ainsi, les décideurs politiques français commencèrent à considérer l’Afrique comme un champ de bataille opposant amis et ennemis, traîtres procommunistes et partenaires loyaux.

In 1958, the French state lost control over two of its former African territories, Guinea and Togo. This loss of control was, at first instance, complete, although the Togolese leaders soon found a working relationship with Paris. In the period between the *loi-cadre* and the establishment of the new government of Charles de Gaulle, such events came as a shock to the French officials. However, they had to cope with the new political circumstances, and they did this by slowly formulating a new policy instead of intervening directly. The French experience with such “dissident states” influenced strongly how those officials would in the future interpret the situation in sub-Saharan Africa. French policy-makers would begin to see Africa as a battleground between friends and foes, between pro-Communist traitors and loyal partners.

INDEX

Mots-clés : décolonisation, Guinée, Togo, France, néocolonialisme, perceptions politiques

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