

# AFRICA

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## *Notes on Current Events*

**NIGERIA** A number of leading Nigerian politicians, including the federal Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and other members of the Federal Cabinet, as well as several regional Premiers, lost their lives in a military *coup d'état*, in January. Although the movement was initiated by a group of younger officers, headed by Major Nzeogwu, control has been assumed by the Chief of Staff, Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi. He has announced himself as head of a new military government; all governments of the Regions of the Federation have been dismissed and replaced by military governors. The new government announced it had no plans for nationalizing industries.

The *coup* follows continuing and widespread disturbances following the October elections in Western Nigeria, marked by terrorism, assassinations and ballot-rigging on a scale even wider than in the previous general election.

Commenting on the position on the eve of these events, Mr. Wahab Goodluck, the President of the Nigerian Trade Union Congress, addressing its second Convention in December, said: 'the world is witnessing the funeral obsequies of Parliamentary democracy being staged by the Nigerian National Democratic Party' (*Advance*, Lagos, December 1965).

The Nigerian military take-over followed a number of army putsches in African countries—Algeria, Congo, Central African Republic, and Dahomey.

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC** It was reported on January 1st from Bangui that former president David Dacko's government was overthrown by a pre-dawn army *coup*. Colonel Bedel Bokassa, Chief of Staff, announced that talks were taking place on the formation of a new government. He said all political

prisoners were being released. It was reported that Mr. Dacko was under house arrest and Mr. Michel Adama Tamboux, president of the National Assembly, was missing.

*Le Monde*, semi-official French Government paper, welcomed the military take-overs in former French colonies, and commended their action in breaking off diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.

**CONGO (Leopoldville)** After a tussle for power between former President Kasavubu and former Prime Minister Mr. Tshombe, General Joseph Mobutu seized the reins of government in the Congo in a bloodless *coup*, and announced himself President for a period of five years. He names his Chief-of-Staff, Col. Leonard Mulamba, Premier, and said that they and other officers would continue to run the army and also assume civilian duties. In a communique, giving reasons for the *coup*, General Mobutu blamed 'the race for power between politicians for the complete failure in political matters'.

Premier Mulamba has chosen a cabinet which is representative of the supporters Convention Nationale Congolaise (CONACO) led by Mr. Tshombe and the Front Démocratique Congolaise (F.D.C.) of Mr. Kasavubu.

While General Mobutu claimed that Mr. Antoine Gizenga, former Deputy Premier under the murdered Premier Patrice Lumumba, was being freed from imprisonment, the role of the General in bringing about the downfall of beloved Patrice, has not been forgotten.

Meanwhile, Mr. Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, has described the new Congolese leaders as 'old friends', and in expressing the hope that the Congo would embark on a 'programme of reconstruction', indicated 'that Belgian technical assistance would probably be increased during the coming months'.

**CONGO (Brazzaville)** Education was nationalized in October. Owing to the shortage of school accommodation, students and parents are co-operating in the building of a number of school buildings and class rooms. Young people are sacrificing free time to volunteer for new building projects. Many new roads, bridges and clinics have also been built as a result of the 'roll-up-your-sleeves' campaign.

**GHANA** Ghana, the world's biggest exporter of cocoa, now makes its own chocolates, and the first Ghanaian-made chocolate has appeared in the shops of Ghana. In the past Ghana was required to import all cocoa products from abroad. More and more factories are being established for the processing of cocoa beans and according to *Solidarity*, 'A huge combine, able to process 200 tons of cocoa beans per hour into chocolate, oil and beverages, is now being completed at the port of Tema, Ghana's new industrial centre'.

The construction of a science city, about ten miles from Accra, has also been started. The city will have a central building to be named 'Palace of Science' and fifteen scientific research institutes. It will be the centre of scientific and research work for Ghanaian scientists.

**ZANZIBAR** The Island's first cold storage plant has been opened by the First Vice-President, Sheikh Abeid Karume. The sea around Zanzibar abounds in fish but the fishing industry was never encouraged under British rule. After the revolution in 1964, the government took over the Fisheries Development Company which has since been expanded, and this storage installation is part of this development.

Figures indicate that the tourist trade is once again on the increase in Zanzibar, but without the once famous rickshaw. This is what Sheikh Karume said of the rickshaw: 'It is wrong for citizens of a free country to ride about using other men as beasts of burden'. The rickshaw men have been compensated and the only rickshaw to be found on the island these days is in the museum.

**SUDAN** The Communist Party of the Sudan, which played the vanguard role in the overthrow of the Abboud military dictatorship, has been outlawed. Their eleven members in the Constituent Assembly have been unseated and the Party newspaper *Al Meudan*—the most popular in the country—seized.

Since the law was pushed through the Assembly on November 15th there have been a series of demonstrations by trade unions, student organizations and others supporting the Communist Party's right to legal existence. The Communist Party has declared that the ban was unconstitutional and would not be recognized. The Party's General Secretary, Abdul Halek Madjub, stated that

imperialist influence was behind the decisions taken by the Umma and National Unionist Parties to attack the Communist Party. He called on all democrats and anti-imperialists to protest and rally in defence of democracy.

**MOROCCO** It is feared that Ahmed Ben Barka, leader of the democratic opposition in Morocco, has been murdered following his kidnapping in Paris by agents of the Moroccan Minister of the Interior, General Mohammed Oufkir, with the connivance of prominent members of the French security police. The scandalous crime has created a crisis not only in Morocco but also in France. The French government has demanded that Oufkir be extradited to France to stand trial for his part in the proceedings; but although failure to comply would result in serious damage to French-Moroccan relations, until now very close, King Hassan does not appear to be in a position to carry out this request. In France, the incident has sparked off widespread public demands for enquiry into the French political police and spy network, which seem to be a law unto themselves. The French Cabinet admitted that the kidnapping was carried out with the 'complicity of the French secret services or police officials'. M. Mitterand, Left candidate for the recent Presidential elections who shocked De Gaulle by winning more than a third of the total vote, has demanded a full public explanation.

Ben Barka was chairman of the preparatory committee for the African-Asian-Latin American tri-continent conference in Cuba, which was meeting when these notes were being written.

**MOZAMBIQUE** According to Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, President of *Frelimo*, his organization plans to move its headquarters from Dar-es-Salaam to Mozambique, once they had consolidated and made an area safe. He disclosed this at a press conference at Dar-es-Salaam, when he also gladdened the hearts of all freedom lovers with the news that 'large areas' were now under the control of *Frelimo* freedom fighters.

During October, the second conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies (CONCP) took place in Dar-es-Salaam, for the second time in five years. Organizations which participated are: Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (M.P.L.A.), the African Party for the independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde

(PAIGC), and the Liberation Committee of S. Tome and Principe (CLSTP). They were all represented by their top leaders. With a war waging in Mozambique, Guinea and Angola, against a common enemy, closer co-operation was essential. The purpose was therefore to establish co-operation based on common principles. An editorial in *Revolution*—organ of FRELIMO—states that the conference revealed an almost absolute community of viewpoints among the member organizations of CONCP, concerning the fundamental aspects of the revolutions which are taking place in our countries'. In conclusion it said, 'Talks, in fact, are useful only to the extent that they are the prelude to action. The conference established adequate forms of co-operation among our movements, namely in the political and military fields, and in the field of national reconstruction. It is necessary to implement this co-operation'.

At a meeting in Accra, during the O.A.U. Conference, the heads of the four movements met 'in order to put into *immediate operation* the system of political and military co-operation'.