

would alleviate the problem of would-be investors' playing off one state against another. Equally, such a unit would be able to organise continental or regional resources of power, raw materials, capital, and human skills toward more rapid and more rational growth. A federal union—à la the Nkrumah proposals for the Addis Conference—would, especially to the extent it resulted in a single international voice, further increase equality in external relationships.

Pan-Africanism, in this sense, has from the Mahgreb to the Zambezi become a means to building greater African sovereignty and controlling neo-colonialism.

South of the Zambezi attaining national political independence remains as a precondition for such a development as it formerly was in other parts of the continent. PAFMECSA, for example, was founded as PAFMECA with more of its territories independent. Today liberation efforts are concentrated on Zimbabwe (ZAPU), Mozambique (FRELIMO), and the Republic while for the central Kenya-Uganda-Tanganyika unit (and perhaps Zambia, Zanzibar, Malawi, and Mauritius) the expansion of certain common services into an economic and political union is now of central concern. ●

A Scandinavian Report

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Socialism the Ideal

JORGEN SCHLEIMANN

WHAT STRUCK ME first was the confessional character of the interventions by many of the African participants in the recent Dakar *“Colloquium on Politics of Development and Different African Ways to Socialism.”*

Whether they came from Senegal itself, from Niger or the Congo, from Tunisia, Tchad or Guinea, from Mali, Nigeria or the Malagasy Republic, the African orators confessed their common belief in Socialism as the road for Africa to follow.

In fact the Dakar Colloquium was but another occasion to ascertain what so many observers of the African political scene have reported for long that the most representative African leaders to-day are people who consider themselves socialists, who tell you so with proudness and deep conviction, and who are strongly committed to the socialist course they have made for their peoples.

This is a significant political and psychological fact for the rest of the world to consider. Posing no problems of acceptance to a Scandinavian, himself a born socialist, it may well do so to many other people in this world. It is not in all quarters that the word socialist carries a notion of honour, and yet the world had better get adjusted to the fact that Africa wants to be socialist, that post-colonial Africa is socialist by her own will and by the best of her pre-colonial traditions.

If this is clear and acceptable as a fact, there remains

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nevertheless one important point that needs further clarification, particularly in the minds of people outside Africa, and that is the question of the African image of Socialism, for Africans not only want Socialism. They want African Socialism.

By inviting some 60 non-African personalities to attend the Dakar Colloquium the organisers—the Senegalese government and the Congrès Méditerranéen de la Culture—made a major contribution to that process of clarification.

WHAT IS AFRICAN SOCIALISM, THEN? In the words of the distinguished host of the Colloquium, President Léopold Sédar Senghor: “Socialism, for us, is nothing but the rational organisation of the human society considered in its totality, according to the most scientific, the most modern and the most efficient methods.” But the Senegalese president later in his speech of welcome to the conference participants also made this significant addition to his definition of African Socialism: “Socialism is, more than the use of the most efficient techniques, the sense of community which is a return to Africanness (*Africanité*).”

Some people apparently feel that this definition is too vague, some even suggest that it is evasive. I disagree with both of these views.

To my mind it does not weaken a definition of African Socialism that it suits the Africans at large, as could be seen in Dakar by the fact that the first speaker to endorse the statement of President Senghor was the Nigerian delegate, Professor S. O. Biobaku, vice-chancellor of the University of Ife, who said with particular reference to the Nigerian Six Year National Plan:

“Is this Socialism? Maybe not according to Marx and Engels—but we agree with President Senghor that we must evolve our own Socialism or better still make an African contribution distinct and impressive to the general concept. We hold that we need not be bound by any theory or practice designed for other peoples in different circumstances—nor import such concepts blindly. What we need to do is to evolve a way of living and community development best suited to our environment—we believe that every African State is entitled to do this. Indeed President Senghor’s definition of Socialism as a sense of community appeals to us greatly. He adds that this is a return to Africanism; we would rather say this is the essence of Africanism which must be preserved at all costs in our endeavours to modernise.”

In the eyes of the non-African world the distance between a Senegal republic officially proclaimed

socialist and a Nigerian Federation often labelled conservative may seem great but measured in terms of African realities the distance may be considerably shorter. In fact nobody in the audience seemed to be shocked or even surprised by Dr. Biobaku professing African Socialism on behalf of an official Nigerian delegation.

LISTENING TO THE SPEECHES IN the hemicycle of the Senegalese National Assembly—only one week later to become the stage of Premier Mamadou Dia's abortive *coup d'état*—I could not help agreeing with Pierre Kanouté who wrote in an important pre-conference essay: "The question is not to adapt Socialism to Africa. It is to modernise the traditional collectivism." (The Dakar weekly *Afrique Nouvelle*, No. 799).

Pierre Kanouté has the merit in this essay of pointing to fundamental differences in origin and purpose between European and African Socialism.

European Socialism was primarily a movement of protest and indignation, a reaction against the abuses of an unbridled capitalism. European Socialism is linked historically to the birth of modern industrialised society and philosophically to traditional West European individualist thinking.

The situation was and still is totally different in Africa. As Pierre Kanouté describes it:

"The African world is a world in permanent process of socialisation, and the Black Man is a socialised being; as an African teacher said one day: 'We are born socialised.' African Socialism is not a reaction against anybody or anything. It is not a matter of practising a class struggle, since society is not characterised by the existence of antagonistic classes. The problem is to avoid the establishment of a strongly class-divided society that will sooner or later engender such a struggle. The question is not in our countries to prolong Proud'hon, Jaurès or Marx. It is to return to the sources. African Socialism is a reality which has suffered for a certain time the shock of colonisation, and which it is now necessary to rethink in the context of evolution, because scared by the spectacle of Western individualism we prefer to correct the abuses of our 'state of socialisation' and guard the communitarian dimensions of our civilisation. The expression 'African Socialism' is the expression of a reality old as Africa itself."

Africa Diary

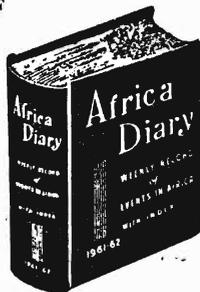
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Certainly the unanimity, the pragmatic approach, the positive spirit, the confessional touch, all of these characteristics of African Socialism are better understood, when one gets acquainted with the common base of African development which is that of a traditional society built on collective ownership and collective exploitation trying to raise itself from village level to the level of the nation.

THE DAKAR COLLOQUIUM OFFERED little of a discussion between its African participants. Their interventions were statements of faith in economic planning and—for the greater part of them—of their faith in African Socialism, too. Or they were accounts, interesting and challenging, of an experience that showed a singular degree of similarity. In both cases parallelism was the dominant feature, and not diversity.

Yet, these African contributions were in their uniformity nevertheless more in keeping with the subject of the debate than those interventions by non-African participants relating different examples of Socialism outside Africa; for it is highly questionable, in my view, how relevant the Yugoslav, the Czech, the Israeli or the Scandinavian ways to Socialism really are to African socialists, and the same thing goes for French, British, Italian or West German thinking on that same subject.

Indeed, the Colloquium confirmed once more the decisive fact that African socialists are in search of modern techniques of development but in no circumstances in search of an ideology. This may be of some comfort to those people still haunted by the mental picture of an emerging Africa having to choose between Capitalism and Communism.

In a constructive debate like the one of the Dakar conference and faced with African realities the much publicised differences between revolutionary Africa and reformist Africa seemed reduced to differences of temperament coupled with different road conditions along the common path to African Socialism.

In fact the Guinean delegate—ambassador Namamodou Diakité—was perhaps the one who spoke with greatest frankness and an impressive sincerity about hardships encountered and errors committed in the national development, and the strongest criticism against capitalism and neo-colonialism was probably the one voiced by the Congolese trade unionist A. Kithima, evoking the scandalous example of Katangese secession.

And was it not the most convincing illustration to President Senghor's words that "our own African Socialism will be elaborated not only in independence but in the autonomy of our thought", when the most radical participant to the conference, the Mali chief delegate, Dr. Seydou Badian Kouyaté, declared:

"For us other Africans, the socialist option conforms to our real structures . . . but it must be understood that this socialist option can in no way be inconsistent with religious faith. Our faith in socialism translates our aspirations towards a community, the pillars of which will be justice, fraternity and mutual help. If we think that the development is a total development (*épanouissement*), then there can be no question of our amputating a humanised world. To sum up, we can say that the socialist way that we have chosen rests on these two fundamentals: socialism built by a movement led by elements not essentially proletarian; and socialism recognising spirituality as part of man." ●