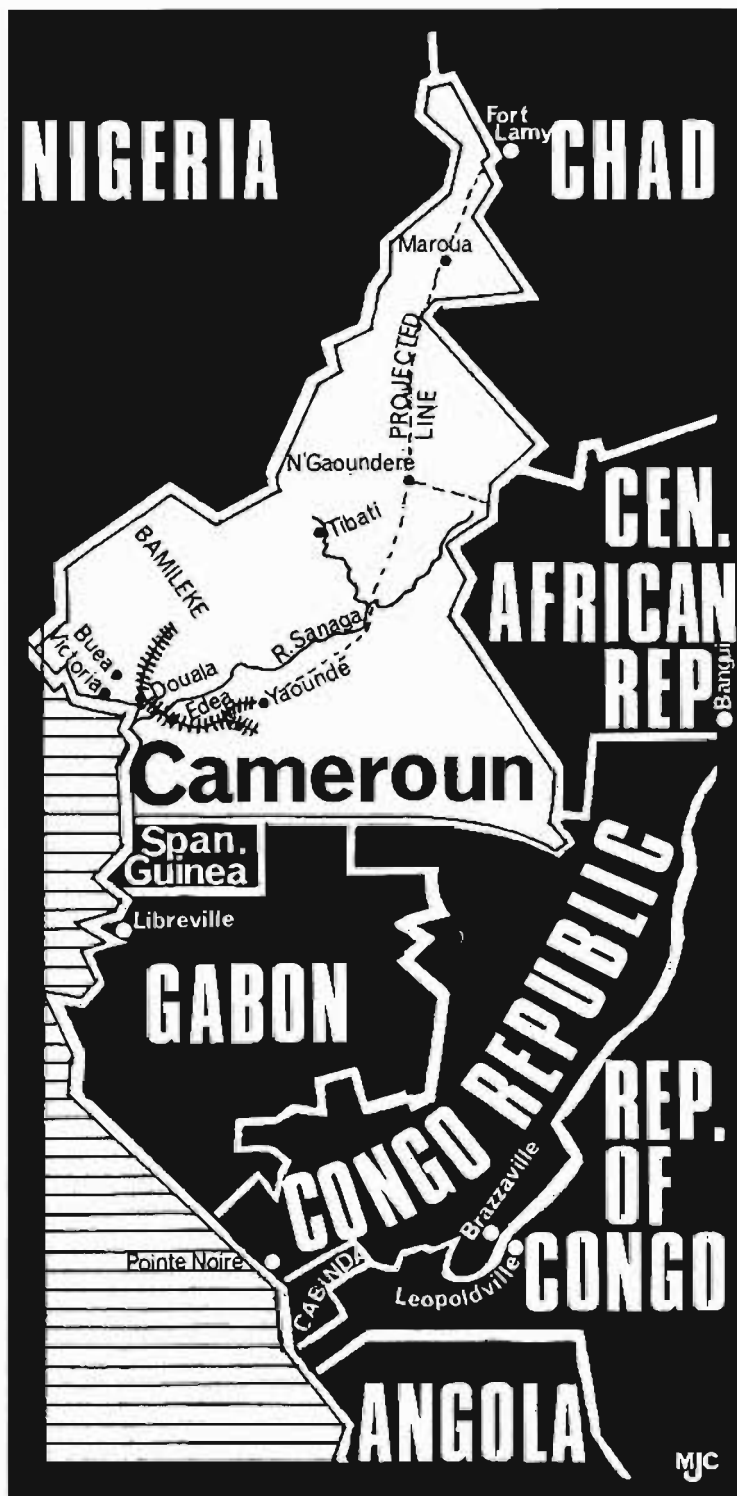


# THE HEIRS OF LE CLERC

REGINALD HERBOLD GREEN  
Notes on the Cameroun Federal Republic



TWO OF THE MAIN STREETS in Douala, economic hub and largest city of the Cameroun Federal Republic are Boulevard Le Clerc and Avenue 27 Août 1940. A monument emblazoned with the Cross of Lorraine overlooking Parliament in Yaounde declares "On August 27, 1940 Marshal Le Clerc commanding the French forces in the Cameroun declared for Free France."

The Cameroun Republic has continued to declare for France and for General de Gaulle: in its political structure, in its association with the Common Market, in the French technical, economic, educational, and political omnipresence. However, within that general framework Yaounde has forged an identifiable style of its own. It has come to pursue a set of regional foreign policy goals distinctly different in emphasis from those of the closest French allies and clients in the Conseil d'Entente (Ivory Coast-Upper Volta-Dahomey-Niger).

Cameroun independence in 1960 under Ahmadou Ahidjo's Union Camerounaise government represented a triumph for France both over the much more radical internal forces represented by the Union des Populations du Cameroun and over its radical African and Socialist supporters in the United Nations. The latter argued that France had grossly misused her mandatory powers, both in formulating the 1946 Trust Agreement and after, to suppress the genuine (U.P.C.) nationalists and foist a safe, client government on the people. The reality is more complex — the Ucam was originally a party of modernising but conservative Northern "young men" which gained allies among and presently absorbed similar Southern parties. It came to power on the collapse of a still more conservative and pro-French coalition based on the Southern bourgeoisie and semi-feudal traditional leaders. While never approaching the revolutionary fervour of the West African R.D.A's pre-1950 years, Ucam had a broader popular base than many present French promoted or aided ruling parties (including most of the "reformed" R.D.A. ones) and is certainly more concerned with modernisation and economic development than most. The Ucam was and is an African Gaullist party in its style of action and its basic support. It has made use of naked force, which Gaullism has consistently seen as a legitimate instrument when other means fail. Its ability to carry through the total absorption of its allies and to create a one-party state is again a logical implication of Gaullist political principles. It is based on the lesser organisation and ability to resist of its opposition. It is also a fact that a level of repression which European reaction could, and would, prevent in France can be maintained by an African state without comparable repercussions.

Ucam's ability to rule has depended on French technical, military, and economic support. Its desire to become the leader of a Cameroun-Gabon-Chad-Central African Republic-Congo (Brazza) grouping can be attained only with active French backing. Camerounian economic development is almost totally conditioned

DR. R. H. GREEN now of the East African Institute for Social Research, Makerere University College, Kampala, has travelled widely in Africa during 1960-5 while with Yale University and University of Ghana Departments of Economics.

## Cameroun

by foreign resources especially for the key 400-mile £30 million Transcam railroad to Chad and the CAR. France has skillfully used her assistance to create continuing patterns of dependence. (She is financing the first stage of the Transcam.) France is also out to forge new links by means of EEC Associate status and the paper transformation of the Currency Issuing Institute into a "National Bank." The latter is operated from Paris by Frenchmen jointly with the currency bodies of the CAR-Gabon-Chad-Congo (B). France's third goal is to perpetuate French commercial dominance.

WHATEVER THE OFFICIAL FIGURES (50 was cited as early as 1961), French "advisors" and technical experts sit at the elbow of virtually every key functionary in Yaounde. Visits to less than a fifth of all government Departments and agencies there led to a count of 98. Adding in the French Aid mission (which has a major operational role) and such joint ventures as the Transcam (whose Board reports show an effective French majority over Camerounian and Chadian directors together as well as a near total dominance of discussion by French directors and expert advisors) 1,000 would be a fair estimate of French officials holding policy-making or influencing roles in state and quasi state bodies. The Camerounian state corporations are both French operated and dependent directly or indirectly on French official funds for expansion, only one sample is the key hydroelectric producer which provides power to the Edea smelter. It must build a new dam if the Northern bauxite at Tibati is to be smelted when the Transcam reaches it.

The private commercial sector is predominantly French owned and operated. This French dominance exists down to the level of senior mechanics and the proprietors of the numerous small shops and service establishments catering to the 15,000 odd European community and the somewhat smaller high income Camerounian economic elite.

A tremendous gulf exists between these 25,000 odd and the other 5,990,000 (more or less, no complete census exists). The average salaried expatriate earns over £1,500 and the upper Camerounian bureaucrat or manager almost as much. Major businessmen and professionals fare even better as — including official and unofficial "perquisites" — do the top politicians. Urban skilled workers average £150, unskilled less than £100, and Southern cash crop farmers still less per year. All prices — even including local staples — are much higher than in English-speaking West African though lower than Senegal, Ivory Coast, Gabon, or Congo (B). Corned beef costs 6-8 a 14-oz tin (vrs 3-4 Accra) or more than a worker's wage, low-priced shirts are 30-70 (vrs 20-49 Accra) or up to a week's wages. An African hotel room with no meals is at least 30 while a European hotel room with board is in the 140-300 range. Only local beer at 2 a quart bottle, cigarettes at 2 for 20, local eau de cologne, and imported *vin ordinaire* at 41 a litre are cheap. Even eggs run to 10 a dozen in urban stores. The inflated price structure stems partly from very high import and excise duties but probably more from oligopolistic handling of imports and the above world prices French firms have consistently levied on protected African markets.

THE CAMEROUN REPUBLIC IS, NONETHELESS, rather sounder economically than most West African states. Its national product per capita is computed to be in the £35-£45 range. That of Ghana and the Ivory Coast is twice as high, that of Nigeria three fourths to two thirds (depending on which Census one thinks less inaccurate), and that of Niger, Chad, Dahomey, Togo, or Sierra Leone half or less. While problems of computing the value of local foodstuffs and the variety of population estimates between 4.5 and 6 million prevent any great confidence in the figures, the general impression left by Southern Camerounian cities and rural areas is of economic standards well below those of Ghana, somewhat above Nigeria, and far above, say, Dahomey. Unemployment is high — perhaps 25% — in Douala and substantial in Yaounde, Victoria, and other Southern cities, a record again distinctly better than the 30-45% in Lagos and Ibadan and worse than the 10% in Accra or Kumasi.

Exports, net of the alumina imports embodied in aluminium exports from the Edea smelter, run around £35 million and are approximately equal to merchandise imports. Profits, remittances, and services result in a current balance deficit running near £5 million. On the other hand, exports show a relatively sluggish growth both in volume and in value as does real national product which has probably barely kept pace with population — 2-2½% a year — over the past decade. Government revenue has indeed increased 50% since 1961 but this results from higher tax rates not an expanding economy. The principal effect of the increase has been to eliminate the former substantial (in the order of £5 million) French and British subsidies to the two Trust Territories. Even today, total surplus of revenue over current expenditure stands at barely £2 million versus Development Plan public investment targets of over £10 million. With virtually no scope for domestic borrowing, this pattern leaves the Cameroun Republic very heavily dependent on foreign — largely French and EEC — loans and grants to the government and to public or quasi-public bodies.

The economy is very heavily dependent on primary products exports from the Victoria-Douala-Yaounde triangle and the Bamileke country of the south-west. The interior areas are hampered by an inadequate country transport system — indeed the main railroad, roads, and ports date from the pre-1914 German colonial period as do many if not most of the pre-independence public buildings. Manufacturing is held back by the small size of the domestic market and the economic influence of the major French commercial houses.

The one apparent major exception — Edea's aluminium smelter — really represents the export of cheap hydroelectric power in that the alumina came first from France and now Guinea. Cocoa processing and sawmilling are undertaken for only a small — and in the latter case declining — share of total cocoa and wood exports.

THE WESTERN CAMEROUN (formerly British Southern Cameroons) economy is even more stagnant and primary export dominated. Wage employment has actually decreased for over half a decade while exports are virtually static. Over 60% of the regional  
[continued on page 193]

*continued from page 184]*

revenues are provided by a Federal subsidy. As yet — nearly three years after Federation — the economy is still separated from that of the Eastern Cameroun by customs barriers and controls. Neither tariffs nor country of origin import quotas have been harmonised, both because of the predominant British orientation of pre-unification Western Cameroons buying and because rapid unification at the markedly higher price levels — including those for local foods — in the East Cameroons would have created major problems for Vice President Foncha's regional government. However, tariff and quota harmonisation (on the East Cameroun pattern) is proceeding. French based firms are replacing British, prices are rising, and the Victoria-Tiko complex is, if anything, more stagnant than before unification now that it is open to competition from nearby Douala.

Overall, 90% of exports go to EEC countries (over 67% to France) and over 80% of imports are of EEC origin (about 65% Franc area). Combined with the dominance of French firms and French advisors and the successful elimination of the current budget deficit the overall picture is one — at least viewed from Paris — of a model neo-colony. Expenses to Paris are reasonably low; commercial gains are substantial; key economic decisions are subject to direct, or stringent indirect, control; foreign policy support can be ensured when seriously desired by the implicit threat of cutting back on grants or credits.

The Abidjo government is well aware both of the weakness and of the dependence of its economy and far from complacent about either. The 1961-65 Plan represented an effort at change, but had to be largely abandoned as unrealistic, especially in its direct-labour rural investment sector. Since Victor Kanga's accession to the joint Finance-Planning Ministry, more energetic and realistic action and more emphasis on structural change have been noticeable. A new Plan will appear for the 1966-71 period.

FOUR ELEMENTS ARE CENTRAL in Camerounian development strategy: the Transcam Railroad to open up the interior (including the Tibati bauxite and upper Sanaga River power combination), massive expansion of primary export production, domestic market import substitution manufacturing, and the creation of a Cameroun-Gabon-Chad-CAR-Congo (B) economic union with much of its manufacturing and commercial activity centred at Douala and Yaounde. These goals are interlocking in that the Transcam would both increase possible Chad and CAR exports and channel them through Douala while the economic union would substantially enlarge the markets open to Camerounian manufacturers.

How successful the strategy will be is less clear. The first stage of the Transcam is finally under construction (over half a century after the Germans first planned the extension of the railhead from Yaounde) but will reach neither Tibati nor the Chad-CAR frontiers. 1970 seems the earliest possible date for the second stage to reach Tibati and 1975, if anything optimistic, for reaching Chad-CAR internal transport links. Primary production increases are likely but the continued rural discontent, and indeed suppressed insurrection, centred in — but by no means limited to — the Bamileke area hampers all rural sector pro-

grammes. Further, Camerounian coffee exports are limited by International Coffee Agreement quota, those of bananas by EEC allocations among Associates, and cocoa by the exceedingly depressed market.

Industrialisation for an economy with a national product of approximately £250 million and a consumption of manufactured goods of perhaps £30 million is difficult. This is especially true given the EEC's combination of ambiguous treaty clauses and unambiguous practical discouragement of protected Associate manufacturing there are no grants or loans for Associates. Export processing and import final processing (e.g. flour) or assembly (e.g. bicycles) are encouraged however.

Sub-regional economic union faces serious obstacles. France, despite the Jeanneney Report's endorsement of economic grouping, seems at best passive. Gabon's small ruling elite is only mildly interested as it is economically satisfied by the possession of ample incomes from a burgeoning export sector and politically secure in the knowledge that French troops will suppress any revolt (as they did in 1963). Congo (B) is hostile both because its radical government distrusts the other states' regimes, and because a Cameroun-led union would deepen its desperate economic plight. The Congo (B) economy is already stricken in fact by the loss of the old Equatorial Federation administrative complex. In a Cameroun-led union moreover, Douala would displace Pointe Noire's and Brazzaville's substantial role of ports for the CAR and to a lesser extent Chad. Industry would tend to locate on the trade route. Only the CAR and Chad — who would benefit from the cheaper transport — are actively favourable.

Camerounian foreign policy also shows a trend toward limited but significant divergence from the standard Francophonic line. Originally Abidjo was a rigid opponent of the radical African and socialist states because of their sympathy and support for the UPC revolt. However, the tone of his foreign policy has changed considerably. This is due to his desire to develop wider international contacts outside Africa, to lead an Equatorial grouping, and to be free of the Ivory Coast domination which has characterised Francophonic African groupings, despite active Camerounian efforts for co-leadership. Relations with Socialist European states are correct if not close. Ironically relations are most cordial with Hungary, the Cameroun government apparently seeing the UPC and the Nagy revolutions as vaguely comparable! (The analogy is *not* extended to following Kadar's policy of gradually adopting modified versions of the rebel demands). Albeit still recognising Formosa as China, the Cameroun government has permitted publication of favourable articles on People's China and "heroic" pictures of Chairman Mao.

More spectacular is the *rapprochement* with Accra and related divergence from Abidjan. *En route* to the founding meeting of the Organisation Commune Africaine et Malagasy the Camerounian delegation stopped in Ghana. When OCAM became a clear anti-Ghana front after the Cameroun rejected the "boycott the Accra OAU Conference" appeal, refused to attend the Abidjan OCAM conference, and indeed worked actively to gain CAR (successfully) and Gabon-Chad (unsuccessfully) support for its position. All this despite Voltaic President Yameogo's U.S. tour and the Ivory Coast's announcement that Ghana had inspired the assassination

attempt on Niger's President Diiori (subsequently "confirmed" by Diiori).

INTERNAL CAMEROUNIAN POLITICAL POLICY shows much less change and is considerably less attractive. Coercion, repression, centralisation, and the enhancement of Ahmadou Ahidjo's personal position are its hallmarks. In rural areas — at least of the South — brutal repression of opposition to land tenure, traditional oligarchy, and bureaucratic exaction remain the rule. The UPC maquis still exists; roadblocks are frequent; troops in full battle kit complete with sub-machine guns check travel papers midway on the main Douala-Yaounde railway.

All political bodies in the Eastern Cameroun have been forcibly incorporated into the Ucam; the predictable 99.9% vote in favour was rolled out in March 1965. Of the three 1961 ministers viewed as able and independent in outlook two, Charles Okala (Foreign Affairs) and Charles Awana (Finance and Plan), has disappeared from circulation. The last — and perhaps most able — Victor Kanga, a Bamileke, holds Finance-Planning. However, Yaounde rumours — which indicate the prevalent view of the regime if nothing more — predict his imminent departure. Lesser figures by the score have been whisked into prison. In early 1965 government employment rosters were purged of non-Ucam members.

The press is tightly government-controlled — with the partial exception of the Roman Catholic paper and even it has been forced to dilute its once fairly critical tone. Editorials are written by the state press agency. Fear, reticence on all political issues, and rumours consistently predicting new repressive measures characterise Yaounde and Douala.

THE WESTERN CAMEROUNIAN SITUATION — in politics as in economics — is diverted. While the press is controlled, discussion is much freer and criticism of the Federal, Eastern, and — to a lesser extent — Western governments are frequent and often sharp. Trade unions retain considerable independent power and even maintain tenuous contact with (though not membership in) the radical All-African Trade Union Federation. While Vice-President Foncha's Kameroun National Democratic Party — which he has been loath to merge into its counterpart, Ucam — is dominant, the opposition Cameroun Peoples National Convention is still tolerated. Military and police roadblocks are virtually unknown, as West Camerounians are quick to inform the visitor.

The whole tone of the Western Cameroun remains that of Anglophonic Africa. A real loyalty to the Federal Republic has been created — as well as a dependable, newly recruited bureaucratic class — but with it goes a deep distrust of submergence in the Francophonic majority. In Victoria and Buca sharp criticism of French standards and French domination and their acceptance by the Cameroun Republic are open and common — if unofficial and unorganised — as they most certainly are not in Douala and Yaounde. News of Ghana — and particularly refutation of criticisms about it — is eagerly sought and her determined stand against foreign domination of Africa admired, albeit her Pan-African leadership is viewed with distrust; Nigeria is still disliked and — with Britain — blamed for the Western Camerouns' 1918-65 stagnation. There is, however, no fear of Nigeria's rather mild

contempt of a state viewed as complacent, incompetent, and corrupt.

THE CAMEROUN FEDERAL REPUBLIC in 1965 is a going concern with a government internally in full control and seeking — if tentatively — to decrease its foreign economic dependence. The problems entailed in unification of the two trust territories are being handled with care and deliberateness and at least an emergent feeling of national oneness has been created.

Negative aspects are, however, at least as striking. Virtually total foreign economic control remains a fact and determines what development projects can and cannot be undertaken. A yawning and broadening gulf between the tiny elite and the masses of the population erodes faith in progressive professions and arouses envious discontent. Massive socio-political unrest continues to be suppressed by force. There is little evidence of radical reforms — e.g. in rural land holding, traditional and local authority, or urban job creation — to rechannel it into a unified national development effort. Politics becomes steadily more authoritarian and Ahidjoist (Ahidjoism has been floated as a rather vague political philosophy). Fear, discontent, and apprehension rise. The land ruled by Le Clerc's heirs and dominated by France may yet become but is still far from justifying its Chamber of Commerce's hopeful slogan "*Cameroun: Terre d'Avenir*" (Cameroun: Land of the Future).

## LIFT THE VEIL LET ASTROLOGY HELP YOU

Consult

## BHAGAWAN SOAHAM

A WELL-KNOWN

HINDU ASTROLOGER PALMIST  
SHADOW-READER HEALER

For sound Astrological Advice and Guidance in the solutions of the intricate problems of your life from the analysis of Palm-Lines and the stars at the time of your birth. Send your birth date, if possible, with particulars stating exact Time, Date, Month, Year, and Place. Please send any three questions at a time for advice with a crossed Postal Order for Cash for any amount you wish, whatever the amount, it will be appreciated.

LET PRAYERS HELP YOU Soaham-Raksha Stars are the visible manifestations of the DIVINE. Let me pray to THE GODS OF THE STARS and prepare a most powerful LUCKY PRAYER CHARM for you which will help you in fulfilling your ambitions regarding your career, finance, love, marriage, home, travel and studies and to achieve health, wealth, and prosperity.

LET YOGA HELP YOU with the aid of YOGIC EXERCISES & CONCENTRATION To cure chronic diseases, to slim and to gain radiant health Silence is being observed on Fridays, personal interviews are not available on this day.

N.B.—Typewritten or legible letters assist in giving an early reply. Prayers for world peace will be offered during the month of December every year, therefore personal appointments are not available.

**BHAGAWAN SOAHAM**

90 ALMA ROAD WANDSWORTH LONDON S.W.18 Telephone: VAN 3602  
(Opposite Wandsworth Town Station)

