

killed himself: the Senegalese have broken into the northern sector of the village; women have been assaulted; mass arrests have been instigated by the settlers, who organised themselves into armed militia units as soon as the news of the events in Satif reached them.

The administrator undertakes to maintain order. The settlers and their wives, almost on bended knees, want him to finish the matter for good.

The administrator gives it to the commanding officer of the Senegalese.

The peasants are dispersed by machine-gun fire.

Two escapees are shot at the entrance to the village.

The militia draws up the list of hostages.

LOBETAL

Jean Ikelle-Matiba

... Finally the sound of a bell, the hum of human voices, the echoes of a village, and the people crowding around a landing-stage, heralded Lobetal.

We were given a grand reception. There was quite a big welcoming committee expecting us. Our luggage was loaded on carts. We walked the rest of the way. It was a nice road, very clean and lined with flowers, leading through a garden full of lovely smells. In the distance we saw white buildings with black windows emerge out of the greenery. Lobetal was an important educational centre. It had a church with a capacity of a thousand, spacious classrooms, comfortable dormitories, a nice residential area for the teaching staff, a well-stocked library, a book-shop, a dispensary, recreation rooms, a post-office and a shop. Some traders had settled in the surroundings.

Jean Ikelle-Matiba was born in Song Ndong near Edea (Cameroon) in 1926, a direct descendant of the famous Bassa chief, Pemnie-N'tomb. After attending the Ecole Supérieure in Yaounde he studied Law and Social Sciences in Paris. Ikelle-Matiba has been living in the Federal Republic of Germany for a long time, writing scripts for the "Deutsch Welle" and working as an assistant to the Director of the Evangelical Academy at Iserlohn.

His only novel, 'Cette Afrique-là' (1963) is the life story of an old Cameroonian, Franz Momha, who grew up under the German administration, attended various elite schools, and suffered greatly for refusing to shift his loyalties to his country's new masters, the French.

Through Momha, the story-teller minces no words in dealing with German atrocities during the early stages of colonisation, his picture of a country under German colonial rule contrasts sharply with the traditional French and British view.

Lawyer Gharib, Mustapha's father, is pointed out as one of the ring leaders.

The sun is still up.

May 1961.

Mustapha pays a visit to the graves of the two who were recently shot.

Curfew.

Civilians and policemen, shocking, suspects being escorted with kicks.

Their bodies are exposed to the sun.

From Katch Yacine Nedyma, 1956, (Editions du Seuil, Paris). Transl. by Wilfried Reuser.

We were accommodated in very modern, first-rate dormitories, where we met fellow-pupils who had arrived before us. They received us very politely and helped us to settle in. As we came from various provinces, we spoke German to understand each other.

The syllabus, which was full enough already, became even more crowded. It appeared rather like a reversion to scholasticism; we were taught all kinds of things which had no practical purpose whatsoever. The courses were hard. Apart from general subjects we had to study English, music, art, geography, and history. But the brand of history we were taught was strongly biased. It was based on the superiority of the Teutonic race. We learned that there were three powers on earth, Germany, France and England. But the English were insidious and the French unjust. How did our teachers explain this?

The French are a great nation that once had mighty kings, invincible warriors, and such an incomparable civilization that even our own kings in the eighteenth century spoke their language, which during that period was considered a universal language, owing to the French writers who had spread their ideas all over Europe. But driven by some strange madness they revolted, killed their king, and betrayed their masters in order to adopt a hypocritical system of government called Republic, which benefits on the rich man while contributing to the misery of the masses. They proclaim the liberty and equality of all citizens before the law, whereas in actual fact these rights and liberties are pawns in the hands of a caste of bourgeois politicians who pass laws guaranteeing merely their own interests. Their colonial policy casts shame on the civilized world, for not only did they sell Negroes as chattels and systematically exploit the yellow race but they also let the natives live in the most tragic conditions even though they are human beings like everyone else. They are incapable of actually granting freedom to anybody since they are not free themselves. The French workers are the last to have grown conscious of their condition and to have been able to get organized, owing to their own individualism. But the common people still believe in the Republic.

As far as the English are concerned, they are perfidious because they are hypocritical and jealous. They have a morbid fear of being surpassed. Is not the major part of the misfortunes besetting their

French neighbours caused by them? As soon as they realise the military superiority of another nation, they go around looking for allies with the aid of their vast financial resources, and sign treaties in order to be able to destroy that power. They are ardent advocates of a balance of power between the diverse nations. They chased the French out of their possessions, Canada and India, and conquered them for themselves. Unable to live off their own poor soil, they turned adventurers, conquered the greater part of the countries on the globe and now like to call themselves the first colonial and maritime power.

We also learned that the United States of North America was a young country with a great future and that the Tsars had done a lot of harm to Russia, which was still living in the Middle Ages.

Our history classes were thus rather on the ideological side. This was how we learned to despise everything that was not German. It has to be noted that we were living through the period of European nationalism. Every colonial power was trying to create its own extensions overseas. This was the case with the English, French, Dutch, and others.

After classes we used to go to the stadium, the gymnasium, or the swimming-pool. Everyone devoted himself to his favourite sport.

On Saturdays we had our weekly compositions. Competition was often tough and the margin between the pupils' marks insignificant. But the beginnings were encouraging. I came out on top. The results were communicated to Die-Ngombe. I learned about my success through a letter of congratulation from the headmaster.

During the Easter vacations we would go to the seaside. The first time, I was afraid - water as far as the eye could see, waves as high as walls with deep abysses in between, the endless surging of the sea. We would venture out very far, as far as Schuellaba, Tiko and Victoria which seemed quite close to us. At Lobetal we learned how to swim and to row, at least those of us who did not already know. This got us passionately interested. We would enjoy organising canoe races. The boys from the coast won most of the time. Only once did we succeed in beating them after months of tough training. It came as a big surprise. The headmaster, who wanted to encourage us further, declared: "Do you see now that you have managed to beat those born fishermen through your efforts? This goes to show that there is no monopoly in any field. Hard work and endeavour surpass everything. Don't let anybody pin a label on you telling you what you are. You are like me, and I am like you. One day you will take my place through your sheer courage, and you will accomplish your task with the same diligent effort. A man's race and birth are not enough, only what you yourselves put in counts".

Lobetal was an ideal place for intellectual work, and we made the best of it. This was no longer the medieval school of our beginnings. The rod was not used anymore, for there were no longer any deserters or laggards to be castigated. Instead there were men with the rugged will to live, to play their part, men imbued with the spirit of superiority, who dreamt of world conquest like their masters. Our motto was "order and Discipline."

Cape to Cairo Dakar to Dar



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