

college, and powers for the territorial assemblies. The constitution had placed African deputies where their voices could be heard, and they did not hesitate to speak. But their efforts ran into the efforts of other politicians to defend, with varying degrees of explicitness, the privileges of metropolitan citizens overseas—particularly those of Algeria—and the anxiety of officials about losing control. Many of those officials were in fact of two minds, and they were concerned that a regime of half measures would be ineffective. So there was an element within the Ministry of Overseas France favorable to universal suffrage, to greater decentralization of decision making, and to ending practices like the double college that Africans correctly perceived as perpetuating a regime of racial distinction that had, on the surface, been repudiated.

But the problem lay deeper, emerging most clearly in the unresolved debates over the extension of the *état-civil* and the regulation of renunciation of personal status. African politicians did not all agree among themselves: some opposed any distinction among French citizens, while others saw different statuses and different versions of the *état-civil* as a way of protecting Africans' right to difference. French officials and legislators did not agree either, and it was their uncertainty that above all prevented legislative solutions to the controversies. Behind their disagreement over enacting one or multiple systems for the *état-civil* and their inability to specify criteria for Africans who wanted "French" civil status lay a profound unease with the apparent acceptance of diverse ways of being French in the Constitution of 1946. Much of the French elite could not, in their heart of hearts, accept that African ways of marriage and affiliation were equivalent to French norms. Their acceptance of "*citoyenneté dans le statut*" had been an act of state, a way of reconciling diversity and equality as a matter of constitutional law, a form of thinking through and beyond empire. But the decade-long legislative paralysis over voting rights and civil status revealed both the political and the ideological limits of the reforms of 1946.

CLAIMING CITIZENSHIP

French West Africa, 1946–1956

The politics of citizenship played out in African cities and countryside as well as in Paris, in popular mobilization as well as legislative controversy, in regard to issues of livelihood, of institutional change, and of basic conceptions of political life. This chapter considers different instances of African claim making, and it hardly exhausts the locations, participants, and idioms of African politics. First, we look at the effort of the RDA in the Sudan and especially the Côte d'Ivoire to build up its political apparatus across the territory and the efforts of the government to combat what it saw as a countergovernment. We will see how both the party and the government learned about the limits of what they could do. Second, we focus on the social and economic significance of citizenship by looking at the efforts of labor unions to turn the abstract notion of the equivalence of citizens into concrete gains for their members. We then turn to ways in which African political leaders sought to change the very terms in which future politics was discussed—to rethink the meanings of nation and sovereignty. They were thinking about different levels of political belonging and political action—the territory, French Africa as a whole, the French Union. And as France entered into discussion of creating a European community, they were thinking of expanding the idea of a "Franco-African" political ensemble into something even wider, into "Eurafrica."

Citizenship in a Colonial Situation: The RDA and the Threat of Parallel Government

African politicians faced the problem of whether they could delve deeply enough into largely rural, spread-out populations to win elections and undertake a range of political activities to challenge the French government on all the levels at which it operated, from the locality to the French Union as a whole. Political leaders like Senghor and Houphouët-Boigny had learned what they could and could not accomplish during the ANC and the debates over electoral laws. Could they now build large, durable organizations capable of

organizing diverse communities? For the French government, the question was what limits they could set on African political organization, now that the fact of African political participation had been given constitutional sanction.

The founding of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA) represented the most striking effort of African politicians to construct an organization with breadth as well as depth. In September 1946, with the citizenship issue still unsettled in the ANC in Paris, Houphouët-Boigny and Gabriel d'Arboussier drafted a manifesto calling on territorial parties in all of AOF and much of AEF to group themselves into a new ensemble. Delegates from the parties assembled in Bamako from 18 to 21 October 1946. The manifesto of the RDA was signed by Houphouët-Boigny, Lamine Guèye, Jean Félix-Tchicaya of Gabon-Congo, Sourou Migan Apithy of Dahomey-Togo, Fily Dabo Sissoko from Sudan-Niger, Yacine Diallo of Guinea, and Gabriel d'Arboussier from Gabon-Congo, all deputies except the last (who had been in the first assembly but not the second).

The manifesto made clear the intensity of the struggle for citizenship and a meaningful form of federalism. It condemned the false federalism of the then most influential French political party, the MRP, calling its stance "the mask of an authoritarian regime." But it went on to argue, "Our adhesion to the French Union, which we solemnly proclaim, is justified by a realistic view of the world's problems," by confidence in Africa, and by "the certitude that despite reaction, we will obtain the liberal, democratic, and human conditions that will allow the free development of the original possibilities of African genius." The idea of uniting territorial parties stemmed from the structure of French Africa, with its two grand—but at the time administrative—federations, and the need to fight for African interests and democratic principles across the French Union.¹

The founders made their goal precise: "We have taken care to avoid equivocation and not to confuse PROGRESSIVE BUT RAPID AUTONOMY within the framework of the French Union with separatism, that is immediate, brutal, total independence. Doing politics, do not forget, is above all to reject chimeras, however seductive they may be and to have the courage to affront hard realities." The manifesto concluded, "Vive l'Afrique Noire, Vive l'Union française des Peuples Démocratiques."²

¹Joseph Roger de Benoist, *L'Afrique occidentale française, de la conférence de Brazzaville (1944) à l'indépendance (1960)* (Dakar: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, 1982), 67–69, and Frédéric Grah Mel, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny: Biographie* (Abidjan: CERAP, and Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003), 280–86. The Manifesto, dated 12 September 1946, is reproduced in de Benoist, *L'Afrique occidentale française*, 559–61.

²De Benoist, *L'Afrique occidentale française*, 559–61; *Réveil*, 30 September 1946.

The Overseas Minister at the time, Marius Moutet, feared that the new African political formation was too radical, too close in rhetoric to what communists were saying, but behind his anxiety was a more mundane political calculation: Moutet was trying to line up African deputies behind his own party, the Socialists, and the RDA was setting itself out as an alternative, a specifically African alternative. Moutet put pressure on his closest African allies like Lamine Guèye to dissociate themselves. Senghor did not even go to Bamako, later admitting he had made a mistake. Moutet ended up promoting what he wanted most to prevent, for by keeping Socialists out of the RDA, he left the field open to the French Communist Party to develop an alliance with an important African party (despite misgivings within the RDA), leaving the Senegalese Socialists relatively isolated outside their home country.³ Senghor himself would soon break with Moutet's (and Lamine Guèye's) Socialists, even sooner than the RDA broke with the Communists.

Administrative pressure and personal rivalries led to defections of Sissoko, Apithy, and others, but the RDA sought a coherent African strategy. Only one party in each territory could claim the RDA mantle. The RDA branches set about making themselves into veritable machines in the territories, and despite administrative connivance with its opponents, succeeded well in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and the Sudan, while becoming competitive elsewhere in AOF with the exception of Senegal and Mauritania. There was infighting between personal factions within the RDA in some territories and rivalries with other parties, but on the relationship of the territories to France, the RDA position remained consistent with its original manifesto for at least a decade, trying to make citizenship—social as well as political—into a meaningful construct across French Africa.

The RDA was a loosely structured organization, owing much of its coherence to the respect in which its founding president, Houphouët-Boigny, was held. Meanwhile, the Ivorian branch, the Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) set about building on its rural base to mount an effective challenge to administrative control. And the party's branch in Sudan, the Union Soudanaise, was also confronting the basis of administrative power in the countryside by challenging the authority of chiefs. It was led by Modibo Keita, a schoolteacher, graduate of the elite training program at the École William Ponty near Dakar, posted in a town in an agricultural region of the southern Sudan.

Let us begin with a small incident in the town of Sikasso, Sudan. In 1946, Modibo Keita persuaded the local section of the Union

³Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 89.

Soudanaise to mobilize people, especially former soldiers (tirailleurs) against local chiefs who were abusing their authority. He had considerable success. An administrative inspector noted that chiefs were no longer being obeyed. But he admitted that Keita and his followers had a point, for the local French administrator of the district (Cercle) had tried to conceal from his charges the recent reforms, including the suppression of forced labor.

Some months later, the chiefs were still not being obeyed, and the Union Soudanaise was gaining the loyalty of villagers and collecting dues. The inspector reported that "the Union Soudanaise in the Cercle of Sikasso constitutes a veritable state within the state. Nothing can get done in this Cercle without the local leaders of the Union Soudanaise giving their consent. In fact, the Union Soudanaise works against our authority and paralyzes our actions."⁴

Keita, while acting locally, was also appealing through official channels, jumping the hierarchy directly to the Governor General in Dakar with a telegram in November 1946 denouncing "slave regime that Administrator Rocher has sustained in Cercle Sikasso." He claimed that it was Rocher who had "reduced the population to revolt." The Governor General asked local authorities to consider whether Keita could be prosecuted for sending this "insulting" telegram.⁵ Keita also contacted one of the deputies from Sudan in the Assemblée Nationale, Mamadou Konaté, who in early 1947 sent a dossier on the affair to Marius Moutet, the Minister of Overseas France, insisting that Sudanese activists in his area had been calm and disciplined, but were being prosecuted because of Keita's telegram. Another deputy, Henri Lozeray, had earlier written to Moutet complaining that Keita's lieutenant Seydou Traoré had been sentenced to nine months in prison for outrage to a magistrate, adding "a citizen of metropolitan origin never would have been investigated for such a letter addressed in moderate terms to an authoritative civil servant." To him, administrators' actions recalled the *indigénat*.⁶

Governor Louveau had written in December to the Governor General in Dakar that Modibo Keita "has succeeded in having a quasi-absolute authority, unquestionable personal influence over former soldiers, some of the civil servants and an important portion of the pop-

ulation." Keita was using his authority against the chiefs and the administration, and even appointing his own canton and village chiefs. The Union Soudanaise apparently had eight thousand dues-paying members, and one of the top leaders of the RDA, Gabriel d'Arbousier, had visited the area, an occasion for which Keita had brought out his "small army" of ex-tirailleurs and one thousand supporters. He thought of transferring Keita to another district and his principal lieutenant Seydou Traoré to yet another one. He admitted there was a problem with "an old-style and tired administrator M. Rocher," but he still wanted to act against the movement's leaders.⁷

Moutet wrote the governor saying he was surprised by Keita's arrest, which seemed to him to have a "political character," and he told Konaté that he had asked the prosecutor to lift the mandate of arrest.⁸ But later in 1947, Moutet telegraphed the Governor General that the actions of the RDA were "analogous to those which preceded trouble in Madagascar."⁹ What had occurred in the meantime was a major insurrection in rural Madagascar, whose connection with the mobilizing efforts of the most popular political party there appears murky today but was compelling in officials' minds. The insurrection had been put down by French forces with tremendous loss of life. The file in Moutet's papers, on which these paragraphs are based, peters out at this point, but we know the eventual outcome: Modibo Keita, the school teacher in Sikasso, built the Union Soudanaise-RDA into the major political party in the Sudan, and in 1960 he became the first head of the government of the Mali Federation.

Whether or not an African political party in a small town in Sudan had truly constituted itself as a parallel administration, important officials thought it did. They worried about communist politics in Africa, but even more about the danger that, as Moutet put it to a meeting of top administrators, "these populations, of which the largest number are still in a relatively primitive state" might be stirred up by political parties.¹⁰ But by now, the administration could not just go its representative ways free from critical eyes. A local party leader could mobilize people, including men with military experience and jobs in local administration. He had access to the Assemblée Nationale in Paris, and African deputies could at least make a Minister think twice about arresting activists on flimsy charges. A Minister might still display

⁷Governor, Sudan, to Governor General, 1 December 1946, 28PA/3/168, AOM.

⁸Ministre to Governor, telegram, nd [February 1947?]; Moutet to Konaté, 24 February 1947, 28PA/3/168, AOM.

⁹Moutet to Governor General, telegram, 20 September 1947, 28PA/3/168, AOM. The standard account of the revolt in Madagascar is Jacques Tronchon, *L'insurrection malgache de 1947: essai d'interprétation historique* (Paris: Maspero, 1974).

¹⁰Moutet to Conference of High Commissioners and Governors, 21 February 1947, 28PA/3/93, AOM.

⁴"Rôle de l'Union Soudanaise et ses procédés," extract from report of Inspecteur des Affaires Administratives Cande, nd 1947, 28PA/3/168 (Moutet Papers), AOM. There is some confusion of dates in the papers in this dossier, and what I have set out here represents the most logical sequence.

⁵Modibo Keita, pour le Comité local section soudanaise Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, Sikasso, to Governor General, Dakar, telegram, 20 November 1946, 28PA/3/168, AOM.

⁶Mamadou Konaté to Minister, 6 February 1947, Henri Lozeray, membre de la Commission de la FOM, to Minister, 26 December 1946, 28PA/3/168, AOM.

his prejudices about primitive Africans and dangerous agitators in a closed meeting, but it was no longer colonial business as usual—not in relation to local activism, not in relation to parliamentary politics.

The incident contributed to officials' fear that authority in rural areas was diminishing; so too did a similar incident in Kankan, in rural Guinea, in 1947.¹¹ As Robert Delavignette put it, the Minister had once exercised "*impérialisme*" on behalf of the Republic, by the intermediary of a hierarchy of European functionaries and indigenous authorities." But now, "the powers of the hierarchy have also been diminished. The colonial administrator has lost his disciplinary code of the *indigénat*, and above all has been dispossessed of his quality of magistrate of indigenous tribunals. Finally, the native chiefs have seen their traditional authority blown apart. The abuses they could have committed have served as a pretext for agitation, which has also been full of excesses." Delavignette saw the change as not entirely a bad thing—going from rule by decree to a situation where legal procedures shaped overseas policy was a positive step—but the loss of day-to-day authority was a worrisome matter.¹²

A larger-scale and longer-lasting confrontation took place in the Côte d'Ivoire, but it had the same origins as the one described above—in successful mobilization by an African political party with roots in rural Africa and connections in Paris, and in administrative fears that alternatives were being developed to the vertical channels characteristic of imperial power. Houphouët-Boigny's political machine, which would dominate politics in Côte d'Ivoire for a half century, had developed primarily among African cocoa planters in the southern part of the territory. In 1944, farmers possessing at least two hectares of coffee or three of cocoa under cultivation had set up the Syndicat Agricole Africain (SAA). They were aggrieved that white planters benefited from government services—particularly forced labor recruited in the northern Côte d'Ivoire or neighboring French territories—while African planters were discriminated against on a racial basis. The SAA forged a network not only among planters, but among chiefs of northern areas from where potential workers could come—if they could be

freed from the yoke of forced labor. At this time, a relatively progressive Governor, André Latrille, saw forced labor as not only detestable in itself and a demeaning stain on his administrators, but as a practice with no future. The SAA furnished him an alternative—a network capable of supplying labor by means other than coercion, or at least by means in which French administrators were not complicit. With the first postwar elections, the SAA converted itself into a political organization and successfully backed Houphouët-Boigny's candidacy for the Assemblée Nationale Constituante. That the SAA offered a more promising, and less politically costly future than maintenance of the forced labor regime helped to convince the Ministry not to oppose the initiative of Houphouët-Boigny in the Assemblée Nationale Constituante to abolish forced labor. With the passage of his bill in April 1946, Houphouët-Boigny established himself, in and beyond the Côte d'Ivoire, as the emancipator of French West Africa's workers.¹³

Over the next decade or so, African cocoa planters became the motor of AOF's most dynamic economy, and the SAA, transformed into the PDCI—branch of the RDA—became one of Africa's most successful political parties.¹⁴ In the summer and fall of 1946, incidents of disobedience of chiefs, including a violent demonstration, were reported in the northern Côte d'Ivoire. Local officials feared that the Parti Démocratique, along with the communist-connected Comité d'Études Franco-Africaines, were taking over "the political direction of the bush." Police reported that "the natives no longer recognize the authority of canton chiefs." Governor Latrille thought that the violence might have something to do with a chief forcing people to work for him when it was no longer legal, and he was critical of the local administrator.¹⁵

Two new developments in 1947 from outside the region produced a more constricted atmosphere: the drift to the right of the French

¹³ Frederick Cooper, "Conditions Analogous to Slavery: Imperialism and Free Labor Ideology in Africa," in Frederick Cooper, Thomas Holt, and Rebecca Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 107–50. Security agents thought Houphouët-Boigny considered himself "le Gandhi de l'Afrique." "Note sur la situation en Côte d'Ivoire," 13 July 1946, 17G 556, AS.

¹⁴ Aristide Zolberg sees the origins of the PDCI as an amalgam of social groups, the SAA most prominent among them, but by 1947, he argues, it was turning into a "monolith," with a strong central committee and a cell-like organization. *One-Party Government in the Ivory Coast* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 113–17.

¹⁵ Governor, Côte d'Ivoire, to High Commissioner, telegram, 15 September 1946, Commandant de Cercle Lequer, to Governor, 29 September 1946, Chef de Subdivision Centrale de Bobo-Dioulasso, reply to questions 19 September 1946, Chef de Brigade Mobile Bobo-Dioulasso, to Chef de la Sûreté, 9 July 1946, Governor to High Commissioner, 4 October 1946, Moutet Papers, 28PA 8/175/3, AOM; Governor to Governor General, 4 October 1946, Governor General to Minister, 19 October 1946, 28PA 8/168, AOM.

¹¹ Ex-soldiers played a big part in the demonstrations, which included a siege of the administrator's office by fifteen hundred men and protest marches of two to three thousand. The leader was a Muslim cleric, and grievances were focused on abuses of authority by chiefs and local administrators. The Guinea branch of the RDA would later make a major effort to mobilize rural dwellers. Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939–1958* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2005), 46–48, 106; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea, 1946–1958* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2007), 51–55.

¹² "Rapport sur la situation politique dans les États et territoires relevant du Ministère de la France d'Outre-mer," 4 September 1948, Delavignette Papers, 19PA/3/30, AOM, p. 33.

political spectrum, especially the exclusion of the PCF from the governing coalition (in May) and the Madagascar revolt (March–April) and its bloody repression. The former brought to the Overseas Ministry Paul Coste-Floret, anxious to preserve central power and strongly anticommunist, who contributed to a complex whereby every rural stirring was often seen as a second Madagascar that had to be nipped in the bud.¹⁶ But the on-the-ground politics in Côte d'Ivoire did not correspond to predetermined images of either communists or blood-thirsty natives.¹⁷

On the government side, the hard line began with settlers persuading officials to replace Latrille, seen as too pro-PDCI, as Governor. Governor Georges Orselli, in charge for a time in 1948, later told an investigatory commission that he had been told by Coste-Floret, "You are going down there to suppress the RDA."¹⁸ He did not do it and was replaced by Laurent Péchoux, who took on the task with zeal.

The incidents began with riots in Treichville, a working-class suburb of Abidjan, that followed RDA members' disruption of meetings in January and February 1949 of what they felt was a government sponsored political party. Pro-RDA crowds apparently roughed up opponents and pillaged their property. The police took this to be an occasion to crack down hard, arresting RDA followers and leaders (Houphouët-Boigny, who was there at the time, was protected by his parliamentary immunity). Thus began a pattern repeated in several smaller towns around the Côte d'Ivoire, which appear as riots in official accounts and as police violence in those of the RDA members. The hearings of a committee of the Assemblée Nationale in 1950 provide oral testimonies supporting both versions.¹⁹

In the course of 1949 incidents multiplied. The RDA called for a variety of mass actions, many of them directed against the economic

¹⁶The second Madagascar thesis was embraced by the hard-line Governor Laurent Péchoux and the more progressive Robert Delavignette. Testimony of Péchoux, 25 July 1950, 221, and of Orselli (reporting conversation with Delavignette), 4 July 1950, 98, in Assemblée Nationale, *Impressions, projets de lois, propositions, rapports, etc. tome CXXVII, Session de 1950, No. 11348, "Incidents de la Côte d'Ivoire"* (Paris: Imprimerie de l'Assemblée Nationale, 1951). This volume contains the testimonies in the Assemblée's official inquiry into the incidents, referred to below.

¹⁷Alexander Keese puts more weight on French officials' fear of communism (and less on their concern with the RDA's parallel administration) than I do. Governor Péchoux and various officials were prone to find—or at least to say they found—communists throughout Côte d'Ivoire, but Keese overestimates the coherence and consistency of French thinking about the relationship of communism and anticolonial movements in AOF. "A Culture of Panic: 'Communist' Scapegoats and Decolonization in French West Africa and French Polynesia (1945–1957)," *French Colonial History* 9 (2008): 131–45.

¹⁸Orselli, "Incidents," 98.

¹⁹There is a good account, largely based on testimonies from the above investigation, plus newspapers, in Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 188–202. See also the long report by G. Delamotte, Procureur de la République, Grand Bassam, 16 July 1951, 17G 554, AS.

position of Europeans: boycotts of commercial houses, strikes of house servants and gardeners, refusal to sell fruits and vegetables to Europeans. There were also mass demonstrations, including several by women. "I was afraid of the women," testified the Commandant de Cercle of Dimbokro, after an incident in which a crowd of women, throwing rocks at the police, tried to free someone from a jail.²⁰ Ex-soldiers played a part in some demonstrations.²¹ The towns of Grand Bassam, Dimbokro, and Bouaflé and smaller interior towns like Zuenola, Grand-Labou, Ngokro, Motobe, Daloa, D'Issia, and Katiola were sites of mobilization.²² Officials accused the RDA of ordering its members to destroy the houses of opponents.²³ Some of the mass actions were directed against the wave of detentions by which the government was cracking down on—and provoking—the unrest. In a number of cases, police fired on and killed demonstrators—fifty-two by one count. Some three thousand people ended up in jail. Prisoners engaged in hunger strikes.²⁴

What bothered officials the most was that the RDA seemed to be setting up a "parallel administration" in some towns and rural chiefdoms. Péchoux himself told the investigatory committee that "RDA forces of order existed alongside the legal policy." He insisted that the RDA had created its own "clandestine tribunals" and a "parallel jurisdiction." One such court, he said, had heard two hundred cases over two years and fined people for corruption and other crimes. The RDA, he alleged, was telling people to pay their taxes to the party instead of the government. Farmers were being told to market crops through parallel channels, not through European commercial houses, and RDA members attacked markets and market sellers in towns like Bouaflé. Crop exports fell. Officials were convinced that the movements were being coordinated from the top of the RDA—by Houphouët-Boigny, Gabriel d'Arbousier, Ouezin Coulibaly, and others.²⁵ A French

²⁰Pierre Montel, "Incidents," 2 August 1950, 668. A demonstration of women who paraded into town, attacked customers and sellers in the market, and tried to take over the prison in the town of Daloa is described in the telegram of Commandant de Cercle, Daloa, to Governor, 6 January 1950, 17G 554, AS. He warned that "disorder is spreading."

²¹Houphouët-Boigny, "Incidents," 28 June 1950, 70.

²²Incidents in the interior are catalogued in the Delamotte report, 16 July 1951, 17G 554, AS. For waves of incidents in December and then in January, see Governor, Côte d'Ivoire, to Governor General, 31 December 1949, 7 February 1950, 17G 554, AS.

²³Governor General to Minister, 28 February 1950, 17G 554, AS.

²⁴Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 198–99.

²⁵Péchoux, "Incidents," 25, 27, 29 July 1950, 219, 310–13, 537–38; Governor General, report to Minister, 26 January, 1 February 1950, and telegrams, 7, 12, 13 February 1950, 17G 554, AS. A circular (if authentic) to all sections of the RDA from Gabriel d'Arbousier stated "only the action of resolute masses can bring to fruition our cause, in parliamentary as well as juridical terms"—an interesting argument for seeing the

prosecutor claimed that the RDA had created "village committees" that were intended to supersede the authority of the administration at the village level. He concluded, "the RDA had tried to insert itself directly into the local scene by undertaking actions that belong either to administrative or judicial authority."²⁵ The investigating committee, later touring towns in the Côte d'Ivoire, collected a number of testimonies of RDA members alleging harassment by the administration and from a number of other Africans alleging harassment by RDA members.²⁷

If the story told by most officials during the parliamentary inquiry was one of an RDA parallel government, with its police and courts, and of rock-throwing women and interference with Africans and Europeans trying to do business, the story told by RDA members depicts a program of government intimidation. Behind the harassment, they saw the maintenance of a "mercantile" economic order and the failure of the government to live up to its constitutional promises of equal treatment of citizens. Houphouët-Boigny brought the discussion down to the level of the petty exactions of a local French administration. District officials had been

simultaneously administrators, judges, accusers and directors of cooperative societies. They indiscriminately inflicted fines, appointed and fired chiefs at their pleasure. Messieurs les commandants, who could obtain for free cows, sheep, chickens, [now] saw themselves constrained to pay like others, like the poor, can I say; because they, as the best paid civil servants, did not pay for food products! The occasion was ripe to retake their exorbitant powers! . . . Down with the RDA! Down with communists! Down with the agents of Moscow!²⁸

The two versions are not mutually incompatible. The RDA had, over a period of five years, established good networks across small towns; its campaign against forced labor had won the support not only of workers but of African cocoa planters. It gave people in a variety of social niches reason to believe that the RDA could deliver on its promises. Its top leaders had prestigious posts in Paris, and when the local administration tried to go after RDA leaders, Houphouët-

ultimate goal of mass action to be parliamentary and juridical. Circular of 19 December 1949, copy in 17G 554, AS.

²⁵Guy Delamotte, "Incidents," 29 July 1950, 497-99. The Commandant de cercle at Daloa also testified about "clandestine tribunals" that judged misdemeanors and even felonies and made convicted people pay fines that were divided among the judges. Ibid., 11 August 1950, 895.

²⁷Assy N'Gho, "Incidents," 31 July 1950, 636-68, Mamadou Koné, 31 July 1950, 651.

²⁸Houphouët-Boigny, "Incidents," 21 June 1950, 46, 28 June 1950, 71.

Boigny played his two cards successfully: he could use his parliamentary immunity to avoid the tyranny of the local administration, and if an official overstepped his bounds—and one tried to serve a warrant on him—he could surround himself with a crowd of people who could prevent such an official from acting.²⁹ At the same time as the RDA could stay in motion with boycotts, demonstrations before jails, and interference with commerce; shifting from town to town, it could act like an established political movement, its deputies issuing protests, calling in the Assemblée Nationale for investigations of the Côte d'Ivoire administration, getting articles published in African newspapers.³⁰

The administration, for its part, tried to portray the movement as riot, disruption, and communist conspiracy, but it also kept harping on the theme of parallel government—something that acknowledged the capacity of the RDA. It used the standard techniques of colonial repression—mass arrests and a degree of deadly violence—but it also, if RDA testimony is to be believed, engaged in a sort of politics that was new to French Africa but would have its place in the ensuing decade: meddling with electoral lists to reduce the number of RDA voters.³¹ But for all the possibilities the administration had to lean on its own African personnel to work against the RDA, it did not mount a credible threat to its electoral success. And it pulled its punches: when a local prosecutor tried to arrest Houphouët-Boigny, his superiors made him back off.³² Governor Péchoux lobbied vigorously for the government to ban the RDA altogether; the Ministry refused.³³ The RDA

²⁹Governor General to Minister, 7 February 1950, 17G 554, AS; Georges Chaffard, *Les carnets secrets de la décolonisation* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1965-67), 1:112-16.

³⁰Houphouët-Boigny and Coulibaly sent a telegram directly to the Minister to complain of police methods "worthy of the Gestapo used against population Region Zuenoula," and they threatened to take the information to the UN and the press. The Minister duly informed the Governor General of this telegram, and the Governor General predictably denied the charges. Ministry to Governor General, telegram, 21 January 1950, and letter, 24 January 1950; Governor, Côte d'Ivoire, to Governor General, telegram, 17G 554, AS. When the Governor General tried to get governors in other territories to ban RDA meetings, another deputy, Mamadou Konaté of the Sudan, complained to the Minister, who got officials in West Africa to refrain from a general ban on RDA meetings, without admitting they had done wrong. Governor General to Ministry, telegram, nd (February or March 1950), and Ministry to Governor General, telegram, 9 March 1950, Governor General to Minister 19 March 1950, Governor, Côte d'Ivoire, to Governor General, telegram, 24 March 1950, all in 17G 554, AS. The RDA-connected newspaper *Réveil* (19 December 1949, 27 February, 3 April 1950) called attention to the "repression" in Côte d'Ivoire.

³¹Houphouët-Boigny, "Incidents," 21 June 1950, 53, 28 June 1950, 58.

³²Governor Péchoux to Governor General, 31 January 1950, Governor General to Minister, 7 February 1950, 17G 554, AS.

³³Governor to Governor General, telegram, 14 February 1950; AOF, Direction Générale de l'Intérieur, Service des Affaires Politiques, "Note sur les activités illégales du

pulled its punches too: Côte d'Ivoire did not turn into a second Madagascar. And even in May 1950, after months of fighting off police repression and courting arrest himself, Ouezin Coulibaly concluded a speech stirring up his militants, "The RDA does not want France's departure, on the contrary. It wants to collaborate in the French Union, a fraternal union."³⁴

The pushing of limits on both sides occurred in towns across much of the southern Côte d'Ivoire in 1949 and into 1950. In the summer of 1950, after insistence by the RDA and some of its friends in Paris, an investigatory committee from the Assemblée Nationale looked into the situation, hearing from Houphouët-Boigny and Péchoux, and numerous others; the transcript of testimonies is over eleven hundred pages long. But there was one arena where compromise was possible: the RDA's legislative alliance with the PCF. Houphouët-Boigny later seemed rather amused that someone as bourgeois and traditionalist as he was—property owner, businessman, Catholic, scion of a chiefly family—could have been considered a communist. At the time, he denied that the RDA was a communist movement and insisted that its relationship to the PCF was a legislative alliance only, conditioned by the willingness of the PCF to vote for measures regarding the French Union that the RDA supported.³⁵ It was, in other words, a pragmatic relationship that could be jettisoned when it did more harm than good. That was the origin of the famous "désapparement," the breakup of the relationship between the RDA and the PCF.

The deal was made quietly and personally, between Houphouët-Boigny and François Mitterrand, then the Minister of Overseas France.³⁶ The RDA—the overall organization, not just its Ivorian branch—publicly announced its disaffiliation from the PCF in September 1950, and Mitterrand told his officers in Dakar and Abidjan to call off their dogs. Governor Péchoux was transferred away from the Côte d'Ivoire the next May. Some—including one of the RDA's top leaders, d'Arboussier—thought the pact a betrayal of principle,

PDCl, 2 March 1960; Governor to Governor General, 6 March 1950; Minister to Governor General, 6 June 1950, all in 17G 569, AS.

³⁴Reported by security services. Renseignements, Abidjan, 29 May 1950, 17G 555, AS.

³⁵Houphouët-Boigny, 28 June 1950, 70; speech in Grand Bassam, reported by police, Renseignements, 20 December 1951, 17G 555, AS; speech at colloquium on history of RDA, published in Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, *Actes du colloque international sur l'histoire du RDA, Yamoussoukro, 18-25 octobre 1985* (Abidjan: CEDA Hatier, 1987), 1:10.

³⁶The initial rapprochement between Houphouët-Boigny and the government owed much to René Plevin, who became President of the Council of Ministers in July, and who was more familiar than his Parisian colleagues with personalities in Africa. See Chaffard, *Carnets secrets*, 1:121-24, and Joseph Roger de Benoist, "Le désapparement et ses lendemains," in RDA, *Actes du colloque*, 1:389-407, esp. 393.

but for other RDA leaders the relationship with the PCF had not had much to do with principle, or ideology, in the first place.³⁷ RDA leaders acknowledged that their ability to formulate a program for themselves had been hurt by the "savage repression" that they had experienced, but the break with the PCF, they argued, would now allow the party to pursue the "realization of its destiny by its own means, with its own voice" and it would no longer have to "adopt a priori positions." It was both liberated and constrained to undertake "a politics of the possible" and "as realists to look at the government that is in front of us, reactionary or not, with which we must deal to obtain the maximum."³⁸ Houphouët-Boigny compared his situation to that of Kwame Nkrumah in the Gold Coast, who, faced with having to work with a more conservative British government after 1951, made his arrangements, not taking issue with British policies that did not concern the Gold Coast. "He has his feet on the ground," noted Houphouët-Boigny, and that was where he proposed to keep his.³⁹

The deal left in place what was, if anything, the more important problem that the RDA was posing to the French government—its local organization. The Administration still played dirty tricks in the 1951 election campaign—keeping RDA members off commissions supervising registration and voting, erasing RDA members' names from lists and padding opposition lists, and openly urging people to vote against the RDA. They knocked off some RDA candidates, but not Houphouët-Boigny, and the Administration thereafter gave up such strategies in the Côte d'Ivoire (but not elsewhere, for example Niger in 1958). In both the Côte d'Ivoire and the Sudan, the

³⁷For others, the affiliation with the PCF was more profound, since they had entered the RDA via communist study groups and engaged in long debates over RDA-PCF relations. Alpha Oumar Konaré, "Le RDA, l'Union soudanaise et le désapparement," in RDA, *Actes du colloque*, 1:173-88. D'Arboussier objected both to the nondemocratic way the decision to disaffiliate had been made and to the RDA's cooperation with a government that he regarded as still oppressive. Instead of Houphouët-Boigny's deal, he sought an "alliance of democratic African forces and democratic and progressive forces of the entire world, and first of all those of the French people in their common struggle against imperialism." *Le RDA est toujours anticolonialiste (lettres ouvertes à Félix Houphouët-Boigny)* (Dakar-Paris: Imprimerie pour le Commerce et l'Industrie, 1952), second letter, September 1952, 29, quoted, CAMP microfilm (University of Wisconsin Library, 2169). See also Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 200-201. On the other side of the bargain, Mitterrand was beset by administrators, settlers, and their allies, who wanted to keep up the repression of the RDA. He felt compelled to explain later, "The Rassemblement démocratique africain was not communist." *Présence française et abandon* (Paris: Plon, 1957), 184, 194-98.

³⁸RDA, "Rapport politique à toutes sections," Paris, 8 December 1950, 17G 572, AS. Sékou Touré initially opposed the break with the PCF, but came around and made his own move to break with the communist-affiliated French trade union. Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 159-61.

³⁹Quoted in Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 98.

territorial branches of the RDA had developed into movements that the government would have to live—and negotiate—with. Police reports from the Côte d'Ivoire in 1951 pointed to evidence of militancy and antigovernment propaganda, but emphasized that the PDCI was taking care to remain within the law and maneuvering to bring potential rival parties into the RDA fold.⁴⁰ In 1953, government officials reported, the RDA in Côte d'Ivoire was so solidly entrenched that European planters and businessmen had decided to cooperate with it. By 1956, the PDCI-RDA was telling the government whom it could assign to posts in local administration and Houphouët-Boigny was sitting in the French cabinet.⁴¹

In Cameroon, the French government did, indeed, eliminate a political party—the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) from the scene, driving it underground and into a guerrilla conflict that began in 1955.⁴² The UPC had after 1948 taken a radical stance on labor issues and it had called for independence at a time when such a demand was considered anathema. Some of the highest officials in the government would have liked to do eliminate the RDA from the Côte d'Ivoire, but they failed. The reason why Coste-Floret, Péchoux, and others wanted to destroy it was the reason why they failed: The RDA had, unlike the UPC in Cameroon, enracinated itself too deeply in too much of the Côte d'Ivoire. The government would have to deal with the RDA and reach compromises with its leaders.

Citizenship in a Colonial Situation: The Rights of Labor

Another kind of politics was played out between West Africa and France, in which the social meaning of citizenship was at stake. I have already described the strikes of 1946 in Senegal, in which the slogan “equal pay for equal work” became part of a well-coordinated social movement, embracing people from unskilled laborers to relatively privileged civil servants, winning important concessions on wages for some and family allowances for others, and above all pushing the state to accept that African workers and their representatives would have

a place within a system of industrial relations based on metropolitan principles. Over the course of 1946, citizenship and labor became intertwined.⁴³

Of almost mythic proportions was the great railway strike of 1947–48, shutting down the major transportation system of French West Africa for five months.⁴⁴ The strike was about the *cadre unique*, the demand of African railway workers for a single, nonracial job hierarchy, with the same scale of benefits for all members. The young, militant leader of the AOF-wide union of “indigenous workers” on the railroad, Ibrahim Sarr, defined the issue in the language of citizenship, even while the constitution was being debated in Paris, calling for “the abolition of antiquated colonial methods condemned even by THE NEW AND TRUE FRANCE which wishes that all its children, at whatever latitude they may live, be equal in duties and rights and that the recompense of labor be a function solely of merit and capacity.”⁴⁵

Sarr thought such ideas applied not only to the elite of railway workers, but also to the “auxiliaries,” who worked without job security and other indemnities, and whom he wished to integrate into the “cadres,” the permanent labor force. In April 1947 the union pulled off a theatrical coup. At the moment of a visit to Senegal by the President of France, it organized a strike. In such circumstances, the government could not publicly go against principles of equality. An official commission accepted the principle of the single cadre. But when management refused to follow through, the entire African labor force on the railway, across AOF, went on strike in October.

Governor General Barthes insisted that the strike was illegal; he would not negotiate. The strike remained remarkably solid until January, when the Abidjan-Niger region broke away and went back to work, largely because Houphouët-Boigny, whose constituency was strongest among cocoa planters being hurt by the strike, put pressure on the Ivorian branch to return to work. Even this defection did not lead the rest to lose heart.

Workers survived this long only because they were integrated into town-centered and family-centered networks, which gave them access to food supplies. Women played a crucial role in pulling together

⁴³The subject of this section is discussed in much more detail in my *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁴⁴Frederick Cooper, “Our Strike: Equality, Anticolonial Politics, and the French West African Railway Strike of 1947–48,” *Journal of African History* 37 (1996): 81–118. Recent scholarship on the railway and the strike includes James A. Jones, *Industrial Labor in the Colonial World: Workers of the Chemin de Fer Dakar-Niger, 1881–1963* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2002), and an ongoing Columbia University PhD dissertation by Brandon County.

⁴⁵Renseignements, 29 May 1946, K 352 (26), AS.

⁴⁰Service de Police de la Côte d'Ivoire, “La vie politique: le RDA,” nd 1951, Governor General to Governor, 31 August 1951, Service de Police, Renseignements, 4 September 1951, 20 December 1951, 17G 555, AS.

⁴¹AOF, Affaires Politiques, Notes sur la Côte d'Ivoire, November 1954, AP 2257, AOM; Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 201–3.

⁴²Richard Joseph, *Radical Nationalism in Cameroon: The Social Origins of the UPC Rebellion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Achille Mbembe, *La Naissance du maquis dans le Sud-Cameroun, 1920–1960: Histoire des usages de la raison en colonie* (Paris: Karthala, 1996); Meredith Terretta, “Cameroonian Nationalists Go Global: From Forest Maquis to a Pan-African Accra,” *Journal of African History* 51 (2010): 1–24.

such resources. The chief labor inspector commented, "Here the means of defense are very different—and singularly more effective—than in the case of metropolitan strikes."⁴⁶ The incompleteness of workers' absorption into proletarian society gave them more diverse roots than their French comrades had; they were part of Africa. But neither other African trade unions nor African political parties joined to build a solid front against the colonial regime. The railway union had itself failed to join the 1946 strike in Senegal; unions had different political affiliations; and, after the 1946 strike settlement, unions had a great deal to gain by working within professional boundaries. The RDA did not back the strike because the railway workers were not affiliated with it and because of the opposition of Houphouët-Boigny. The strike thus remained a railway strike, becoming neither a proletarian movement in general nor a focus of anticolonial action by political parties.⁴⁷

The government's caution in using repressive means—arrests, requisition, ejecting strikers from railway housing—reflected the postwar conjuncture. Railway workers represented the best hope for the kind of stable, skilled workforce officials wanted to build. Finally in March 1948, a new Governor General decided to compromise. He sustained the railway on some of the issues, split the difference on others. There would be no punishment for striking. Many auxiliaries were slowly integrated into the single cadre.

The Administration now knew that restructuring the colonial labor system would involve African agency as much as imperial design. The principles of the equivalence of citizens could not be kept within a Parisian container. The government made its point too: African unions could fight and win, but within certain legal and institutional structures. The very battle brought both sides deeper into those structures, and the strike became neither a popular liberation struggle nor an exercise in colonial repression.

There were other major strikes between 1945 and 1950—a general strike in Conakry in 1950 and others in Senegal and Dahomey most notably. Sékou Touré made his name in Guinea by leading the labor movement through major strikes, culminating in one that lasted over two months in 1953. By pulling wage workers into the Guinea branch of the RDA, Sékou Touré, Elizabeth Schmidt argues, began to attract people from different social positions into a political movement that focused on issues of immediate, material concern—wages, veteran

benefits, education, and health facilities, as well as on the abuses of rural chiefs.⁴⁸

As early as 1948, the labor movement in French West Africa—working with parliamentarians in Paris—was fighting its next battle: for a labor code, based on metropolitan models, applying to overseas France. The code would make certain conditions of labor into legally defined rights: minimum wages, the forty-hour week, paid vacations. And because it would also give workers the right to form and join unions and to strike—subject to certain procedures—it would make clear that workers had the right to *claim* rights.

Many administrators and business leaders also wanted to see a labor code in place, but for their own reasons: to promote and enforce orderly procedures. As noted earlier, the citizenship law of April 1946 had immediately forced the Ministry to give up its plan to implement a "code du travail indigène," since such a category no longer existed. Any code would have to apply to all wage workers in the overseas territories. With such a reach, the stakes in specifying rights and benefits were high.

For the government, and particularly the Inspection du Travail, the model for industrial relations was French. As a system of protection for the vulnerable, social security was based on "solidarity," and hence the presumed unity and universality of the French citizenry. In 1946, officials were talking about installing overseas "a system of social security . . . strongly resembling the current system perfected for the metropole."⁴⁹ But this universalistic vision had its limits when applied to the overseas territories: the focus was specifically on one category among citizens, the wage laborer. The African worker could be assimilated to the normative and institutional frameworks for industrial relations and social security in France, but the rural African, living in a "traditional" milieu, could not. Only slowly and with the revolutionizing of agricultural production would their way of life be transformed. The more immediate task was to ensure that urban workers could raise families in their places of work, producing a new generation of workers under the watchful eyes of doctors, urban planners, teachers, and civil servants. Codifying labor relations—and promoting wages sufficient to raise a family—were crucial to the process. It was above all the resistance of employers and their allies in the Paris legislature that dragged the process out.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 56, 71–83.

⁴⁹ Inspecteur Général du Travail, Note, November 1947, K 461 (179), AS; Inspecteur Général du Travail, Paris, to Inspecteur Général du Travail, AOF, 17 December 1946, K 438 (179), AS.

⁵⁰ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 278–92; Omar Guèye, *Senégali: histoire du mouvement syndical: la marche vers le code du travail* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011).

⁴⁶ Inspecteur Général du Travail to Deputy Dumas, 6 January 1948, in IGT, Report, 24 January 1948, IGT 13/2, AOM.

⁴⁷ In an interview in 1994, a strike veteran used the phrase "our strike" to distinguish his memories from the version of the novelist Ousmane Sembène, who subsumed it under an anticolonial rubric in *God's Bits of Wood*. See Cooper, "Our Strike."

For African politicians, labor was a constituency, not the only one but important by virtue of its organization, its falling within the "capacities" specified by the election laws, and its strategic location in a colonial society that was fragmented along different axes. In each territory of AOF, individual unions were grouped into a "union des syndicats," and at the level of AOF as a whole these unions belonged to one of the major French union federations, the largest being the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT). African trade unionists had their own priorities, but affiliation with union organization spanning the French Union as a whole provided resources and legitimacy within the French system.

The immediate passage of the Code du Travail—along with demands for equal wages and benefits for all workers—was the major theme of union meetings from 1946 to 1952. A Sudanese trade union newspaper made the case for a universal social security scheme with particular vigor: "In the face of danger, there is no difference between a FRENCHMAN born near the banks of the Seine or the Loire and a FRENCHMAN born near the banks of the Senegal or the Niger."⁵¹ French officials both welcomed a well-organized labor force as part of the "modern" world and feared that it could be "a formidable element of social agitation, if seriously discontented with their lot, they were taken in hand, supervised and guided by clever people without scruples. . . . The moral and material situation of these workers should necessarily remain among the most fundamental preoccupations of all."⁵²

The Ministry, the Assemblée de l'Union française, and the Grand Conseil in Dakar talked about the need for a code from 1947 to 1950 before a proposed text made it to the floor of the Assemblée Nationale. It was backed not only by African deputies but also by a faction within the center-right MRP, mainly by social Catholics, who sought an integrative approach that would be supportive of African family formation and more important would be appealing enough to workers to fend off communist organizing. Backers were explicit about extending a French model of labor to Africa: the point was to extend "the majority of the social advantages accorded to metropolitan workers."⁵³

African deputies focused on a form of work defined by the authority of the employer and the payment of a wage. They were content to leave "customary" laborers outside of its purview, a stance that no doubt appealed to the peanut growers who backed Senghor and the cocoa growers who were Houphouët-Boigny's constituency. Pro-colon

deputies tried to call Africans on that position, posing as defenders of African peasants and agricultural workers against exploitation by fellow Africans. Coming from where it did, the argument lacked credibility. When there seemed to be sentiment in the Assemblée to dilute provisions on the work week and overtime, Senghor cut to the key point: "As you know, Africans now have a mystique of equality. In this domain, as in others, they want the same principles to be applied from the first in the overseas territories as in the metropole."⁵⁴

The debate—on and off in the Assemblée, bouncing between it and the more conservative upper chamber—went on for two years. It had some of the drama of the citizenship debates of 1946, and several provisions provoked tough fights and close votes. In the end, African deputies had to threaten to vote against the bill as a whole to save an article allowing for the future extension of the French system of family allowances to workers in the private sector (public employed already had family allowances).⁵⁵

A key act of the drama took place in Africa. As the debate neared a climax, Abbas Guèye, veteran leader of the 1946 strike in Senegal and now a deputy allied to Senghor, wrote to the Comité de Coordination des Unions Territoriales des Syndicats de l'AOF et de l'AEF and to several constituent unions warning of delays and dilutions. His letter set off a chain of mobilizations, including a day of demonstrations and speeches on 28 October 1952 and a one-day general strike across AOF on 3 November, with more strike plans held in reserve.⁵⁶ Conservative deputies complained of being threatened, but the point had been made. Even Paul Coste-Floret, who as Minister had done battle with the RDA in Côte d'Ivoire, noted that the bill that emerged from all the turmoil was not at all inconsistent with "our law or the principles on which it is based, but, on the contrary, they recall the most authentic principles of our democracy."⁵⁷

The code provided for a forty-hour work week, paid vacations, procedures to set minimum wages in different professions and locations, and the right to organize and (with limits) strike. Implementing the code led to some conflict, notably a strike in Guinea that lasted from

⁵⁴ Senghor, Assemblée Nationale, *Débats*, 22 November 1952, 5502-5. This phrase was picked up by Governor General Comut-Genille to let administrators know the sentiments they had to accommodate themselves to. Speech to Grand Conseil, 13 Octobre 1954, 20. It was also used up a leading authority on colonial law, for whom the words had a positive significance: "The mystique of equality brings us back to the mystique of the law." P.-F. Gonidec, "Une mystique de l'égalité: le code du travail des territoires d'Outre-Mer," *Revue Juridique et Politique de l'Union Française* 2 (1953): 176-96, 96 quoted.

⁵⁵ Assemblée Nationale, *Débats*, 22 November 1952, 5547-51.

⁵⁶ The mobilization is described in Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 303-4.

⁵⁷ Assemblée Nationale, *Débats*, 6 November 1952, 4796.

⁵¹ Barabéla, *organe de l'Union Régionale des Syndicats du Soudan*, 17 September 1951, 17G 279, AS; Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 285-87.

⁵² AOF, IGT, Rapport Annuel, 1951, 197-98.

⁵³ Report of the Commission des Affaires Sociales, AUF, *Documents*, Annex No. 12 to session of 26 January 1949, 23.

September to November 1953 and made CGT leader Sékou Touré into a hero. Another round of agitation took place in 1955–56 over the implementation of family allowances. As before, Africans argued that anything less than full implementation would violate principles of equality among citizens. Social Catholics wanted to support family life, and many officials thought that working-class families were particularly worthy and needful of attention because they were likely to follow “modern” ways. Other officials feared disorder if African unions were stymied. The probusiness or pro-colon deputies made their habitual arguments about the peculiarity of the African, insisting that African families were not comparable to European ones. In 1956, African unions won their battle.⁵⁸

There were, typically, maneuvers to compromise the effect of the code: indemnities for European workers for “displacement” and job classifications that put most African workers on the low end of the skill hierarchy. Most important, the code applied to wage workers only, not to “customary” labor. The work of family members on small farms was exempt, and that of tenants and clients fell into a gray area between regulated and unregulated forms of work. Whereas the Constitution and the code forbade discrimination among *workers*, the code made a distinction between types of *work*, separating a codified “French” realm from a noncodified “traditional” realm.⁵⁹ Thus if political citizenship would supposedly unite all French people, social citizenship could imply a separation between two categories of Africans.

When it came to the civil service, there was less room for maneuver, and indeed in 1950 the “second Lamine Guèye law” had built on the first Lamine Guèye law to guarantee public employees benefits equal to those of civil servants coming from the metropole. There were arguments about how fairly this law was implemented too, but officials knew they were in a quandary. They needed not only to respond to trade union pressure—and the civil service unions were the strongest—but also to take into account the fact that administration actions, from development to repression, depended on the loyalty and skills of civil servants.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 305–21.

⁵⁹The exclusion of “customary” labor relations from the code could be read as having to do with the personal status of the employer, and this created problems of jurisdiction—over what kind of tribunal could hear different kinds of work-related cases. See François Luchaire, “Le champ d’application des statuts personnels en Algérie et dans les territoires d’outre-mer,” *Revue Juridique et Parlementaire de l’Union Française* 9 (1955): 45.

⁶⁰The Commission des Affaires Diverses of the Grand Conseil de l’AOF reported that the second Lamine Guèye law enshrined the “principle of eliminating all discrimination in salaries and benefits of any nature based on difference of race, personal status, origin, or place of recruitment.” But the decrees of implementation left certain inequali-

Numerous reports and correspondence referred to the problem of African “cadres” in the administration, for example in this comment of the Governor General of AOF in 1947:

I am obliged to take into account the fact that very rapidly and increasingly, I will have Africans among the African cadres, in the cadres that serve the affairs of Africa. Africans do not accept that, because of being African, they have salaries inferior to the salary given to a European who came to take this place, who fills that role alongside them and does not fill it any better, with more conscientiousness or more experience.⁶¹

The problem was clear: civil servants in Africa were French citizens working for the French state; deviations from equality of treatment would be evident and galling. As we shall see in the next chapter, the government by the mid-1950s was realizing that the French reference point—above all in regard to standard of living—had become a dangerously important part of social and political action in an empire of citizens.

How high Africans could push in the hierarchy was also at issue: “It seems clearer each day that in the realm of practice the elites—or at least those that are usually called évolués—should be called upon to play . . . a more assertive and efficacious role.” These imperatives would soon be given a name—“l’aficanisation des cadres”—and its implementation would reflect a demand both from current civil servants for advancement and from high officials who saw in the program a way of giving educated Africans a stake in the French Union. Whether the French government could control both the pace of change and its costs would become an increasingly difficult question.⁶²

Here we have social citizenship in action: movement politics in Africa, parliamentary politics in Paris, in which coalitions formed among African deputies concerned with equality, social Catholics worried about the family, communists and socialists who favored progressive legislation overseas as in the metropole, and officials worried about

ties in place, a point underscored by Lamine Guèye himself. *Bulletin du Grand Conseil*, session of 6 November 1951, 17–18, 22. See also Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, chaps. 7 and 11.

⁶¹René Barthes, statement to Conférence des Hauts-Commissaires et Gouverneurs de la FOM, 22 February 1947, 19PA 3/34, AOM.

⁶²Minister to High Commissioners of Territoires d’Outre-Mer, circular 17 July 1951, 17G 641, AS. On “Africanisation des cadres,” see Michelle Pinto, “Employment, Education, and the Reconfiguration of Empire: Africanization in Postwar French Africa” (PhD diss., New York University, 2013).

order.⁶³ The factionalization of French politics gave African deputies and their French leftist allies a chance to pick up votes on questions of social policy from MRP deputies who believed in such reforms, votes that were not available on issues of electoral reform in the early 1950s. One could make similar arguments about different domains of social policy—education, health, and veterans' benefits. The equivalence of citizens did not always carry the day, but in the mid-1950s it was an argument that had to be confronted.⁶⁴ The French government had staked its legitimacy on presiding over an empire of citizens, and when the citizens were as well organized as the West African labor movement, the logic of their claims and the potential for trouble if they were not met were hard to resist.

Toward a More Perfect Union?

The deputies and other political leaders from French West Africa were trying to put together diverse constituencies at a time when voter rolls were taking in an expanding portion of a diverse citizenry. They were well aware that the institutional structure in which they operated was a work in progress, and in basic ways unsatisfactory. Across Africa, there was a wide variety of forms of collective thought and action, to which the RDA and other parties were sometimes able to connect, sometimes not.⁶⁵ There was also in the early 1950s the beginnings of activism among youth groups, especially students. Meanwhile, the very nature of the French Union was in question, and African political elites were trying to figure out how—or even if—they could reorganize it.

A consistent vision of how France could be remade came from Senghor in the decade that followed 1946. On the occasion of a visit of French President Vincent Auriol to Senegal in April 1947, Senghor

⁶³ Officials thought that the labor code of 1952, like the 1946 citizenship provisions, made France look good in international circles. Still, the prevalence of poverty in much of French Africa left France vulnerable to accusations of failure to live up to promises of social and economic rights. See papers in the file K.Afrique, 1944–1952, Généralités/31, ADLC; Speeches of Minister, 26 February 1949, AP 219/1, AOM, and Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, chap. 9.

⁶⁴ Note the mitigated outcome—better than after World War I but well short of equality—in debates over veterans' pensions. Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006). On divergent views of educational reform, see Harry Gamble, "La crise de l'enseignement en Afrique occidentale française (1944–1950)," *Histoire de l'éducation* 128 (2010): 129–62.

⁶⁵ For a recent study that links the formation of a particular rural Islamic community with party politics in the Côte d'Ivoire, see Sean Hanretta, *Islam and Social Change in French West Africa: History of an Emancipatory Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

published an article in *Réveil* that took the Constitution as a point of departure. Even the second, less favorable version of the constitution did not freeze the situation of the overseas territories. By law rather than a constitutional revision, the territories could evolve toward either the status of a department or that of an Associated State. The electoral laws and decrees that followed the Constitution had given rise in Africa to "indignant stupefaction" for the "racial discrimination" that they enshrined. The goal was clear: these laws had to be revised: "We, Negro-Africans, will agree to remain in the French Union only on this condition. We do not want to be either dupes or accomplices."

Not just institutional structures, but society had to be reformed:

We want less to rid ourselves of the tutelage of the metropole than of the tyranny of international capitalism. We think that an autonomy that simply brings us back to the feudal regime of castes would not solve the problem. We are not rebels, but revolutionaries. We want to construct a better world, better than the colonial world of yesterday, better as well than our world before the European conquest. We will build it taking inspiration from European socialism and the old African collectivism. We will thus reconcile modern technique and African humanism. We will is a question of building a new world where, in an organized society, men will be equal and fraternal "without distinction of race or religion."⁶⁶

Here we have Senghor's way of articulating ideas: writing in a public forum, at a well-chosen moment, in a vein that combined immediate political issues and a philosophical position. Senghor's claims to building a new world and escaping international capitalism were complemented by his evocation of African humanism and French fraternalism. He was seeking not to re-create the African world before the French conquest, but to provide a synthesis of civilizations. In the immediate present was a straightforward demand: to reform the institutions of the French Union in the spirit of the Constitution recently accepted by the French electorate.

Senghor's idea of humanity constituted of diverse civilizations was written into the name of the newspaper he founded in February 1948, *La Condition Humaine*. Its opening editorial called for "the liberation of Africa in the framework of the French Union." From the conciliation of civilizations, he came down to the organization of an inclusive polity in which Africans could both express their personality and remain part of a larger whole: "We say that assimilation is an illusion in a world where peoples have become conscious of their personality; and we affirm that independence is a dream in a world where the interde-

⁶⁶ Léopold Senghor, "Les Négro-Africains et l'Union française," *Réveil*, 24 April 1947.

pendence of peoples affirms itself so manifestly." He was seeking "a new economic and social order," and it was such a transformation that he termed "revolution." His movement would be socialist, but following Marx more in spirit than to the letter.⁶⁷

Aware of talk of European integration taking place, he worried about a new "pacte colonial" that would allow Britain and France to cooperate to more fully exploit their empires. The European connection, however, if used to support social and economic betterment, could prove valuable to Africans: "That is what we call 'vertical solidarity.'"

I will return to the subject of Africans' fears and hopes for a European connection broader than that to France, but now I want to underscore the importance of Senghor's notion of vertical solidarity. He was frankly acknowledging the reality of inequality—especially social and economic inequality. The vertical relationship was still a relationship. Africans had need for such a connection, but only when vertical solidarity was combined with a different sort of relationship. There was "another solidarity, more real because based on ethnology and geography, that is 'horizontal solidarity' that ties together people of the same continent or the same condition." Horizontal solidarity needed to be organized "on the basis of equality among all peoples, whatever their race or religion. For that we need courage and imagination."⁶⁸ Behind this choice of words was a focus on the need for political action: vertical solidarity without the horizontal would be the old colonialism reincarnated, but horizontal solidarity without the vertical would be unity in poverty, a failure to understand the nature of interdependence in the world as it was.

It was in 1948 that Senghor broke with his mentor Lamine Guèye. He was making a personal as well as a political break against the "dictatorship of Lamine" that had dominated Senegal. It was also a reaction against the way in which the Senegalese Socialist Party had become subordinated in its vertical relation to the French party. The party had failed to work against the double college, obtain equal pensions for veterans, or bring about democracy in Algeria. Senghor insisted "we remain faithful to the socialist ideal," but he was founding a new party, the Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (BDS).⁶⁹

Unspoken was the change of political circumstance that was at least as much to Lamine Guèye's credit as to Senghor's, the expansion of the Senegalese electorate following the constitutional reforms of 1946. Lamine Guèye's base in the Quatre Communes was increasingly

overshadowed by the new voters from the inland towns and countryside. Senghor had grasped the opportunity, and—even though he was a Catholic—he was working through the leaders of the Islamic brotherhoods—known as marabouts—who had great influence in rural Senegal. He was engaged in a kind of vertical politics he did not talk about—through power brokers with influence over rural voters, even as he set about cultivating other leaders, such as Ibrahima Sarr, hero of the railway strike of 1947–48.⁷⁰ The Lamine Guèye law was ultimately Lamine Guèye's undoing, as it provided new citizens, new voters, and a new political dynamic that Senghor grasped more quickly.

Senghor saw social rights—not just political ones—flowing from the French Constitution, and he specified what this meant: full access for overseas citizens to civil service jobs, equal wages, equal pensions, and other benefits, administration of enterprises by both metropolitan and indigenous people. None of this, he argued, had been realized, and French funding for development programs, while welcome, was "ridiculously low." The struggle both echoed a European history—seeking the kind of "social conquest wrested in the metropole from the French bourgeoisie"—and had a specifically African element—a struggle against "indigenous feudalities" as well as colonial exploitation.⁷¹

In the light of such aspirations, Senghor wrote on behalf of the BDS, "indigenous nationalism" was "like an old hunting rifle." The colonies were "poorly equipped" even in agriculture, while technology in the metropole was "more and more advanced." These considerations led him to his central theme: "Yes, it is good that the Constitution of the French Union allows us to help ourselves with the experience and resources of France, to develop at the same time, with our economic potential, our own Negro-African personality." But that personality was not closed in on itself. "We are no more racist than regionalist or nationalist. The BDS in defending the Senegalese and African man defends the man of the French Union and the universal man. The 'Human Condition' remains our definitive objective."⁷²

He was equally emphatic about what the movement was not: "The Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais, I affirm once again, is not afflicted with Senegality." He reminded his readers that he had "many times

⁷⁰ See the excellent biography of Senghor, Janet Vaillant, *Black, French, and African: A life of Léopold Sédar Senghor* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

⁷¹ *La Condition Humaine*, 11 July 1948.

⁷² Senghor, "Rapport sur la méthode du Parti," to Congress of BDS, 15–17 April 1949, *La Condition Humaine*, 26 April 1949. Modibo Keita was even more categorical in rejecting the idea that Africa "must evolve on her own." He considered this idea "an imbecilic sectarianism having as a consequence the birth of a retrograde nationalism." Report to 1947 congress of US-RDA, quoted in Konaré, "Le RDA, l'Union soudanaise," 177.

⁶⁷ *La Condition Humaine*, 11 February 1948.

⁶⁸ *La Condition Humaine*, 11 July 1948.

⁶⁹ *La Condition Humaine*, 5, 19 October 1948. On party politics, see Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, de Benoist, *L'Afrique occidentale française*, and Christian Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance 1939–1960* (Paris: Karthala, 2001).

publicly condemned nationalism as an infantile illness that we have to cure.⁷³

These principles were also enunciated by the grouping that Senghor helped to organize, beginning in 1948, inside the Assemblée Nationale, the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). The IOM's policy declaration of 1948—repeated almost verbatim in 1951—rejected the goal of national independence: "The modern world has no room for small economic entities whose independence will be a myth if they are not adequately equipped and if they do not participate in a broader 'union.'" For the IOM, the "temptation of narrow nationalisms represents a grave danger." Its call, repeated in 1953, was for an "economic and social democracy" to be built on the "great emancipatory laws of 1946 crowned by the Constitution." The 1953 manifesto picked up Senghor's call for "vertical solidarity" between France and Africa as well as common action among African territories. As in 1951, it called for the revision of the Constitution in the direction of "an active federalism." The group sought "a double decentralization to the detriment of the central government and the governments general for the benefit of each territory, and then a deconcentration of powers that translates into a democratic extension of the prerogatives of the territorial assemblies."⁷⁴

For Senghor, the issue was reforming the entire French Union. Throughout 1953 and 1954, Senghor's BDS kept calling for constitutional revision and "a great French federation."⁷⁵ But Senghor had to work with a constitution that gestured to federalism and concentrated power in the Assemblée Nationale, precisely the body that was unable to come to grips with electoral reform, Algeria, and other divisive issues. In the end, African deputies would find that their way out of the impasse depended on separating their future from Algeria, a bifurcating of pathways in the remaking of the French Empire, toward war in Algeria and a renegotiated relationship between France and sub-Saharan Africa.

But that is to get ahead of the story. If one looks at party manifestos, articles in African newspapers in the period 1948 to 1956, and legislative interventions by African deputies and councillors, one keeps coming back to claims framed by the Constitution of 1946 and directed toward remedying its inconsistencies, discriminatory structures—and most important—the lingering sense of humiliation that former colonial subjects perceived. Some Africans were still unsure that the con-

⁷³ *La Condition Humaine*, 29 November 1951.

⁷⁴ "Déclaration du groupe interparlementaire des Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (24 Décembre 1948)," and "Situation des Indépendants d'Outre-mer en 1950," copies in AP 2257/3, AOM; Statement of political parties, in Assemblée Nationale, *Débats*, 6 July 1951, 5909; *La Condition Humaine*, 25 February 1953.

⁷⁵ *La Condition Humaine*, 25 February, 2 April 1953, 21 December 1954.

cept of citizenship could work for them, as one can see in the eloquent intervention in July 1950 of Ya Dombia, representative of the Sudan in the Assemblée de l'Union française (and like Modibo Keita a graduate of the École William Ponty). For him, "the question was whether the citizenship that has been conceded was viable and did not create a juridical impasse, for it seems a priori impossible to have the same rights and duties as metropolitan nationals and in addition retain a personal status that in many ways is opposed to French citizenship as an integral whole." In the absence of laws to make clear what personal status signified, there was a risk that citizenship would be limited to equal rights before the penal law and to political rights (themselves compromised by the electoral laws). There were still gaps between the treatment of soldiers and ex-soldiers of the two statuses—"citizens of the same country"—and "racial discrimination that is becoming more and more intolerable" in the pay and benefits of civil servants, depending whether they were of African or European origin or Africans "assimilated" to a "European" status. In some territories, Africans faced discrimination in access to restaurants and cinemas owned by Europeans. "What is the value of this citizenship?" Ya Dombia asked.

And if one looked toward "citizenship extended to citizenship of the French Union" the juridical situation was confusing and contradicted the internal law of certain Associated States. There were, he argued, four types of citizens: of "metropolitan status," of the Quatre Communes of Senegal, of Associated States, and of former subjects or protected persons. All but the first were "citizens of the second zone," their secondary status marked by the double college. The inadequacy of "customary tribunals" weakened the effects of their right to keep their personal status under customary law. There was no clarity in regard to "indigenous property rights." And "in regard to the economic regime, political and social equality remain an empty word in the overseas territories."⁷⁶ But resolving the problem, Ya Dombia and some of his colleagues insisted, was a matter of political will, not an inherent contradiction in the Constitution's conception of citizenship: "It is evident that one can be a citizen, a perfect citizen, under the same fiscal, military, electoral rules as other citizens without, nevertheless, being obliged to adopt the same modes of family life or inheritance regime as one's fellow citizens."⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ya Dombia was presenting to the Assembly a report of the report of the Commission de la Politique Générale. AUF, *Débats*, 25 July 1950, 1122–25. It took the Ministry nearly four years to respond, in an internal memo, to Ya Dombia's points. It claimed progress on most fronts and that further changes were under consideration. Section d'Études, Note pour M. le Directeur du Cabinet du Secrétaire d'État à la FOM, 2 March 1954, AP 217/1, AOM.

⁷⁷ Avis of Commission de la Législation, de la Justice et de la Fonction Publique, des Affaires Administratives et Domaniales, on proposition of Darlan, Ya Dombia, and

Ya Dombia sat in a body that could contribute to the discourse on overseas governance, but not to governance itself, since it was a consultative unit only.⁷⁸ Giving the Assemblée de l'Union française real power in affairs concerning the Union as a whole—that is, making it into something more like a federal legislature—was therefore one point in the reformist agenda.⁷⁹ It ran head-on into the conception of a unitary French state held by many. But it was not a neat left-right issue, since de Gaulle, among others, remained a consistent advocate of some kind of federalism, albeit a federalism with French teeth, while many on the left feared that conservative elements in overseas territories as well as the metropole would undercut a reformist agenda.

The situation offered a potential dynamic. Most French leaders wanted to integrate Africa more closely into France to avoid the dangers of the French Union flying apart. Most African leaders wanted more equality. In a general debate on overseas policy, a social Catholic, MRP-member, Louis-Paul Aujoulat could speak of the need for a “reinforcement of integration” and “reaffirmation of French sovereignty,” and still insist that territories should have more power “to administer themselves all the while remaining fully within the Republic.” The solution, Senghor argued, was not just giving Africans more voice, but democratizing executive authority. However, he noted, there was not one Minister from overseas territories in the government. The centralizing hand on the reigns of power was responsible for the continued existence of the “pacte colonial” and the extremes of economic inequality.⁸⁰ The Minister of Overseas France at the time, Louis Jacquinot, replied to these arguments by emphasizing the progress made in “our large community,” especially the extension of citizenship, which “the people . . . knew how to use wisely.” He promised more power to the local assemblies, so that “the territories can and must develop their own personality.” He raised the “possibility to re-

others to ask government to propose laws “specifying the conditions under which the *ressortissants* of the overseas territories exercise their rights as citizens.” AUF, *Documents*, No. 184, session of 4 July 1950, 219.

⁷⁸Other African legislators complained that even as a French parliamentarians, they faced racial insults in their home territories: “returning home, any ‘petit blanc,’ as we call them, drags us in the mud,” said a councillor from Cameroon. AUF, Report by Commission de la Législation, No. 104, 6 April 1949, copy in 950236/2, CAC, citing the words of M. Okala. Assembly members advocated legislation to ban racial discrimination in such instances, but all they got was a questionable assertion that discrimination was not tolerated any longer. See Minister (Coste-Floret) to High Commissioners and Governors, circular, 15 December 1947, 17G 152, AS.

⁷⁹The President of the Assembly, Daniel Boisdon, claimed it was “an Assembly of Civilizations.” What an assembly of civilizations could actually do was not so clear. “Nous sommes une Assemblée de civilisations,” *Marchés Coloniaux* 3, 111 (27 December 1947), 1845–48.

⁸⁰Senghor and Aujoulat, Assemblée Nationale, *Débats*, 6 April 1954, 1913, 1925–26.

form Title VIII of the Constitution,” claiming this was the first time a Minister had suggested such a possibility.⁸¹

It did not happen. There were some reformist successes: steps toward equalizing the rates of pay and benefits of civil servants in 1950, the labor code of 1952, more Africans voting in elections.⁸² But attempts to advance universal suffrage and end the double college ran into a stone wall, and more fundamental revision of the Constitution was caught in the instability of governments in the Fourth Republic. And there was also an element of distrust that led even African deputies to wonder if universal suffrage might be used against them. Houphouët-Boigny—even before the conflict in the Côte d'Ivoire became acute—worried about the “meddling of the local administration in elections”: chiefs, themselves not chosen by the local inhabitants, might intervene, so that enrolling more rural voters might produce an electorate more under the thumb of the administration. He did not think universal suffrage would be possible until the état-civil was fully extended, and meanwhile he preferred extending “conditions of capacity”—presumably focusing on people whose ability to register and vote freely was less subject to manipulation. In 1951, it was Senghor who was arguing that universal suffrage, for practical reasons, took time to install, and he too invoked the inadequacy of the état-civil and the impossibility of putting it into place before the next electoral cycle.⁸³ But as we have already seen, the process of generalizing the état-civil was itself hung up, and indeed universal suffrage would be implemented before an état-civil had been put in place.

What went on beyond AOF was on people's minds. In 1951, Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party won legislative elections in the Gold Coast, and Nkrumah emerged from detention to become Leader of Government Business, a kind of apprentice prime minister. He would lead his country to independence in 1957. In 1954, the French government—under pressure from the UN Trusteeship Council as well as from local politicians—reformed the government of Togo in a way that many Africans desired. A Conseil de gouvernement (Cabinet), with half of its members coming from the Territorial Assembly, took charge of administering the country, with the Governor presiding over the council but with limited powers to act independently of it. Nicolas Grunitzky, deputy from Togo, pointed out

⁸¹Ibid., 9 April 1954, 2023, 2025.

⁸²The party newspaper *La Condition Humaine* (2 May 1950, 15 March 1952) gave Senghor credit for some of the advances.

⁸³Commission de la FOM, sessions of, 6, 11 April, 22 May 1951, C/15408, ANF. Lamine Guéye blamed his loss in the 1951 elections in part on irregularities in the hastily arranged process of registering new voters. Notes de M. Mecheri à l'attention de M. le Président, 2 July 1951, 4AG 518, ANF.

in Paris that the project for Togo's government had originally been presented in 1952. In the meantime, he noted, "the installation of the Nkrumah government has become for Africans, and especially for Togolese, a true pole of attraction."⁸⁴ And looming above the politicians who wanted to reform the French Union was the French defeat in Vietnam in 1954 and the situation in Algeria, where war began in earnest in that same year. Things were moving across the French Union, but would they move together or along separate paths?

Rethinking Sovereignty

To rewrite the Constitution meant to think about the Union as a whole. By focusing on this level, African leaders pushed the Ministry and leading French politicians to ask themselves whether they wished to think systematically about the questions left unanswered in the Assemblée Nationale Constituante in 1946 or else about the mix of reform and repression that would keep each component in the Union. It was not clear in the early 1950s that the French Union was viable at all.

The comprehensive approach was most clearly expressed by Senghor in an article in the journal *La Nef* in June 1955. He cited the tradition in the Constitution between the preamble, which stressed equality, and the body, which conferred power on institutions dominated by the metropole. Subsequent governments had insisted on the unity and indivisibility of the Republic—a "sterile" formula, unsatisfactory to the people of Asia, Africa, or North Africa. With no progress toward federalism, it was necessary to think differently, and Senghor turned to the concept of confederation—an ensemble that would recognize the national personality, not just the autonomy of component parts. That Morocco and Tunisia seemed headed toward independence raised "the possibility for France to create, with other 'independent states' a confederation to which all would concede limitations of sovereignty." Senghor was putting other states of the former empire on a par with France and making the crucial point that all—Morocco, Tunisia, and a reformed France—could cede some of their sovereignty to the confederation.

Senghor spelled out institutional arrangements to make a confederal government work. The French Republic would become a federal republic within the confederation, and making it federal would entail increasing the representation of Algeria, the overseas territories, and the overseas departments in Parliament. Here he alluded to the noto-

rious words of Herriot from 1946, insisting that overseas citizens did not want France to become the colony of its former colonies. They did not want France to lose its personality any more than they wanted to lose theirs: "African nationalism is willing to renounce the nation, but not the African *patrie*."

Senghor was distinguishing, as he had in his literary writing, between nation—a political creation—and *patrie*, the sentiment of belonging. His notion of the "petite patrie" had both African and French roots—his own Serer origins and resentment against the larger and more domineering Wolof of Senegal melded with the romance of the "terroir-province" in France.⁸⁵ It was the place of the nation in political institutions that had to be rethought. To do so meant rewriting the Constitution to transform the "the unitary Republic, centralized and centralizing into a federal Republic, on the model of Canada, Switzerland, or West Germany." Algeria and the overseas territories and departments would have internal autonomy within this federal republic: "The *nation* and sovereignty would be the French state," even if the "*patrie*" lay in more diverse sentiments. The federal government would be in charge of foreign affairs, defense, money, and economic coordination. Everything else would be the concern of local governments and their legislatures. And the individual territories would be free to federate among themselves within the Republic. The already diverse Republic could then join Morocco and other former Associated States as partners in a confederation.

He came back to a theme he had earlier articulated for his African audience: the choice between "total independence" and "assimilation" was a "false dilemma." Nationalism was in "complete contradiction" with technology and science. Different people lived with their "complementarity."⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Etienne Smith, "Senghor voulait qu'on soit tous des Senghor": Parcours nostalgiques d'une génération," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire* 118 (2013): 97–100.

⁸⁶ Léopold Senghor, "Pour une solution fédéraliste," *La Nef* Cahier 9 (June 1955), 148–61. This issue also included pieces on the future of the French Union by Gaston Monnerville, René de Lacharrière, J.-M. Domenach, Maurice Duverger, and François Mitterrand. Mitterrand must have angered Senghor by asserting, "African youth does not have morally, professionally, or civically perspectives that are large enough, varied enough, complete enough in the current limits of our system" to make nationalist aspirations possible to fulfill. But he also wrote, "It is in effect difficult to hold to the notion of a unitary Republic from Lille to Brazzaville and from Pointe-Noire to Fort-Lamy." So one had to "soften the unitary Republic" and federate associated states. "Paradoxes et promesses de l'Union française," *La Nef* Cahier 9 (June 1955): 223–31, 230, 231 quoted. Duverger despaired of both the assimilation of the left and the paternalism of the right and concluded his essay by asking, "will the ruin of the Empire be completed before the generations can undertake its transformation into a Commonwealth?" "Une course contre la montre," *La Nef* Cahier 9 (June 1955): 212–22, 222 quoted.

⁸⁴ Assemblée Nationale, *Débats*, 3 November 1954, 4692, 4694. Senghor made a similar point about the importance of neighbors acceding to internal autonomy, and used this as an argument for reform of Title VIII. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1954, 5618.

In the midst of uncertainty, Senghor had sketched out a program for remaking state and nation in a multitiered structure. He was aware of the different ways in which liberty could be exercised, and he could at the same time celebrate the extension of citizenship to ex-slaves in the 1790s and criticize the Jacobin framework in which this move had been made. His own thinking about federation and confederation was evolving. In 1948, he had used the word "confederation" to emphasize a composite polity that recognized difference among its components, whereas "federation" presumed equivalence of the units being federated.⁸⁷ In 1953, he was not making much of this distinction, but rather trying to argue for a supple form of federation itself: "Within the French Union, organized in a flexible federation—or in confederation—would be, alongside the kingdoms or republics of Asia and Africa, a *Federal French Republic*." The "flexible federation" or "confederation" would include this federal republic, plus the Associated States of Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Morocco, and Tunisia.⁸⁸ In 1955, he had become explicit. He was advocating a three-way structure, beginning with individual territories or states: the federation would embrace citizens of the Republic, in both Africa or Europe. The confederation would be multinational—Moroccans, Vietnamese, French, and so on. As we shall see, after 1956, his position would shift again: he would then advocate an *African* federation, which would take its place in a confederation alongside France and whatever other parts of the former French Empire chose (freely) to remain or join.

The pattern reflects an increasing assertiveness of a distinct African vocation within the French Union, but he was consistent in regarding the French Union as an ensemble of nonequivalent components, descended from empire's mode of governing different people differently. Senghor took such a complex entity as a historical fact. For him, the Union posed the immense danger of discrimination and exploitation and the immense possibility of interconnection, of mutual learning, and of social progress.

The most radical challenge to these reformist arguments came from student groups, particularly from Africans in Paris. They were not a large part of the overseas student population in Paris: of students from the French Union in French universities, only 251 came from AOF, 38 from AEF, compared to 1,123 from Algeria, 764 from Tunisia, 532

from Morocco, 890 from the states of Indochina, 707 from the Caribbean region, and a scattering from elsewhere.⁸⁹

The Association des Étudiants du RDA had, according to police, close connections to the PCF and had opposed the RDA leadership's decision to end the parties' legislative alliance. By 1952, the monthly bulletin of the association, the *Voix de l'Afrique Noire*, published in Paris, was setting forth a clear call for "the liquidation of the entire colonial system of imperialism" and for "political, economic, social and cultural emancipation in view of national independence." The students, with a bit of sarcasm probably directed at Senghor, stressed the integrity of their own effort "that does not depend essentially on the claim-making eloquence of such and such a deputy in a European Chamber or Assembly." Their manifestos were anticapitalist as well as anticolonialist, emphasized the need to jar rural Africa out of its "ignorance," and called for an effort to forge among Africans "a modern mentality (the only guarantee of adaptation to current life) without being obliged to pass through foreign modes of expression, which would be illusory." But the students writing for the *Voix de l'Afrique Noire* did not forget who they were: "We do not have the right to forget that our particular task as students is to pursue our studies and bring them to a conclusion." They were concerned with scholarships as well as liberation, and both were on the agenda at meetings when students came from France to Senegal on vacation. The police were keeping a careful eye on all this activity, and duly noted the militancy of the group's main leaders, Cheikh Anta Diop and Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, who by 1958 would become important figures on the radical side of Senegalese politics. Police reports, however, do not suggest that the radical movement was yet extending much beyond the student milieu.⁹⁰

If the student movement's most important linkage was to the PCF in France, Senghor and his colleagues were engaged in a dialogue with other parts of the French political spectrum. In books and journals, intellectuals were willing to ask fundamental questions about the nature of the French state in their uncertain times, reflections that both overlapped and differed from those coming out of Africa. A book published in 1950 by a high civil servant, jurist, and political journalist, Henri Culmann, brought out a postimperial perspective—

⁸⁹ AFP bulletin, 17 February 1953, citing the Bureau Universitaire de Statistiques, AP 2265, AOM.

⁹⁰ *La Voix de l'Afrique Noire*, *Bulletin Mensuel de l'Association des Étudiants RDA*, February 1952, copy in 21G 209, AS. For reports on meetings of the association and other police surveillance, see Chef de Sûreté, A. Laporte, "Étude sur les revendications et les activités politiques des étudiants Africains," 23 August 1951; Direction des Renseignements Généraux, Sûreté Nationale, Section "Union française," report on "Activités des étudiants africains en France," nd [1951]; Renseignements, 22 July 1952, 28 November 1952] 29 December 1953, 21G 209, AS.

⁸⁷ *La Condition Humaine*, 5 October 1948. He was reacting in this instance to a publication of the Socialist Paul Alduy, "Confédération et Fédération."

⁸⁸ "Socialisme, Fédération, Religion," from Rapport sur la méthode de Ve congrès du BDS, 3-5 July 1953, reprinted in *Liberté II: Nation et vote africaine du socialisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), 105.

thinking through empire to something new.⁹¹ Culmann wrote, "The French Union was not born in 1946 by a promulgation but in 1636, by the arrival of the first Frenchman in the first colony and his encounter with the first inhabitant."⁹² The question for him was how a highly unequal structure created by empire could evolve. Societies within the Union should have their own laws and legislatures "on an equal footing." His precedent for such legal pluralism was the Ottoman Empire: "This organization functioned for 388 years in the Turkish empire, which extended from Algeria to Tibet, through the regime of capitulations."⁹³ But the present Union had a contradiction at its core: all people within it were in theory equal, but only as individuals, while the overseas territories, not being self-governing, had a status that had only slightly changed from that of colony. But what sort of entity was the French Union? "It is this ensemble—this collective unity one might say—that has the quality of a state. Metropolitan France is not by itself a state."⁹⁴

Not everyone agreed that the French Union was a state, and the French Republic was not.⁹⁵ But for Culmann the metropole was not a discrete state, but part of something bigger and more diverse—a consequence of the "colonial fact." In a world that now demanded "the universal equality of men in rights and freedom" such a nested polity had to be transformed by dividing power among its different levels.⁹⁶

Socialist politician Paul Alduy also set out his thinking about sovereignty and the state in a book published in 1948. He saw the French Union as "a sort of super-state harmonizing the metropole-colony relationship, transposing overseas these principles of liberty and equality that the French seem hitherto to have jealously guarded for themselves alone. . . . If the French want to base a long-term politics on the free consent of peoples, they do not have a choice of the means. There is only one of them: efface oneself before the sovereignty of

the Union recognized as superior to that of France."⁹⁷ Culmann and Alduy, by locating state and sovereignty above the French Republic, were reversing the current constitution's vesting ultimate sovereignty in a national assembly. Much as both of them differed from Senghor, they were all trying to develop a political form that did not fit into either the framework of empire or that of equivalent states. Such views were now thinkable among respectable members of the French political establishment.

In 1953 and 1954, as things were going from bad to worse in Vietnam, Algeria, and Morocco, the journal *Politique Étrangère* published a series of articles on the dangers and possibilities facing the French Union. Opinions ranged from the complacent defense of French accomplishments overseas by General Georges Catroux to a biting indictment of French failures to live up to promises by Léopold Senghor. But when it came to the future, both ends of the spectrum were calling for a similar solution: "that the French Republic and the Associated States should remain in a federation run by a true federal system and that the autonomy conceded within the French Republic should become effective" (Catroux); "the true solution to the problem is a Federation" (Senghor). Catroux's federation would be headed by a France that was "disinterested" and a "tutelary guide," but it would have to give up its pretensions to be a unitary state. Senghor denounced the very idea of "la République une et indivisible": it would not only be "the death of autochthonous civilizations" but of France itself, for it would imply that "three hundred Arab-Berber and Black deputies" would come to Paris—the Herriot problem once again. The solution was his combination of federal and confederal structures, but above all a step-by-step process of "raising the former colonies to the level of the metropole, on the basis of equality of rights and duties, which is the principle of the Federation."⁹⁸

But could the high officials of the government entertain such a thorough rethinking of state and sovereignty? The Minister of Overseas France, Louis Jacquinot, on a visit to West Africa in March 1954, admitted that constitutional reform was necessary. Even the double college had to be considered anew, although he made no promises to get

⁹⁷ Alduy did not worry that by diluting its formal power France would in practice give up too much, for it would retain "the preponderant role justly conferred on it by her economic and military power, the size of her population, the quality of her elites." Alduy, *L'Union française*, 23, 32, 83, 86–90.

⁹⁸ Georges Catroux, "L'Union française, son concept, son état, ses perspectives," *Politique Étrangère* 18, 4 (1953): 233–66, 262, 264 quoted; Léopold Sédar Senghor, "L'avenir de la France dans l'Outre-Mer," *Politique Étrangère* 19, 4 (1954): 419–26, 421, 423 quoted. In this series, see also XXX [Anonymous], "Union française et institutions européennes," *Politique Étrangère* 18, 4 (1953): 267–76, and P.-O. Lapie, "Conception unitaire ou conception pluraliste de la Communauté française," *Politique Étrangère* 19 (1954): 437–44.

⁹¹ Henri Culmann, *L'Union française* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950).

See also Boisdon, *Institutions de l'Union française*; René Jacquinot, *États-Unis de France: Ce que doit être l'Union française* (Paris: Larose, 1953); Paul Alduy, *L'Union française: Mission de la France* (Paris: Fosquelle Editeurs, 1948); A. Fauchon-Villeplée, *Constitution et Union française* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1953).

⁹² Culmann, *L'Union française*, 133.

⁹³ For an interempire perspective, see Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁹⁴ Culmann, *L'Union française*, 17, 31, 34, 72–73, 131.

⁹⁵ The jurist Borella wrote in 1958, "The French Union is not a state, but an international community composed of entities recognized by international law." Borella, *Évolution politique*, 54.

⁹⁶ Culmann, *L'Union française*, 125–26, 135.

rid of it. He understood that the Union would have to evolve as some kind of complex structure, with powers located in different places: "Our century has largely gone beyond the stage of narrow nationalisms. The future of the world belongs to large economic and political ensembles." African voices would have to be heard, and this would mean that "particular issues" would be decided by "different collectivities," including communal, territorial, and federal assemblies. But about sovereignty, he brooked no ambivalence: the *Assemblée Nationale* "should naturally conserve its entire sovereignty." On matters that applied to all citizens, including public liberties, criminal penalties, military recruitment, and "political organization," its power would remain intact. Perhaps local assemblies could make decisions in more domains, but subject to review in Paris.⁹⁹

Within the Ministry, officials were questioning the centralization of administrative authority more than sovereignty. Ministry inspectors, evaluating how policies were being implemented, drew attention to the need for what as early as 1948 was called "bureaucratic decongestion." Citizenship had widened the domain in which Paris thought it should act and contributed to administrative blockages. The lack of authority of territorial legislatures made things worse. Personnel all over AOF now had to be administered through the same mechanisms under the same rules.¹⁰⁰

The Ministry, as of 1953, was of two minds about centralization. The federations of AOF and AEF, with their ability to coordinate policy over multiple territories under the eyes of a powerful High Commissioner, had been in place since 1895 and had become even more relevant as a unit of planning in postwar circumstances. They combined diverse resources and the possibility of economies of scale, and they were consistent with an alleged "historical evolution tends toward the creation of large political units." Decentralization might seem to bring government closer to the people, but a strategy of focusing on "small territories," some of them very poor in comparison to others, was risky. Territorial autonomy could lead to a "centrifugal tendency of nationalism" or perhaps to "regionalism" (in one document in the archives, "nationalism" is crossed out and "regionalism" substituted). In the

⁹⁹ Jacquinet, speech to Grand Conseil de l'AOF, 2 March 1954, text in 17G 518, AS.

¹⁰⁰ "Rapport sur la Décentralisation en AOF" by P. Chavuet, Inspecteur Général des Affaires Administratives, 29 May 1948, 18G 281, AS; Inspecteur Général de la FOM, Chef de la Mission d'Inspection en AOF, to High Commissioner, 14 August 1954, along with enclosed reports, 18G 238, AS; Robert Delavignette, Note for the Minister, 25 November 1950, AP 492, AOM. In 1950, the Minister noted the calls for decentralization and asked the High Commissioners for their views, but pointed out that the principle of "Governments General is not and should not be put in question." Six years later they were in question. Minister to High Commissioners, AOF and AEF, 7 June 1950, AP 218/1, AOM.

opposite argument, AOF and AEF were portrayed as "a screen" between Paris and the territories that might slow communication, raise expenses, and make the work of a governor more difficult.¹⁰¹

But if the Ministry was thinking inconsistently about administrative decentralization, African leaders were campaigning for *political* decentralization—for real power to be located in African legislatures. Senghor had called in 1951 for "a double decentralization to the detriment of the central government and the governments general for the profit of each territory, followed by a deconcentration of power that takes the form of a democratic extension of the prerogatives of the territorial assemblies."¹⁰² Senghor was ahead of French officialdom in seeing decentralization as a fundamentally political problem, but he was getting ahead of himself in not focusing on the implications that relocating power to territories would have on his hopes for federal and confederal structures—an issue that would come to haunt him after 1956. We will take up these issues in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, African deputies and some of their allies—still trying to improve the political structures in which they operated—submitted to the *Assemblée Nationale* in April 1955 a proposed resolution calling for revision of Title VIII of the Constitution that would ensure territories were "integrated—in stages—into a federal French Republic." The deputies were quite sure what they did not want: "It would be folly for poor territories of 500,000 to three million inhabitants to wish to constitute themselves in so-called independent nations." Put together, the different parts of the Union would create a confederation of Associated States, based on principles of equality and non-discrimination." The revised constitution would specify general principles, and organic laws would fill in the details. Such an entity would take fifteen years to create. The Assembly agreed that Title VIII needed to be "revised," but the discussion did not make clear how.¹⁰³

Officials in the Ministry knew that Title VIII was flawed. But officials also knew that the process of constitutional revision was long, and they could not agree whether to devolve more power to territorial institutions or maintain a centralized planning process and authority to bring about reforms. They almost instinctively argued that the power of Governors and High Commissioners had to be preserved. And they were well aware of the pressure from Africans to cede ground

¹⁰¹ Ministère de la FOM, Section d'Études, "Note sur la décentralisation," 2 December 1953, AP 492, AOM. This report even raised the possibility of breaking up AOF into two federations, Dahomey-Niger-Togo vs. the more western territories, each seen to be a more coherent geographic unit.

¹⁰² *Assemblée Nationale, Débats*, 24 July 1951, 6044.

¹⁰³ *La Condition Humaine*, 22 April 1955; *Assemblée Nationale, Débats*, 24 May 1955, 2943–45, 2962.

to the territorial assemblies.¹⁰⁴ With the situation in the Associated States and Algeria falling apart around them, they were not sure that any constitutional reform could apply to the French Union as a whole.

"Eurafrique"

There was another perspective from which sovereignty and authority were being rethought in the early 1950s: *Europe*. Already in 1949, African leaders were becoming aware that their French compatriots were talking with other European leaders about some sort of framework for common institutions. There was a long way to go before arriving at the confederal structure and shared sovereign functions of the European Union today, but the possibility was on the table early on. The first concrete step was the Coal and Steel Community, agreed to in 1951, followed by the European Economic Community in 1957. But even before 1950, the possibility of European political cooperation—perhaps based on a confederal structure with a European parliament of some sort—was being discussed in French political circles. In 1949, Senghor felt he had to remind the *Assemblée Nationale* that, as France considered its position in Europe, "in terms of the Constitution, the French Republic is not just composed of the metropole, but also of overseas departments and territories." France was not, in short, a European country. On this point, government officials agreed: "France is not a European power. It is a world power."¹⁰⁵

In 1950, Senghor sent to the Minister of Overseas France a resolution of the IOM, then representing forty of the sixty-seven overseas deputies in the Assembly, expressing their concern that negotiations over Europe were going on over their heads and that French African territories risked becoming "an international colony." Instead, they insisted "that Eurafrique, notably, which we believe to be necessary and possible, should be conceived of only as a form of economic association, freely conceived on the basis of equality, where the present and future interests of Africa will be protected under the same conditions as those of Europe." Africans did not want their continent to become a "reservoir of primary material and an outlet for [Europe's] excessive production." Nor did they want to open it up to extensive European immigration. The Minister replied by claiming to share the IOM's preoccupations. He told them that the presence of Africans in Parliament

¹⁰⁴Unsigned, undated paper reporting on meeting of Minister (Teitgen) and cabinet, 4 May 1955, AP 492, AOM.

¹⁰⁵Senghor, Intervention in *Assemblée Nationale*, 18 September 1949, reprinted in *Liberté II*, 60; Directeur Général des Affaires Politiques, "Note sur la position des territoires d'outre-mer dans la question de l'intégration européenne," 14 October 1952, K. Afrique 1944–1952/Généralités/L'Europe et l'Afrique, ADLC.

and in local assemblies ensured that African interests would be represented. He thought access to a larger European market would benefit Africa and European immigration would be restrained. He anointed himself "your interpreter in respect of the Government to defend African interests."¹⁰⁶

In August 1950, not long after the above resolution was sent to the Ministry, Senghor joined one of the bodies discussing how to put Europe together, the *Assemblée Consultative Européenne* (in Strasbourg) and, along with a British and another African colleague, submitted a resolution calling for "a constituent assembly for Africa and for the establishment of the United States of Africa." They proposed a European and African commission that would prepare for elections in each colonial assembly of representatives to a "Pan-African assembly" to study such possibilities. Senghor soon backed off the proposal, saying that he wanted these ideas discussed, not that he believed in them. What he wanted to get on the table was his conception of Eurafrique, growing out of his vision of horizontal and vertical solidarities:

The only efficacious solution thus lies in federation. . . . In my opinion this federation must be made along two axes of solidarity. On the one hand, vertical solidarity between the overseas peoples and those of Europe on the model of the French Union. On the other hand, horizontal solidarity among the peoples of the same continent. . . . This is the only chance for Europe and Africa to save themselves, for these complementary continents, united by the same destiny, by history and geography. . . . Neither nationalist nor racist, I continue with men of good will the fight for Eurafrique. It is self-evident that the latter cannot be that of Hitler, but a federal, democratic Africa, in dignity and honor, that is in equality, the condition of fraternity.¹⁰⁷

As Senghor well knew, Eurafrique was a concept with a past. It had been invoked in the 1930s by French ideologues eager to gloss the complementary destinies of Europe and Africa in a particular way: a combination of African resources in raw materials and raw labor and European resources in technology, manufacturing, and governance. The idea appealed to Vichy, and to Nazis as well: a Eurafrique of combined and uneven development. For some defenders of the French presence in North Africa after the war, Eurafrique was an appealing notion, for Algeria, Morocco, and Algeria could be the linchpin of a vast regional economic system, and perhaps the benefits accruing to

¹⁰⁶"Résolution du Groupe Interparlementaire des Indépendants d'Outre-mer à propos des décisions de la conférence de Londres," enclosed Senghor to Minister, 16 May 1950, and Minister (Jean Letourneau) to Senghor, 9 June 1950, AP 219/3, AOM.

¹⁰⁷*Le Monde*, 15, 26 August 1950.

its inhabitants would give a bit of legitimacy to a continued French presence.¹⁰⁸

Senghor was turning the idea around: Europe's claim to Africa was Africa's claim on Europe. The issue was practical, but also civilizational, the complementarity between European and African modes of being, the former rationalist, the latter intuitive. He saw Eurafrika in such terms—as long as colonialism was thoroughly repudiated.¹⁰⁹ For Africans, the difficulty of integrating France's African territories into a European community was also the interest in doing so: the huge gap between the standard of living on opposite sides of the Mediterranean and the hope of allocating resources to bring about greater equality and more balanced forms of economic interaction.¹¹⁰

The call for a United States of Africa was a false alarm perhaps, but the resolution submitted to the Assemblée Consultative Européenne frightened the Overseas Ministry. "The idea of a United States of Africa is dangerous," contended a study group in the Ministry. "It would lead to the dislocation of the French Republic whose overseas territories would separate in order to become, from then on, a part of an African confederation." But if France wanted to keep pan-African unity out of discussions of pan-European unity, it had to give its Africans a place in those discussions. Overseas territories could participate in "a Eurafrikan community," the study group insisted, only "by the inter-mediation of the French Republic." Still, Africans had to be consulted on such a process and they "would without doubt react very violently" if such a community were constructed over their heads.¹¹¹

Everyone concerned was on uncertain terrain. Indeed, the idea of Europe—let alone Eurafrika—generated confusion as well as passion. Some sort of economic and political community appeared to many in the late 1940s to be a way of ensuring that the history of two world wars would not repeat itself; economic cooperation promised bigger markets, more secure supplies of raw materials, and an alternative to economic nationalism. But many French leaders worried about giving up too much sovereignty and especially that Germany might play too

¹⁰⁸ Charles-Robert Ageron, "L'idée d'Eurafrique et le débat franco-allemand de l'entre-deux-guerres," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 23 (1975): 446–75; Papa Dramé and Samir Saul, "Le projet d'Eurafrique en France (1946–1960): quête de puissance ou atavisme colonial?" *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 216 (2004): 95–114.

¹⁰⁹ Senghor made the connection between civilization complementarity and Eurafrika in "L'Afrique et l'Europe: Deux mondes complémentaires," *Marchés Coloniaux*, 14 May 1955, reprinted in *Liberté II*, 148–57.

¹¹⁰ Such an argument for historical interdependence and the need for future development was the gist of a speech given by the Senator from Senegal Ousmane Soce Diop to the assembly in Strasbourg, a copy of which he sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 22 August 1950, K.Afrique 1944–1952/Généralités/subdossier L'Europe et l'Afrique, ADLC.

¹¹¹ Affaires Politiques, Section d'Études, Note, 26 March 1952, AP 219/3, AOM.

big a role. Opinions on Europe did not divide neatly along left-right lines.¹¹²

Many advocates of European cooperation did not want to be seen as jettisoning Africa in favor of Europe; they argued for integrating the two. Some saw Eurafrika as a way of extending social democracy over much of the world; others were more interested in expanding Europe's access to Africa's raw materials.¹¹³ Some saw a federal Eurafrika as an alternative to the Soviet and American blocs. But there were doubts about how much of the costs of developing and defending Africa France's European partners would be willing to undertake, how willing they would be to listen to Africans' opinions, and how much they expected to get from an enlarged economic community. Some French leaders embraced Europe because they thought that the burdens of empire could be shared, while others feared that France's European partners could benefit from Africa's markets and leave France with the costs.¹¹⁴ Some thought that integrating Africa into Europe would give Africans incentives to cooperate and save France from losing its influence overseas; others feared that integrating Africa into Europe would allow African politicians to act in cooperation with European politicians whose interests diverged from those of the metropolitan. There was uncertainty in different parts of the political spectrum over whether European integration would upset the cohesion of the French Union or whether including the overseas territories would undermine the cohesion of Europe. The upshot in the early 1950s was that France proved cautious about European integration even as it was debating how to reconfigure its empire. A negotiated European defense pact was refused ratification in the Assemblée Nationale; eco-

¹¹² The divisions—and shifting alliances—are too complex to be analyzed here. See Yves Montarolo, *L'Eurafrique, contrepoint de l'idée de l'Europe: Le cas français de la deuxième guerre mondiale aux négociations des Traités de Rome* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2010), and Marie-Thérèse Bitsch and Gérard Bossuat, eds., *L'Europe unie et l'Afrique: de l'idée d'Eurafrique à la convention de Lomé I* (Brussels: Bruylant, 2005). Some advocates of European integration believed they could get support in France only if they ensured that the overseas territories would have a place within it. Anne-Laure Olivier, "Entre Europe et Afrique: Gaston Defferre et les débuts de la construction européenne," *Terrains et Travaux* 8 (2005): 14–33, esp. 20. Business interests gave Eurafrika mitigated support, seeing possibilities for profit but fearing loss of control. Catherine Hodeir, *Stratégies d'Empire: Le grand patronat colonial face à la décolonisation* (Paris: Belin, 2003), 273, 278.

¹¹³ Jean-Marie Palayret, "Les mouvements proeuropéens et la question de l'Eurafrique, du Congrès de La Haye à la Convention de Yaoundé (1948–1963)," in Bitsch and Bossuat, *L'Europe unie et l'Afrique*, 185–229, esp. 193–200, 205.

¹¹⁴ The economist Jacques Lecaillon emphasized that France lacked the means to respond to the "growing demands" of the overseas territories. But the thrust of his analysis was that he could not imagine France without the overseas territories or Europe without France. "L'intégration de l'Union française dans l'Union européenne et les enseignements de la théorie économique," *Annales Africaines* 1954, 19–48, 19 quoted.

nomic cooperation was limited for the time being to steel and coal. The Common Market would only come into being under the Treaty of Rome of 1957.

It was into this realm of disagreement and uncertainty that African politicians stepped with their insistence that they had to have a place in whatever institutions were governing Europe. As Senghor told the *Assemblée Nationale* in 1952, "Eurafrica will not be built without the consent of Africans." If the government wanted to negotiate to protect French agriculture—or to enlarge its markets—it could not forget the overseas territories. And Africa had much to offer to France's position within Europe: "Eurafrican France of 88 million inhabitants will be in the first place, as much by the number of its inhabitants as by its resources of all varieties."¹¹⁵

Senghor kept up his involvement in European fora, appearing before the "Ad hoc assembly charged with developing a draft treaty instituting a European political community" in January 1953. He insisted that under the French Constitution overseas territories were an integral part of the Republic, and therefore "enter by right in the European political community." He insisted, "I am impassioned by the Eurafrican idea." And that meant overseas participation in European institutions. There was talk of creating a *Chambre des Peuples* that would be a key element of a federal Europe, and Senghor proposed that the overseas departments and territories be allotted twenty seats, with sixty-three going to the metropole, a modest proposal, he thought, given that the overseas and metropolitan populations were relatively equal. Europe had to be faithful to its own ideals—the value of the "human person"—and it could therefore not exclude millions of persons. And he had a warning, put in terms of one of his favorite phrases: "Africa has the mystique of equality in cooperation. If you refuse to satisfy it, the men of good will that we are will become tomorrow, in twenty or thirty years, 'collaborators' in the eyes of the young generations." Africans supported the European Community, notably the reconciliation of Germany and France, but they refused to be "the pages that carry the bride's veil, we refuse to be the wedding presents or the china" of the household. Participation in governing institutions was a matter of shared humanity, but also of interests, which were not

necessarily the same for overseas and metropolitan citizens: "Culturally, politically, we are French, we expect to be French, we want to enter into the Community in the French framework, but economically [our] interests are not the same."¹¹⁶

Senghor's intervention caused consternation in Paris.¹¹⁷ The Political Affairs section of the Ministry recognized its dilemma. If France joined a larger European entity without its overseas territories, it was effectively breaking up the French Union. If it joined with them, then African representatives would participate actively, bringing problems before European bodies. "Up to the present our Republic made itself understood with one French voice." But now they faced the reality that there were multiple French voices. Officials claimed that overseas representatives would pose demands on behalf of their territories, making "a harmonious development plan" harder to achieve. Overseas representatives to a European institution could find non-French allies, leaving representatives of metropolitan France wondering if they had become "the colonies of Europe." The study group of 1953 concluded that it needed to build "a solid barrier" against proposals like those of Senghor. Worried as well about Africans' connections to each other, it fell back on a notion of a unitary—but presumably Franco-African—state: "The only counterweight to separatist Pan-Africanism is the unity of the Republic and not a federalism that carries the seed of disaggregation."¹¹⁸

Africans' insistence on participation in any European venture had a solid constitutional basis, which Senghor did not hesitate to make explicit: sovereignty lay in the people, and Africans were among the people. Africans deputies, including Senghor, Abbas Guèye, and Jean-Hilaire Aubame, kept reminding their colleagues that Africans

¹¹⁶ Senghor's interventions before *Assemblée Ad Hoc* chargée d'élaborer un projet de *Traité instituant une Communauté Politique Européenne*, Strasbourg, 8–9 January 1953, AP 219/3, AOM. Later that year, Senghor worried that French officials were trying to construct "a resolutely European Europe." Speech in *Assemblée Nationale*, 18 November 1953, cited in *La Condition Humaine*, 10 December 1953.

¹¹⁷ However, some MRP leaders, notably Pierre-Henri Teigen, shared Senghor's desire to integrate Africa into the European Community. Teigen was at loggerheads with many of his colleagues. See Montarolo, *L'Eurafrrique*, esp. 104–5, 137–39.

¹¹⁸ *Directeur des Affaires Politiques*, "Note: La République française et la Fédération européenne," 28 January 1953, AP 219/3, AOM. The Juriconsulte of the Ministry, noting that the project for Europe constituted a confederation, pointed out that it would in effect create a "common citizenship" of Europe, in which citizens of each member would have rights in the others—something on a European scale like the citizenship of the French Union. Note pour M. le Directeur des Affaires Politiques, 9 February 1953, AP 219/3, AOM.

¹¹⁵ Senghor to *Assemblée Nationale*, 17 January 1952, reprinted in *Liberté II*, 91, 93. The *Groupe des Indépendants d'Outre-Mer* had earlier issued a manifesto insisting that the entry of French Africa in "an expanded European union . . . can be imagined neither without the consent of Africans nor at the price of economic or industrial stagnation of their territories nor without the active participation of Africa in the advantages of the system." Statement of IOM at opening of session of *Assemblée Nationale*, *Débats*, 6 July 1951, 5909.

insisted not only on having the benefits of integration, but on participating in developing and managing it. Senghor warned that failure to include the French Union in Europe would lead "directly to the secession of the overseas countries."¹¹⁹ One of the most influential Socialist leaders and future Minister of Overseas France, Gaston Defferre, grasped the stakes: "The exclusion of the overseas countries, particularly the overseas departments and territories, that is the territories of the Republic, in the event of the integration of the metropole into a European community could only be considered by the peoples of these countries as an act of discrimination of a colonial, even racist, character."¹²⁰

The race word had been spoken, the danger of splitting apart the French Union invoked. For Defferre, Europe could not be built at the expense of the French Union: "Let us not forget either that France without the French Union would no longer be a nation of world importance, would become a small nation whose population, economic resources, territory, strategic positions would be all the more limited given that she finds herself in Europe faced with powers that are expanding and might not, perhaps, take their time to dominate us." A convinced Europeanist, he thought that the only way to proceed was to make the new community more inclusive but less ambitious in its initial goals: specific agreements for cooperation on the line of the Coal and Steel Community, rather than a full-blown common market, would allow for the working out of a positive relationship between Europe and overseas France.¹²¹

The opening of the European question was forcing an ongoing reconsideration of the Union question, just at a moment when some were arguing that only federalism would keep the Union from falling apart. Might Eurafica be a better alternative than "France" to the nationalist movements threatening in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia? But the question kept coming back to that repeatedly raised by Senghor and others from AOF: who would run the show in the big tent? To some members of the French elite, too much of a political role for Africans now seemed to give Africans a chance to make their own relationship with Europe, bypassing Paris, or too much power to Europeans to

¹¹⁹ Assemblée Nationale, *Débats*, 18, 24, 27 November 1953, 5249–50, 5487, 5629–30. See also Senghor, "L'intégration des pays d'outre-mer dans la Communauté européenne," *Le Monde*, 6 October 1953. Gaston Monnerville also warned of the dangers of the secession if African territories were not given full voice in Eurafica. Speech in Brussels, 1 March 1954, 4AG 528, Dossier II, ANF. The argument for inclusion as a requirement of constitutional law was also put forward by the jurist P.-F. Gonidec. "L'Union française et l'Europe," *Union Française et Parlement* 52 (July 1954): 6–10.

¹²⁰ Defferre, Assemblée Nationale, *Débats*, 17 November 1953, 5210–11.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 5212.

make their own relationship with Africa. The Europeanization of Africa worried the author "XXX"—presumably an official hiding behind anonymity—entering the discussions of the Union's future in *Politique Étrangère*: to remain a "world power," France had to integrate with both continents, but it could not give up its own authority over Africa. "We have no right," insisted XXX, "to transfer the moral obligation that the trusteeship of overseas populations represents to other nations that cannot, to the same degree as France, claim a liberal tradition founded on the principle of equality of races."¹²² But if France were to tie together both continents on such a basis, it had to make good on its promise of equality, that is, solve the problem of the French Union as well as that of Europe.¹²³ That was a tall order, as the more insightful officials like Robert Delavignette realized, recommending caution in balancing European and African objectives.¹²⁴

The Dahomean deputy Sourou Migan Apithy was weighing the balance of France's European and African priorities. In a report to the Assemblée Nationale on behalf of its Overseas Committee, he took a critical view toward the proposed treaty establishing a European Defense Community. He saw the pooling of resources within Europe conflicting with the Constitution's provision for the French Union to pool its resources for defense. France consisted not of forty-four million Europeans, but of eighty-seven million people overseas and in Europe. The treaty writers considered overseas territories as "annexes of the metropole," as if they were in "a secondary position, without even anticipating if they are being annexed to Europe, 'given as dowsy,' or if the lines attaching them to European France will be loosened." A common European defense pact implied a "progressive diminution of French sovereignty," and he saw this effort "to surmount nationalism" as positive.

Here he made an insightful connection: "This is an effort of the same kind as that which is asked of diverse territories of the French Union that are supposed to overcome their local particularisms to integrate themselves from one day to the next more freely into the

¹²² XXX, "Union française et institutions européennes," 272, 275. See also René Servoise, "L'Union française devant l'intégration économique européenne," *Politique Étrangère* 18, 4 (1953): 277–306. The North African dimensions of Eurafica are emphasized in Dramé and Saul, "Le projet d'Eurafric" and, with emphasis on the late 1950s, in the forthcoming dissertation at New York University by Muriam Haleh Davis.
¹²³ "At the moment when we try to found Europe . . . let us first found the French Union," pleaded Daniel Boisdon. AUF, *Débats*, 12 November 1952, 1113.

¹²⁴ Robert Delavignette, "Notre double vocation: L'Europe et l'Afrique," *Agence France Presse*, 4 January 1954, cited in Louisa Claire Rice, "Reframing Imperialism: France, West Africa, and Colonial Culture in the Era of Decolonization, 1944–1968" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2006), 30.

Republic." The layering of sovereignty within the French Union was analogous to the layering of sovereignty proposed for the European Defense Community. But did one preclude the other? Apithy worried that some provisions of the proposed treaty tended to create "a sovereign state that would govern and administer only non-European French people." Overseas France, partially governed by European institutions, "would become a bit German, a bit Italian." But if the overseas territories were not integrated into Europe, then France would be divided into "two distinct zones, one European, with diminished sovereignty, the other extra-European, with full sovereignty." In this scenario, European France would cede some of its sovereignty to Europe, and only overseas France would remain fully French. Apithy concluded that priority should go to ensuring the full participation of the overseas territories in French sovereignty: "In any case, we would like—it is our great ambition—to be better French people and more fully in the French community before becoming European French people." For him, it was a choice between two systems of layered sovereignty, and when advocates of the defense community termed one "European," he assumed they meant what they said. And that left out Africa. It was the other form of layered sovereignty, labeled French, that gave Africans a clear place.

Twenty-four members of the Overseas Committee backed Apithy. Fifteen opposed him. The treaty was voted down in the Assemblée Nationale, 319 to 264. Senghor and Apithy were on opposite sides. Houphouët-Boigny abstained.¹²⁵ Senghor and Apithy both wanted to reform the French Union, but Apithy had a more focused view on the relationship of France and its African territories, Senghor a broader vision of both Europe and Africa.¹²⁶ But Europe was not about to be constructed overnight. The relationship of French Union and European Union would surface from time to time throughout the 1950s. But the flurry of argument in the early 1950s draws our attention to the relationship of two confederal ideas, either of which would have constituted a historical break: one turning a three-hundred-year history of colonial domination into a federation or confederation of equal states, the other turning a fifteen-hundred-year-old history of rivalry for power in Europe into a confederation of equal states. We know how the story turned out: a Eurafican confederation did not come to pass, but European leaders eventually decided that they liked the idea of confederation for themselves.

¹²⁵ Assemblée Nationale, *Débats*, 29 August 1954, 4419–22, 4471.

¹²⁶ Senghor remained worried that if Africans did not fully participate in European institutions, accords among Europeans could "open the door to German colonization." Commission de la FOM, 20 December 1954, C/15640, ANF.

Conclusion

Doudou Thiam, Senegalese, French-trained jurist, future Minister in Senegal, published in 1953 a pioneering book-length analysis of the citizenship that overseas peoples had won seven years earlier. He had no doubts about the importance of the citizenship of 1946: "The great innovation of the Fourth Republic is to have generalized what was only an exception."¹²⁷ For all the subtlety of his juridical analysis of the less-than-clear constitutional text, he ultimately saw the extension of citizenship to Africans in human terms, a relationship of two civilizations that had up to then been unequal. He asked, "To say to an African or a Malagasy that he is a French citizen, is it not to ask him in a sense to grow a new skin, to get rid of the sum of traditions that make his personality?" But then he answered his question in the negative: "But in fact the problem is no longer posed entirely in those terms. It is posed less under the angle of assimilation of one civilization by another as under that of an exchange of cultures." Europe and Africa, he said, could learn from each other's way of doing things, ways which a common citizenship put into juxtaposition—"a junction between two humanities." Contrary to the usual thinking about citizenship, the Constitution did not make all citizens subject to the same laws; different rules applied to Africans' marriages and inheritance. It did not quite entail equality of political rights, because it left open the possibility—which the government was insisting on exercising—of leaving Africans not fully enfranchised and underrepresented in electoral institutions. But citizenship should be seen not just as what it was in 1946 or 1953, but also in terms of the extremely unequal structure out of which it had emerged and the direction in which it was moving. "In sum, citizenship is a *tendency*, a notion in movement, and not a definitively fixed notion."¹²⁸

That was how some of the African legislators who had helped to write the citizenship clauses had seen the significance of the text in 1946—as an act of becoming—and that is how they were still finding it in the early 1950s, an often-frustrating attempt to realize citizenship's potential for raising once-colonized people to the political and juridical stature of their colonizers, of providing a basis for claiming social and economic equality with their more affluent, better-educated fellow citizens. They had learned how vigorously their effort to make "a tendency" into a reality was being opposed, out of the habits and interests of the old colonial system and out of the inertia and opportunism that characterized the Republic created in 1946.

¹²⁷ Doudou Thiam, *La portée de la citoyenneté française dans les territoires d'outre-mer* (Paris: Société d'Éditions Africaines, 1953), 13.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 81, 157–58, 174.

The political structure in which they lived and acted, the French Union, was a peculiar sort of entity. It had attributes of a super-state, of which the French Republic was a component, and attributes of an extension of the French Republic. Historically, it emerged out of empire, and its rulers were divided over whether they wanted to retain the power in an imperial center or share it among the different sorts of components which made it up. In 1947, Prime Minister Paul Ramadier told a meeting of High Commissioners that this "great union, in which we believe as a categorical imperative, has not yet found its definitive formula, that she searches for its soul." It was essential that it find not only its soul but its body: "France by itself would be France enslaved. That is why, gentlemen, the problem of the French Union, the imperial problem, has become not that of the aggrandizement of France, of the growth of France, but the problem of the life and existence of our country."¹²⁹

In 1955, the Union was coming apart at both its softest and most rigid points, the Associated States and Algeria. The crisis in the Associated States exposed the basic fallacy of the Union as a supra-national structure, for the Constitution of 1946 had been written unilaterally, without revision of the treaties by which the protectorates had, while retaining international sovereignty, ceded much of their sovereign prerogatives to the protecting power. When the Sultan of Morocco and the Bey of Tunis refused to participate in the institutions designed for them, the Haut Conseil and the Assemblée de l'Union française, there was little the French government could do. In a world context, where colonial power had lost its taken-for-granted aspect, the international status of these territories counted for more than it had before, and the political movements that wanted to make real the sovereignty that nominally they had never lost had a good opportunity to stake their claims. The French war in Vietnam was lost by 1954, and whether Indochinese sovereigns would continue to play a role in the Union was no longer so sure.

The war in Algeria started in 1954. In reality, Algeria was experiencing two kinds of empire conflicts at once. The Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), which launched the war, was following in the footsteps of Vietnamese and Indonesians in a struggle for independence, conducted in the name of an Algerian nationality. Some Algerian leaders, notably Ferhat Abbas, had tried to reconcile the claim to Algerian nationality with continued participation in the French Union. Any such possibility ran into the second struggle, one with echoes of the process leading up to the North American Revolution of 1776 or the revolutions in Spanish America of the early nineteenth century (or in the

future white Rhodesians' Unilateral Declaration of Independence of 1965): a settler movement, taking things into its own hands, claiming to be plus français que les Français, and standing in direct opposition to the attempt of the French state to convince the majority of the colonized population that it had a stake in continued membership in the French system. In this case, the fragmented nature of French politics gave settlers sufficient voice in key French parties to conduct an effective operation within French institutions. Later, when the French government gave indications that it might turn against settler domination of Algerian policy—in 1958 and then in 1961–62—elements of the settler population and their supporters in the French military were willing to engage in acts of insurrection against the state they claimed to epitomize. The fiction that Algeria was an integral part of the French Republic was repeatedly invoked by people at various points of the political spectrum to set a sharp limit on the kinds of adjustments that could be made. A number of people on the center and left managed to convince themselves that France could be an agent of social and economic progress in Algeria, if only the rebellion could be put down and settlers marginalized. The Fourth Republic proved unable to resolve—or even think through—its double challenge in Algeria.

But in Africa, the lines of struggle were not so sharply drawn. Most African leaders were well aware of the immense need for resources that the continent faced, of the small size and inadequate level of education of each territory. Most saw the French Union as providing a connection not only to France and its resources but to each other—Senghor's horizontal and vertical solidarities. They had accepted that the Constitution and the Union were works in progress. Yet Africans were chafing at the failure of the political promises of 1946 to be met, and they had run into obstacles to reform, from the opposition of defenders of racial privilege to officials concerned about their loss of control, to the indecision and short-term deal-making characteristic of the Fourth Republic's legislature. Nonetheless, African trade unions had shown their vitality; movements like the RDA had weathered political repression; and African intellectuals were proposing solutions to the political impasse in which the Union stood. Perhaps sub-Saharan Africa could be the core of a reformed structure—respectful enough of multiple nationalities to be attractive even to militant Moroccans and Algerians—or perhaps it should be treated as a special case, the part of the former empire to which inclusion in a larger entity offered the most.

¹²⁹ Prime Minister Paul Ramadier, speech to Conférence des Hauts Commissaires, 21 February 1947, 28PA/3/93, AOM.