

UPPER VOLTA LIKE OLD WEST -PLUS LEPERS

6-14-66

Land Better Suited to Lions than Farming

BY ROBERT LEE

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

OUAGADOUGOU, Upper Volta, June 13—Even relatively wealthy African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and the Ivory Coast need sound planning, stable government and substantial outside assistance if they are to attain self-sustaining economic growth.

Upper Volta needs all those things and more.

But at the moment it has no plan, a government that quite frankly calls itself provisional and moderate foreign assistance that is designed primarily to keep the country alive, not to promote long-term development.

Ouagadougou looks a bit like a town of the old American west, with its one- or two-story buildings overhanging roofs and boardwalks. But instead of cowboys, there are lepers begging.

Modern Stores Close

You find yourself wishing that a gang of masked horsemen would come thundering down the main street in a cloud of dust just to break the sweltering torpidity.

The open market that covers a two-block area in the heart of town, rich with vegetables, fruits and smells, fills up early every morning as people arrive on bicycles, motor scooters, now and then horses, and mostly on foot.

But the bustle is deceptive. Several modern stores have closed in the last six months, and those French and Lebanese business men who remain say sales are off at least 20 per cent this year from last.

An Ouagadougou banker said, "The purchasing power of Voltans is declining." His own reserves are piling up for lack of borrowers.

Live in Villages

Modern commercial activity affects few Voltans, however. Ninety-five per cent of the population continues to live in small villages and depend on raising livestock and a few food crops for subsistence.

Until now projects have been undertaken without consideration of priorities or the effects one might have on another.

Need One Another

However, the real question is whether any plan can be drawn utilizing foreseeably available resources that will assure Upper Volta of sustained economic growth.

Some realistic Voltans and many foreign experts believe the only long-run solution lies in at least economic if not political consolidation of Upper Volta with one or more of the coastal states. The Ivory Coast would be the logical choice.

The Ivory Coast needs meat from Upper Volta, and Upper Volta needs the Ivory Coast for manufactured products and for imports from Europe, that must pass thru Abidjan.

But, as one Voltan notes, the Ivory Coast, where per capita

income has already climbed to \$200 a year, will not be eager to absorb 4.7 million poor Voltans, who earn an average of only \$53 a year.

HOW NZEOGWU ROSE, FELL IN NIGERIAN COUP

4-20-66

Leader of Overthrow Is Held in Prison

BY ROBERT LEE

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

KADUNA, Nigeria, April 19—

One of the enigmas of Nigeria's recent coup is the 29-year-old army officer who apparently masterminded it.

In one day, M. J. Chukwuma Nzeogwu rose from the middle ranks of the army to regional and even national heroism. Four days later, he left Kaduna for Lagos and official oblivion.

The military government says Nzeogwu is being held in "protective custody" in a Lagos prison.

But in Kaduna, capital of the north, he is not forgotten. His name still evokes awe among local residents for the daring murder he committed. Nzeogwu personally shot the sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, premier of the northern region.

Only Job for God

"The general reaction was that only God could have done that job," said a Kaduna newsman who saw the sardauna's body. "It was said that the sardauna, if attacked would stretch out his legs and they would shoot fire."

As president of Nigeria's majority party, the Northern People's congress, Bello was regarded by many as the most important political boss in Nigeria. The premier, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who also was assassinated during the coup was vice president of the party.

Seven hours after putting a bullet thru the sardauna's head, with one arm in a sling and bandages on his neck, Nzeogwu proclaimed martial law in the northern region in

hospitalized for further treatment of his wounds.

The press has not been allowed to see him since.

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Sheep and cattle driven to the Ghanese and Ivory frontiers make up more than two-thirds of Upper Volta's exports. But more food and water must be found and herdsmen persuaded to change their ways if production is to be increased substantially.

One Gold Mine

Mineral resources are almost nil. There is a small gold mine, and United Nations experts are in the process of assessing deposits of manganese in the northeastern corner of the country, which are believed to total 15 or 20 million tons.

This is not enough to provide Upper Volta with the boost Nigeria is getting from oil, or Guinea from bauxite.

What then can move the Voltan economy off dead center? Foreign assistance would seem essential.

Col. Sangoule Lamizana, head of the military government that was pushed into power by popular demonstrations Jan. 3, says he will appeal to all developed nations.

Important Strategically

"I have the impression that when you are small and have rather limited possibilities, they tend to forget you," he said in an interview. "They forget that Upper Volta holds a position of strategic importance in West Africa."

One does tend to forget. France provides about 10 million dollars a year in aid, much of it as technical assistance, the rest as direct budgetary support. And the European Common Market has granted about 30 million dollars in assistance since 1961.

American aid to Upper Volta has been small: about 6 million dollars since 1961 and \$1,250,000 this year, of which more than a third is surplus food commodities for relief feeding.

One problem is that no one, least of all the government, knows where to begin with a development program." Pierre-Claver Damiba, minister of development and tourism, says he is preparing a plan that will serve as a working instrument

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Seven hours after putting a bullet thru the sardauna's head, with one arm in a sling and bandages on his neck, Nzeogwu proclaimed martial law in the northern region in the name of the Revolutionary Council of Nigeria.

Role Is Uncertain

Whether Nzeogwu actually planned the military take-overs, effected simultaneously in the eastern and western region and in the federal district of Lagos, is not certain. His role may only have been that of coordinator, or perhaps that of signal caller.

Gen. Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi announced his loyalty to the government. Later, he said the government had entrusted him with the fate of the country, as supreme commander of the revolutionary council.

Nzeogwu was on the spot. He considered the possibility of war against the south. Detachments were sent to be ready to blow up the bridges over the Niger at Jebba and over the Benue at Makurdi, should that prove necessary.

He Feels Isolated

With large military establishments at Kaduna, Zaria, and Kano, the north had more soldiers than all the rest of Nigeria. But the Kano garrison announced support for Ironsi, and Nzeogwu felt isolated.

He began negotiating with Ironsi. One reliable source maintains that he gained satisfaction on five of seven points, but what those points were the source declined to say.

Then Nzeogwu nominated for military governor, and Ironsi approved, a man whom he had held at gunpoint on the morning of the coup. "I am with you," Maj. Hassan had replied.

Job to Keep Order

In announcing Hassan's appointment, Nzeogwu said: "I made it clear a few days ago that it was not my job to rule. My job was to keep order."

When Ironsi asked Nzeogwu to come to Lagos, he hesitated. A friend counseled him to tell Ironsi he couldn't leave just then but would be able to come in a week or so. "But it is the supreme commander who is asking me to come," he is said to have replied.

An officer friend with whom he had been trained at Sandhurst in England came to give him Ironsi's assurances of safe conduct to the federal capital, and Nzeogwu agreed to go.

Never Came Back

It was Wednesday, Jan. 19. "I will be back in time for polo on Saturday," he said.

He didn't make it. Newspa-

Power Was Thrust on Him

6-12-66 WHEN UPPER VOLTA FACED CRISIS

By ROBERT LEE

OUAGADOUGOU, Upper Volta—It was not yet 8 a.m. but a May sun had already pushed the temperature past 90 and the market place was jammed by women with babies on their backs when three black Mercedes sped through Ouagadougou, as a siren blared.

It was the city's first of four daily reminders that the President of Upper Volta lives not where presidents are supposed to live, in a block-square walled place adjacent to the presidential office buildings, but on the other side of town, behind some barbed wire, in an unimposing house with a dirt lawn, at a military camp.

THE PRESIDENT, Col. Sangoule Lamizana, still had a trace of dust on his shoes a quarter of an hour later as he sat down in his air-conditioned office to talk about his first five months in office.

Dressed in a light tan uniform with a minimum of decoration, he looked much like the picture friends had painted of him: a simple soldier with neither a taste nor special capabilities for the presidency.

ALTHOUGH his manner was warm and vigorous, his words sometimes complemented the image. Asked



SANGOULE LAMIZANA
He's in no hurry

how he found his job, he said: "It's very complex. Military men are not prepared for this." He has the equivalent of a secondary education.

But Lamizana spoke with an air of confidence and authority about his country's political and economic problems, which would discourage the best of men. And he gave no hint of wishing to quit soon.

"We are in no hurry to turn power over to those who would lead the country

into chaos or would impose a foreign system," he said.

THE ARMY took power January 3 to preserve order after a full day of demonstrations made it clear the President Maurice Yameogo's regime could not survive, Lamizana explained.

On that day a general strike called by the Federation of Voltaic Workers' Unions was totally effective.

Thousands of demonstrators swarmed around the presidential palace to protest a reduction of 20 per cent in all government salaries—one of three wage and salary-earning persons in Upper Volta works for the government—and other economy measures that Voltans judged were made necessary by Yameogo's own profligacy.

THE FORMER president had announced the salary cuts just after returning from a honeymoon with his second wife in Brazil.

His marriage October 17, with five visiting heads of state present, was lavish enough to attract attention in any country and especially in Upper Volta, where per capita income is estimated at \$53 a year.

At 6:30 p.m. on the third Yameogo had Col. Lamizana, who was then Chief of Staff, announce to the demonstrators that the salary cuts would be restored, but it was too late.

"RESIGNATION. We want no more of Maurice. The army to power. Where is Col. Lamizana?" the mob shouted. At 9:45 p.m. Lamizana announced that the army was "assuming its responsibilities."

Lamizana, 50, was the highest ranking Voltan officer. He had served 25 years in the French army including tours in Indochina and Algeria before becoming Chief of Staff in 1961.

"Even President Yameogo realized there was no other solution," Lamizana said during the interview. "The army was the only organized force alive in the country. If it had not acted, violence and bloodshed could easily have followed, and bloodshed always brings vengeance."

THE ONLY casualties of the change in government were a few shrubs that were uprooted on Ouagadougou's only boulevard. Yameogo and his wife were given a guarded home in a military camp.

Lamizana repeated a previous statement that the army has no intention of keeping power indefinitely.

He said that civilian rule would be restored as soon as political leaders "can agree." He did not elaborate.

"We will hold free, normal elections," he said, but he declined to set a date.

ROBERT LEE is a Minneapolis Tribune staff writer on leave under a William P. Gray foreign correspondent's fellowship.

7-4-66

'MIRACLE' IS NEEDED

Upper Volta Is Poor by African Standards

By ROBERT LEE

OUAGADOUGOU, Upper Volta — Even relatively wealthy African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and the Ivory Coast need sound planning, stable government and substantial outside assistance if they are to attain self-sustaining economic growth.



Upper Volta needs all those things plus a miracle.

At the moment it has no plan, a government that quite frankly calls itself provisional and modest foreign assistance that is designed primarily to keep the country alive, not to promote long-term development.

Signs of life are few in Ouagadougou. The center looks a bit like a town of the old American West, with its one- or two-story buildings, overhanging roofs and boardwalks.

But instead of cowboys, with weeds in their mouths, leaning nonchalantly against porch pillars, there are lepers with their hands out.

THE OPEN market that covers a two-block area in the heart of town, rich with vegetables, fruits and smells, fills up early every morning as people arrive on bicycles, motor scooters, now and then horses, but mostly on foot.

But the bustle is deceptive. Several modern stores have closed in the last six months, and those French and Lebanese businessmen who remain say sales are off at least 20 per cent this year from last.

An Ouagadougou banker flatly asserts: "The purchasing power of Voltans is declining."

MODERN commercial activity affects very few Voltans, however. Ninety-five per cent of the population continues to live in small villages and depends on raising livestock and a few food crops for subsistence.

Nations experts are in the process of assessing deposits of manganese in the northeastern corner of the country, which are believed to total 15 or 20 million tons.

This is not enough to provide Upper Volta with the kind of kick Nigeria is getting from oil, or Guinea from bauxite.

WHAT THEN can move the Voltan economy off dead center? Foreign assistance would seem essential.

Col. Sangoule Lamizana, head of the military government that was pushed into power by popular demonstrations last January 3, says he is launching an appeal to all developed nations.

"I have the impression that when you are small and have rather limited possibilities they tend to forget you," he said recently in a private interview. "they forget that Upper Volta holds a position of strategic importance in West Africa."

ONE DOES tend to forget. France provides about \$10 million a year in aid, much of it as technical assistance, the rest as direct budgetary support. And the European Common Market has granted about \$30 million in assistance since 1961.

American aid to Upper Volta has been small: about \$6 million since 1961 and \$1.25 million this year, of which more than a third is surplus food commodities for relief feeding.

One problem is that no one, least of all the Voltan government, is sure where to begin. Pierre-Claver Damiba, who is Lamizana's minister of development and tourism, says he is preparing a rough plan that will serve as a "working instrument."

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However, the real question is whether any plan can be drawn utilizing foreseeably available resources that will assure Upper Volta of sus-

not political consolidation of Upper Volta with one or more of the coastal states. The Ivory Coast would be the logical choice.

The Ivory Coast needs meat from Upper Volta, and Upper Volta needs the Ivory Coast for manufactured products and for imports from Europe that must pass through Abidjan.

But, as one Voltan notes the Ivory Coast, where per capita income has already climbed to \$200 a year, will not be eager to absorb 4.7 million poor Voltans, who earn an average of \$53 a year.

Perhaps a miracle is after all the only answer.

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Soldier in Power in Upper Volta

BY ROBERT D. LEE

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