AFRICAN UNIFICATION MOVEMENTS

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The numerous unification efforts now under way in Africa represent one of the most significant developments in the brief post-independence era of that continent. Freedom has brought with it increased recognition in many African quarters of the interdependence of the African states and the need for unified approaches to common problems. The new countries together with the handful of older independent African states have nearly all become involved in one or more of the intensified drives toward some form of integration. Paradoxically, the issue of how to achieve unity is becoming one of the principal divisions between African states.

In view of the centuries it has taken the Western European nations to progress just to the point where the European movement stood today, it is scarcely remarkable that as unification efforts in Africa have not evolved into a single, clear-cut, steady movement. On the contrary, the directness of the head-on approach which sovereign African states have taken to promote closer cooperation or unity with each other is one of the outstanding and possibly more promising features on the contemporary African political scene.

Nationalism in the independent states of Africa is a very recent development and is far less deeply rooted than the history-laden nationalism which has plagued the European movement. Even so, many of the nationalist-inspired rivalries between African states are not easily bridged. Nationalism in the new African states had its origins in the colonial era. The nineteenth century partitioning of Africa by the European powers resulted inevitably in the isolation of the colonies from each other. Having been oriented for so long toward metropolitan capitals with antipathetic colonial policies and differing cultural systems, the African states have had some difficulty in replacing these past colonial associations with new intra-African relationships. The colonial administrations in Africa deserve full credit for the benefits they brought and indeed for the provision of the only available means of transition from tribal society to modern statehood. At the same time it must be acknowledged that the European powers were late in recognizing the intrinsic value of unity in Africa and have only recently begun

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than in this series of conferences. In fact, the rivalry between these two leaders has threatened to vitiate the work of a network of political activists engaged in promoting the concept of African solidarity, notably in the Cairo and Accra Conference secretariats but also in centers scattered throughout the northern half of the African continent.

These conferences, as the name implies, are composed of representatives of private and unofficial organizations. Government representatives attend only as observers. A substantial portion of observers at each conference have been representatives of various communist bloc countries. The conferences and their permanent machinery serve as one of the principal channels for the introduction of communist funds into Africa.

When the All-African Conferences were initiated, the Soviets held out high hopes that they would provide a forum for uninhibited communist propaganda and agitation. But Nasser, who has consistently refused to legalize the Communist Party in the United Arab Republic, has dispelled Soviet hopes for an Egyptian fiefdom, demonstrating that he is not in anyone's pocket. A basic principle of Soviet strategy, however, is to probe every avenue of opportunity. Nasser was not very flexible, other African nationalists might prove more susceptible to Soviet blandishments. The communists are now working busily to infiltrate the African solidarity movements in an increasing number of African countries and particularly in Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Somalia, and the Congo (Leopoldville).

The third conference, from the viewpoint of its participants, was regarded as a letdown from previous meetings. Although numerous Soviet and Eastern bloc observers were on hand, the Soviet-Egyptian rift must have seemed a heavy pall on conference proceedings. The conference drew fewer African officials as observers than either of the preceding meetings in the series—an indication that interest was waning. Some 200 delegates representing a wide range of unofficial organizations in independent and dependent territories took part in the meetings. But after passing five major resolutions similar to those adopted at many another gathering of anti-colonial nationalists, the conference disbanded without making any significant lasting impression on the African political scene.

**Conferences of Independent African States**

The First Conference of Independent African States was held in Accra in April 1958, while the Second Conference took place in Addis Ababa in June 1960. Five of the members of the Casablanca grouping—the United Arab Republic, Libya, Morocco, Ghana, and Guinea (an observer)—attended the Accra conference. Other countries represented at each of these two meetings included Ethiopia, Liberia, Sudan, and Tunisia. Attendance at
After prolonged pulling and hauling among African labor leaders, a meeting intended to launch the controversial AATUF was finally held in late May 1961 in Casablanca where representatives of 45 African trade union organizations from some 30 African countries assembled. The rigged nature of the gathering became apparent as soon as the invitations for it were dispatched. Several representative African labor organizations were pointedly not invited. Those unions which accepted invitations were accredited by a preparatory committee weighted in favor of the Nkrumahist Casablanca wing. Heavy-handed discrimination in designating the voting power of various delegations, however, could not disguise the deep difference of opinion on the key issue before the conference, i.e. the Casablanca bloc’s insistence on disaffiliation of African labor unions from existing international labor organizations in order to make way for the new AATUF.

Strong opposition to disaffiliation came from the delegations representing unions of Kenya, Tunisia, and Nigeria and most of the other twenty-old unions affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Union (ICFTU)—the pro-Western international in which APECIC plays an important role. The Ghana-Guinea delegations resorted to blatantly coercive tactics in an effort through threats of disaffiliation of all African unions within ten months after the signing of the proposed AATUF charter.

The communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) had long since prepared itself to back the Ghana-Guinea line at Casablanca by severing direct affiliations with all but one African labor union, the WFTU organization in Cameroun. The vote on disaffiliation was taken on the last day of the conference after a large percentage of the delegates had decided to boycott the meetings in order to demonstrate their opposition to the preparatory committee’s tactics.

The Casablanca powers had manipulated a short-lived victory at Casablanca. John Tettegah, head of Ghana’s Trades Union Congress, was named Secretary-General of the AATUF. But Tettegah’s domination of the movement and the entire Casablanca orientation of the AATUF made it highly suspect in the eyes of those who had suffered defeat at the May conference.

African Trade Union Confederation (ATUC)

The Casablanca powers were not to be unchallenged for long in their play for control of African unionism. More moderate elements in the labor movement had been laying plans for establishing a competing organization even before the Casablanca meeting was held. In January 1962, this rival group convened in the Senegalese capital of Dakar. Those attending represented approximately 50 unions from 30 nations. They agreed to form a loose organization called the African Trade Union Confederation.