

Mass Sentences of Death and Life Imprisonment for “Plotters” allegedly involved in “Invasion” of November 1970. - Expulsion of West German Development Workers. - Guinea breaks off Diplomatic Relations with Federal Republic of Germany.

During the months following the attempted invasion of Guinea in November 1970 by exiles allegedly led by Portuguese [see 24858 A], President Sekou Toure repeatedly claimed that further attacks against Guinea were being prepared in neighbouring territories, and at the end of December he ordered the expulsion of a number of specialists who had been sent to Guinea by Western Germany under its development aid programme. After the German Federal Government had strongly and persistently denied that it was in any way involved in the November events, the Guinean Government broke off diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic at the end of January 1971.

Earlier, it had become known that mass arrests had been carried out in Guinea during December, including that of the Archbishop of Conakry, and during January those arrested were subjected to summary “revolutionary justice”, the Guinean National Assembly on Jan. 23 passing sentences of death on 91 persons and of life imprisonment on 66 others.

These and related developments are summarized below.

In a message to U Thant, circulated to the members of the U.N. security Council on Dec. 19, 1970, President Sekou Touré claimed that “large military formations” were “amassed along Guinea's frontiers” with Portuguese Guinea and Senegal; that preparations were being made for an attack; and that Portugal was being “widely encouraged and supported in this criminal undertaking”.

These allegations were immediately refuted emphatically by the Governments of Portugal and Senegal—the former stating, in a protest to U Thant on Dec. 22, that it had never allowed any preparations for an invasion of Guinea to be made on Portuguese territory, and the latter denying on Dec. 21 that any troops were massing inside Senegal to invade Guinea.

Guinea renewed its campaign against Senegal on Jan. 3, 1971, when Conakry Radio announced that the Guinean Government had requested Senegal to extradite all “mercenaries” domiciled in Senegal and accused by Guinea of preparing the overthrow of President Sekou Toure.

President Sekou Toure on Jan. 22 asked both Senegal and the Ivory Coast to hand over “to the people of Guinea” those who were working in those two countries for “the destruction of the Guinean revolution”. The Senegalese Government thereupon decided on Jan. 23 to recall its Ambassador from Conakry, and in a statement on Jan. 26 President Senghor deplored Guinean attacks on his country and declared that he had ordered speedier legal action against Guineans suspected of subversive activities before the November events but that there could be “no question” of Senegal obeying any “injunction” from a “brother State”. He emphasized that plotters both for and against President Sekou Toure would be “unmasked and punished without any unnecessary cruelty”.

On Jan. 26 the Government of Senegal declared the Guinean Ambassador in Dakar to be *persona non grata*, and it was announced shortly afterwards that M. Fode Sylla, a Guinean militia officer, had been arrested in Dakar on charges of having entered Senegal to murder Guinean exiles sentenced to death *in absentia* in Conakry.

Hadj Ibrahima Faye, the newly appointed Guinean Ambassador in Dakar, was arrested on March 19, the Senegalese Ministry of Information maintaining that he was of Senegalese and not Guinean nationality and could therefore not be Guinea's diplomatic representative.

The Gambian Government, on the other hand, complied with a request by Guinea when, during December, it extradited to that country 37 Guineans who had been sentenced on Oct. 6 to terms of imprisonment ranging from nine months to two years for illegal entry and “organizing an expedition against a friendly country” [see page 24354].

The West German Foreign Ministry announced on Dec. 29, 1970, that 30 West German development workers and their families had been expelled from Guinea at short notice, and that Herr Hermann Seibold, a

Church project leader, had been arrested on Dec. 18, allegedly for making unfriendly remarks about the Guinean Government. Those expelled included five *Bundeswehr* members, who had been instructors to the Guinean Army.

The West German Ambassador in Conakry, Dr. Johann Christian Lankes, who had been recalled for consultations, arrived in Bonn on Dec. 30, and Herr Sigismund von Braun, Under-Secretary at the Federal Foreign Ministry, disclosed the same day that President Sekou Toure had complained to President Heinemann on Dec. 17 that the Ambassador was unacceptable to his Government because he had allegedly been involved in the Portuguese “invasion attempt” of Nov. 22 [see 24353 A]. President Heinemann had replied on Dec. 26, declaring that the Guinean President's allegations were without foundation. Dr. Lankes and Herr von Braun also refuted any suggestion that Germans had played any part in the November events. Conakry Radio, however, on Jan. 1, 1971, accused Western Germany of “active complicity in Portuguese aggression against Guinea” and claimed that a West German spy ring headed by former S.S. officers had been uncovered.

The broadcast stated that the expulsion of the German technicians had been decided by the Guinean Revolutionary High Command, because investigations had, it was alleged, established that West Germans were involved through (a) contacts between certain Guineans abroad and the West German authorities with a view to provoking internal unrest and the fall of President Sekou Toure; (b) the organization of espionage activities at Kankan and Conakry, tantamount to a “fifth column”; (c) the participation of West Germans in the attack of Nov. 22; and (d) the discovery of a plan for industrial sabotage and a smuggling network for art objects, precious stones, arms and ammunition, with the use of diplomatic cover through the West German Embassy in Conakry. It was added that the suicide of Herr Hans Schmidt-Horix, the West German Ambassador in Lisbon, on Nov. 30 was directly linked with the “invasion” [It had been stated in Germany at the time that the Ambassador had shot himself after finding that his wife had taken an overdose of sleeping drugs as an escape from an incurable illness.]

President Sekou Toure threatened in a New Year message that all foreign diplomatic missions and trade enterprises whose members took part in subversive activities would in future be closed irrevocably; that all “traitors and imperialist agents” would be liquidated; and that no death sentences passed on persons convicted of attempting to set up a “neo-colonialist regime” in Guinea would be commuted as an act of mercy. [The West Germany Government had favoured Guinea, among African countries, by granting it a total of DM 100,000,000, or £11,400,000, in capital and other aid between 1950 and 1960]

Meanwhile it had been learnt that not only Herr Seibold but also another West German, Herr Adolf Marx (the manager of a French brewery), had been arrested before the other Germans were expelled. Conakry Radio reported on Jan. 19 that one of the arrested Germans had committed suicide; M. Ismael Toure, the Guinean Minister of Finance, said in the National Assembly that this was Herr Seibold, whose wife claimed later that he had been beaten to death in prison.

The West German Foreign Ministry instructed its Charge d’Affaires in Conakry on Jan. 20 to protest to the Guinean Government because the Embassy had been prevented from making contact with Herr Seibold after his arrest, and to demand that his body should be handed over for transfer to Germany. This request was refused on Jan. 22.

Herr Erhard Eppler, the Federal Minister for Economic Co-operation, declared on Jan. 20 that the West German Government had several times rejected Guinea's accusations against Germans working in that country but that it was not intended to break off diplomatic relations as long as the Federal Government had interests in Guinea. No further aid, however, would be given to Guinea.

Herr Scheel, the West German Foreign Minister, stated in the *Bundestag* on Jan. 21 that he had well-founded suspicions that the East Germans [with whom Guinea had established diplomatic relations in september 1970—see 24266 A] had falsified documents and handed them to the Guinean Government; he added that efforts made by friendly African Governments to intervene had proved fruitless, but that he had asked the U.N. Secretary-General for help.

President Heinemann urged President Sekou Toure the same day not to allow anything “which could not be undone” to happen to Herr Marx, and the Guinean President replied that he had passed the message on to the National Assembly, which would deal with those involved in the invasion of Nov. 22.

When M. Sekou Top, the Guinean Charge d’Affaires in Bonn, on Jan. 21 produced a document alleged to “prove” West German complicity in the November plot, Herr Scheel immediately described it as a “gross forgery”, whose authors were no doubt to be found in East Berlin [It had earlier been suggested in the West German Press that the East German Government had supplied Conakry with “information” on Herr Seibold's political past and on alleged West German arms sales to Portugal.]

Conakry Radio announced on Jan. 29 that Guinea had broken off diplomatic relations with Western Germany as a result of reports studied by the President and alleged to show that West German agents had been involved with Portugal in launching the November invasion. President Sekou Toure was also reported to have claimed that he had evidence showing that Western Germany was preparing to send 500 commandos to Portuguese Guinea to launch a new invasion. In Bonn these allegations were officially dismissed as “nonsense”.

Herr Paul Frank, Secretary of State at the West German Foreign Ministry, said on Feb. 10 that German development aid for Guinea had been supplied for 12 years in the hope of perhaps linking that country with the West, or at least not losing it to the East, and that the “German Democratic Republic” had “scored points” by fanning President Sekou Toure's distrust by means of alleged Bean documents which were “skilful forgeries”. He added that Western Germany would nevertheless not withdraw its representatives from countries which admitted those of Eastern Germany.

Meanwhile the Revolutionary High Command had in mid-December given orders to the “defence committees” of the *Parti démocratique de Guinée* (PDG), the country's sole legal party, in all towns and villages to list all suspect foreigners so that they could be “made harmless”, and it called up all reservists for active service. During the next few weeks militiamen were reported to be carrying out mass arrests and to be violently attacking civilians suspected of belonging to movements opposed to the regime. Those arrested included Mgr. Raymond-Marie Tchidimbo, the Archbishop of Conakry, detained by police on Jan. 24, allegedly for having refused to endorse the President's version of the November events.

In the absence of foreign correspondents in Guinea, information about the ensuing events was derived mainly from broadcasts by Conakry Radio, monitored in neighbouring countries.

Thus the radio announced on Jan. 7 that those accused in connexion with the November invasion included “members of the Portuguese forces, mercenaries, local accomplices of the aggressors, foreign accomplices and persons arrested for being implicated in previous plots”, whose responsibility had been “aggravated as the result of the interrogation of mercenaries and their accomplices”.

On Jan. 11–15 a total of 8,000 local committees of the PDG held meetings to “pass sentences” on the “traitors”, who were alleged to have “plotted with imperialism in November last”. These “sentences” were subsequently considered by the party's 210 district committees, the “party federations”, the Trade Union Confederation, the party's youth organization and the Army's General Staff. The party committees were reported to have asked for the public hanging of the “Portuguese mercenaries” held prisoners in Guinea and of all their accomplices, including those arrested before the November events. According to a Dakar report on Jan. 15 the Army officers, under the chairmanship of General Koumadian Keita, the Chief of Staff, had demanded the death penalty for all accused without exception.

The National Assembly, sitting as a “supreme revolutionary tribunal”, met on Jan. 18 to decide upon the penalties to be imposed upon the accused. While the latter were not present, the Assembly's sessions were attended by a number of “guests”, including M. Joseph Mara (Minister of Justice in Mall), M. Alex Mivedor (the Togolese Minister of Public Works, Posts and Telecommunications) and several Communist journalists.

President Sekou Toure declared in the Assembly on Jan. 18 that power was not vested in the Government or in the Assembly but in the people, and called upon them to “massacre, dismember and burn all its enemies and all agents of the fifth column”.

M. Ismael Toure, the President's half-brother, alleged in the Assembly on Jan. 19 that Herr Seibold—who had, he said, committed suicide in prison [see above]—had been an ex-Nazi and had been in possession of a letter from M. Naby Youla, a former Guinean Ambassador in Paris and Bonn who had been condemned to death in absentia [see page 23408 A], proving “conscious and active West German participation in the aggression of Nov. 22”. The Minister also accused a “fifth column” which, he alleged, had worked for M. Jacques Foccart (the Secretary-General for the French Community and African and Malagasy Affairs) in conjunction with the West Germans and M. Naby Youla in a new plot in December.

M. Louis Behanzin, State Secretary for Ideology and Educational Broadcasting, speaking in the Assembly on the same day, called for the immediate execution of foreigners who had organized the invasion, with seizure of their property; for life imprisonment for those foreigners who were accomplices; and for breaking off diplomatic relations with countries implicated in the attack.

The Assembly was on Jan. 20 informed of the alleged confessions of a “Guinean mercenary”, according to whom two Guineans living in exile in Dakar were being “maintained” by the Vatican and one of them, M. David Soumah (a trade union leader), was to have become Guinea's Head of State if the “*coup d'état*” of

Nov. 22 had succeeded and would have created a Roman Catholic community embracing also Senegal and the Ivory Coast [both States with Roman Catholic Presidents].

According to Conakry Radio, the death penalty was demanded for, among others, Mgr. Tchidimbo; Colonel Kaman Diaby (a former Army Deputy Chief of Staff) and M. Barry Diawadou (a former Minister of Finance)—these two having already been sentenced to death in May 1969 [see 23408 A]; and M. Kone Fofana, M. Barry Ibrahima, M. Ousmane Balde, M. Magassouba Moriba and Mme. Camara Louffo (all former Secretaries of State).

On Jan. 28 the National Assembly passed sentence of death on 91 of the accused, 33 of them being sentenced *in absentia*. Those condemned were said to include M. Diawadou, the former Secretaries of State, six Portuguese mercenaries, Herr Seibold (sentenced posthumously) and M. Achkar Marof, Guinea's former Ambassador to the U.N., who was sentenced *in absentia* and was said to have escaped during the November invasion.

The Assembly also sentenced 66 persons to hard labour for life, among them Mgr. Tchidimbo, Herr Marx, three Frenchmen —M. Jean-Paul Alata (adviser to Herr Marx), M. Jacques Demarchelier (a cinema owner) and M. William Gemayel (of Lebanese origin)—and 10 Lebanese.

There was no appeal against the Assembly's decision, and Conakry Radio announced on Jan. 25 that “the whole will of the people” had been carried out as executions had taken place in various parts of the country; it added that spectators had rejoiced as in “a carnival” and had “stoned and spat at the corpses”.

Although this and other reports gave the impression that all those sentenced to death had been executed, it emerged later that not more than eight persons had been hanged, including M. Magassouba Moriba, M. Ibrahima, M. Ousmane Balde, and a former Commissioner of Police.

On the other hand, the Opposition movement *Regroupement des Guinéens en Europe* alleged in Paris on Jan. 25 that since Nov. 22, 1970, more than 500 persons had been executed in Guinea.

President Sekou Toure declared in a message to the relatives of the condemned persons that the sentences of Jan. 23 were “eminently just” because they conformed to “the line which our party has imposed upon the national liberation movement for a quarter of a century”.

At a press conference in Conakry on Jan. 30 the President said that, if the West German and French Governments handed over to Guinea those Guineans resident in their countries and sentenced *in absentia*, he would be able to “place at the disposal of their people” the Germans and Frenchmen sentence.

The sentences and executions in Guinea aroused indignation in many countries, particularly in Western Germany and France, and appeals for clemency were sent to President Sekou Toure by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, certain Heads of State and Government and a number of international organizations.

Mgr. Giovanni Mariani, the Papal Nuncio in Dakar, disclosed on Dec. 31 that he and the Archbishop of Dakar had been refused visas for a visit to the arrested Archbishop of Conakry. Meeting in Abidjan shortly before the mass trial, the six Archbishops of French-speaking West Africa (Cardinal Zoaugrana of Ougadougou, and Archbishops Bernard Yago of Abidjan, Yacinthe Thiandoum of Dakar, Luo Sangare of Bamako, Bernardin Gantin of Cotonou and Robert Dosseh of Lome) asked President Sekou Toure to receive one of them to discuss the case of Mgr. Tchidimbo.

The Vatican issued a statement on Jan. 21 declaring that “for the sake of Africa's honour and dignity” it was to be hoped that “no irreparable measures” would be taken against Mgr. Tchidimbo and the other accused.

The Pope disclosed on Jan. 24 that he had made a personal appeal to the Guinean President to show “justice and generous clemency to a dearly loved Archbishop and the other prisoners”, adding: “As far as we know he is innocent and is threatened by terrible torments.”

The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* on Jan. 26 described the allegations against the Vatican as “absurd inventions” and pointed out that Archbishop Tchidimbo had in the past been one of the staunchest opponents of colonialism, and that it was scarcely believable that he should have been accused of being one of its accomplices.

The Pope himself condemned the trial on Jan. 27 in these words “The horrible and pitiless conclusion of the revolutionary trial of Conakry in Guinea is the cause of profound sorrow and grave disappointment to us even if the life, though not the honour or liberty of the Archbishop, Mgr. Tchidimbo, has been saved.

“It is not within our competence to pronounce on questions relating to an independent and sovereign State, but the Judgment of the moral conscience of the world is applicable to the moral aspect Of this wicked affair, in which the exercise of the judicial power appears to have been transmuted into a vehement outlet of atrocious and bend revenge and a collective explosion of hate and cruelty.

“Because of the obligation which binds us to the cause of justice and peace, and because of the esteem which we constantly hold towards the African peoples, we, too, must deplore the clamorous and dishonouring offence inflicted on human sentiment, civil behaviour and the rights of man. And we must all the more renew our love for Africa, which is moving upwards towards true liberty and towards modern civilization.”

Pope Paul subsequently appointed Father Louis Barry—one of eight remaining priests, all of them Guineans, for Guinea's 150,000 Roman Catholics—as temporary head of the Roman Catholic Church in that country, with direct responsibility to the Vatican.

Herr Brandt, the West German Chancellor, on Jan. 24 expressed the hope that with the help of others his Government would succeed “in getting a change in the penalty” imposed on Herr Marx, which he called “inconceivably severe by our standards”.

President Soliman Frangie of the Lebanon appealed at the same time to President Sekou Toure for clemency for the Lebanese sentenced.

Mr. Niall MacDermot, secretary-general of the International Commission of Jurists, cabled the Guinean President on Jan. 25 asking for clemency for those condemned to death. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, in a telegram to President Sekou Toure on Jan. 27 appealed to him to resume his “right to reprieve, and to grant clemency to, those who remain in your custody or under sentence”. Professor Olivier Reverdin, President of the Assembly of the Council of Europe, on Jan. 27 called the reported hangings “a cold-blooded massacre carried out in atrocious circumstances”. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, asked the Guinean President on Feb. 1 to exercise clemency.

Among African Heads of State, President Eyadema of Togo said: “We cannot get mixed up in the internal affairs of an independent country. But I think all Africas disapprove of what has happened. When Europeans talk about it, they won't say: ‘That is what happened in Guinea.’ They will say simply: ‘That happened in Africa.’”

In France, according to *Le Monde*, “informed circles” declined on Jan. 25 to make any statement on the trial in Guinea, it being pointed out by “observers” that the presence of a rather large number of French nationals on Guinean territory and their “rather disquieting position” imposed a need for “prudence” in judging both the events in Guinea and the measures which might be taken.

Officials in Lisbon pointed out that no pleas for clemency had been made by U Thant, the Organization of African Unity or the United States [which is involved in the exploitation of Guinea's bauxite deposits—see 28409 A, note].—(*Le Monde Die Welt - Federal Press and Information Office, Bonn - Times Daily Telegraph - Guardian - Financial Times - Sunday Times - Corriere della Sera - U.N. Information Centre, London*)

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