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TRANSLATIONS FROM "SOVREMENNY VOSTOK" (CONTEMPORARY EAST)

ON GUINEA AND IRAQ

-USSR-

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FOREWORD

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TRANSLATIONS FROM "SOVREMENNY VOSTOK" (CONTEMPORARY EAST)
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Following are two translations selected from Sovremenny Vostok, No 5, Moscow, May 1960, pages 42-47 and 41 and 56, respectively.

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GUINEA IN ITS SECOND YEAR

Following is the translation of an article originally published in L'Humanite and condensed in Sovremennyy Vostok (Contemporary East), Moscow, No 5, May 1960, pages 42-47.

This Cannot be Burnt

Early in October 1958, piles of files containing records and documents were burned in the yard of the Department of Communications in Conakry. Instructions, specifications, prescriptions, drawings, and everything else that would be needed by the Guineans the day after the departure of the French specialists, was committed to the flames. The spite and stupidity of colonial officials were revealed in that act of open animosity towards the Guinean people who had just then won their independence.

The buildings which formerly housed the offices of the French Commandant are now occupied by the young Guinean administration. The residences of the former colonial officials used to be forbidden zones and tabu to the Africans. At present the people freely come with their needs, and bring their suggestions to the elected workers of the local self-government.

The burning of the archives did not only show the stupidity and wickedness of colonial administrators; the papers that were being burned were especially valuable documents, not just scraps of office papers. In a country where malaria is a national evil the pharmaceutical plant manufacturing quinine drugs suddenly discovered the disappearance of the prescriptions for producing these drugs. Acts of this kind were a part of a disgraceful plan to prove that the Guineans cannot exist without European colonizers and that their independence would turn into disaster.

The first year of the existence of the independent Republic of Guinea irrefutably demonstrated a complete fiasco of all attempts to sabotage the building of a new African state. International solidarity and the hard labor of the population of Guinea ensured significant successes during the very first year of the proclamation of sovereignty of the country.

First Investment -- Five Billions

The colonialists were quick in spreading false rumors to the effect that forced labor was introduced in Guinea. The fact of the matter was that from the first days of its existence the country found itself in a difficult position. All current credits were frozen. It was then that the people

began to work voluntarily and without pay on the completion of the jobs that were necessary for the people themselves. A great patriotic movement developed and became known as a "Voluntary Labor Investment." The peasants are now building a road not for the residence of a French commandant, but in order to connect their own village with the main highway. They construct schools for their own children and build polyclinics for their village districts. No detachments of armed guards -- which recently drove people together for "con-scription" -- are needed any more.

The results of this movement exceeded even the most optimistic prognoses. It would be appropriate to mention here that, prior to the proclamation of independence, the total annual budget covering all expenditures amounted to seven billion francs. Within the first ten months since the declaration of independence, roads were built, bridges constructed, and school and dispensary buildings erected, to the tune of five billion francs and at no labor cost.

Struggle for Independence Welded the People Together

Many unfriendly statements are being made against the young Republic of Guinea. The most serious of them is the one dealing with the question of why there is only one political party in Guinea? The reason can be easily given, thus: It is the result of the development of Guinea in the process of the people's struggle for independence. It was possible to attain the political unity only shortly before the decisive voting on 28 September 1958. All political parties that existed in that country prior to the election joined the ranks of the Democratic Party of Guinea (DPG) -- that mighty movement which represented the true aspirations of the people, their yearnings for independence. Inasmuch as different parties usually represent the interests of different classes, economic strata, and various ethnic groups, it is self-explanatory that the objective conditions that exist in the Guinea of today do not call for the creation of several different parties.

The election of 28 September 1958, in which 97% of the voters unanimously said "No," turned into a vivid demonstration of the national aspiration for independence. Is there any possibility of the contradiction of interests within the masses of Guinean society? How can we talk of the presence of opposing classes in a country where over 90% of the population are peasants and where there is no national bourgeoisie?

The struggle for independence united the population and promptly liquidated disagreements among the various ethnic groups. Those disagreements were artificial. Colonial administration intentionally instigated them, played up these contradictions, and set one ethnic group against the other -- e.g., Soussou against Mossi, Malinke against Fula, etc.

During my trips to the various parts of Guinea I became convinced that the Democratic Party of Guinea managed to rally around it the entire population, and achieved the national unity. This is one of the most important accomplishments of the party.

Can one affirm -- on the basis of the above -- that all nationals of Guinea are happy with the new ways of the young republic? Of course, not.

Certainly there are those who are dissatisfied. They are predominantly, former cantonal chiefs [See Note]. They have lost their former power and the privileges they enjoyed under the old regime. Another reason for dissatisfaction within certain segments of the population were the important reforms concerning retail trade, which met with approval of the majority of citizens. At any rate, only individual oppositionists can now be found in certain towns and villages.

(Note: See article "Liquidation of the Institution of Cantonal Chiefs in Guinea" by Zh. Syure-Kanal' [translit. from Russ.] in Sovremanny Vostok, No 11, 1959.)

Prison Gates Opened

On 28 September 1959 I was at Kissidougou, located some 500 kilometers from Conakry. It was in Kissidougou that I could observe the implementation of the decree approved by the DPG Congress, which set the prisoners free.

A crowd of people gathered in the large square under the shade of the trees long before the appointed hour.....

Local political leaders and distinguished citizens dressed in white bubu -- long robes with pockets on the chest -- formed two rows in front of the jail. The district chief, wearing a three-colored scarf -- the insignia of his office -- personally opened the door of the prison ward. The inmates poured out into the square bathed in sunshine ... They were obviously confused and blinded by the bright light ... Politicians made speeches. They explained in detail the meaning of the decree which was approved by the congress. This is not a matter of simply returning the freedom to people who were sentenced to a jail term. The main problem is to ensure their re-education ("reforging"), and their return to the fold of the citizens of Guinea.

In conclusion, the district chief of Kissidougou announced to the freed prisoners:

"Now," he said, "go to your friends, to your families."

One could observe some thirty men -- mostly still young people -- mix with the crowd, which accepted them with sympathy and warmth. And the general rejoicing ensued.

Only one of the former inmates stood by himself, separate from the others and, afterwards, promptly disappeared. His dress was unlike that of the Guineans and the skin of his face was white. That was a Frenchman, about 30 years old, who did not complete his time by two months but took advantage of the amnesty.

One of the Guinean deputies standing nearby told me his story. Returning home one evening this young Frenchman, an employee of a commercial firm, discovered that his servant, a Guinean boy, forgot to feed the master's dog. The white man grabbed a club and began beating the servant. The boy was taken to the hospital with both ear drums broken.

Only a few years ago such an incident would have passed unnoticed, and a white man in Guinea would not have been punished in those days. The man who had used the club would have told the story as a joke to his friends around a whiskey bottle. However, in an independent Guinea he was brought to book. He was lucky to get away so easily; the Guinean court sentenced the

Frenchman only to six months in jail.

The same evening I saw that young man in the bar of the only restaurant in Kissidougou. He was quite confused and finally decided that it would not be nice for him to remain in Guinea and live under this sort of a regime. He had to leave Guinea anyway since, according to the court order, he was subject to deportation after completion of his sentence. He was going to move to the Ivory Coast to continue "making" colonial francs. I asked him what would have happened in France, had an employer beaten up his servant there. He shrugged his shoulders, turned around and disappeared.

However, there are different Frenchmen, too. A number of teachers invited to work in Guinea are awaiting exit permits in Paris, in order to go and join their colleagues who are already teaching in the schools of the young republic, thus doing their share worthy of this real French culture....

New Horizons

Not every European can fully realize what it means in the life of the Guinean People to have the youths elevated to the leading posts in the state. Since ancient times in Africa the last decisive word in everything always belonged exclusively to the elders. Suddenly the position changed drastically. A young fellow or a girl can now be a member of the village committee which makes decisions on all local problems. At long last they have the right to vote and they use this right in a very active way. Leading positions in labor belong to the youths, which is the reason why they now show initiative and defend their rights.

Revolution -- since what is now happening in Guinea is a revolution -- opened to the youths the possibility of accomplishment and they went to work with enthusiasm. In Mamou I heard how the young generation was heatedly discussing the marriage laws newly promulgated by the government. From now on girls under 17 are forbidden to marry. The state bureaucrats registering the marriages have received strict instructions to make sure that the bride agrees to marry the man in question.

To a European this may seem insignificant. However, in Guinea, as well as in the majority of other countries in Africa, it was often the case for the parents of the bride to make the marriage arrangement on her behalf without even asking her opinion. Girls were married off at the age of 15 and even younger. As a result many young mothers died in childbirth, while others suffered from post-delivery complications.

A girl in Mamou told me: "You see, not everything is changed yet... However, a girl in the new and independent Guinea has the right to refuse to marry a man who doesn't appeal to her... whereas in the past, it was possible that such an unwelcome groom would be paying a ransom to the bride's parents for five or even ten years..."

Apparently, the girl was rather excited. She seemed to be 17-18 years old. While talking with me she kept pulling at her head-dress, a sort of turban made of pink tulle...

When I asked the girl whether she or her friends could believe -- two or three years ago -- that such a change in their lives could take place, my companion sadly replied: "Oh, no... We couldn't even dream about it. We

saw the life of our mothers -- and it was a life of slaves -- and thought with horror that the same fate awaited us. When the girls discussed this among themselves, someone would mention that, surely, there must be a different way of life somewhere, but nobody knew for sure. We resigned ourselves to a sad and joyless future. Now everything has changed for the better...."

When the marriage law was being debated the men participated in the discussions, too, and agreed that girls under 17 should be forbidden to marry. However, what bothered the men most of all was the ransom. According to the local custom, the future husband was required to pay the bride's parents a considerable ransom.

I was told by the Guineans that formerly, in addition to the ransom, the groom was obligated to present the parents with expensive gifts. The result was that a young man was paying the ransom for years and ended up deeply in debt. On the other hand, some middle-aged, or even old man -- who already had several wives, but who had saved a lot of money -- could afford to marry any girl he liked. It was trade rather than marriage. Today the situation has changed substantially, and for the better. First, the bride's consent is required; second, the maximum limit of the ransom is set at 5,000 francs; third, the ransom is handed to the bride (not to her parents) to enable her to set up her own housekeeping ... Under such circumstances, even a poor young man can marry the girl he loves, who would agree to become his wife.

Poligamy is widespread among the population of Guinea, as well as of the other countries of Africa. This problem is so complex that it is impossible to solve it by administrative measures either in a day or in a year.

Nevertheless, the girls with whom I talked are decidedly against becoming third or fourth wives of their husbands. I remember a discussion of this subject at a meeting of one of the youth organizations. The speaker was a girl responsible for organizing the service of law and order. With an enthusiastic approval of her friends she announced: "When I get married, I will demand that my husband take no other wives. I will be the only mistress in the house."

To the Guinean youth, the solution of all of these problems is a matter of dignity and self-respect, which fact is one of the fundamental victories of the Guinean people.

On 28 September 1959 -- the first anniversary of the referendum which brought Guinea her independence -- I observed the following picture in the large square in the town of Kissidougou. Orderly columns of participants in the festive demonstration of young men and women, dressed in original national costumes (loose shirts and trousers or skirts of the state flag colors -- red, yellow, and green), were marching in review. They marched young, proud, free....

To the side, under the trees, stood a group of old men. They were obviously envious of the young people and, at the same time, they were proud of that legion of the builders of the new life in the independent Guinea.

Population [Insert, page 42]

According to incomplete data (no nation-wide census has ever been taken), the population of the Republic of Guinea is 2,800,000, and consists of a number of ethnic groups.

The area of the Lower Guinea is populated by four tribes: Nalu, Baha, Landuma, and Soussou. The first three are not numerous and are the indigenous population of these parts. The most significant group are the Soussous who come from the West Sudan. Having moved to Lower Guinea the Soussous brought with them their original culture, and their language has spread almost throughout the entire area. The Ful'be [translit. from Russ.] Tribe settled in the Fouta-Djallon Uplands. These people are accomplished cattlebreeders and also farmers. Central Guinea, bordering on Senegal, is populated by the Tenda people who are in turn, sub-divided into the Bassari and Koniagi branches. A large group of the Mandingo people populates the area near the border of West Sudan. The Malinke people live in the region of Kankan. They are farmers and merchants. The wooded part of the country is populated by the Kissi, Manon, Gertse and Kono nationalities. Contrary to the majority of the Guineans, who are predominantly of Moslem faith, most of the forest dwellers remain animists.

According to the data made available by the UN, the Republic of Guinea has the highest birth rate in the world. Whereas the average birth rate is 34 per thousand persons, Guinea has 60 births per thousand, annually.

Mineral Wealth [Insert, page 44]

Guinea owns very extensive deposits of bauxite. The most important of the deposits being exploited are located on the Islands of Los [translit. from Russ.] and in the regions of Boke, Dabola, and Kindia. The latter two deposits are located near the waterfalls which are intended to be utilized to provide electric power. Production of aluminum is expected to start in the near future, in the bauxite mines area -- such as Kindia -- while electric power will be supplied by the Government Power Station which will be built at the base of Kaleta waterfall on the Konkura river.

Bauxite is mined in Guinea by the open-mine method, by means of the steam or power excavators. The most efficient methods are applied at the mines, using heavy-duty equipment. The annual output of bauxite in Guinea is approximately 500,000 tons, or half the output of the whole of France, which is the fourth largest producer of bauxite in the world. In the output of bauxite, Guinea is significantly ahead of all other countries of Africa.

Iron ore deposits in the Kaloume Peninsula were known since 1904. These deposits are among the largest in the world. The resources of this mining region represent a minimum of 200 million tons, with the iron content of the ore approximately 51.5%. Some experts estimate that the deposits of iron ore in Guinea amount to as much as 3-3.5 billion tons!

Democratic Party of Guinea [Insert, page 46]

"To strengthen democratic system of Guinea for the benefit and in the interests of the masses, to participate actively in the complete liberation of the sister nations of Africa, to accomplish true African unity in the fight against imperialism!" Such is the program of the aims of the Democratic Party of Guinea.

Every inhabited point of the republic has an active primary organization -- i.e., a cell of the DPG. There are 4,123 such cells in the country -- i.e., exactly as many as there are inhabited points. The work of the cells is supervised by a committee consisting of ten members, nine of whom are elected for one year at a general meeting. It is mandatory for the committee to include three women and two representatives of the youth. No women or young people could be elected to serve in any executive branch prior to the declaration of independence. The highest body of the DPG is the Congress. The latest session (Fifth) of the Congress of the DPG took place at Conakry on 14-17 September 1959. Implementation of the decisions of the Congress is entrusted to the national Political Bureau of the DPG, which consists of 17 members elected for three years (until the next Congress). The Politibureau includes two women.

Current membership of the Democratic Party of Guinea exceeds one million.

Conakry [Insert, page 46]

The City of Conakry, capital of the Republic of Guinea, is situated partly on Tombo Island, partly on the northwest coast of the Kaloume Peninsula. Tombo is a small isle about three kilometers long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ km wide; it is connected with the mainland by a causeway. Conakry is a convenient port protected from the ocean by Los Island and the breakwaters. The population of the capital is growing rapidly. From 13,600 in 1936 it increased to 52,900 in 1951 and 70,000 in 1960. About 40,000 residents of the capital live on the island. Prior to the declaration of independence the new city blocks on the northwest shore of Tombo and Kaloume Peninsula were known as "European". French officials, military personnel, and businessmen had their residences in that part. The southeast shore was known strictly as "African" and was always overpopulated.

Housebuilding in the mainland part of the capital has been spreading rapidly during the past few years and, especially, since the declaration of independence. Occasionally these districts are referred to as Tainakri -- which means "Shore City" or "Inland City" -- whereas Conakry means "City of the Sea."

Guinea Breaks Through [Insert, page 47]

Struggling for the achievement of economic independence, the Republic of Guinea created in 1959 the Foreign Trade Administration, which took charge of imports and exports. The agency ensures the importation of the goods which are really necessary for the population and prevents foreign speculators from

attempting to burden the Guineans with all kinds of rubbish, alcohol, and adulterated wines.

On 1 March 1960 Guinea established its own currency. The French colonial franc -- with which foreign capitalists always speculated -- was replaced by the Guinean franc.

"The meaning of this reform," announced Sekou Toure, Secretary General of the DPG, during his address at the convention of party activists at Conakry, 8 March, "is that prior to the establishment of the Guinean currency we had neither economy nor the finances, whereas now the Guinean economy is a recognized factor which nobody can deny. Moreover, without our own currency we could not plan the development of our economy." Consequently, concluded Sekou Toure, "By the enactment on 1 March 1960 of the financial reform, we are making an important break-through in the colonial system of the imperialism in Africa."

Soviet Union Helps Guinea [Insert, Page 477]

The goal set by the people of Guinea is to transform their fatherland -- formerly a colony -- into a modern country with a developed agriculture and industry.

The leading country of socialism -- the Soviet Union -- is the first to come to the assistance of the young African republic. Guinea needs to have its own cadres of specialists. In accordance with the agreement signed by the Soviet Union and Guinea, the USSR will assist in establishing a poly-technical institute for 1500 students. Besides, it is known that a group of Guinean students is already studying in the University of Moscow, while in the fall of 1960, young men and women from Guinea will no doubt be arriving in Moscow to join the youths of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America at the University of Friendship of the Peoples.

The Soviet organizations will render technical assistance in the construction of a cement plant, a sawmill and railroad-tie manufacturing plant, a tannery-shoe factory combine, a fruit and vegetable cannery, a large refrigeration plant, and a sports stadium in Conakry with a seating capacity of 25,000.

The USSR will assist Guinea in geological exploration and prospecting for diamonds and gold, and will furnish the equipment for the development of these deposits, as well as agricultural machinery for the large-scale government-managed rice-growing farms (an area of approximately 7,000 hectares) and model dairy farms. Technical aid will also be rendered in the reconstruction of the airport in Conakry and the railroad between Conakry and Manou, in the mechanization of the Port of Conakry, in building asphalt and concrete roads, and in a number of other projects.

Captions to Photographs [not reproduced here]

Page 43: "For achieving equal rights for women!" Such is the call of the modern, independent Guinea. In the photograph: Column of the girls of the Democratic Youth Union.

Page 45: "To vote for independence!" Such was the unanimous decision adopted by the Democratic Party of Guinea at its extraordinary conference held 14 September 1958. Exactly one year after this historic decision -- 14 September 1959 -- the 5th Congress of the Democratic Party convened in Conakry, and the DPG became the ruling party of the independent Republic of Guinea. In the photograph: Delegates at the session of the 5th Congress of the DPB.

WHAT SORT OF PLANNING IS NEEDED FOR IRAQ

Following is the translation of an interview of Muhammed Sal'man Hasan in Sovremennyy Vostok (Contemporary East), Moscow, No 5, May 1960, pages 41 and 56.7

QUESTION: Do you consider economic planning necessary for the rational utilization of the national resources and for raising the living standard of the population?

ANSWER: They often talk about planning, nowadays. However, it seems to me that many people cannot imagine the type of planning required by Iraq. Some think of it as the construction of housing and public buildings in town and provinces, others as a compilation of certain technical specifications, which should serve as a basis for the industrial projects.

The planning needed by our republic should be considered in a much wider aspect. Generally speaking, this means the development of an over-all economic plan on the basis of an extensive study of the national resources with an idea of laying the foundation for the economy, building heavy industry, transport, etc., for the purpose of increasing the production of consumer goods and raising of the standard of living of the masses in the shortest possible time. At the same time, economic planning is not only the formulation of a plan; it is also control over its implementation.

Planning is necessary for the prosperity of the country because only planning can ensure timely execution of the research operations required for the development of various branches of the national economy, such as: farming, stock-raising, mining, and first of all, oil. Indeed it is planning that mobilizes the ways and means for realizing the results of research, regardless of whether these ways and means will be financed by the state or private capital, whether it would be local capital or a loan. Planning also helps to prepare the necessary manpower, especially the skilled labor, which is necessary for utilization of this capital and for the development of the above-mentioned branches of the national economy on the basis of the better methods of production and a higher level of technology. All of these operations -- research work, mobilization of the capital and manpower, utilization of the new techniques -- can succeed only when there has been extensive preliminary planning, various parts of which are carried out by the departments concerned and which are controlled efficiently and strictly by a central authority.

QUESTION: What, in your opinion is the substance of the economic policy required for the Republic of Iraq?

ANSWER: Before answering this question I consider it necessary for us to agree on what we mean by the term "economic policy."

The economic policy, as I see it, is an aggregate of operations conducted by the government in the areas of agriculture, industry, finance, and credits for the purpose of solving definite economic problems. The implementation of economic policy on the basis of a previously developed plan is a difficult and complex task for any country and requires extensive study. The first and basic point which should be considered is the solution of the problem of all possible development of all branches of economy, without exception. The next point is formulation of a scientifically sound plan and a timely application of the necessary measures for nationalization of the foreign capital in agriculture, industry, trade, and the credit-financial system, with a consideration to the real possibilities of Iraq. The third point is the development of the means of production and introduction of the new technology in all branches of economy.

In the light of the above-mentioned considerations I believe that the key to overcoming the economic difficulties of Iraq will be a simultaneous development of industry and agriculture. It is necessary to commence working persistently in these two areas at the same time, since -- if success is to be had in the agricultural reforms -- organization of the production of agricultural equipment, inventory, and fertilizer cannot be achieved without industrialization. By the same token, accomplished industrialization presupposes expansion of the local market which could accommodate the new industrial production. However, this is unthinkable without an increase in the purchasing power of the peasants, which can only be possible on the condition that the chains of feudalism are liquidated in the village, which would result in the growth of the agricultural output.

In the area of commerce, the Republic of Iraq has already taken the first steps towards strengthening the principle of free and mutually-beneficial trade by concluding trade agreements with the socialist countries headed by the Soviet Union, where new markets have now been opened for the Iraqi goods. It is now possible for Iraq to purchase the machinery and equipment necessary for her economic progress.

The purpose of the financial policy of any country is to increase the funds necessary for financing not only current governmental operations but, also, the measures which are being carried out in accordance with general economic policy of the country. It is necessary, however, to avoid inflation which would raise prices, or devaluation which would deaden manpower and capital. In this connection it is necessary to maintain the principle of equal distribution of the financing of various undertakings conducted in accordance with the general economic plan, among the various strata of the population. The great difference existing between the incomes of the rich and the poor, must be brought to nought by introducing the progressive income tax, inheritance tax and, also by exemption of the poor from taxation and by offering them financial assistance.

QUESTION: What should be done for the conduct of this economic policy?

ANSWER: The mere compilation of a long-term general economic plan and the implementation of certain short-term measures do not guarantee a rapid development of the national economy. It is necessary to train qualified personnel in definite specialized economic areas: industry, communications, construction of housing and public buildings, irrigation, etc. The

fiasco of the attempts of the old regime to formulate such a general economic plan can be explained by the contradictions of the conservative elements within Iraw as well as abroad, lack of conditions necessary for general economic planning, existence of a swollen and -- consequently -- inefficient government machinery, absence of distribution of responsibilities among the government agencies, anarchy and confusion as regards planning and implementation, and also misappropriation of government funds.

The state machinery which we inherited from the regime liquidated by the revolution of 14 July was created to satisfy the interests of imperialists and their hangers-on -- feudal lords and compradores. It is small wonder, therefore, that the government staff is extremely numerous but unqualified and that different departments duplicate each other. Such a staff is unable to conduct any economic plan in accordance with the interests and requirements of the people. It cannot take into account the labor energy of the masses or direct it towards creation of the healthy economy and raising of the standard of living of the population.

The basic principles, which should guide us in the conduct of the policy of planning are as follows:

1. Clear-cut distribution of responsibilities between the central government apparatus -- which works out the entire general economic plan -- and the various local bureaus which execute such a plan.
2. Distribution of the duties and authority among the ministries responsible for the completion of the general economic plan.
3. Control of completion of the plan and supervision of current operations. Also, taking the necessary steps to ensure the success of the plan.