

# **FRENCH DOMINATION IN THE SAHEL IS APPROACHING AN END**

The transition from colonialism to neo-colonialism (i.e, the finishing process of transition from colonialism to imperialism) was finished for France in 1980 with the independence of Vanuatu (France still keeps New Caledonia, but the official Colonial empire is over). What followed after, was a series of French neo-Colonial institutions, which tried to re-claim the French part of the pie in the imperialist game which intensified after the fall of the Communist and anti-imperialist camp.

After the fall of the Colonial empire, in most states, proletarian or national bourgeoisie revolution, all with some sort of Socialist ideology followed up.

Algeria, Mali, Benin, e.t.c. In many cases, the vehicle of change was not a mass proletarian party, but the lower echelons of the military. There is plenty of Marxist bibliography on why this is the case, but we will just mention here that in rural countries, where the rural proletariat is small, and the urban one even smaller, the only organism which centralized the elements of the state from various villages (and nations) within the state, was the military, so it would make sense for revolutionaries to use the military as an engine of organization and revolution.

But this African socialism was destroyed quickly after it was birthed, and what followed was again, the neo-colonial splitting of Africa, with the French again gaining defacto neo-colonial control of the Sahel. The primal engines of this neo-colonial status are many: economically, it is the CFA franc, politically and militarily, Barkhane (and Serval before it), but in general, politically, the imperialists dont have a specific organization to control Sahel, instead they try to use

multiple ways to control individual states by the usage of compradorist elements in these societies.

Of course, we all know that imperialism (and therefore, neo-colonialism, its political manifestation) are full in contradictions, and therefore have no future. Whatever is the aim of the imperialists, the African bourgeoisie that grow (consisted mainly in industry and agriculture) will wish day in and day out independence from the imperialists so they are able to avoid both social revolution and also be able to compete with the imperialists in the global market, bringing to themselves more profits but also bringing economic prosperity in general and elevating the living conditions of their working class (as we said, it is also a way for them to avoid social revolutions). The bourgeoisie of Africa even try to create their own unified bloc, also known as ECOWAS to try and take their states out of imperialist hegemony (even here, it must be clarified that this institution is a child of neo-colonialism where individual national bourgeoisie formations were weak, and it will die with its mother once it becomes apparent that national bourgeoisie development of individual states has no more need for an African EU).

From this point we can understand that French and in general imperialist domination has no future in the Sahel. But neither has this pan-africanist bourgeoisie coalition which aspires to create a cosmopolitan bourgeoisie in the future. Unlike Europe, where this was and is possible thanks to the fact of major uneven development and the two world wars which worked to unify north-western Europe under American-German hegemon, such a hegemonic and developed group of bourgeoisie does not exist in north Africa, and Nigeria is not that much of a power to try to play Germany and America in an effective way within ECOWAS. This fact became apparent this last two years by two military coups, in Burkina Faso and in Mali.

There are three factors we need to take in consideration: The national question as a source of inhered dissability, the question of imperialism as a source of unification, and the question of regional multinational bourgeoisie development as a source of internal competition.

Lets take the the two main states that form the two main points of this confortation, where these three factors meet together.

First, Mali. We have written extensively on the national question in Mali in the past<sup>[1]</sup>, and therefore we urge the reader to go read our previous article on this. But to make a quick sum up, there is no "Malian" nation, in the sense that the population of Mali does not belong to one nation. The two main nations in Mali are the Tuaregs and the Bambara. The Bambara form the dominant and largest nation in Mali, and the main source of assimilation of the other nations of the Mande race into it (Sonike, Xaasongaxango, Khassonke e.t.c), while the Tuareg in the north, while numerically very small, inhabit all northern Mali, and is this national condradictions which spearheads the form of all wars in Mali the last 3 decades. From this, we understand that there is no future for Mali as a state, and its immediate future looks like the territorial situation in 2012. How will the future develop beneath Azawad, i.e, if the nations there will follow a race-nation line or an actually nationalist line in the future, will depend on the course of industrialization and urbanization which will determine if the nations will be assimilated into the Bambara. If by the time Mali finishes industrialization the non-Bambara Mande nations fail to be assimilated, one can be sure of separatist wars and conflicts at all times crisis enters the field, just like separatist forces are growing in Italy and Spain, the only multinational formations where there is no a big central nation like the French against the

Britons.

This factor therefore, the factor of the national question, will always be like a "spectre haunting Mali" at all steps of its development as a state. We can all thank colonialism for the fake borders most African states have.

Secondly, the fight against imperialism. Mali forms one of the states in Africa, while also being one of the top producers of commodities like gold and cotton. One of the main reasons it is still very poor is because their exports go mainly in Europe, with the classic trade package coming with it; European parasites want to consume cheap, and therefore the Malian workers are also paid very cheap. Nonetheless, industrial development is increasing in Mali the latest years, almost reaching pre war status (in 2010, industry composed 22% of Mali's GDP, in 2013 this went down to 17%, and in 2020 it went back to 21%),<sup>[2]</sup> and it is obvious that the bourgeoisie. This, combined with the future capabilities of Mali due to its natural wealth, could be a main reason why the intra-bourgeoisie conflicts of Mali dont just take a character of political conflicts within the sphere of French hegemony, i.e who will be able to pocket more with French cooperation, but also take an international character, with one group of bourgeoisie wishing to break free from French dominion.

And third, the intra-bourgeoisie competition within Africa. As it is proven already with the fact that ECOWAS was immediate to sanction and suspend Mali from the organization due to the coup, there is no way for it to ever manifest to something serious enough once radicals who wish to head on a an actual confrontation with the imperialists and to chose a national development plan take power. It is not Mali sanctioning ECOWAS, it is ECOWAS sanctioning Mali for not following its liberalism. It is ECOWAS defaulting on the purpose it was originally

created (i.e to combat French imperialism economically only, something impossible but still) by defacto allying with the imperialists against Burkina Faso and Mali. Nonetheless, as it was proved this helped the army to solidify support in the population.

Anyways, to conclude on Mali, what are the policies of the Goita Junta and of France and ECOWAS?

First of all, they started straining relations with the west, but also with ECOWAS. They defaulted dept payments to the west and France multiple times, with two being just these last days, one in January 11 over 50 million euros<sup>[3]</sup>, and one today regarding 30 million.<sup>[4]</sup> France is currently pushing EU to push sanctions to Mali the moment you are reading this.<sup>[5]</sup>

The final straw of ECOWAS and France, and the final victory of the anti-imperialist forces in Mali was finally the biggest trade union taking the side of the Junta against ECOWAS (implying also that ECOWAS is in cahoots with the imperialists) some weeks ago.<sup>[6]</sup> Even the African lapdogs of the imperialists admit that Goita and his group have won the masses over against France-ECOWAS, and thousands heeded the calls of Goita to go protest the embargo by the imperialists and ECOWAS.<sup>[7][8]</sup> The Junta itself, after what seems to be a popular demand too, started forming closer relations with Russia, inviting many Russian soldiers in Mali, in what is seen as a move by many as the government preparing itself to completely oust French and German armies from Mali and end their operations there<sup>[9]</sup>, with the nail in the coffin was the Malian government's order for French ambasadors to leave Mali within 72 hours.<sup>[10]</sup>

The second country is Burkina Faso, where the coup of January 24, seems to be taking a similar direction as the one in Mali.<sup>[11]</sup>

All in all, it seems that French domination in west Africa

is about to come to an end, and so it ECOWAS, since no anti-imperialist African will take its lines seriously from now on, if they did take them seriously in the past anyway.

F. U. Kuqe 2/2/2022

*If a MAC line is expressed, then it will be clarified. If not, the reader should consider the work expressing the views of the writer.*

## REFERENCES:

- [1]<https://archive.org/details/as-long-as-france-remains-in-mali-no-peace-can-ever-be-achieved>
- [2]<https://www.statista.com/statistics/457788/mali-gdp-distribution-across-economic-sectors/>
- [3]<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/mali-debt-sale-cancelled-because-sanctions-over-election-delay-2022-01-11/>
- [4]<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/mali-says-it-has-defaulted-bonds-blames-sanctions-2022-02-02/>
- [5]<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220113-france-presses-eu-to-agree-sanctions-against-mali-in-line-with-ecowas>
- [6]<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220113-who-supports-mali-s-junta>
- [7]<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/30272/since-coup-mali-s-military-junta-has-targeted-public-opinion>

[8]<https://www.dw.com/en/rattled-mali-junta-calls-for-protests-against-ecowas-sanctions/a-60389552>

[9]<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220107-russian-military-advisors-arrive-in-mali-after-french-troop-reduction>

[10]<https://www.africanews.com/2022/01/31/ruling-junta-tells-french-ambassador-to-mali-to-leave-the-country/>

[11]<https://www.nytimes.com/article/burkina-faso-africa-coup.html>