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BRIEF ON MALI

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Summary

The 4 million inhabitants of the Republic of Mali are scattered irregularly over a vast, arid, essentially flat land surface. Much of this land is desert or scrubby grassland on which crops are grown, if at all, only during a short rainy season. The most widespread use of the land is as pasture for excessively large herds of livestock. Annual flooding of the Niger and other rivers permits a type of agriculture somewhat similar to that of the Nile Valley, but on a much smaller scale.

Most of the people of Mali are sedentary farmers of Negroid stock. Although they are basically similar in background and mores, they are divided among dozens of tribes, each with its own language or dialect and parochial loyalties. In northern Mali live several major mulatto groups, nomadic herdsmen who bear more physical and cultural resemblance to the people living all around the Sahara -- on the "shore" of the desert -- than they do to their black compatriots.

This potpourri of diverse peoples creates a problem in the establishment of a cohesive state, but the Mandingo language is widely used, either as a mother tongue or as a "trade" language, and permits communication among a majority of the people. Along with language differences are ingrained tribal rivalries.

A harsh climate and primitive agricultural methods have handicapped economic development, although livestock and a few crops, particularly peanuts, are produced in sufficient quantity to be exported. Most of Mali's exports and imports in the past have been shipped via the Dakar-Niger Railroad. Since its rupture by government edict in August 1960, following the demise of the Mali Federation, some goods have been sent and received through Abidjan in the Ivory Coast and Conakry in Guinea. Neither of these routes is satisfactory, but the route through Guinea is particularly uneconomic.

* This report was prepared in response to a specific request for information. It is receiving general distribution because of the current interest in Mali.

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Mali's foreign trade consists primarily of the export of agricultural products and the import of manufactured or processed goods. Peanuts and peanut oil represent about 90 percent of the total exports; imports include processed foods, petroleum products, and construction materials. Within the country, trade is in the hands of large, European-based companies, and itinerant traders, some of whom are Syrian-Lebanese, some African, and some European. The traditional exchange of goods also continues at local market places on regular market days.

Although most of the people are unschooled peasant farmers, urban groups have been active politically for decades and have formed an effective political party which currently controls the government. The ruling clique is divided between supporters of East and West, but recently leftist approaches toward economic and social goals have become increasingly attractive.

Government officials in Mali have concluded, or are considering, foreign aid programs with both Sino-Soviet Bloc and non-Bloc countries. The Chinese Communists, the Russians, and the Czechs have been particularly active. Among the non-Communist countries that have already signed aid pacts, or indicated an interest in supplying aid to Mali are France, the United States, Ghana, West Germany, and Israel.

I. Setting

The Republic of Mali, in the heart of West Africa, is entirely surrounded by the French or former-French territories of Algeria, Niger, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Senegal, and Mauritania (see Map 29762).* Although Mali is more than 1,000 miles in length, varies from 200 to 600 miles in width, and is twice the size of Metropolitan France, much of this vast land is so arid and so isolated that it contributes little to the national economy.

The landscape of Mali is one of transition from the Sahara Desert in the north to grasslands and sparse forests in the south. The few hills and low, truncated mountains stand out in sharp contrast to the monotonously flat terrain throughout most of the country. Similarly, the narrow bands of green vegetation hugging the banks of the Senegal and Niger Rivers accentuate the brownness of the stark landscape during the long dry season. Prominent features in the picture of rural Mali are the mixture of short and tall grasses, the thorny brush, the gnarled and ungainly baobab trees, and the dusty roads connecting the villages of adobe houses. In northern Mali, even the roofs are made of adobe; but in the south, where the heavier rainfall would turn an adobe roof to mud, each house is topped with thatched grass. In urban Mali, the imprint of French culture is clearly evident in the architecture and layout of some of the important towns; in others, the buildings and urban pattern appear to have survived from the African empires of the Middle Ages.

II. Population

A. Number and Distribution

Approximately 3,643,000 people lived in French Soudan (now Mali) in 1956, the latest year for which fairly complete data are available. The population density averaged about 3 people per square kilometer (8 per square mile), but the distribution throughout the 17 cercles, or administrative regions, was extremely uneven. The 3 Saharan or sub-Saharan cercles of Timbuktu, Gao, and Goundam made up more than half the national territory, but together they contained less than 15 percent of the total population. (See Table 1).**

The overwhelming majority of the people live in the rural areas, but the number of town or city residents has been growing steadily

* Map follows p. 20.
** Table 1 follows on p. 4.

Table 1

Population, 1956

Cercle	African	Other a/	Density (per sq. km.)	Principal Ethnic Groups
Bamako	532,000	4,306	9	Bambara
Bafoulabe	140,000	162	4	Malinké, Kassonké
Bandiagara	360,000	32	8	Dogon, Peul
Bougouni	230,000	39	6	Bambara
Gao	248,000	347	0-1	Songhai, Touareg
Goundam	139,000	56	2	Songhai, Peul, Touareg
Issa-Ber	134,000	26	9	Peul, Bambara
Kayes	123,000	411	5	Kassonké, Toucouleur
Kita	115,000	222	3	Malinké, Peul
Koutiala	203,000	84	11	Minianka
Macina	210,000	359	5	Bozo
Mopti	179,000	229	15	Marka, Bozo, Peul
Nioro	285,000	154	5	Marka, Diawara, Peul
San	206,000	99	15	Marka, Bozo, Bambara
Ségou	209,000	604	16	Bambara, Peul
Sikasso	211,000	79	10	Sénoufo, Bambara
Timbuktu	112,000	83	0-1	Songhai, Maure, Touareg
Total	3,636,000	7,292		

a. Chiefly French.

and now exceeds 250,000 people. The most spectacular growth has been in the capital city of Bamako, where the population has increased from 6,500 in 1910 to 68,000 in 1956. Bamako is by far the largest community in the country. To most Malians, it must appear as a metropolis; but it actually bears a closer resemblance to a county seat in a farming area in the United States. The other towns, including all of those with more than 10,000 inhabitants, are Kayes (20,000), Ségou (17,000), Sikasso (14,000), and Mopti (13,000). The ancient city of Timbuktu -- at one time a "port" for camel caravans crossing the Sahara and, at its height, a city of some 20,000 inhabitants -- today has a population of only about 7,000 and is but a minor trade center for salt and local produce.

B. Ethnic Composition

The diverse ethnic groups within the boundaries of the Republic of Mali include several light-skinned nomadic tribes that live along the edge of the Sahara and numerous sedentary Negroid tribes that inhabit the remainder of the country (see Table 1).

The nomadic groups include the Maures, the Touareg, and the Peul or Fulani. All are Muslim herdsmen, descendents of North Africans who came across the Sahara and made contact with the Negroid peoples on the southern rim of the desert. The Maures, who number about 50,000 in Mali, tend their cattle, sheep, goats, and camels along the southern margin of the Sahara, in an area lying between the Mauritanian border and the Senegal and Niger Rivers. They are divided into distinct castes, and have a reputation for being fiercely independent and generally unfriendly to outsiders.

The 150,000 Touareg in Mali live primarily in the vicinity of Timbuktu and within the big bend of the Niger River near the boundary of Upper Volta. Although many of them are tent-dwelling nomads, some have become settled to some extent and live in stone or adobe houses. In their seasonal migrations from pasture to pasture each clan carefully observes the territorial rights of fellow tribesmen. Their culture includes both Berber and Arab characteristics.

The almost 400,000 Peuls (also known as the Fulani) are more widely scattered throughout Mali, but they tend to be concentrated south of the other nomadic groups. Throughout West Africa, the Peuls have tended to reside in the midst of more populous ethnic groups, such as the Bambara in Mali or the Hausa in Nigeria.

The vast majority of the people of Mali, some 3 million out of a total of 3.6 million, are Negroid. This group is subdivided into at least 30 tribes or subgroups, the most numerous of which are the Bambara (800,000), Marka (265,000), Songhai (210,000), Malinké (206,000), and Dogon (183,000).

Although estimates vary, the French population of the Mali area in 1955 probably numbered about 4,800, of whom 2,600 lived in the Bamako area. As of October 1960, about 600 French technicians, advisors, and teachers remained in Mali. In December 1960, 680 French officers and men were stationed at the army base at Kati, 10 miles from Bamako; and 560 were stationed at the Bamako, Gao, and Tessalit air bases. No information is currently available on the number of Frenchmen employed by private interests in the country.

C. Language

The multiplicity of languages spoken by the people of Mali is one of the liabilities facing the new nation. Although linguistic specialists have established that there are but six linguistic "families" in Mali, each of the many tribal groups has its own dialect and many are not mutually understandable. Dialects of Mandingo, the most widespread language in Mali, are spoken by the Bambara, Malinké, Khassonké,

and Dioula tribes (about 2,100,000 people). Mandingo is also used as the "trade language" throughout much of the country. French is the medium of instruction in the schools, and consequently its use is limited primarily to the few people who have had some formal education. As recently as mid-1960, there were only 372 schools in the entire country.

D. Religion

Religion plays an extremely important role in the life of the average Malian and significantly influences his behavior pattern. This pervasiveness of religious tenets or superstitions woven throughout all phases of Malian life affects the leaders of the government, the market woman on the corner, the itinerant trader, and the cotton picker in the field.

About half of the people of Mali are Muslim, and the remainder follow various indigenous animistic beliefs. Many people who list themselves as Muslim also observe animistic practices -- just to be on the safe side. Fewer than 1 percent of the people are Christian. The north is considered to be Muslim territory -- reflecting the spread of Islam from North Africa -- and the south is considered animistic. The boundary, however, is not clear cut and there are enclaves of Muslims or animists scattered throughout the country. Although animism has retreated or gone underground to some extent in the face of aggressive proselytizing by Muslim and Christian, it still shows vitality, tenacity, and a capacity to alter alien creeds.

Ancestor worship is the basis of many of the animistic beliefs. The earliest ancestor -- the link that unites the clan -- is considered to be a god, and successive generations transmit and embellish myths about his fabulous life. Among the living members of the clan, the patriarch is the priest, and he alone is credited with being able to communicate with souls of the ancestral dead.

In addition to the family cult, many animists adhere to what are frequently called the "mystery societies." These brotherhoods cross the boundaries of the family cults and differ in beliefs, rites, and organization. They also tend to weaken the authority of the family cults, creating conflict in individual lives between the claims of the traditional religious organization into which a man was born and the organization into which he was later initiated.

Among the African animists, illness, death, or other misfortune is ascribed to many causes including black magic, taboo-breaking, and the action of spirits or people with special powers, such as sorcerers and witches. To ward off these evils, the average animist puts great faith

in the potency of amulets or fetishes. There is scarcely a man who does not wear an assortment of gris-gris (amulets) to protect him from specific perils. Divination, also, plays a vital role among animists. No important decision is made or act undertaken unless the signs are consulted and prove propitious.

III. Political Development

The Republic of Mali is a direct descendant of several of the most famous ancient empires of West Africa, one of which was in fact known as the Mali Empire. The legend of the power and greatness of the Mali Empire has been passed down and embroidered upon from generation to generation. Many of the citizens of present-day Mali saw the formation of the recent Federation of Mali not as the joining of two political entities but as the revival of the former Empire.

The first of the ancient empires was that of Ghana,* which may have been established as early as the 4th century, A. D. The capital of the first Ghana was at a site about 200 miles northeast of Bamako, capital of the present Mali. In the 11th or 12th century, Ghana was conquered by peoples from North Africa and its rulers became converted to Islam. The Ghana Empire was succeeded by the Mali (or Manding) Empire, which in turn succumbed at the hands of the soldiers of the Gao or Songhai Empire in the 15th century. Toward the end of the 16th century the Songhai Empire split into a number of hostile minor states. The persistence of this fragmentization greatly facilitated conquest by the French.

The French, in other words, walked into a power vacuum. They moved up the Senegal River and down the Niger, a natural invasion route that offered no major physical obstacles. The French established their first permanent fort on the upper Senegal as early as 1772; by 1866, Ségou (north of Bamako) on the Niger had been reached; and in 1892, the territory became a separate French colony.

Wherever feasible, the French subdivided existing units and placed their own appointees at the head of the new units. Despite this maneuver, many of the African chiefs managed by various devices to stay one jump ahead of their conquerors. Some surviving chiefs, for instance, covertly set up straw men to replace themselves in any dealings with the administration, thus fending off French pressures and penalties.

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* There is no more than sentimental connection between the present-day Ghana and the original Ghana -- in fact, Kwame Nkrumah and his colleagues usurped the name much to the chagrin of the people (or at least the educated people) of what was then French Soudan.

In the years just before World War II, the French Government introduced a policy of strengthening the chiefs' authority, and the number of administrative units was drastically reduced. Regions with ethnic, historical, or economic affinities were combined, and an effort was made to train the heirs of the surviving hereditary chieftaincies in special state schools. This policy was counteracted somewhat by the formation of trade unions, student associations, and similar groups, which gave organization to the detribalized urban elements and permitted many rural Soudanese to escape from the authority of the chiefs.

Although fledgling trade unions and political discussion groups were beginning to be formed in the 1930's, they did not really flourish until after World War II. At that time the worsening of an already bad economic situation, along with the survival of many Vichy-inspired repressive measures, impelled liberal elements in both France and French West Africa to press for the elimination of political and economic grievances. Late in 1945, the easing of controls and the elections held throughout French West Africa for overseas representatives to sit in the French Constituent Assembly caused a flowering of political activity. For example, some 800 delegates from all parts of Black Africa met in Bamako in 1946 to form a political party that became powerful throughout French West Africa and Equatorial Africa.

Following World War II, the urban population increased phenomenally. It was among the floating, detribalized townspeople that one of the earliest Soudanese parties, the Union Soudanaise, found its most fertile field. Trade unions, especially among the railroad workers of Bamako, also developed rapidly, as did student organizations. Both were attracted to the radical platform of the Union Soudanaise, which today is in almost complete control of the governmental apparatus. The extremism of these groups was offset or moderated by the presence of an even larger urban element made up of a stable Muslim middle class, steeped in Islamic traditions and much less willing to accept new ideas.

For the territory as a whole, a counterbalance to urban radicalism has been supplied by the archaic, conservative life among the people of the vast countryside. Yet even there, despite apparent stagnation, the traditional leadership and customs are slowly disintegrating. This process has been accelerated by the spread of education, improvement in communications, and interparty political struggles.

The growth of regional and ethnic organizations checked the expansion of the Union Soudanaise in the rural areas. Although some of the tribes provided satisfactory material for party organization, others such as the Touareg and Songhai are unresponsive to political stimulus from whatever source. The development of ethnic or tribal parties, like that formed by the Peuls (who number some 400,000 to 500,000)

prompted rival tribes to emulate them, the better to oppose their own hereditary tribal enemies. The considerable development of tribal parties does not, however, indicate genuine political activity in the countryside. Politics in the real sense of the term is still confined to the town.

During the past several years, increasing political pressure concomitant with the development of effective political parties and leaders forced the government in Paris to accede to African demands for increased self-government. In June 1956 the French passed the Overseas Reform Act, which allowed the Africans fuller participation in local and territorial government. To many Frenchmen, the Act was a radical measure; but, to most African leaders, it seemed merely a praiseworthy stepping stone in the path to complete control of their own affairs.

Each of the overseas territories of France was given the option of immediate independence or of becoming autonomous states within the French Community. Soudan, in the September 1958 plebiscite, voted to remain within the Community. In January 1959, however, representatives from Soudan, Senegal, Dahomey, and Upper Volta decided to unite their republics into a Mali Federation. Shortly thereafter, Upper Volta and Dahomey backed out of the Federation. The Mali Federation that remained (and became independent on 20 June 1960) was a fairly loose amalgam made up of Senegal and Soudan.

Almost from the inception of the Federation, however, its leaders espoused viewpoints that were not in harmony. The basic orientations of the Federation's two major political forces, the Union Soudanaise and the Union Progressiste Senegalaise, were "out of focus" -- Soudanese leaders being closer in political outlook to Guinea's Sekou Touré than to Senegal's Leopold Senghor. The Soudanese were particularly opposed to the desire of Senegalese leaders to retain close ties with France. With the secession of Senegal on 20 August 1960, the Mali Federation was defunct. Soudan proclaimed its own independence as the Republic of Mali on 24 September 1960 and was admitted to membership in the United Nations on 28 September 1960.

Following the demise of the Federation, there has been sharp disagreement among Mali's leaders on the question of their country's international alignment. The extremists would prefer a close alignment with Guinea and, like that country, would welcome Sino-Soviet assistance on a large scale. The moderates apparently want to show the world that the new Mali Republic is truly independent and in no way tied to either East or West. It was recently reported that President Modibo Keita and other moderates have succeeded in temporarily containing radical, pro-Communist action, but it appears doubtful whether the moderates will

prevail over the long run. It has also been suggested that the position of the moderates is likely to crumble unless they receive substantial assistance from the West.

IV. Economic Resources

A. Agriculture

Most of the people of Mali depend, directly or indirectly, on agriculture for their livelihood, but the country's extreme aridity presents a formidable handicap. The vast northern part of Mali -- north of Timbuktu -- receives less than 10 inches of rainfall annually, but only the extreme northern tip of the country is true "Hollywood Saharan," with virtually no rain and with livestock and plants restricted to oases. On approaching Timbuktu, cattle of the nomads become more numerous. Even here, however, the rainfall is still light and highly erratic in distribution. Consequently, even quick-maturing millets often fail. South of Timbuktu, a belt of somewhat more plentiful rainfall stretches almost as far south as Bamako. In this belt, rainfall varies from 20 to 30 inches annually, and the rainy season is about 4 months long. This belt is important cattle country, and some crops can be grown without irrigation. Farther south, the rainy season gradually lengthens, the total rainfall increases slightly (44 inches per year at Bamako), and sedentary agriculture becomes possible. In the extreme south, the wet season may last as long as 6 or 7 months; but, because of infertile soil, the rainfall is less effective than might be expected.

Not only is rainfall sparse throughout most of Mali, but daytime temperatures are so consistently high that evaporation is intense. As a result the land is significantly drier than other parts of the world that receive the same amount of rainfall. The area around Bamako, for example, receives as much annual rainfall as Washington, D.C., but during most of the year the aridity is comparable to that of Phoenix, Arizona.

Because of the deficient rainfall in Mali, the growing of crops depends to a very great extent on either irrigation or flooding from the Niger River and its tributaries. The lack of adequate moisture also has a deleterious effect on the extremely important livestock industry. Animals are moved frequently in search of better pasture, but because of overstocking the available land often is grazed bare and the soils are both cut and compacted by hoofs. One serious result is severe erosion during the infrequent but heavy storms.

Millet is the main food crop of Mali, and the Niger Bend area is the region where millet is cultivated most intensively. Mali (or Soudan) for some time has been the chief millet granary of French West

Africa, and some 20,000 tons were customarily exported annually to feed the population of Senegal and occasionally Niger. A lively trade in millet has long been carried on between the sedentary farmers and the nomadic herders, who use it for porridge, as animal fodder, and as the base for a fermented drink.

Rice also is a popular and widely used food crop in Mali and in other parts of West Africa. Its popularity is due, in part, to a French program to encourage cultivation of irrigated rice at the expense of millet; rice keeps well, has a higher nutritive value than millet, does not impoverish the soil as much, and requires less preparation for eating. Rice production increased significantly during and especially after World War II, and currently about 180,000 tons are produced each year. Some rice is currently exported, but no figures are available.

Minor food crops are of wide variety; but, because of regional specialization, not all crops are produced in all parts of the country. Nuts from the shea butter tree, African yams, and sweet potatoes, for instance, are raised primarily in southern Mali whereas wheat and barley are grown in the Niger Bend area. Among the other crops are corn, peas, beans, manioc (cassava), potatoes, bananas, and citrus fruits.

Peanuts are, by far, the principal cash crop of the country and are also used domestically. They are grown in a wide belt along the railroad, from the Senegal border as far east as Ségou. Climatic conditions, fluctuations in the guaranteed price, soil exhaustion, the availability of immigrant agricultural laborers, and the accessibility to and cost of transport are the elements that govern peanut production. Recently, the annual export crop of 55,000 tons has had a value of 2,200 million CFA francs (about $9 million). Most of the production is exported in an unrefined state because of the limited capacity of the oil-extracting plant at Koulikoro, the only one in Mali.

Irrigated cotton has been grown successfully in the central delta of the Niger River under the auspices of the Office du Niger, a semi-autonomous government agency. Research and experimentation in both cultivation and marketing methods also have benefited the producers of the unirrigated cotton who, incidentally, produce far more cotton than do those using irrigation. The high cost of transportation to the ocean is a major handicap in the development of cotton exports. Nevertheless, the cotton harvest has increased from 153 tons in 1952 to 6,000 tons in 1959.

Livestock has traditionally been one of the "riches" of Mali. Statistics vary somewhat, but in 1958 there were an estimated 3.4 million cattle, 7 million sheep and goats, 330 thousand donkeys, 112 thousand horses, and 98 thousand camels. Thousands of cattle, sheep, goats, and

horses are sent each year to Senegal, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and, to a lesser extent, to Liberia and Nigeria.

Despite these impressive numbers, the inadequacy of the water and fodder supplies and the prevalence of animal diseases are serious handicaps to the development of herds. All of Mali except the area north of Timbuktu is infested with the tsetse fly, which attacks both man and animals. Furthermore, many of the animals are worn out by being almost constantly on the move either to pasture or to market. Their value, however, cannot be estimated strictly from a monetary angle because they play a major role in the daily life of their owners. Among many Malians, herds are almost the sole capital, and animals furnish essential food, materials for clothing and shelter, and a medium for barter exchange. The herds are chiefly a measure of wealth and provide little return in the form of fertilizer, transport, or plow power.

All of the tribes living along the Niger River and its tributaries use fish for food, and some of the tribesmen are professional fishermen. The greatest single market for fish is at Mopti, but dried or smoked fish are sent throughout the country and exported as far afield as Ghana. More than 30 thousand tons of fish are caught annually in the central Niger Delta alone, and approximately one-half of this catch is exported to nearby countries.

B. Minerals

The minerals known to exist in Mali include gold, salt, iron, phosphates, manganese, tin, lead, and zinc; but none of these is exploited in any appreciable amount. At the time of the ancient empires, gold, was an important article of commerce. Today it is found in several parts of the country, but only in small amounts. Salt production satisfies less than one-fourth of the local demand, the remainder coming from Senegal, Mauritania, and Europe. Iron occurs as magnetite near Kayes and as nonphosphoric hematite near the railway between Kayes and Bamako. These deposits are exploited only by the Africans for their personal use. The phosphates in the remote valley of the Tilemsi River, 80 miles north of Gao in the Sahara, are of poor quality. A potentially valuable deposit of manganese was found a few years ago near Ansongo in eastern Mali. Like the deposits of lead, tin, and zinc in the Adrar des Iforas region of northeastern Mali, the manganese deposits are remote and not readily accessible.

V. Transportation

Although the transportation pattern of Mali includes rivers, roads, a single railroad, and airlines, the limited use of each reflects the rudimentary state of development of the economy as a whole. The rivers

have historically been important in the transfer of goods, but their navigability is severely restricted by seasonally low water. The road network links all of the important towns and most of the villages, but most of the roads are practically useless for modern vehicles during much of each year because they have only natural, unimproved surfaces. The nation's only railroad has long been the most important link between Mali and the outside world, but this link recently was broken by Senegal when it withdrew from the Federation, and no satisfactory substitute has been found. Air transport is available throughout the economically significant part of the country, and is becoming increasingly useful, but still plays a minor role in the movement of goods and people.

A. River

The Niger River is the major artery of water transportation in Mali and serves the most densely settled part of the country. Complete data on river traffic are not available, but the port of Koulikoro (the eastern terminus of the Dakar-Niger Railroad and head of navigation of the Middle Niger) normally handles some 70,000 metric tons of cargo per navigation season, including rice, gasoline, cotton, cement, steel, and skins. Excluding canoes the river fleet on the Middle Niger between Koulikoro and Gao consists of 4 passenger boats, 20 tow boats, 38 tow or push barges, and 6 tank barges.

During and for a short time after the rainy season, major segments of the Niger River are navigable for vessels drawing up to 4 feet of water. The Upper Niger, from the headwaters in the highlands of Guinea to the rapids at Bamako, is the first segment of the river to fill each year because the summer rains begin in the south and move northward. The Upper Niger therefore rises to a navigable level earlier than the segments farther downstream. From Kouroussa and Kankan in Guinea, the Upper Niger and its tributary the Milo are navigable from early July to December. The Middle Niger, from Bamako to Gao, rises slowly because the water flows from the main channel into the many marshes and creeks of the interior delta. As these become filled, the main channel gradually becomes navigable farther and farther downstream. Stretches of the Middle Niger are navigable from about mid-July until February, depending on the date of beginning and the length of the rainy season. The Niger's usefulness as a means of transportation is limited because the coincidence of the various periods of maximum water rarely lasts throughout the October-to-February harvest season.

B. Road

About 500 kilometers of Mali's roads have been asphalted, 2,200 kilometers are classed as "permanent" dirt roads, and more than 9,000 kilometers are "seasonal" dirt roads. Within a few weeks after the

start of the rainy season in June, the "seasonal" dirt roads become unusable, and many towns are completely cut off from places with which they had road communication only a few weeks earlier. The large town of Kayes on the Dakar-Niger Railroad, for instance, is without usable local roads between mid-July and October. During part of this time, the nearby Senegal River is navigable but only from Kayes downstream toward Senegal. Until traffic on the Dakar-Niger Railroad was stopped recently by government edict, the railroad furnished the sole transportation link with the outside world during the wet months.

The pattern of road trafficability is varied because the wet season does not start at the same time nor last the same length of time in all parts of the country. Furthermore, some roads along the Senegal and Niger Rivers may be flooded during the middle of the dry season because the lag in drainage brings the rivers to flood stage during that season, several weeks or months after the rains have ceased. The rivers then flood the nearby roads, making them impassable.

C. Railroad

The Dakar-Niger Railroad, connecting the busy Atlantic port of Dakar with the inland towns of Bamako and Koulikoro, was completed shortly after World War I. At the eastern end of the line the short rail segment between Bamako and Koulikoro skirts the rapids on the Niger River and forms a transportation link between the Upper Niger and the Middle Niger. Soon after its completion the Dakar-Niger Railroad became the major east-west route, and the rivers and roads became internal feeder routes. In 1959, before Mali severed relations with France, goods traffic on the line reached a total of 235,000 metric tons -- 120,000 from Soudan to Senegal, and 115,000 in the other direction. The main items originating in Soudan were peanuts, rice, cola nuts, livestock, and construction materials. Goods brought in from Senegal included processed foods (mostly for Europeans and urban Africans), petroleum products, construction materials, and beverages.

After Senegal dissolved its federation with Mali in August 1960, the Malians closed the Senegal-Mali border and refused to use the Dakar-Niger Railroad for freight traffic. Instead, they have shipped the bulk of Mali's commercial traffic to Abidjan, capital of the Ivory Coast. Transport to Abidjan is more costly because it entails trucking for 300 miles to the railhead in Upper Volta. Furthermore, the road used has only a dirt surface and, without very unusual maintenance, will in a short time be seriously damaged by sustained truck traffic. The biggest problem, however, concerns the transportation of petroleum products. The maximum that could be handled if Dakar is bypassed is 2,000 tons a month, and Mali's average monthly requirements amount to 3,200 tons.

An alternative route, to the port of Conakry on the Guinea Coast, would involve road transport all the way, or road or river transport to Kankan and then transshipment to a railroad that is in very poor physical condition. The Upper Niger River, as mentioned previously, is navigable only between July and December. In October 1960, a group of 40 Soviet engineers and surveyors began a 3-month study of the Conakry-Kankan Railroad, an indication that Guinea may be in a stronger position in the future to influence the direction of Malian trade. The railroad, however, requires thorough rejuvenation and, regardless of Soviet help, could not quickly become a major transport artery.

D. Air

At least seven towns in Mali have scheduled air service. The airport runways at Bamako and Tessalit are more than 7,000 feet long and are surfaced with tar-macadam. Runways at Nioro (5,000 feet long) and Kayes (4,000 feet) also have all-weather surfaces. Eleven other airports have dry-weather runways that are more than 3,000 feet in length. The modern airport at Bamako is capable of handling airplanes as large as Constellations and DC-7's, and has a well-equipped control tower. The other fields are less well equipped and most are served by smaller planes of the DC-3 or DC-4 class; several can handle only light planes.

VI. Trade

A. External Trade

In the past, trade statistics for Mali (Soudan) have been grouped with those of the other states of French West Africa, and therefore it is not possible to present detailed information on Mali alone. The available data, however, give at least some indication of the magnitude and principal products of Mali's foreign trade.

Exports from Mali (Soudan) reached a value of about $10.5 million in 1959; and the value of its imports has been estimated from $18 million to $20 million. The trade deficit will probably increase in the immediate future because of the greater cost of shipping goods via Abidjan rather than Dakar, as in the past. As of October 1960, there was also some uncertainty as to whether Mali could continue to sell its peanuts and peanut oil to France at the usual subsidized prices. Peanuts and peanut oil represent about 90 percent of Mali's total exports. Other customary exports include gum arabic, hides and skins, shea butter, millet, rice, fish, and livestock.

The principal products imported into Mali (Soudan) in 1959 via the Dakar-Niger Railroad included groceries and foodstuffs (32,000 metric tons), petroleum products (28,000), construction materials (18,000), beverages (6,000), and motor vehicles (2,000). Additional construction materials (6,000 metric tons), groceries and foodstuffs (4,000), and petroleum products (3,000) came in via river transportation. France has been the leading customer and supplier of both exports and imports.

B. Internal Trade*

Even before France gained control of most of French West Africa, the economy of that area was essentially one of trading, and French rule intensified the role of trade in the economy. The raw materials which French West Africa was encouraged to produce for export were those wanted by Metropolitan France, and the manufactured goods it received were those selected by French industrialists and exporters. The latter were assured of a preferred and virtually closed market and one in which, for many years, they did not find it necessary to conform to the needs and tastes of their clients.

The African producers were unorganized and scattered over a vast area. Perforce, they accepted low prices for their output and took the consumer goods offered them by traders. Some of the traders were itinerant Syrian-Lebanese or African Dioula or Hausa tribesmen, and some were European, usually French or Greek. The big merchants, however, were the large trading companies that had installed themselves at an early date in French West Africa and had set up a network of posts and agents throughout the producing areas.

Almost invariably the big trading houses in French West Africa have been both exporters of African produce and importers of general merchandise. Most of the firms are French, some of which also operate in British territory; reciprocally, some big British firms have branches in French West Africa. Of the three great trading companies, known as the Grands Comptoirs, that of the Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Occidentale (CFAO) is the oldest, having been established in 1887. It exports produce and imports French manufactured goods, chiefly cotton cloth, and controls most of former French West Africa's river transport. It also has consistently run up a comfortable profit. In 1953, a year

* Except where specifically noted, the information presented here on internal trade is of a pre-independence vintage and refers to all of French West Africa, not just to Mali. It is believed, however, that all or most of the information also holds true for Mali. To date there is a serious dearth of information on trade within the country.

that the authors of its annual report described as difficult, the CFAO declared a 30 percent dividend. The second large French firm is the Société Commerciale de l'Ouest Africain (SCOA). It is younger but larger than the CFAO and is the owner of plantations, department stores, and a variety of other enterprises. The third of the Big Three is the British concern, Unilever. Through its African branch, the United Africa Company, Unilever formed the Compagnie du Niger Français in Guinea and Soudan as well as companies in other French territories. Although concerned chiefly with oleaginous products, Unilever has side interests, particularly in sea transport.

Among the grievances voiced against the big trading companies are their failure to promote production in a way that is helpful to the African economy, attempts to establish monopolies, and a tendency to repatriate their profits and to sell at prices often agreed among themselves as being the maximum that the traffic will bear. Whether or not these charges are true is not particularly pertinent; the fact is that they are widely believed and therefore the companies have a reputation somewhat similar to that formerly held by the United Fruit Company in Central America.

Retailers tend to deal in a wide variety of goods rather than to specialize in a few products. They might, therefore, be compared to rural American general stores since they cater to all the small needs (cotton goods, kerosene, food, etc.) of the peasant farmer. In the cities, however, certain small, privately owned shops catering to both European and African customers specialize in such lines as dry goods, hardwares, and foodstuffs.

In addition, the traditional African markets and peddlers continue to play an important role in the trading pattern of the country. In the big towns, markets are held daily. In less important centers, they are held less frequently. At the country crossroads, old women still may be found selling a few articles, such as food, to the occasional passerby. Barter continues to be practiced, and in some isolated regions cowrie shells, millet, or cloth serve as the media of exchange. Women do most of the selling in markets, whereas the itinerant peddlers are men.

Until recently there have been no government import, export, or retail-trade channels. On 29 October 1960, however, the government of the Republic of Mali set up a trading corporation known as the Mali Import and Export Company (SOMIEX). This company, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, was organized to stimulate exports of Mali commodities, to provide Mali with various imported goods at the lowest possible prices, to study sources for imports and outlets for Mali exports, and to cooperate in the elaboration of import

and export programs as well as in the preparation of commercial agreements. SOMIEX, alone, is authorized to sell products of state-owned companies, joint companies, and rural cooperatives, and to provide such organizations with the usual consumer goods. It is also the only company authorized to procure items needed for the government.

VII. Foreign Aid Programs

A. Sino-Soviet Bloc Aid

As of mid-November 1960, the Chinese Communists appeared to be interested primarily in assisting Mali in the field of agriculture, rice growing in particular. Visiting Soviet missions have examined the Sotuba Dam project near Bamako and may soon make a definite offer to aid in the development of the dam. The USSR has also shown an interest in assisting in the work of the Office du Niger. This is the leading agricultural project in Mali and to date has been handled by the French. Another subject of interest to the USSR is the proposal to build a second airport at Bamako.

A Czechoslovak delegation visited Bamako in October 1960 and discussed the economic-development needs of Mali in detail. The Czechs offered to construct an international airport at Bamako, build an oil refinery, and supply 350 trucks. The projects on the agenda of a conference between Mali and Czechoslovakia in Prague scheduled for November 1960 were the construction of a bicycle and motor scooter assembly plant and of refrigeration facilities and abbatoirs at Mopti and Gao; the reorganization of storage facilities at Kayes, the training of Malian pilots, the donation of light aircraft, the construction of a weaving mill to utilize Malian cotton, and the construction of the bridges necessary to make the Kankan-Bamako highway an all-weather road. The last project is worth noting because it correlates well with Soviet proposals to improve the Kankan-Conakry railroad, with a resultingly close tie between the economies of Mali and Guinea. During a September 1960 meeting in Prague, the Czechs are reported to have proposed a barter agreement involving an exchange of Czech consumer goods and agricultural machinery for Malian peanuts and other farm products. Reportedly the Czechs also offered to provide the Malians with whatever arms the country might require.

B. Non-Bloc Aid

The French have been involved in aid and trade programs in French West Africa for many years and after World War II embarked on a particularly ambitious development program. It was financed primarily from a central fund known as FIDES (Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social des Territoires d'Outre-Mer --

Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development of the Overseas Territories). From 1947 to 1957, FIDES appropriated $79.4 million for use in Soudan alone. Major operations included road and railroad repair, improvement of health and educational institutions, construction of hydraulic works, agricultural research, and land development.

During 1960, an estimated 1,200 million francs CFA (approximately $4.8 million) were earmarked by the French Assistance and Cooperation Mission for economic projects in the Republic of Mali. In addition, trade pacts were signed between the two countries, such as the Peanut Purchase Agreement whereby France obligated itself to purchase and Mali agreed to deliver stated amounts. On 9 December 1960, an agreement was signed between the French and Malian Governments whereby France granted to Mali a subsidy of 1,485 million francs CFA (approximately $6 million) for the realization of an economic and social development program. This program included demographic, geological, road, and agricultural studies; surveying and mapping; regional development projects; well digging; improvement of irrigation facilities; construction of hydraulic projects; and the building of hospitals and schools.

The crystal ball is too cloudy to forecast future relations between France and Mali; but the assistance program agreed upon in December 1960 indicates that, despite past difficulties, the French are seeking to maintain good relations with Mali. On the other side, there is evidence of increasing pressure on the part of the Government of Mali to get as many Frenchmen as possible out of the country -- an attitude that could be reflected in future French-Malian negotiations. Much depends on whether pro-French or anti-French elements win out in the current struggle within the Mali Government.

Negotiations between United States representatives and officials of the Mali Government in reference to the establishment of an American aid program were held during October and November 1960. After fairly long but friendly negotiations, the Mali authorities agreed to accept United States economic and technical assistance. Mali's needs, as presented by President Modibo Keita at a meeting held with American technical experts, include airplanes (especially small liaison planes and cargo planes for exporting meat), the improvement or construction of runways, the construction of a second airport at Bamako, road-building equipment, techniques and equipment for drilling for water, cheap power for industrial development (especially the construction of the Sotuba Dam on the outskirts of Bamako), the improvement of livestock, railroad extension, techniques for cotton-seed pressing, vehicles for security forces, and an athletic stadium -- a <u>covered</u> athletic stadium.

Other foreign aid or trade programs include a commercial agreement between the Republic of Mali and Ghana which, according to the Accra press, was signed 27 October 1960. Economic cooperation between the two countries, however, is not yet clearly defined, and only the "broad lines" of the agreement have been settled. Similarly, agreements for economic cooperation between Mali and Guinea are "in the making," but not even the formlines are yet visible. On 4 and 5 December 1960, Mali and Guinea delegations, headed respectively by Modibo Keita and Sekou Touré, met and promised close cooperation between the two governments in political, economic, diplomatic, cultural, and security fields.

West Germany has indicated an official interest in aid or trade with Mali and is reported to have offered trucks and ambulances and to have displayed some interest in financing a slaughterhouse in Bamako. The Israelis are already supplying technicians in various fields requested by the Mali Government, are starting a school for training Mali pilots, and are involved in building a cement plant and a radio factory. Israel also has promised to supply small arms. The Israel-Mali agreements are particularly interesting because they indicate that, although Mali is a semi-Moslem country, it has refused to heed Arab protestations about Israeli activities in Africa.

It would appear that Mali has, or is receptive to, economic-aid or trade agreements with almost any country except Senegal, her erstwhile partner in the Mali Federation and a region with which economic ties had been close for many years. Mali President Modibo Keita recently stated that, even if present Senegalese leaders were to disappear from the political scene, Mali leaders would still be unwilling to reconstitute the Federation and were convinced that the present Republic of Mali will enjoy more rapid economic development alone than as a member of the Federation. This state of mind, of course, does not rule out economic cooperation between the two countries once current animosities die down.