



## AFRICA in Today's World

By DR. CHARLES I. WEST

(THIS WEEK'S COLUMN is devoted to a portrait of David Kairaba Jawara, an "up-river" boy who became first Prime Minister of independent Gambia, that tiny sliver of a country that knifes through the center of Senegal on the northwest bulge of Africa. This sketch by Claude E. Welch Jr. appeared in a recent issue of AFRICA REPORT, a non-partisan journal of African affairs published monthly in Washington, D.C.)

GAMBIA'S Prime Minister was born in 1924 to a Moslem Mandingo family in Barajally, a small town in then British Protectorate. Much of his political strength lies in the fact that he has never lost contact with the up-river people from whom he came.

As a youth, Jawara attended the Methodist Boys High School in Bathurst, then worked as a medical assistant for two years before going to Achimota School (then Prince of Wales College, Achimota) in Ghana in 1948-49 to study science. He was trained as a veterinarian in Glasgow from 1949 to 1954, and returned to the Gambia in 1954, becoming Principal Veterinary Officer in 1958. This was the highest rank in government service then occupied by a resident of the Protectorate.

Acutely aware of the political significance of bridging the historic differences between Bathurst and the Protectorate, Jawara began to take an active role in the Protectorate People's Society, which coordinated the activities of Protectorate-based social clubs in Bathurst. Since few other Bathurst politicians had any interest in the uneducated chiefs and inhabitants up the river, the PPS proved an excellent base on which to build a national political movement.

Jawara changed the name of the PPS to the People's Progressive Party in December 1959 (the same year in which the British Government decided to establish universal suffrage), resigned his government post, and henceforth devoted his full attention to politics.

The PPP thus became Gambia's first organized national party, other so-called parties having been limited to short-lived groups of Bathurst residents. Nine of the 12 Protectorate seats were won by the PPP in the May 1960 general election. The Bathurst-based United Party won seven seats, and eight chiefs were elected under special provisions. Jawara was given responsibility for education in the Governor's Executive Council.

In March 1961, Jawara resigned from the cabinet. The Governor, reinterpreting the provisions of the constitution, had appointed the leader of the minority United Party, P.S. N'Jie, as Chief Minister. N'Jie's decision to form a Senegalese-Gambian joint inter-ministerial committee without consulting the Legislative Council brought sharp criticism.

A year later, the PPP won 18 seats (to the United Party's 13) in the May 1962 elections and Jawara finally became Leader of Government Business, then Prime Minister when internal self-government was granted in October 1963.

There is little of the flamboyant politician in the quiet, unfailingly courteous, schoolmasterly Jawara. Although he believes that some form of association with Senegal is both inevitable and desirable, he favors a gradual growth of this "Senegambian" interdependence, with the Gambia meanwhile retaining close

## VOICE READERS COMPRISE a \$30,000,000 MARKET

# EDITORIAL

## Laxalt Expedient But Not Dedicated

JUDE WANNISKI, writing on "bright spots in the 1965 Legislature," exposes himself as a political Judas. Wanniski attempts to deceive the Negro voter that Paul Laxalt provided the leadership that led to enactment of Nevada's Civil Rights Act. The truth is that the "Bound-

ing Basque" exhibited political expediency rather than leadership.

Laxalt was not motivated by any altruistic considerations of what was best for the public welfare--nor, was he guided into his sudden change of face by his moral convictions. He expressed his position on integration in his public statement which opposed the location of a Youth Camp to be activated at a site in the environs of his home town of Carson City.

No one is stupid enough to believe that Laxalt is sincere in his new attitude on Civil Rights, when he supports the Rights Act in the Nevada Senate while simultaneously objecting to a Youth Camp near his town because the camp would house a few Negro youths who might create a social problem in Carson City because Carson City has no Negro community to absorb these youths socially.

Laxalt thinks in terms of white and black. He thinks in terms of racism. He is a political paradox that is obvious to even the politically blind.

Laxalt was shaken from his public position of devoted opposition to a Nevada Civil Rights Act by nothing but political expediency. He learned a political lesson last November that was very costly to his political ambitions. He lost the U.S. Senate race to Howard W. Cannon when the Nevada Negro voters gave Cannon 50 votes to every one it gave to Paradoxical Paul. Not even this 50 to 1 Negro vote produced a change of heart in the Lt. Governor. It was Oran Gragson, Mayor of Las Vegas, who convinced the "Bounding Basque" that he must bounce to the other side on the rights issue.

Mayor Gragson called a Civil Rights seminar in Las Vegas two nights after the November defeat of Laxalt by the Negro voters. Laxalt was present at this meeting and made himself perfectly clear that he did not believe there was any need for a Rights Law in Nevada, and that upon that conviction he was opposed to such.

Mayor Gragson, a Republican like Laxalt, went to work on the Lt. Governor and convinced him that he would have no political potential unless he changed his attitude on Civil Rights.

There is no question of Oran Gragson's integrity--he is as sincere and as honest as any public official anywhere. However, there is nothing complimentary that we can say of Paul Laxalt's integrity on Civil Rights.

We will have much more to say on this subject next year when and if Paradoxical Paul runs for any public office.

We shall work toward a goal of "Not One Negro Vote For Laxalt," and "Not one drop of confidence in the writings of "Judas Wanniski.

C. I. W.

will attempt on the House and Senate floor to write a tougher bill than the administration bill, which some Southern leaders have seemed disposed to accept. Sen. Russell B. Long, D-La., majority whip, told reporters on Feb. 17 that Southern legislators might not undertake to filibuster a voting rights bill this year, and that he could live with a measure authorizing federal registrars to enroll Negro voters in the South. So long as the resuscitative process is not interrupted, the Fifteenth Amendment may begin to breathe again in 1965.

(From the Las Vegas SUN)

### It's Been a Long Time

History is probably as much coincidental as it is casual, and so it is probably only chance that Congress receives an administration proposal that would finally give full meaning to the Fifteenth Amendment almost on the 95th anniversary of the ratification of the amendment itself.

The bill introduced for President Johnson on March 17 by Rep. Emanuel Celler, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, gives the Negro the right to vote he was promised in 1870 but which has been denied him since removal of federal troops from the South in 1877.

The Fifteenth Amendment is a model of brevity and clarity. It simply says: "1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. — 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

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Negroes voted in the South in the reconstruction years after ratification of the Fifteenth. Congress passed various enforcement acts to protect Negro rights. But the North clearly was growing weary of the crusade for betterment of the Negro. As for the South, Gunnar Myrdal explains: "The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were . . . looked upon as the supreme foolishness of the North and, worse still, as an expression of ill-will of the Yankees toward the defeated South. The Negro franchise became the symbol of the humiliation of the South."

The U. S. Supreme Court at first interpreted the Fifteenth as solely negative; holding it did "not confer the right" to vote on anyone. Within less than 10 years, however, in Ex parte Yarbrough, the High Bench ventured to read into the amendment an affirmative as well as a negative purpose.

However, not until 1915 did the Supreme Court strike down the "grandfather clause," which allowed anyone descended from anyone who had voted on Jan. 1, 1867--when no former slave could vote--to register even if he could not pass a literacy test. This device, adopted by a number of states, had allowed disfranchisement of Negroes by the literacy test while whites were still rendered eligible.

Not until 1944 did the Court rule that Negroes could not be excluded from primaries, which in the South were the real elections. Congress in 1948 passed three laws making it a felony to deprive a citizen, or conspire to deprive him, of any constitutional right, or to intimidate him for the purpose of interfering with his right to vote. But even with these laws, Southern juries were loathe to return convictions.

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The events in Selma, Ala., have virtually assured passage this year of a voting rights law. A real question is whether the liberals

Commonwealth ties. An advocate of African unity, he shares Senegalese President Leopold Senghor's view that the most fruitful way of working toward this aim is by regional and functional interstate cooperation.

A recent comment on Jawara made by the British Colonial Secretary seems particularly appropriate: "It is, above all, his wise leadership during the past two years which has made it possible for the Gambia to achieve independence despite all the practical obstacles which nature and circumstances have placed in her path."

## LAS VEGAS Voice

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