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by PETER ROBSON

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The Problem of Senegambia

by PETER ROBSON*

THE last few years have been notable in Africa for the many attempts which have been made to bring about economic integration, on the one hand through political regroupings, on the other by various kinds of economic associations between fully sovereign states. At present, the number of 'political' integrations is small. One of the most important recent examples, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, was broken up in 1963 after a life of ten years. The Federations in former French West and Equatorial Africa did not survive the independence of their constituent territories. In fact, about the only examples of this kind of integration at present are Cameroun, Somalia, and Ethiopia-Eritrea.

On the other hand, examples of economic integration between independent states are much more numerous. Instances are the East African Common Market, the Central African Economic Union, and the (French) West African Monetary Union.¹ Several others are being actively discussed, such as the West African Free Trade Area, which would cover Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Ivory Coast. Several interesting questions arise in relation to these experiments. How important are the economic gains? Can economic association without some kind of political union produce an optimal pattern of economic development? Can economic association survive without some degree of political unity? Is economic association likely to develop into some kind of political association? The last question is of particular interest to Pan-Africanists. A general answer to these questions is unlikely to be found, but the experience of particular experiments may provide useful indicators. Given the importance of the issue of economic integration in present-day Africa, it is in any case vital that the problems and experience of economic integration should receive as wide a discussion as possible. This article discusses some recent aspects of the attempt, so far unsuccessful, to bring about some form of association between Senegal and Gambia, sometimes referred to as Senegambia.²

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¹ This Monetary Union currently includes Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. Its currency is the C.F.A. franc (*Communauté financière africaine*) which is freely convertible into French francs.

² Senegambia, including much of what is now Gambia and Senegal, was the name of a British colony which existed from 1765 to 1783.

It is concerned mainly with economic aspects because, in this instance, it appears that co-operation in defence and foreign policy apart, the chances of any closer association, freely entered into both sides, will turn largely on economic issues.



The map serves to indicate why the question of some form of association between Senegal and Gambia has recently arisen. Gambia is an extreme example of a territory which owes its existence entirely to colonial policy. It forms an intrusion into the much larger country of Senegal, stretching from the coast inland along both sides of the



Gambia river, and making up a strip about 200 miles long and 12-20 miles wide. Although roughly following the course of the river, it does not extend to the natural limits of the basin on either side, nor does it reach the source, which lies in Guinea. The frontiers of Gambia cut through both natural features and human settlement patterns. Wholly surrounded by Senegal except on its seaward margin, Gambia largely isolates the southern region of Casamance from the rest of Senegal. Ethnically the people of Gambia and Senegal are the same. At the same time the two countries have for a long period been subjected to the influence of two quite different colonial systems. This has created divergences in administrative as well as cultural and economic patterns which are important obstacles to a closer association of the two countries.

It is however felt by many that a situation in which these countries are completely independent of each other has important disadvantages for both. Three main considerations seem to have led during the last few years to an active discussion of a closer relationship between them. The first is doubt as to whether Gambia by itself is economically viable. At present it has a budget deficit and is dependent upon a substantial grant-in-aid from the U.K. The second is the view that the present economic frontiers are disadvantageous to both countries. For Senegal it means a partial isolation of the southern province of Casamance and an inability fully to use the Gambia river. For Gambia it is argued that it cannot exploit its main natural asset, which is the river basin, and that Bathurst is deprived of the opportunity to serve as the port for a large economic area to which its natural position entitles it. In short, it is argued that it is impossible to make adequate use of the economic resources of Gambia and Senegal without close co-operation, which is hindered by political and economic frontiers. A third reason for seeking association is political. There is some fear in Senegal that Gambia could become a base for the operations of banned political parties or for subversion from outside. For its part, Gambia, which lacks an army, recognises that the country could be taken by force in a day, were Senegal disposed to do so, and there is little disposition to rely on the willingness or ability of the U.N. or the British Government to prevent or reverse such an operation.

The possibilities of association began to be explored towards the end of 1961, when the two countries established an inter-ministerial committee to discuss matters of joint interest. Among other things this committee considered such matters as posts, telecommunications, and feeder roads. It was not particularly successful. Subsequently, the two Governments discussed the possibility that when Gambia achieved

independence some form of association between their two countries might be entered into. In these talks the Gambian Government made it clear that it would only consider association on terms which would guarantee it a high degree of autonomy in internal affairs—which amounted in effect to a willingness to consider only a weak confederal relationship. These talks led to the commissioning from the United Nations of a report to consider the various possibilities of association. To help matters along, the U.K. Government indicated that no discussions on Gambian independence would be entertained until the Governments of Senegal and Gambia had considered its recommendations. The report and subsequent developments are considered in later sections of this article.

THE ECONOMIES OF SENEGAL AND GAMBIA

Since the motives for considering association were largely economic, a brief review of some salient economic features of the two countries is required. Table 1 summarises some of the relevant data.

From the standpoint of size, the two countries are very different. Senegal is much larger in population and area. In terms of basic economic structure, however, the two countries are very similar. Both

TABLE 1

Economic Features: 1962	Gambia	Senegal
Area: sq. miles	3,978	77,060
Population	300,000	3,000,000
Rate of population increase	2.3 per cent per annum	
Density of population per sq. mile	75	39
Gross Domestic Product	£9,000,000 ¹	£167,000,000 ²
G.D.P. per head	£30	£56 ²
Total exports	£3,232,000	£43,984,000 ²
Groundnut produce as percentage of total exports ³	95	81
Exports per head	£10	£15 ²
Balance of trade	-£1,158,000	-£10,760,000 ²
Current budget revenue balance	-£449,000	

¹ This figure is based on calculations of the Economic Adviser, since no detailed estimates are available.

² C.F.A. francs have been converted to sterling at the official rate of exchange of 696 to £1. The C.F.A. franc, however, is overvalued, and this should be borne in mind in comparing these figures.

³ In Gambia, only groundnuts are exported; but in Senegal, shelled groundnuts and oil are of roughly equal importance.

are essentially mono-crop agricultural economies which rely mainly, in the commercialised sector, upon groundnut products. Both have a trade deficit. In both the greater part of the population is engaged in agriculture. There is a small nucleus of industrial development in Senegal which dates from the days when Dakar was the capital of the *Fédération de l'Afrique occidentale française* (A.O.F.) and its products circulated freely throughout the area. This is no longer the case, though about 30 per cent of Senegal's exports still go to her former fellow members—mainly food, drink, tobacco, and consumer goods of various kinds.

Although they are so very similar in basic structure and resources, the two economies are organised on very different bases. The differences manifest themselves in the first place in foreign trade policy. In Senegal a protectionist and discriminatory policy is followed, and import charges are high. Gambia's policy is liberal and non-discriminatory, and import charges are relatively low.

Thus in Senegal a complex system of fiscal, customs, and other import duties produced in 1962 an average rate of duty of well over 30 per cent, despite the exclusion of a large part of imports from customs duties, which are normally in the range 5–15 per cent. Apart from this, imports are generally controlled by a system of licensing. Goods from France may be imported without either restriction or licence, and being exempted from customs duties they enjoy a substantial preference margin. Also, Senegal binds itself to buy from France a certain minimum total value of goods and minimum proportions of important types of imports. In most cases these proportions exceed 50 per cent. Partly as a result of these arrangements, France is Senegal's chief supplier, providing in 1962 about two-thirds of her imports. Ultimately, goods from all E.E.C. countries will enter on level terms as a result of Senegal's association with the Community, and this should bring about some increased diversity in import sources.

For its part, France provides preferential markets for Senegal's products. A market for a large part of its groundnut output is guaranteed, and until recently the price paid was about 25 per cent higher than world market prices, representing a subsidy of 8,000 m. francs C.F.A. Under the E.E.C. association agreement this subsidy will disappear. In 1962 85 per cent of Senegal's exports went to France.

By contrast with Senegal, Gambia has a very liberal import policy. Goods may be imported from most countries under freely granted open general licences. Compared to Senegal, import charges are relatively low. During 1960–62 the average rate of duty on all imports, including

a four per cent purchase tax, was about 20 per cent. The tariff is non-discriminatory except for a Commonwealth preference margin, which on most goods is very small. Gambia's liberal import policy enables it to obtain supplies from the cheapest source and it is one of the factors which accounts for the marked difference in the cost of living between the two countries. In 1962 about 40 per cent of Gambia's imports came from the U.K.

A second important difference between the two countries is that there is a substantial difference in both the structure and the general level of internal prices. A number of goods are relatively expensive in Senegal, due in part to restrictions on the sources of imports and in part to relatively high tariffs. At the same time the general level of prices is higher in Senegal, in part due to over-valuation of the West African C.F.A. franc. Thus, food prices are estimated to be up to 100 per cent higher in Dakar than Bathurst, wages up to 80 per cent higher, and in general the cost of living to be 50 per cent higher.

Given these differences and the difficulty of policing the frontier, it is not surprising that there is a good deal of smuggling from Gambia to Senegal. In March 1960 an unofficial French estimate put the value of smuggled goods (c.i.f. Bathurst) at over £500,000, or £700,000 including customs duties and profit margins. A similar Gambian estimate broadly confirms this. Goods imported into Gambia and subsequently smuggled into Senegal therefore represent about 10 per cent of Gambian imports and produce about 15 per cent of Gambia's total revenue from import duty. For some categories of goods, for which price differences are very large, it is estimated that a very high proportion is transferred—up to 80 per cent for tobacco, 50 per cent for textiles and 60–70 per cent for shoes. Smuggling is thus quite important to the Gambian economy. By contrast, legitimate trade between the two countries is negligible.

On the other hand, although Senegal complains about smuggling, it is of relatively small importance to her. Smuggled imports amount to less than one per cent of total imports. The value of customs duties lost by Senegal has been estimated at 250 m. francs, which is, currently, about one per cent of total budget revenue or two per cent of revenue from import duties.

THE UNITED NATIONS REPORT

Early in 1964 the commissioned U.N. report was submitted, dealing with constitutional, economic, and fiscal aspects of association.¹ It was

¹ United Nations, *Report on the Alternatives of Association between the Gambia and Senegal* (New York, 1964); also published by the Government of Gambia as *Sessional Paper No. 13 of 1964* (Bathurst)

followed by a supplementary report by the F.A.O. on integrated agricultural development in the Gambia river basin.¹

On the question of the constitutional form which association between Gambia and Senegal might take, the U.N. report outlines three alternatives. The first is the integration of Gambia as the eighth Senegalese or Senegambian province. This is ruled out as unacceptable to Gambia and not to be entertained 'until a long period of friendly and fruitful collaboration between the two countries has elapsed'.

The second possibility is a Senegambian federation. The report envisages a federal government with powers for the initial period limited to defence and overseas representation, and with complete autonomy in other respects for the federated states. Progress thereafter would depend on the wishes of both states. The authors of the report clearly favour this alternative, but evidently doubt whether a precondition—a will to create and maintain such a federation among leaders and the electorate—is fulfilled in Gambia.

The third alternative—the establishment of a Senegambian *entente*—would not involve the creation of a new state and both countries would remain fully sovereign. The report favours this only if the outlined federal solution is considered premature: 'The solution of a mere *entente* accordingly remains . . . more a means to an end; it is a means of preparing for the future, of laying the foundations for an initial co-operation, than of expanding that co-operation in many matters and so of impressing on both sides the need for an association of the federal type.' It is therefore a merely transitional solution. In its recommendations, however, the report recognises that in the constitutional and legislative field it may not be practicable to go beyond the establishment of a treaty relationship. This judgement, which events have so far borne out, is the background to the economic aspects of the problem considered here.

In economic as in constitutional matters it is also possible to conceive of a number of alternatives, ranging from complete integration—probably feasible only with political unity—to various degrees of association which might be compatible with an absence of any formal political links.

The possibility of full economic integration is considered in the report only briefly, since political integration, which would be a precondition, is ruled out as unfeasible. The report suggests that it would have two main advantages. First, with French concurrence, Gambia could

¹ Food and Agricultural Organisation, *A Report to the Governments of Gambia and Senegal: integrated agricultural development in the Gambia River Basin* (Rome, 1964).

benefit from French guarantees and preferential markets for groundnuts. But preferences are of diminishing importance as France reduces its support prices to the free market level as required by E.E.C. Secondly, Gambia could as part of Senegal presumably expect to enjoy the status of an associated overseas territory. But this is also largely irrelevant since, following the precedent set by Nigeria, Gambia could expect to be able to negotiate an association agreement. This is of some potential importance since, although Gambia's main export at present enters E.E.C. duty free, its Development Plan indicates that Gambia intends to process an increasing proportion of its groundnut crop into oil. On present plans in E.E.C., groundnut oil from non-associates will face a 10-15 per cent tariff by 1970. Of course, as part of Senegal, Gambia might expect to benefit from financial assistance from the Development Fund of the Six. This would not otherwise be available.

But even if it were politically practicable, immediate economic integration would give rise to many problems. In the first place, the complicated regulatory system of Senegal could hardly be applied overnight because of the shortage of qualified staff. It is significant that in the Federal Republic of Cameroun there is still not full integration of customs duties, even after four years of federation. Even if such a change were administratively practicable, the resulting rise in the cost of living would involve hardship in Gambia. For these and other reasons, the U.N. report therefore advocates a gradual economic association of the two countries, beginning first with areas in which agreement is easy to reach and gradually building up to a more advanced form of association. The view is taken that a developing economic association will promote a gradual rapprochement in constitutional and legislative matters.

It is suggested that the first essential move towards economic integration should be to abolish customs frontiers, which are difficult to police properly, and which involve Senegal in communications and transport difficulties with the Casamance. Since immediate unification is ruled out for the reasons just stated, a device is proposed which would make possible the abolition of the customs frontier without the need for immediate tariff unification. It amounts basically to a transitional free trade area with import restrictions in Gambia. Customs frontiers would be abolished and Gambia given an over-all import quota, based on recent import levels, to which reduced rates of duty would apply, corresponding initially to the rates hitherto levied. Special quotas would be laid down within the over-all limit to cover the items in which there is most smuggling at present, namely, textiles, cigarettes, tobacco,

shoes, and matches. The Governments should agree on the stages by which the tariff should subsequently be unified.

The report suggests that this arrangement would not affect Gambia's revenue during the transition and that, as Gambian tariffs come into line, revenue should eventually increase. Senegal would continue to lose some revenue from smuggling but would gain from not having to police the frontier. This is the main economic recommendation to emerge from the U.N. report.

On monetary matters the report expresses the view that ultimately the currencies would have to be unified, but this is not regarded as pressing. As already mentioned, Senegal is not autonomous in the monetary field but forms part of the West African Monetary Union. The implications of this, of the overvaluation of the C.F.A. franc and of its possible—or at least rumoured—devaluation are not discussed.

ADVANTAGES OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN SENEGAMBIA

Like many other recent reports on integration, this one largely took for granted that a customs union would be a good thing for all. But theory and experience both suggest that whether a small territory like Gambia would benefit would depend on 'backwash' and 'spread' effects,¹ the balance of which on general grounds can be expected to be unfavourable. A positive gain to the small territory will, very likely, depend upon negotiated benefits in such fields as fiscal compensation, industrial development, labour movements, and so on. It would be more practical to negotiate these as an integral part of a deal about customs than separately. The possibility that Gambia may be better favoured than some other small territories, inasmuch as the Gambia river may form a potential natural growth point, is hardly a reason for not doing so.

What in fact are the specific gains anticipated from integration? In the first place it is suggested that the river could be used to bring down the Senegal groundnut crop for export. The U.N. report quotes estimates that this could save Senegal 1–3 francs per kilo on groundnuts. On a crop of 80,000 tons this would come to between 80 and 240m. francs (£120–£360,000). What is not clear is that this gain is necessarily bound up with the abolition of the frontier. Many countries use the transport networks of others, even in Africa, without unifying tariffs. The expanded use of the river would, of course, be made easier if the

¹ For a useful discussion of these effects, see G. Myrdal, *Economic Theory and Under-developed Regions* (London, 1963 edn.).

price policies of the two marketing boards, the Agricultural Marketing Board in Senegal and the Gambia Oilseeds Marketing Board, were fully harmonised. This should not present any great difficulties when the French subsidy disappears.

Another field to which much importance has been attached in the debate on closer association concerns the integrated development of the Gambia river basin in relation to irrigation and hydrological development. This is dealt with at length in the F.A.O. report. Construction of a storage dam in the upper catchment area of the Gambia river, for instance, would make it possible to irrigate about 100,000 acres in the middle reaches, to protect 160,000 acres of potential rice land in the estuary, and to improve conditions for another 160,000 acres. It would also be possible to generate several hundred million kwh. of electricity.

The economic, as opposed to the technical, feasibility of all this of course has yet to be determined. A labour supply to undertake the intensive cultivation of the additional acres would be very difficult to obtain unless the returns were very high, so long as land continues to be readily available in these countries. For the additional electricity, a market just does not exist. Finance of the order required will certainly not be readily forthcoming and will in any case depend on prior feasibility studies. Rightly therefore the F.A.O. report regards these as very long-term possibilities and concludes that few effects could be expected for at least ten years.

Again, it is not clear that the proposed development hinges on a substantial measure of market integration, still less on a customs union. In other parts of Africa, important initiatives are being taken in river basin development by inter-governmental authorities—as with the Chad and Niger basins,¹ and the Mono basin (which concerns Togo and Dahomey). As a matter of fact, Senegal itself already participates, together with Guinea, Mali, and Mauritania, in an inter-governmental committee which is concerned with the improvement of the Senegal river, the building of a dam, and other matters. A basic convention was recently submitted to the participating Governments for ratification. An inter-governmental Gambia river authority could probably go a long way in advancing the development outlined in the F.A.O. report without either political or market integration. Of course, schemes whose economic viability depends on overstepping frontiers have been traditionally difficult to finance from international agencies and other aid providers. This is, however, one of the problems which the recently

¹ See U.N.E.C.A., *Natural Resources Newsletter* (Addis Ababa), 5, 1965.

established African Development Bank was specifically designed to deal with.

Other possible short-term measures of resource development include groundnut production, diversification of upland crops, and an expansion of rice production. Few of these proposals seem to depend on a customs union for their implementation.

The main institutional proposal of the U.N. report in the economic field is for a transitional free trade area with quotas, aiming at a unified external tariff. The implications of this, regrettably, receive little analysis. Yet even a brief consideration of the proposition suggests that, whatever its merits for Senegal, it has little to commend it to Gambia.

In the first place, despite the optimism of the report the arrangement is likely to be difficult to administer and to produce pricing problems for Gambia. No doubt imports through Bathurst could be readily controlled; but without a rationing system the incentive to divert quota goods to Senegal would be considerable. A rationing system would throw increased costs of administration on Gambia; without it, a sharp rise in living costs could be expected. What happens when the quotas are exhausted? Would additional imports bear the full burden of the higher Senegal tariff? Would the proposal even be consistent with G.A.T.T.?

More important, the consequences of full tariff alignment must inevitably be a shift towards the products of Senegal, which already possesses industries producing phosphates, tinned goods, cement and building materials, cigarettes, beer, soap, shoes, textiles, and thermo-electric power. This shift would gradually involve a loss of revenue for Gambia as rising prices and tariffs made an increasing range of Senegal industry competitive in Gambia. The implications of this should have been examined in the report, which instead facilely suggests that revenue will increase as customs duties are unified.

In short, it is not evident that many of the more important economic gains looked for in the report depend on a customs union. Moreover this is almost certain to involve Gambia in revenue losses. The transitional proposals seem likely to be difficult to administer and the burden would fall on Gambia.

There are, however, two alternative possibilities of which surprisingly no mention is made in the report, possibly because of its preoccupation with smuggling and the administrative savings from abolishing the customs frontier. Both of these other possibilities would require the maintenance of customs frontiers, but otherwise they would permit a

substantial measure of economic integration in most of the areas discussed in the report, with advantage to both sides.

The first of these possibilities is a simple free trade area which would permit each country to maintain its own tariffs against the rest of the world; but local products would be freely exchanged, without restrictions or duties, and so would local manufactures, subject to tax on their import content. A similar free trade area (with the East African common market) was once suggested for Zanzibar, whose economic problems before its union with Tanganyika had many similarities with those of Gambia—a local market too small to attract industry, a relatively low tariff, and heavy reliance on customs as a source of revenue.¹

Such a free trade area should be of benefit to both sides. It would permit most of the gains from agricultural integration to be achieved. For instance, groundnuts from each area could go to the nearest decorticating plant, making possible savings in transport costs and more effective utilisation of capacity. Also it would be easier to expand the use of the Gambia river as a transport artery. This kind of free trade area would require internal customs checks to be maintained and it would not eliminate the incentive to smuggle from one to the other the products of outside countries. But even the U.N. proposal involves accepting the continuance of smuggling for a transitional period. In any event, as has been seen, smuggling is confined to a limited number of articles which have a high duty and are portable. Finally, a free trade area does seem to be the solution to which many other countries in Africa are turning. It might therefore offer Gambia the more attractive prospect of integration within a larger grouping.

A free trade area in local products for Senegambia might conceivably require some changes in taxation in Gambia. For instance, since Senegal cigarettes might well displace imports, to avoid a large revenue loss a consumption tax might have to be imposed. In other directions, however, the present smuggling trade and other factors suggest that, while tariff differences remain, Senegalese manufactures would be unlikely to displace imports for Gambia. Attention would also have to be given in the longer run to internal fiscal harmonisation if full advantage were to be taken of the opportunities presented by the wider market area.

If for any reason a free trade in all local products were not acceptable to either country, yet another alternative would be to institute a free trade area in local agricultural produce only. This again, on a wider African plane, is strongly advocated by the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa as a first, most important, and practicable step towards the

¹ See *Report on the Economic Development of Zanzibar* (Zanzibar, 1962), pp. 9-10.

establishment of an African common market. Such an agreement might later be supplemented by *ad hoc* agreements for free trade in certain industrial products as co-operation develops.

Either of the arrangements just outlined could be accepted by Gambia with a reasonable expectation that they would lead to long-term advantages and no immediate disadvantages. But the U.N. proposals offer Gambia no obvious advantages and some evident immediate disadvantages in the form of higher administrative costs. It would not be sensible to accept them without some reconsideration of the direct costs and benefits of the change-over to the two countries, or without collateral agreements in other fields.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Developments since the consideration of the U.N. report by the two Governments do not justify any strong hope that substantial measures for closer association are likely in the near future, even in the economic field, unless some new proposals are produced. Following the U.N. report in March 1964, talks between the two Governments were held in Dakar in May. At these meetings the Gambians put forward proposals on the political side—very similar to the third alternative mentioned in the report—which envisaged a confederal structure with responsibility for defence, foreign affairs, and overseas representation. This was not acceptable to Senegal, which appears to have countered with proposals envisaging the eventual integration of Gambia into Senegal. This in turn was not acceptable to Gambia, and eventually it was decided by the two Governments to enter into agreements only on foreign affairs and defence.

The defence agreement provides for mutual assistance to secure external security and defence against any form of threat, the establishment of a joint Senegal-Gambia defence committee with a permanent secretariat, and Senegalese assistance in training any Gambian military or para-military units. The foreign policy agreement provides for an exchange of resident ministers, representation of Gambia by Senegal as directed by Gambia, and a joint committee on foreign affairs with a secretariat which will meet once every three months to harmonise the approaches of the parties to all matters of importance in foreign affairs.¹ These agreements provide useful organs for co-operation but do not appear to diminish the sovereignty of either country to any important extent.

¹ See Prime Minister's Speech at Opening Session of House of Representatives on 1 July 1964, in *Gambia News Bulletin* (Bathurst), 9 July 1964.

On the economic side the Gambian Government has not accepted the proposals for a transitional free trade area with quotas. Its view is that levels of taxation and import duties should be gradually assimilated, but that there should be countervailing benefits in the form of increased trade and economic activity in Gambia.¹ At another level, however, its current development programme does provide for various developments to facilitate closer association with Senegal, including the possible introduction of the metric system and a change in the rule of the road.

An assessment of the factors which have contributed to a failure to make more substantial advances in the direction of closer association is hampered by the absence of public discussion in Senegal, where the matter has not even been debated in the Assembly. It appears, however, that the Senegal view has been that any acceptable form of economic association must lead in the not-too-distant future to the full integration of Gambia. It is not clear whether, subject to this, the transitional free trade area advocated by the U.N. report would have been acceptable. A federal arrangement with substantial autonomy for Gambia would not be acceptable to the Senegal leaders at present. For this view, political factors, including the problem of the Casamance and experience with the abortive Mali Federation, appear to account. But it is hard to see what valid objections there would be from Senegal to some form of purely economic association, outside a political link, unless it is judged that this might postpone a close political link which would otherwise materialise rapidly.

But this is an unrealistic judgement. Gambia is not interested in becoming a province of Senegal. There is certainly a feeling among the Bathurst élite that some kind of economic association could be in Gambia's interests, but that even this may be undesirable as long as the Senegalese economy is highly regulated. Also, there is in Bathurst a realistic awareness of Senegal's political concern with Gambia. It is, of course, this aspect which the defence and foreign policy agreements were intended to cover.

In this situation, in which Senegal seems committed to integration and Gambia to substantial autonomy, and in which there appear to be no major economic benefits to be expected by the latter from the present proposals for economic integration, at least in the medium run, the status quo could well continue indefinitely in the absence of new initiatives. With the defence agreements concluded, Senegal seems prepared to see Gambia 'go it alone', confident that she will see the

¹ See *Gambia News Bulletin*, 9 July 1964.

advantages of closer association in the long run. That this may be an optimistic view is suggested by the many examples of the difficulties of bringing about closer union after lines of separate development have been allowed to harden.

Two factors might dramatically change the situation. Despite the defence agreements, a political situation could conceivably develop in which Senegal felt compelled to take over Gambia, and it is doubtful whether effective resistance would be possible. So long as the present level-headed groups continue to wield effective power this eventuality seems remote. The other possibility is that the British Government might taper off its substantial financial assistance, in which case Gambia might be forced to reappraise the situation. Again this seems a remote possibility.

In the longer run, if free-trade agreements become more widespread in Africa, Senegal might be disposed to think about the wisdom of extending this more attractive alternative to Gambia. If she does, there will be little reason for Gambia to oppose an arrangement of this kind.