Let me begin rather journalistically but in a fashion which, I hope, will set the scene for the rest of this paper.

It was my fortune one day to have to go to Bangui on the public bus. One does not choose such a means of transportation in preference to something more rapid and more comfortable, but the experience proved to be instructive.

At one of the short stops at Bossangoa to pick up passengers, there was a large group come to see a young man off. He was dressed neatly and with taste; his relatives were not. What caught my attention, however, was not the difference in dress. It was that the young man was talking to his Gbeya peasant relatives in French. In stilted, rather artificial phrases he would address them, rather self-consciously, I thought. Once in the bus, however, after having said a parting "au revoir", he turned to speak to a young woman whom he addressed in Sango, the lingua franca.

This tableau typifies the stratification of a considerable portion of African society. It is given as an illustration of only one type of divisive force at work on the African continent today, namely that of a cleavage between the élite and peasants, here represented by the young man and his relatives. The illustration is deliberately chosen for its sociological and linguistic significance. Notice the interplay of French, the lingua franca, and the tribal language.

Before I am done, I hope to have related the use of linguae francae to the development of the emerging states, using by way of illustration Sango, the lingua franca of the Central African Republic, the former territory of Ubangi Shari in French Equatorial Africa.

Sango, I should say, is now spoken by an estimated third of the population, which numbers roughly at 1,4000,000. (More significant is the fact that probably all adult males speak it.) It is a partially creolized language.
which is derived by the process of pidginization from a local language which is not too remotely related to most of the languages of the country. As I have pointed out elsewhere, the presence of the European seems only to have been the occasion for the spread of a form of speech, which already in the last century had become some type of contact language.

Let us now return to consider a few of these divisive forces.

The first is one of which the press takes little cognizance, but which is a paramount concern to social scientists. I refer, of course, to the stratification of society along new lines, lines foreign to the indigenous cultures. My tableau suggested only two of the several strata characterized by decreasing degrees of privileges: the peasants and the sophisticated, partly educated tradesmen. (This young man was a tailor; an esteemed position, even though his only responsibility was the running of a sewing machine in a clothing factory.)

Similar and more numerous classes might be cited for most of the Continent. The vast majority is well known to consist of the peasants, the people who very commonly are known by the term "bush folk." These are the people one sees tilling the small gardens or seated at dusk around the common meal pot or — armed with nets and weapons — on their way to scare up some game in the bush. These are the people at Nduri, Gbaziya, Bozanu, and Bomastana, small dots on an administrative map. These are the "have-nots."

Far above them on the social scale is the other major class recognized in almost every African nation by some term comparable to the word élite. Its origin, constitution, and role in the development of Africa is of great concern to political scientists, a fact demonstrated by the number of studies already published or now being undertaken.

Another divisive factor is, of course, tribalism. May I illustrate it first with a dog's name. The Gbeya people of the Central African Republic give names to their dogs which reveal feelings of animosity which the culture
ordinarily frowns upon. Dak-nu-me is one of them. Very colloquially translated, it comes out "shut-up". The owner of the dog alludes to the fact that the state police would interfere in inter-tribal disputes. At the command "shut-up" one had no choice but to discontinue the argument.

I was led to believe, on several occasions, that the absence of hostilities between the tribes in the Central African Republic was enforced only by the authority of the Colonial Government (and I am speaking of the country before it became independent). At that time several individuals expressed the opinion that if the white man left there would be a resumption of tribal hostilities.

Such strife has not returned to the Central African Republic but other sister states are not so fortunate. And even where a modicum of national harmony obtained, there is recognized the ominous threat of stormy fragmentation along tribal lines.

Political parties have in several places utilized these rivalries, rationalizing ethnic differences in giving them symbolic reality, thereby, unquestionably exacerbating the disunity which is the unfortunate heritage of so many of the emerging states. This third factor in the fragmentation of African states is already well documented for nations such as the Congo, the history of which, alas, teaches us so much about social and political developments on the Continent. The Central African Republic, it should be said, has not yet had to witness wide-scale tribal conflicts. They lie dormant, however. As any resident of the country can testify, almost any "palaver" between individuals or groups of different tribes sooner or later is conceptualized as a tribal issue.

The Mesan Party, whose leader had long agitated for and eventually saw the reality of independence, has a broad tribal base. Being the dominant political party at the time of independence, its members included a fairly representative sample of the population. Bartholemy Boganda, the leader whom I just mentioned,
was an ardent foe of what he called "racism". One of the slogans of his party and a nick name which he gladly assumed was Zo Kwe Zo, "all people are human beings". (I should note that this is in Sango, the lingua franca of the Central African Republic. Boganda used it freely before and after the independence in addresses to the general public, even when a few non-Sango speaking Europeans were present.)

Boganda's death in an airplane accident was, ironically, both a test of the country's democratic processes and an indication of the reality of the racism which he so much deplored. Boganda, the Vice-President, and the Minister of Youth were all members of the Mgbaka Tribe, a rather small tribe located southwest of the Capitol. When, in 1959, there was an attempt in the Legislative Assembly to impeach the legal successor to the Presidency, it was rumored, especially among the Bandas who make up a good proportion of the population, that the Mgbakas were moving into Bangui to take over the country.

One of the realities of the African scene is that eruptions breaking the surface in the form of violence are not independent and local, but that such boils are potential almost anywhere. Such is the state of health of the Continent.

My contribution today is the view that what is indicated for the disease is a good dose of effective communication. Language is admittedly no cure-all for the ills of society, but if, as I have attempted to demonstrate, there are indeed several political, social, and economic forces contributing to the fragmentation and stratification of African nations, then we might well recommend a counterforce for unification. If the divisions are correlated with linguistic distinctions, then it might very well be that a substantial contribution can be made by the resolution of these differences. The use of linguae francae, in some places already dynamic forces in the everyday life of the indigenous population, offer excellent means for the achievement of this goal.
This, then, is my thesis.

The Central African Republic illustrates well the point I am trying to make. This small country, separated from the Congo only by the Ubangi River, and lying between the Cameroon and the Sudan is one of these emerging states. In 1958, like the other territories of French Equatorial Africa, it became a member of the French Community. Inevitable followed its evolution into full statehood, which occurred last year.

There had been no publicized discussion as to what the country's national language would be. The Colonial Government had never given any official recognition to any of the indigenous languages. Approved education had to be carried on in French; and the local languages, including the lingua franca, could be used in education only when that was religious in nature. Literature for local consumption was, if religious, in a local language, and if not, only in French. As a matter of fact, while copies of religious literature had to be filed with the government, anything else had to have special approval. Only one such purely secular periodical ever took hold. This was the official organ of Boganda's party, which had the curious name of Bangui La So- "Bangui Today", a mimeographed daily in French with a Sango name. (Its circulation was very limited, being, as its name suggests, for all practical purposes restricted to the Capitol. It was hardly a newspaper, but Europeans read it to inform themselves of the pronouncements of the African politicians.)

Officially nothing changed after the birth of the new Republic. French was named in the Constitution as the official language. This was to be expected; but facts of political life slowly began to exert their influence on the activities, if not the policies, of the responsible leaders. We soon began to see posters issued by the government in the lingua franca. When Radio Bangui was established, we also began to have several programs a week in Sango.
A parallel case can be cited for another creole language. In Haiti ever since the current President came into power, the Haitian language has been used on the air for news broadcasts and for what one inhabitant of the country called "political propaganda". (Only ten percent of the population can be called French speaking.)

As yet no secular periodical has appeared in Sango, but a monthly paper circulated in the country, which in 1957 by necessity had to be religious, last year received official approval. The significance of this action is that the paper can now be expanded into a multi-purpose magazine.

The change in policy with respect to the Trompette, the paper which I have just mentioned, illustrates one very important point, the validity of which, if not universal, can hardly be contested in the Central African Republic, namely that as the indigenous leaders become concerned with the nation's problems they see the advantages inherent in the use of a lingua franca. The Trompette became recognized when my successor to the editorship was able to discuss the subject personally with the President. (One of the privileges of being in a small country is having such opportunities!) But perhaps President Dacko had a precedent, his predecessor, the nation's first President, had himself without embarrassment addressed himself to the masses in Sango. Moreover, before his death, this same leader apparently had already drawn up plans for the establishment of an experimental plantation not too far from Bangui, where among other things, basic education was to have been carried on in Sango.

The continued interest of the authorities revealed itself in the fact that a few months ago the government convened a meeting of parties interested in the use of Sango, the purpose of which was to begin the standardization of the language beginning with orthography. The initiative for calling the meeting being that of the government, we see in it another step toward involvement in the use
of the lingua franca. It marks an epoch.

The future may yet witness the adoption of a creolized lingua franca as the means of facilitating the establishing of a modern state. There is no similar documented occurrence in history. Nationalistic revival movements have hitherto been accompanied by the resuscitation of a dead language or the adaptation of a local dialect. Witness the classic examples of Hebrew, Gaelic, and Czech.

Even the case of Indonesian is not comparable. By the time the Indonesian Youth Conference adopted Malay as the national language in 1928, it had already had a history of several hundred years. It, too, needed to be brought up to date, but it could hardly be called a creolized language. We therefore look with interest on the development in Tanganyika, for it is said that Julius Nyerere, several years ago, recommended the adoption of Swahili as the national language.

To return now to the main stream. It has been demonstrated that the expediencies of political life and the irresistible convenience of Sango were factors in its utilization by the new government. Its use by the religious bodies at work in the country, although intense, was even antedated by its use by the colonizers for whom it became almost indispensable in the administration of the back country. Moreover, one can safely generalize in saying that all business concerns depend on the language for execution of policy and order. Sango links labor to management by means of bi-lingual foremen.

The convenience of a lingua franca, albeit a pidgin or creole language, is hardly contestable. But what chance is there for a "marriage of convenience" to be consummated between the government and such a language in the emerging states, and are such unions to be polygamous or monogamous? How many languages will be used? Should not the facts of life be openly admitted and dalliance with these humble languages be legalized? Before stating my case for these
languages let me review the case of the opposition. A review of the literature is beyond the scope of this paper, but once again Sango serves as an instructive example.

In 1958 the new Central African Republic commissioned a French citizen to make a study of Sango with the purpose of determining whether it was suitable for basic education. The report concludes with an unequivocal negation. I should like to mention his most serious criticisms. My own comments have to be perforce minimal. Apart from the fact that the study could hardly be called scientific, the writer never fully answered the fundamental question, which is: Is Sango suitable for mass education?

1. The report says that Sango is too diversified. While it is true that pidgin languages are characterized by certain types of what might be called dialectal or ideolectal variations, in the Central African Republic none of the variations in phonology or vocabulary interfere with effective communication.

2. The report said that Sango is becoming more and more simplified. What the study is probably describing is the amount of French words with which the Sango of Bangui is spiced. What the native speakers of French are witnessing is a mish-mash of French and Sango spoken by socially maladjusted urban, that is, detribalized, Africans whose aim to impress is often not fortified by fluency in French. What we need to know is what kind of Sango they speak among themselves. A policy decision should no more be made on such individuals than we would on the speech of our own American immigrants.

I might add that Sango is not alone in being criticized for inadequacies found, not so much in the language itself, as in that form of it spoken by the white men. Such hopelessly emasculated forms of Sango are paralleled by a jargon of Swahili which is ingeniously named
Ki-Settla or "settler's talk".

3. The report says that Sango, as a degenerate language, cannot contribute to the intellectual development of the country. To quote the investigator: "A language which is not adapted to the expression of thought corresponding to a level determined by civilization, cannot facilitate the acquisition of civilization, and constitutes, in fact, a handicap". It is this ideological argument which constitutes the substance of the investigator's rejection of Sango. It is perfectly understandable that the French who were trying to create a worldwide Gallic society, would be so insistent on the priority of the French language, but the British, who had similar goals, were much more liberal in their linguistic policies. We, of course, were bystanders and a certain amount of objectivity was the heritage left to us by history.

As an American, but as a one-time inhabitant of the Central African Republic, I venture to suggest, in conclusion, that there are many possible uses to which Sango could be put. Among them are the following:

1. Sango could be used to teach the rudiments of education. Such a system of preparatory education would be inexpensive to operate, and it would have the value of eliminating those children who might not be qualified for more advanced training in French. (It has already been demonstrated that children who first attend the religious catechetical schools where such rudimentary education is given in Sango, do much better than those who enter without such previous training.) This system would also have the merit of training a wide base of the population, I should add, which would be immediately at the reach of the government's media of communication.

2. An adjunct of this program could be the teaching of improved agricultural methods and new arts and crafts. If the government is
concerned with raising the standard of living, it would be only extreme short-sightedness to ignore the utilization of Sango for this purpose. It is a program which has hardly been explored, although as I mentioned previously, President Boganda had plans to experiment with it.

3. Sango could be used to unify the nation. In the absence of a largely French-speaking citizenry no other means now exist for the promulgation of the laws and programs of the government. If Sango was a satisfactory medium for the communication of political propaganda before and during its inception as an independent state, surely it can fill the urgent need today of creating a feeling of nationality, of loyalty, and of civic responsibility. The most effective means to achieve this goal would be the establishment of a Sango newspaper which, by a national coverage, would combat localism and racism by eliminating ignorance on which these diseases thrive.

Here again I should like to refer to the Swahili speaking part of Africa. W. H. Whiteley, in an article published in 1957, mentions the failure of a large proportion of the population of Kenya to register for the elections to the Legislative Council: only 125,000 out of 4,000 actually registered. His appraisal of this event is worthy of quotation: "Possibly the fear that property qualifications might lead to an increased tax or to a new form of land tax may have had something to do with it. But fear is often bred by ignorance and ignorance suggests a breakdown in communication. If this were so, the further questioning remains of whether this was merely bad public relations—and this is more serious—whether there is no machinery for tackling linguistic problems of this magnitude". The emerging states need more than a superficially trained youth. Schools are important; they prepare for the future, but success in arriving at the desired goal can hardly be achieved without the present population, which is accessible only by means of some lingua franca.
I do not mean here to summarily dismiss the vernacular languages, of which there are two major groups spoken by the majority of the population. These are still very much alive, but since these languages, unlike some of those of the former British Colonies, were never used by the government for educational purposes, it would certainly be undesirable to begin at this point. Such a step, would, in fact, tend to kindle tribal feelings. Language awareness has already led to serious problems both in East and West Africa, where even dialects which were mutually intelligible have been isolated by the speakers as being, indeed, separate languages.

The unity of which I speak is not only geographically but also socially oriented. Can it be controverted that the great threat to the equilibrium of many of Africa's independent states is dissatisfaction, unrest, and anti-authoritarianism? These psychological states feed on social exclusion, the feeling of being deprived of the good things of life. I am, of course, referring to the type of social stratification which I mentioned in the beginning of this talk. Even if one must concede the necessity of creating an elite at the expense of creating an opposing peasantry, one must be aware of the cost. There is a real conflict between the two classes.

Although it may take some time before the majority of the population of these nations can fully benefit from social and economic progress, they can enter into the life of the national community by the most effective means known to mankind, through a single language. Eliminate linguistic insularity and national equilibrium will be all the more assured.