

A Project To Renew Lake Chad Presented

Dec. 21—*Lyndon LaRouche's French associates Jacques Cheminade, president of the Solidarité e Progrès party, and Christine Bièrre, managing editor of Nouvelle Solidarité, were invited to participate in a series of events which took place in Niamey, the capital of Niger, from Nov. 30 to Dec. 18, in the context of the 50th anniversary celebration of Niger's independence. This report was translated from French.*

Inoussa Ousseini, Niger Ambassador to UNESCO, and former Minister of Culture, was at the heart of this commemoration, a combative program to renew the impetus and mission of this country for the next 50 years. The commemoration took place each day, from morning to night, with conferences, debates, and film projections on the themes of independence, the role of culture and film, as well as the effects of globalization on Africa.

Among the principle events, were the fifth edition of the African Forum of film documentaries made by young filmmakers of Niger, in the tradition of Jean Rouch; the distribution of films and archived documents describing the advance to independence in Africa, including such famous classics such as: "The Battle of Algiers," "Lumumba," "Katanga Business," "Hotel Rwanda," and others. Another important event was a book fair, with 20,000 volumes provided at a cost barely above the cost of production, by the publication firm Harmattan, about 20% of whose authors are African.

What Future for Niger?

It is in the context of an international symposium that one must respond to fundamental questions such as "Africa in the context of globalization," and, "What

kind of future for Niger by 2050," that Jacques Cheminade intervened to stand up for his project to revitalize Lake Chad. His speech, the audio of which you can listen to below, was preceded by a particularly incisive introduction by Inoussa Ousseini, speaking on behalf of civil society, as well as by a lively discourse delivered by Khardiata Lo N'Diaye, the Niger representative of the UN Development Program, concerning the failure of the first 50 years of independence.

"I especially want to thank Mr. Jacques Cheminade," said Ousseini, who had the evening before already presented him to the government, the diplomatic corps, and about 800 people gathered at the convention center for the ceremony of presenting the prizes for the documentary films and the showing of two of them. He said that he is "a brilliant economist and French politician, who was a candidate in the French Presidential elections. But, more particularly, we have invited him here because he is someone who was anti-colonialist when he was young, who actively fought politically for the independence of Algeria.

"We also invited him to Niger to give him the opportunity to meet a man he appreciates, but whom he only knows via the written word. That person is a gendarme from Niger who, while studying at the war school in Paris, wrote a memorandum on the revitalization of Lake Chad. Cheminade was captivated by this memorandum, which he thought about deeply, and he produced dossiers which inspired the debates of the last meeting on the subject of Lake Chad at Ndjamena.

"After reading this memorandum, he wanted to know if the other military personnel, particularly the captains,

were like the author of what he had read. He wanted to know if Niger was being developed by the army and army engineers building bridges, irrigation projects, and other projects."

Ousseini was insistent on Cheminade's authority on economic and financial matters, and the great interest that Niger has to "incite" itself in this direction. "With Mr. LaRouche in the United States, they were the first to announce, since 1995, the crisis that was coming. Two years ago, I was at a meeting in Germany—Mr.



EIRNS

Inoussa Ousseini, Niger Ambassador to UNESCO, and former Minister of Culture, was the driving force behind the 50-year commemoration of Niger's independence.



EIRNS

French political leader Jacques Cheminade (left) is shown here with the governor of Tillabéri, Col. Ibrahim Bagadoma (center), the author of a memorandum on the revitalization of Lake Chad.

LaRouche could not come, but his wife was there—and they announced this crisis.”

‘Waking Africa, the Sleeping Giant’

Ousseini emphasized the importance of all this for Niger, where the transition period is coming to an end. “Soon we are going to have elections in Niger, and a new head of state, and I thought that it would be very good that the future head of state in Niger could know about these studies on Lake Chad, because we have always hoped that a head of state, a political man, could attach his name to a joint work. Because there are many ponds which have dried up in Niger because Lake Chad is receding, the replenishment of Lake Chad with water would be very interesting and favorable for the economy of Niger.

Lo spoke to make it clear that the first 50 years of inde-

pendence were a failure. At the time of independence, the levels of development of Africa and China were comparable, she pointed out. But today these Asian countries, China, Vietnam, have a voice on the international scale while in Africa too many babies continue to die, too many children do not have a school to go to, too many farmers continue to depend on the rain gauge. African economies are dependent on foreign capital and exportation of raw materials. Africa, rich in primary materials, including 40% of the hydroelectric potential, needs above all, confidence in its ability to develop. This confidence is the most important wealth as opposed to raw materials.

In conclusion, Lo demanded that it was necessary that the next 50 years be those in which “Africa, this sleeping giant, wakes up.”

Cheminade’s intervention came at the perfect time to provide responses to the challenge posed by Lo. He first showed how the policies of financial looting of a new monetarist empire based in the City of London and Wall Street were the origin of the terrible financial crisis which is raging not only in Africa, but around the world. He then showed how only a productive system of public credit, orienting investment towards very large projects such as that of the revitalization of Lake Chad, for which he presented all the aspects, will make the next 50 years a success, not only for Africa but for all humanity.



EIRNS

These children are on their way to receive vaccinations against meningitis.