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A campaign at the initiative of the association Survie Nord on the occasion of the bicentenary of the birth of Louis Faidherbe on June 3, 2018.

In partnership with the Collectif Afrique, the Atelier d'Histoire Critique, the Front uni des immigrations et des quartiers populaires (FUIQP), the Collectif sénégalais contre la célébration de Faidherbe.

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Faidherbe must fall

SURVIE

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Who wants to (still) celebrate the "father of French imperialism"?

Since the end of the 19th century, Lille and the north of France have perpetually celebrated the memory of General Louis Faidherbe. Streets and high schools bear his name. Triumphal statues stand in his honor in the heart of our cities.

There is, however, an unbearable scandal here. For Faidherbe was a fierce colonialist. He massacred thousands of Africans in the 19th century. He was the key actor in the conquest of Senegal. He defended all his life the most abject racist theories.

If we consider that colonization is a crime against humanity, then we must face the facts: the one our cities honor daily is a high ranking criminal.

Of course, officially, it is not Faidherbe's "colonial work" that these streets and statues celebrate: it is his "exploits" during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. At the head of the Army of the North, it was he, we are told, who allowed the region to escape the enemy. A tiny "victory", in the middle of a generalized debacle, which is still worth today to Faidherbe to be carried in triumph by patriots of all sides.

But two hundred years after the birth of Faidherbe, who was born in Lille in 1818, and forty years after the "twinning" between the municipalities of Lille and Saint-Louis of Senegal, sealed in 1978, it is time to know the other facets of this dubious character, whom some describe as the *"father of French imperialism*[1] .

[1] This is the case, for example, of General Maurice Faivre in a text published in January 2011 on the "Colonial Studies" website (<http://etudescoloniales.canalblog.com>).

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A global movement

For several years, movements have been rising around the world to protest the celebration of major slaveholding, colonialist and racist figures. In South Africa, a large campaign called *"Rhodes must fall"* toppled the statue of colonialist Cecil Rhodes in 2015. In the United States, monuments to Christopher Columbus are teetering and statues of Southern general Robert Lee are now only protected by neo-Nazis. In Catalonia, the statue of a slave owner has just been removed by the Barcelona authorities. In Belgium, protesters are attacking the busts and equestrian statues of the bloodthirsty Leopold II, who appropriated the Congo. In France itself, more and more personalities are challenging the national veneration of Colbert, Bugeaud, Lyautey, Gallieni and Jules Ferry.

Lille and its region must participate in this salutary impulse and overthrow the moribund fetishes of colonialism.

Honoring a criminal?

On the occasion of an exhibition of "contemporary art" organized in Lille in the summer of 2017, a panel painted, at the foot of the equestrian statue that adjoins the Place de la République, this lapidary portrait of our regional "hero": *"Louis Faidherbe was a great military man. He brought, throughout his travels, a lot of knowledge about the culture of African peoples and territories.* We will see in the following pages what is scandalous about this irenic presentation.

Present and future generations must know the story of the assassin Faidherbe and all those who, like him, massacred in the name of the

"The celebration of these criminals is an insult to the peoples they martyred and a daily spit in the face of their descendants. The consensual celebration of these criminals is an insult to the peoples they have martyred and a daily spit in the face of their descendants.

Faidherbe must fall!

Questions and answers

(to those who want to keep Faidherbe)

Do you really want to debunk the statues of Faidherbe and the institutions that bear his name?

Yes. At the beginning of the 21st century, we can no longer glorify a man who served colonialism during his entire life (1818-1889), on the pretext that he won two minor victories in 1870-1871.

But he didn't do only bad things: he fought against the invasion of France by the Prussians in 1870-1871!

Like Philippe Pétain in 1914-1918?

You can balance the positive and negative aspects of your career, right?

This is precisely what the worshippers of Faidherbe do, as they modestly "forget" to mention his "colonial work" and its odiousness. But this proves the hypocrisy of their adoration: they celebrate a man who fought against the German invasion of France... but who participated in the French invasion of Africa!

Yes, but you judge a past history with your present eyes!

And that is precisely the purpose of those who erect statues, name streets and create "places of remembrance". And that is precisely the objective of those who erect statues, name streets and create "places of memory". In this case, they wanted to perpetuate the cult of Faidherbe. Their ideals, while perhaps acceptable yesterday, are no longer acceptable today.

But you have to put this into perspective! As you yourself say, Faidherbe's ideas were commonplace in his time.

Banal certainly, but not generalized. From that time on, many personalities challenged colonialism and its ideological foundations. On the political level, we can mention Clemenceau, who was a fierce opponent of colonization. On the scientific level, we can mention Joseph Anténor Firmin who published in 1885 *De l'égalité des races humaines*, a much more serious work than the racist rantings of Faidherbe.

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In any case, your anti-Faidherbe hatred will come to nothing. You don't de-name streets and you don't take down statues so easily!

That's true, but it's because of the prevailing conservatism. And it's not impossible, as proven by the name change of the rue de Paris in Lille, which became at the end of 2017 "rue Pierre-Mauroy". Note also that a street in Lille named after Marshal Canrobert (1809-1895) was recently renamed because this character, whose career has some similarity with that of Faidherbe, had
"a somewhat dubious colonial past[2] ".

And who do you want to honor then?

We are not fans of celebrating so-called "great men". But if we have to name streets, high schools, hospitals or subway stations - it's quite convenient, it's true - we know of nicer names than Faidherbe. It is time to pay tribute to those who fought for the people and for justice, not to their enemies.

Concerning the statues of Faidherbe, would it not be better to leave them, to explain what colonialism is, rather than to remove them and thus erase all traces of this past?

If it is to tell that colonialism has "positive" aspects, as many people still believe, it is not sure that this is the solution. If, on the other hand, it is a matter of clearly indicating, on these statues themselves, what colonialism fundamentally is, namely an abominable crime *in its very principle*, then such a solution could be defended.

These statues would thus be transformed into anti-colonial monuments...

Exactly. And, with a little imagination, we could even transform them further, to reverse their meaning and make them tributes to the victims of colonization and/or to those who resisted it. This is finally what all those who want to *overthrow* colonialist symbols are asking for.

However, it is unlikely, in this hypothesis, that the municipal authorities would wish to keep for a long time monuments that would thus shed light on one of the worst crimes in French history. They would probably be the first to want to remove these buildings...

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[2] See "De l'extrême difficulté qu'il y a à changer le nom d'une rue," *La Voix du Nord*, June 23, 2017.

Who was Louis Faidherbe?

Faidherbe in a few dates

June 3, 1818 : born in Lille.
1838 : entrance to
Polytechnique. 1844-1852 :
stays in Algeria. 1852 :
Assignment to Senegal.
December 16, 1854 : appointed governor of
Senegal. 1854-1861 and 1863-1865 : governor of
Senegal. 1865-1870 : installation in Algeria.
November 19, 1870 : appointed head of the Armée du Nord.
April 1871 : military retirement.
July 1871 : deputy of the North (he resigns quickly) January
1879 : senator of the North.

A young Lille man without sparkle

At first, nothing destined Faidherbe for a bright future. Born in Lille on June 3, 1818, Louis Léon César Faidherbe, a son of the local petty bourgeoisie, had a hard time getting noticed as a young man. At the college in Lille, his teachers found him *"affectionate"* and *"helpful",* but they had great difficulty in identifying other qualities in this boy who was *"not very diligent"*. It was only thanks to the kindness of one of his mathematics teachers that he obtained a half-scholarship to enter the Ecole Polytechnique in 1838. "*One smiles a little when one reads, in the directory of the department of the North, that Faidherbe entered Polytechnique "thanks to a stubborn work...",* amuses his biographer Alain Coursier, however very complaisant.

What followed was no better. Integrated into the engineering school of Metz (1840) and then appointed to Arras (1842), the young officer received salty appreciations. "*His behaviour was quite correct but he was very dissipated",* commented one of his superiors. "*His work is mediocre and incomplete,"* added another. No doubt in a hurry to get rid of such an element, his bosses asked for his transfer to Africa. And this was a good thing, because, mediocre as he was, Faidherbe dreamed of exotic glories and epic adventures for himself.

A little soldier of the conquest of Algeria

In 1844, Louis Léon was sent to Algeria, where there had been a struggle for some time to impose the benefits of civilization on the natives. Under the leadership of General Bugeaud, the "land of human rights" massacred the Algerians to teach them the virtues of French culture. Faidherbe witnessed this generous bloodshed firsthand: *"You see a war of extermination and, unfortunately, it is impossible to do it any other way*," he wrote to his mother in 1844. *After many attempts to inspire him with respect for the law of nations, we are reduced to saying: one Arab killed is two less French murdered."*

As a good soldier, Faidherbe dreamed of participating in this macabre lesson in arithmetic. But his mission as an engineer officer was limited to the construction of roads and fortifications. *When I was in Mostaganem, we were fighting in Djemaa; now that I am in Djemaa, we are fighting in Mostaganem*," he notes bitterly. *I must admit that I have misfortune."*

A "negrophile" in Guadeloupe?

Faidherbe was assigned to Guadeloupe in 1848. Under the pretext that he landed there at the precise moment when France abolished slavery (for the second time), his hagiographers would later tell that his express passage on the island allowed him to sympathize with "the Blacks". It is even said that he militated alongside Victor Schœlcher, deputy of Martinique and Guadeloupe and ardent defender of abolition, and that he was expelled under pressure from the colonists because of his "negrophilia".

The problem is that historians have found no trace of such a commitment. Certainly, Faidherbe was vaguely interested in the condition of the Blacks of Guadeloupe. *"It seems that he felt the will to love this accursed race,"* notes one of his admiring hagiographers. But he did not improve their lot. And it was simply because he was overstaffed that Faidherbe was sent back to Algeria in 1849 - with no more glory than when he arrived, but affected by an ugly skin disease.

After a short stay in Guadeloupe (see box), Faidherbe was posted again to Algeria in 1849. Having missed out on glory the first time around, Faidherbe was determined to seize this new opportunity.

During his second stay in Algeria (1849-1852), he zealously participated in the "pacification" campaign and trained himself in the "Bugeaud method" (looting, massacres, smoking, destruction of villages, decapitation of rebels, etc.). During the expedition to Little Kabylia, in which he took part in 1851 under the orders of the bloodthirsty General de Saint-Arnaud, he sent his mother a satisfied letter: *"I destroyed a charming village of two hundred houses from top to bottom and all the*

gardens. This terrified the tribe that came to surrender today" (June 30, 1851).

This enthusiastic participation in the influence of France overseas earned Faidherbe, for the first time in his career, the encouragement of his superiors. Saint-Arnaud proposed him for the Legion of Honor - which he did not obtain. A misadventure earned him the recognition of his chiefs: caught in a snowstorm during a reconnaissance mission in the Djurdjura mountains, Faidherbe slipped into a torrent of icy water. He narrowly escaped, but was finally awarded the Legion of Honor. However, he would suffer all his life from the after-effects of this faux-pas: the man whom statues represent in virile postures was in fact diminished all his life by countless health problems. And arthritis will leave him paralyzed at the age of 57.

The factotum of the businessmen

Assigned to Senegal, Faidherbe landed at Gorée on November 6, 1852. It was there that he finally made a name for himself. At first, he was simply an "assistant director of engineering", but his rise to prominence was meteoric: he was appointed governor of the colony only two years after his arrival.

As historian Leland C. Barrows has shown, this unexpected promotion was the work of a handful of local businessmen, and in particular of the Bordeaux trading house Maurel et Prom, which was established in Senegal and very well connected to Parisian political circles.

Senegal was then only a collection of trading posts. Seeing their profits melt away, following the abolition of slavery and the erosion of gum prices, French traders were looking for a strong man capable of subduing the surrounding African states, which had the annoying habit of taxing goods and disrupting navigation on the Senegal River. This mania was all the more detestable in view of the fact that a promising crop was being planted at that time: groundnuts.

The little officer from Lille quickly caught the eye of his future sponsors. In March 1853, he wrote a report that was very favorable to the trading companies established on the Senegalese coast. From May to November 1853, he participated in an expedition along the Atlantic coast which led him to take part in military operations to

defend the

French commercial interests. And when Faidherbe took part, in March 1854, in the battle of Dialmath (near Podor) to defend - once again - French traders against the local population, Maurel et Prom actively *lobbied* to propel him to the head of the colony.

Appointed Governor of Senegal in December 1854, Faidherbe never forgot those who had supported him: he worked hand in hand with the colonial employers all his life.

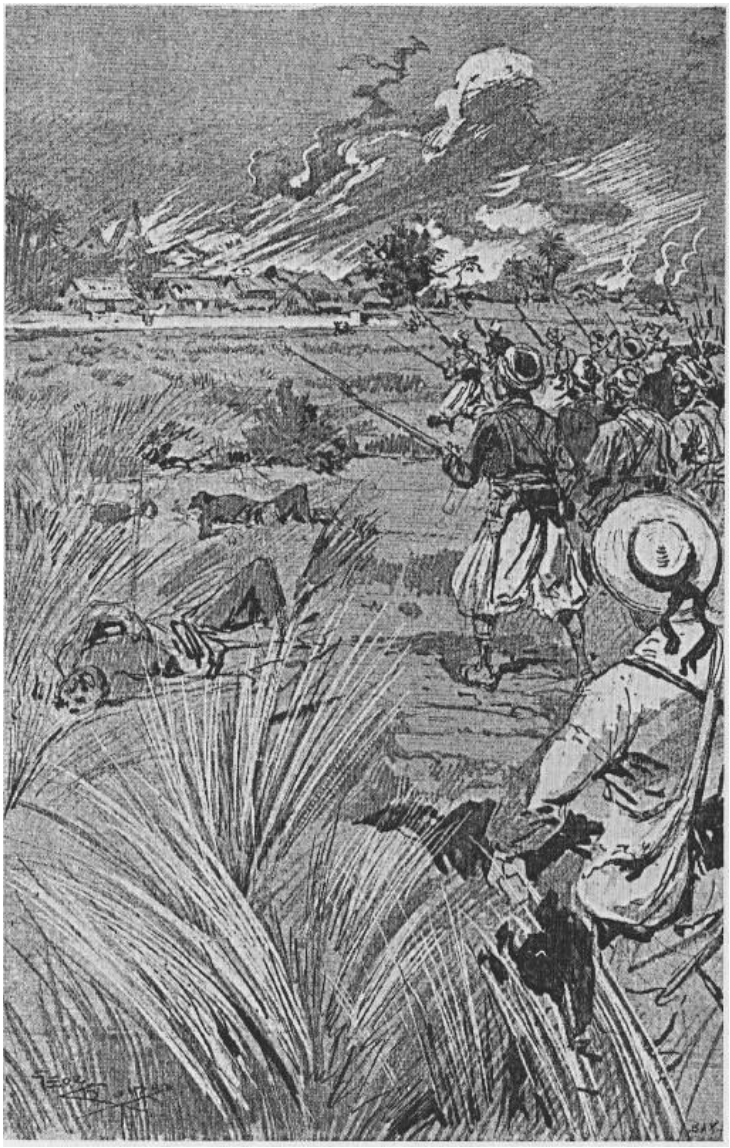
The "peacemaker" of Senegal

Under the guidance of the colonists, Faidherbe undertook, as soon as he was appointed, a vast undertaking to "pacify" Senegal, scrupulously applying the ferocious "Bugeaud method". Objective: to promote trade on the Senegal River by subjugating the neighboring African states. It is a question, according to its terms, of becoming the *"suzerains of the river"*. Faidherbe's governorship (1854-1861 and 1863-1865) was marked by an uninterrupted series of military campaigns, from Fouta Toro to Khasso and from Kayor to Casamance (see box). "*Before being a "builder,* " notes historian Vincent Joly, *Faidherbe was first and foremost a destroyer.* For years, the people of the region were subjected to French machine gun fire. Men are massacred. Villages are reduced to ashes. Famine, skilfully maintained in the "zones rebels", becomes a weapon of war.

As a personal participant in the operations, Faidherbe would claim responsibility for this policy of terror throughout his life. "*In ten days, we had burned several villages along the Taouey, taken 2,000 oxen, 30 horses, 50 donkeys and a large number of sheep, taken 150 prisoners, killed 100 men, burned 25 villages and inspired a salutary terror in these populations*," he wrote one day. "*Nothing can give an idea of the terror that our pursuit inspired in these unfortunate populations, dragged into this war by some chiefs sold to the Moors,"* he adds. "*If a pillage is committed by the inhabitants of a village, the whole country to which the village belongs is responsible and must expect any kind of reprisal from us,"* he comments. These campaigns of terror are causing countless deaths.

victims.

Seeing himself as the Bugeaud of Senegal, Faidherbe demanded that the soldiers sent to Senegal have Algerian experience. For it was in Algeria, he explained in January 1856, that they learned *"how to dominate and organize barbaric peoples and how to wage war together in Algeria and Senegal*.



Propaganda image celebrating the destruction of the village of Dara by the troops of Governor Faidherbe in 1855.

Faidherbe's bloody military expeditions to Senegal [3]

January 1855: An expedition was launched against the village of Bokol in Dimar. The entire village was burned.

March 1855: an expedition against the villages of Marsa and Oundounba. Faidherbe sent the "Bakel Garrison" there. The village was burned. There were 12 dead, 25 wounded, 22 stolen oxen, goats and donkeys.

March 1855: A lieutenant of Faidherbe, M. Bargone, fired cannons and razed the village of Bakel. The determination of Mr. Bargone was welcomed by Faidherbe. Only one place in Bakel was spared: the Ndiaybé district, because there were some loyal allies of the governor.

April 5, 1855: Faidherbe's men burned the village of Nayé in eastern Senegal. More than 200 people perished in the flames. A leading religious figure in the village was shot on the spot.

July 14, 1855: Governor Faidherbe himself fired on villagers and riverine populations near Orndoli in the Damga. Captain Parent, a lieutenant of Faidherbe, carried out raids on the outskirts of Bakel and burned the village of Koungueul to the ground.

December 18, 1856: The village of Nguik in the Ndiambour was looted and burned by Faidherbe's men. The governor himself directed the operations.

December 19, 1856: The villages of Ouadan and Baralé were also burned by Faidherbe's men.

March 1858: Faidherbe's men burned Ouadan again. The village of Keur Seyni-Diop was also burned during the "Niomré expedition. The villages of Tanim and Mbirama were also burned by soldiers led by one of Faidherbe's men, Lieutenant Lafont. Chronicles report that smoke could be seen rising above the village of Mbirama in the distance.

May 1859: On the road to fight the Sine, Faidherbe's men forced the

[3] Census by historian and philosopher Khadim NDIAYE, "The bloodthirsty General Faidherbe does not deserve to have a statue in Senegal. Open letter to Mr. Mansour Faye, mayor of Saint-Louis of Senegal", <www.ndarinfo.com>, 7 September 2017.

villages to provide by force a contingent of volunteers. The scuffle of Logandème against Bour Sine Famak is launched on May 18, 1859. It was a bloody confrontation. Faidherbe himself claimed that 150 Serer were killed or wounded. He gave the order to burn Fatick and all the surrounding villages. The imposing columns of smoke pushed the survivors to take refuge in the neighboring areas.

March 1860: Faidherbe sent Commander Laprade to Lower Casamance to punish certain villagers who were considered hostile. This is the "expedition of Caronne [Karone] and Thionk. The village of Hilor is completely burned down. One of the sons of the king of Hilor is killed. The village of Kourba is also burned.

February 5, 1861: In Upper Casamance, the village of Sandiniéri was devastated. Captain Fulcrand destroyed the village of Dioudoubou. The village of Niagabar was also burned.

February 12, 1861: The village of Bombadiou is burned.

November 1860: Faidherbe's man, Mr. Parchappe, led a violent expedition against the Balantes and destroyed the entire village of Kouniara.

March 1861: Faidherbe personally led an expedition against Cayor. All the villages between Kelle and Mékhé, 25 in number, were burned. Dozens of people were shot.

April 4, 1861: In the village of Keur Ali-Mbengue, 16 men were killed. All neighboring villages were looted and burned.

April 5, 1861: 1,000 of Faidherbe's soldiers were sent to destroy all the villages around Guéoul and Mbawor.

April 30, 1864: 10 villages around Pout are completely destroyed.

December 30, 1863: Faidherbe's henchman, Lieutenant-Colonel Laprade, spent four days violently punishing villages in the Baol that were accused of opposing the interests of the colonists.

July 18, 1864: Faidherbe's men destroyed all the Bosséyabe villages in Fouta. Nearly forty people were massacred.

A technician of colonialism

Faidherbe did not only massacre the Senegalese: he worked hard to control them and make them walk straight. As a good specialist in military engineering, he built all sorts of infrastructures to criss-cross the territory and extract its wealth. This is why his zealous biographers call him
"builder".

He also maneuvered carefully to coax the natives who could be useful to French supremacy. It is necessary, he wrote from the height of his grandeur, *"to give, when we please, some proof of our munificence to the chiefs with whom we will be pleased"*. He therefore offered a few favors to the most devoted African chiefs, to whom he subcontracted the daily repression while stirring up rivalries between the "races" that populated this territory. Divide and conquer: an old imperial technique.

To make up for the lack of manpower, Faidherbe looked for intermediaries in the local population to "defend" and "develop" the subjugated territories. In order to do this, he relied on the two main institutions of all authority: the school and the army. In 1856, he created the "hostage school", the idea of which was simple: as a pledge of peace, the subjugated chiefs were to leave some of their children in the care of the French administration, which was responsible for turning them into docile subordinates. In 1857, he set up a new army corps inspired by the native Tirailleurs of Algeria: the "Senegalese Tirailleurs". Blacks make good soldiers," wrote Faidherbe in 1859,
The Senegalese riflemen were "because they don't appreciate danger and have a very poorly developed nervous system". In the following decades, the Senegalese riflemen served to defend the interests of France on all battlefields (and later fed the colonial imagination thanks to the chocolate smile of the friendly "Banania" rifleman).

Faidherbe resolutely invested in the teaching of French, to anchor in young African minds the subtleties of the language of Molière and thus help them to discover the eternal genius of France, *"this old and noble nation which has walked for centuries at the head of the civilization of the world"* (as he described it in 1855).

Such altruism was, however, accompanied by a more immediate aim: to distance Africans from local traditional institutions, which the colonial administration was also trying to control.

In particular, Faidherbe had an ambiguous relationship with Islam. While he obviously detested this *"half-civilization,"* as it was called, which jeopardized France's generous efforts in Senegal, he saw Muslim institutions as a potential tool for enforcing order and ensuring the unity of the colony. As one observer notes, Faidherbe saw Islam as *"a stage between African barbarism and the final acclimation of European influence*.

A racist ideologue

If Faidherbe still enjoys a reputation today as a "negrophile" and "Islamophile", it is because his racism was more sophisticated than that of his contemporaries and that he succeeded in giving it a "scientific" character. Aware that one must know in order to submit, Faidherbe studied in detail the peoples he intended to dominate.

As soon as he arrived in Senegal, he established contact with learned societies in Paris and participated in the effort to classify local peoples. Unlike his predecessors, who were content with descriptions and typologies, Faidherbe set out to establish a coherent and hierarchical racial system. He thus describes the history of Senegal as an endless "war of races".

This analysis naturally leads to the magnification of the colonial gesture which, after having divided "the Africans" into two camps, entrusts the Whites with the mission of protecting the most fragile (the good guys) against the others (the bad guys). The former have the particularity of having black skin, says Faidherbe, and a singularly narrow brain. "*The inferiority of the Blacks undoubtedly stems from the relatively small size of their brains*," he noted in 1879. The latter, with a lighter complexion, are congenitally inclined to physical violence and to the most fanatical Mohammedanism. By the carrot or the stick, all these people are summoned to submit to the white master.

Contrary to those who advocate the pure and simple extermination of the peoples "Faidherbe was one of the optimists. If the inferior races were undoubtedly doomed to disappear, he thought, there was no need to put them to the sword. As a humanist, he recommended interbreeding, the pleasures of which he himself appreciated (see box). According to Faidherbe's conception, mixed-breeders benefited from the respective qualities of the "races" that had produced them (i.e., the superior intelligence of Whites and the physical robustness of Blacks). In addition to the fact that miscegenation would provide the intermediaries indispensable to colonial administration, this theory allowed the governor to present French colonization in a humanitarian light: perhaps it could regenerate the decaying "races" and offer hope to the Blacks whom the implacable laws of natural history had condemned?

Faidherbe adept at "métissage

In the mid-19th century, settlers on the Senegalese coast commonly practiced what were called "marriages à la mode du pays," or temporary unions between Europeans and African women. Whether they were single or had left their wives behind in France, the colonists used African women to brighten their daily lives and warm their beds. The practice was perfectly accepted: these unions were lived in broad daylight and participated in the mixing of the colony.

Governor Faidherbe was a follower of this attractive custom, which he justified in theory and appreciated in practice. He took as his "temporary wife" a 15-year-old girl named Dioconda Sidibé. On February 15, 1857, Faidherbe's first son, Louis Léon, was born from this relationship. This did not prevent the romantic governor from getting married the following year, during a trip to France. At the age of 40, he married his niece Angèle Émilie Marie Sophie, who was only 18 years old at the time (she was the daughter of his brother Romain, who had died in 1850).

Historians have never found any trace of Dioconda Sidibé, who died prematurely. Raised by Angèle, Louis Léon junior died of yellow fever at the age of 24, in 1881.

An icon of the Colonial Republic

Although his military "exploits" proved largely useless during the 1870 war - Prussia crushed France to the bone - Faidherbe, made a general by the Second Empire in 1863, immediately became an icon of the III^{e} Republic. Born of the debacle, the latter was looking for patriotic symbols. It elevated Faidherbe to the rank of national hero. Did he not fight valiantly against the Germanic enemy? Did he not bring our universal enlightenment to our African friends?

Faidherbe was elected deputy of the North in 1871 and senator in 1879. He enjoyed a happy retirement, during which he cured his arthritis and polished the retrospective legend of his life. As a member of many learned societies, he shared his racist theories, defended the colonial conquest undertaken by the young Republic, and gave advice to the soldiers who set out to civilize the interior of Africa and to the businessmen who proposed to assist them.

Faidherbe died on September 28, 1889, surrounded by glory. Republicans of all persuasions fought over his legacy. A great defender of the civilizing mission of the "superior races", Jules Ferry wrote this moving tribute to his widow: *"I studied his African work* [...] *and fought with all my strength so that this great enterprise would be energetically continued.*

Lille and its region are also in tears. Thousands of people attended his funeral. The city authorities named the street of the station after him and a national subscription was launched to erect a statue of him. When the statue was finally unveiled in 1896, grateful patriots poured out their praise. *By the unity of his life, the uprightness of his character, his private qualities, his valour and his devotion to the fatherland, he almost touches true greatness,"* wrote the editorialist of the *Petit Parisien*. There is *not a task, not a failure, not a contradiction in this existence. Three supreme affections have woven and filled it: family, science, country; I should add: humanity."*


V. COLLODION

Faidherbe seen from Senegal

"Young people can't believe it when they find out that Faidherbe's hands are stained with the blood of their ancestors.

In September 2017, the statue of Louis Faidherbe, installed since 1886 in the square of the same name in Saint-Louis (Senegal), fell to the ground. This symbolic fall sparked a national debate around this increasingly contested monument. Interview with Khadim Ndiaye, philosopher and historian, member of the Senegalese Collective against the celebration of Faidherbe.

What does Louis Faidherbe represent today in Senegal? What types of buildings bear his name?

A number of buildings bear the name of Faidherbe. This is particularly the case in Saint-Louis, where there is a statue of him, as well as a square and a bridge.

named in his honor. All these places were "honored" by Emmanuel Macron during his visit to Senegal in February 2018.

There is also an avenue Faidherbe in Dakar, and, I believe, streets named after him in cities like Kaolack and Thiès. In Dakar, there is a hotel and a pharmacy named after the former governor. It is also worth noting that there used to be a Faidherbe brass band and a Faidherbe high school in Saint-Louis. The latter became Cheikh Omar Foutiyou Tall High School in 1984.

All these buildings reflect the "Faidherbe myth" that has long existed in Senegal. Until recently, Faidherbe was considered a sort of ancestor (*"Maam Faidherbe"*, as it was called), or even a tutelary genius who had to be
This is a "hello" at every entrance or exit of the city of St. Louis.

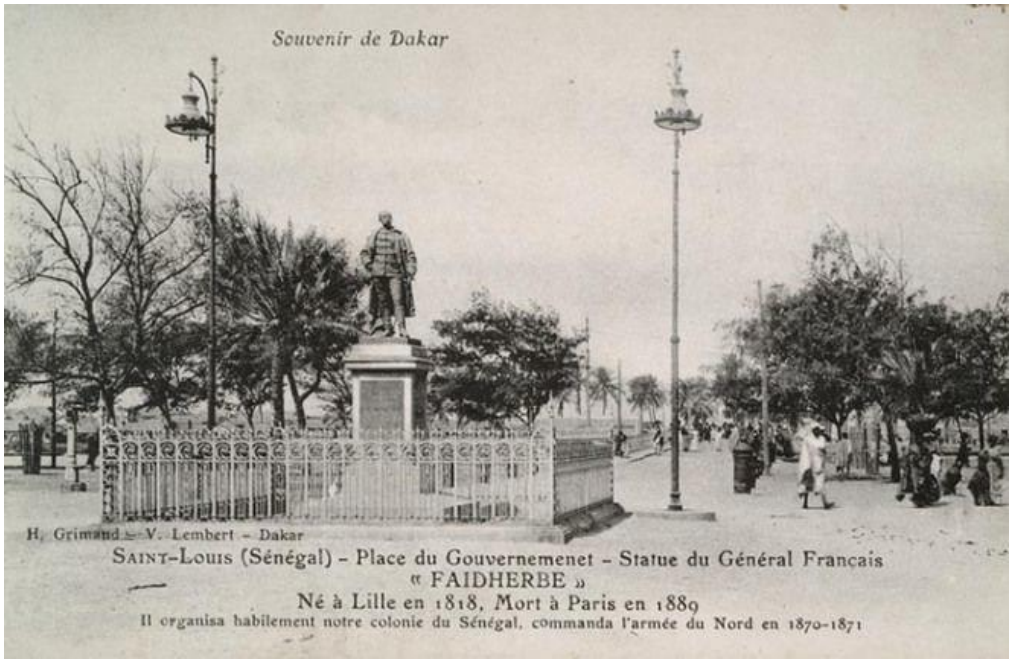
But this myth is now being shattered. Thanks to an excellent work of sensitization on social networks, young people know the negative impact of his action. And they can't believe it when they discover that the native of Lille has his hands stained with the blood of their ancestors.

The awareness work, as well as the strong mobilization against his statue, have greatly damaged his image. The proof: his statue, fallen last September and then put back on its feet by the mayor of St. Louis, has been sprayed with paint and continues to be denounced.

I can cite other illustrations of this "divorce" of the Senegalese from Faidherbe. There is, for example, the case of a friend who, seeking to organize a cultural event on the Island of Gorée, encountered strong opposition when people learned that participants would be hosted at the Faidherbe Hotel. Some refused to participate in the event because of the name given to it; others said to go but to push the manager to change the name of the establishment.

I also have a friend from Dakar who recently went to Saint-Louis. She took pictures all over the island, except near the statue of Faidherbe. She told me that there was no way she was going to be photographed in the Place Faidherbe.

All these examples are very revealing of the current climate. Certainly, there are still some nostalgics of the colonial era, but the reality is that Faidherbe is now contested in Senegal.



When did the first mobilizations, individual or collective, against the celebrations of Faidherbe in Senegal date? What were the main initiatives in this field?

Already in 1978, the well-known Senegalese writer and filmmaker, Sembene Ousmane, in a letter to President Léopold Sédar Senghor, deplored the presence of the statue of Faidherbe. He saw it as a provocation and an attack on the moral dignity of Senegal's national history. *Is it not a provocation, a crime, an attack on the moral dignity of our national history to sing the hymn of Lat Joor under the base of the statue of Faidherbe,*" he wrote. *Why, for years that we have been independent in Saint-Louis, Kaolack, Thiès, Ziguinchor, Rufisque, Dakar, etc., do our streets, our arteries, our boulevards, our avenues, our squares still bear the names of old and new colonialists? Our country has not given women and men who deserve the honor of occupying the pediments of our high schools, colleges, theater, university, streets and avenues?*

In 2014, a blogger from Dakar on a trip to St. Louis, had found the inscription on the statue outrageous: *"To its governor L. Faidherbe, Senegal grateful."* He had launched an online campaign to demand the statue's removal. Since then, many Facebook pages have been created that denounce the statue. There is the page *"Let's take down this shameful statue"* for example.

A collective (Collectif sénégalais contre la célébration de Faidherbe) of which I am a member was created to carry the fight and the claims against the statue and the names of streets and buildings given to Faidherbe. An open letter was sent to the mayor of Saint-Louis du Sénégal to list and denounce the many crimes of Faidherbe.

As you mentioned, the Lycée Faidherbe in Saint-Louis was renamed in 1984. Why was this done? Why was this not the case for the other buildings?

This "Faidherbe" high school was indeed renamed Cheikh Omar Foutiyou Tall in the mid-1980s. This was a strong symbolic act, because this school was the first one created by France in Africa! But at the time, there was no obvious and massive mobilization against Faidherbe. The changes of street names in Saint-Louis were part of the normal framework of municipal management. The mayor exercised his prerogatives without any other pretension. The changes of street and building names were not underpinned by a policy of self-assertion, anti-colonial. This has changed with the multiple requests from citizens that we see today.

Can you elaborate on what happened around the Louis Faidherbe statue in St. Louis in 2017?

The statue of Faidherbe fell in September 2017 following, it is said, heavy rains that fell on the city. The people who had been demanding for several years the debunking of the statue had claimed victory even if they would have liked to debunk it themselves.

The jubilation was felt on social networks. The fall of the statue meant the recovery of a lost imagination and the end of the colonial hegemony that still remained

by the presence of certain symbols. Many said they wanted to reconnect with their history by celebrating their worthy and valiant forgotten heroes. A torturer could not be a hero in their eyes.

On the other side, there were some nostalgic people who argued that "taking down a statue is to erase history" and that "Faidherbe is part of the history of Saint-Louis". Mr. Abdou Aziz Guissé, the director of cultural heritage, argued that the statue, whether positively or negatively charged, is part of the architectural and historical heritage and, therefore, it should be maintained not to celebrate colonization but by duty of memory.

It was on this occasion that the mayor of Saint-Louis, Mansour Faye, without consulting his constituents, took the decision to put the statue back in its place creating a strong outcry.

One curious thing to note is that the statue of Faidherbe was moved back under heavy police escort. There is something contradictory in this. In what country in the world is the statue of a hero installed or reinstalled under police escort? The hero should be a source of joy. A party is organized to celebrate his recognition. Isn't this police escort a good illustration of the disavowal of the statue?

What does it mean to you that there are streets, subways, high schools, and statues that pay tribute to Faidherbe in France?

This brings us face to face with an interesting paradox: the torturer of entire populations in Africa is celebrated as a hero in France. Transforming Blaise Pascal's quote, one could say: *"Hero below the Pyrenees, torturer beyond."* Faidherbe certainly fought the Prussians for the benefit of France, but in France, it seems to be forgotten that General Faidherbe was the great actor of a colonial enterprise that shone by its horrors.

I think that the French, as the writer Léonora Miano says so well, must accept to consider certain references of the Republic as

torturers. Faidherbe not only sent soldiers to massacre populations, he himself participated in the murder of hundreds of people and the burning of several villages in Senegal. These documented facts are available to French people who want to learn about the general's bloody exploits in Senegal. This will allow them to put into perspective the vision they still have of Faidherbe.

Les présidents Emmanuel Macron et Macky Sall, et leurs épouses, sur le pont Faidherbe de Saint-Louis (Sénégal) en février 2018.

Do you think these symbols should be removed or do you see another solution?

In Senegal, some people have proposed that the statue of Faidherbe be returned to a museum dedicated to colonial artifacts. This museum could be visited by teachers and their students as part of courses on colonial history. This solution could also be a way to satisfy those nostalgic for colonization. There are indeed some who still glory in the colonial past.

Beyond Faidherbe, the question arises in this interconnected world of who really deserves to be celebrated. Can one be a hero by half? Should an individual considered a torturer by people in other countries be glorified within a country? The memorial wound of this being-other who does not live

with us, should it not be taken into account? This is a question the world must answer.

Today, there is a debate running through many countries about statues of controversial figures. This debate has become more acute since the Charlottesville protests in the United States against the removal of the statue of Confederate General Robert Lee. There have been protests and petitions around the world against figures and symbols of racism or colonization. Statues of Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence, Cecil Rhodes, Leopold II, Horatio Nelson, among others, are being strongly contested. Just recently, in Barcelona, the statue of Antonio López, a businessman who got rich from the slave trade, was removed.

We are witnessing a paradigm shift. In 2015, in the United Kingdom, students demanded and obtained a decolonization of university education in order to provide the perspective of the colonized. I personally believe that the time has come to listen to the voices of those organizations and citizens' movements around the world that are challenging a certain conception of history that gives pride of place to torturers, racists, actors of colonization, and carves controversial historical figures in stone or bronze.

Two hundred years of colonial hypocrisy

The distant origins of Françafrique

> "A compartmentalized, Manicheist, immobile world, a world of statues: the statue of the general who made the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge. A self-confident world, crushing with its stones the spines flayed by the whip. This is the colonial world."
>
> Frantz FANON, *Les Damnés de la terre*, 1961.

Why tackle Louis Faidherbe today? For one simple reason: because the monuments, buildings and streets that pay tribute to him celebrate - without always saying so openly - the colonial project to which he devoted his life. If Faidherbe undeniably belongs to the past, his ideals still pollute our present. The perpetual celebration imposed on us by these statues and streets proves that the colonial ideology remains very much alive.

Faidherbe was not just another agent of French colonialism. He was a precursor, a theorist and a propagandist. He even ended up becoming a symbol of it.

Inspired by the conquest of Algeria, Faidherbe dug the furrow of colonialism in West Africa and systematized the domination of previously sovereign peoples. Decisively, he forced a foreign land - Senegal - into the service of an occupying power - France - at the expense of its inhabitants. He then passed on his know-how to those who continued his "work", perfected his methods and pushed the subjugation of the African continent ever further.

In a contemporary historiography that struggles to emancipate itself from the mythology fabricated by the III[e] Republic, all of this earns Faidherbe the flattering titles of

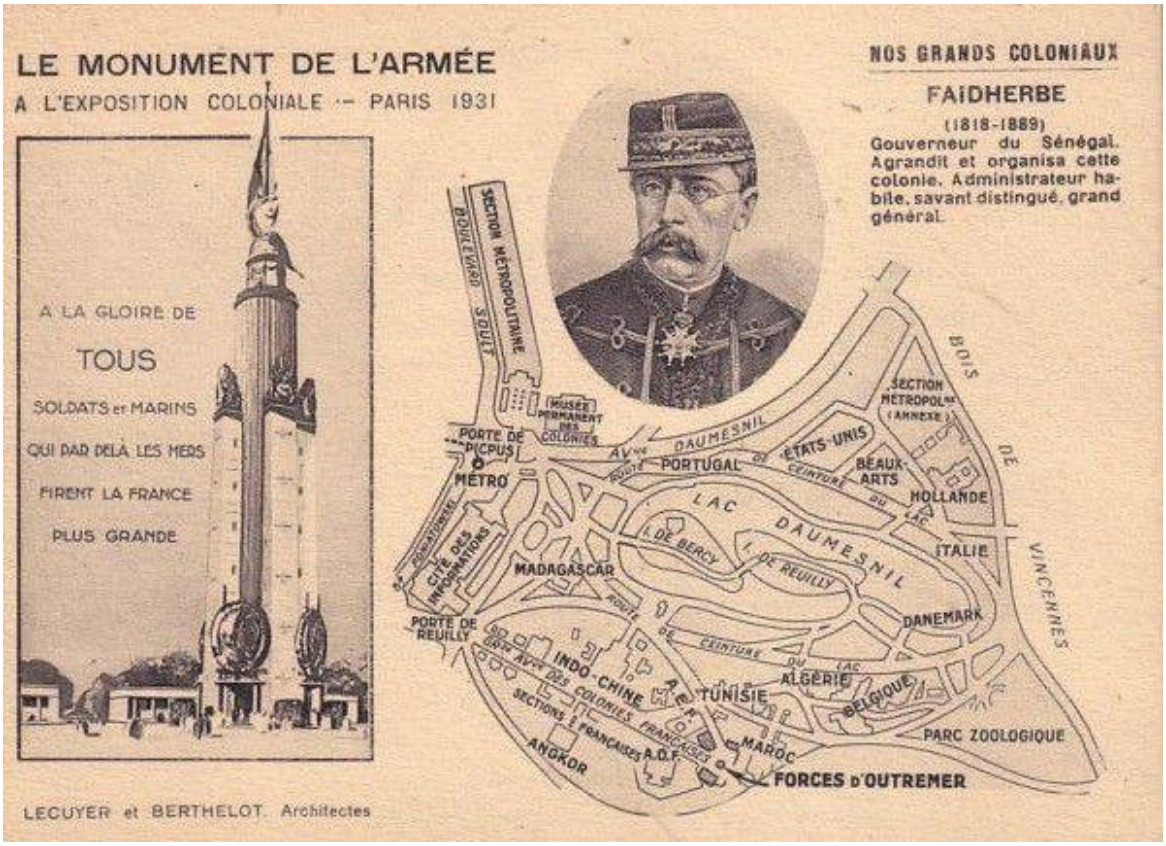
He is a "builder" and a "visionary".

Faidherbe, a "model colonialist

Of course, Faidherbe's death in 1889 did not bury colonialism: on the contrary, it galvanized its proponents. For decades, politicians cited the

He made an example of "good Governor Faidherbe" and had his face printed in school textbooks. Generations of administrators read and admired him, before imitating him in their daily management of the colonies.

All these people wanted to believe in the myths that Faidherbe had helped to propagate. That we colonized for the good of the Africans. That we were protecting them against their enemies and their evil tendencies. That they would be eternally grateful to France for having built roads, hospitals and schools. That they would be grateful to the colonizers for having taught them Christian morals and the French language. In short, that after having worked hard, and sweated a little, the Africans would also become good Frenchmen.



Propaganda image distributed during the Colonial Exhibition of 1931.

The myth was so strong that some Africans themselves began to believe it. In order not to die of despair, they began to admire Faidherbe in turn and adopted "our ancestors the Gauls". The others, less credulous or less pampered by the occupiers, had to listen in silence to the colonialist fables and accept the monuments that were erected in their homes as a lesson. In 1961, the anti-colonialist psychiatrist Frantz Fanon finely dissected what was being played out at the time: *"Each statue, that of Faidherbe or Lyautey, Bugeaud or Sergeant Blandan, all these conquistadors perched on the colonial soil, never cease to signify one and the same thing: 'We are here by the force of bayonets'..."*

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L'AFRIQUE INDÉPENDANTE CHAQUE SEMAINE, FOCUS SUR CES PERSONNALITÉS QUI ONT ŒUVRÉ POUR L'INDÉPENDANCE

LES MILITAIRES BÂTISSEURS

DES CHAMPS DE BATAILLE AUX CHANTIERS

Les militaires n'ont pas fait que conquérir des portions de territoire. En Afrique, ils ont également pris part à leur aménagement. Construction de ports, de routes, de voies ferrées, édification d'écoles, de dispensaires, autant d'infrastructures auxquelles ils ont contribué avec, pour but, la naissance d'un Etat viable. «Les militaires français ont joué le rôle d'urbanistes et d'aménageurs. Ils ont mis leurs compétences au service de grands projets d'intérêt général et ont également favorisé la formation de cadres locaux», souligne Pierre Gény, secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie des sciences d'outre-mer, qui cite les exemples de Joffre, Gallieni et Faidherbe. Une démarche certes altruiste, mais pas seulement. «Evidemment, toutes ces infrastructures avaient une visée stratégique, car elles permettaient d'assurer un meilleur contrôle des territoires», note M. Gény. •

LOUIS FAIDHERBE (1818-1889)

Militaire de carrière, polytechnicien, Louis Faidherbe se voit confier l'administration du Sénégal à partir de 1854, date à laquelle il prend ses fonctions de gouverneur. Dès 1855, il fonde la Banque du Sénégal, puis l'«Ecole des otages» pour la formation des cadres locaux, ainsi qu'un tribunal musulman. En parallèle, Faidherbe enregistre de nombreuses victoires militaires et pose les jalons de l'expansion française au Soudan. Il est considéré aujourd'hui comme le premier grand technicien de la colonisation française en Afrique noire.

JOSEPH GALLIENI (1849-1916)

Nommé maréchal de France à la fin de sa carrière, Joseph Gallieni ne s'est pas illustré qu'en remportant la bataille de la Marne. Son action en tant qu'administrateur en Afrique, notamment au Soudan français (actuel Mali), se traduit par la réalisation de multiples équipements, jardins, marchés, routes, chemin de fer ou dispensaires. Mais c'est à Madagascar qu'il imprime le plus sa marque. Nommé gouverneur en 1896 (jusqu'en 1905), il doit pacifier le pays, mais s'évertue à le doter d'infrastructures (écoles, voies ferrées, ports…).

JOSEPH JOFFRE (1852-1931)

Elève de l'école du Génie de Fontainebleau, qu'il intègre après Polytechnique, Joseph Joffre se voit confier pour sa première mission en Afrique, en 1892, la coordination de la construction du chemin de fer Dakar-Niger. Un an plus tard, il se lance dans la campagne de Tombouctou (Mali), dont il sort vainqueur face aux Touaregs et qu'il ponctue d'une série d'aménagements d'envergure visant à pacifier la région. Rentré en France en 1903, après un détour par Madagascar, il est fait maréchal en 1916.

Article published in 2011 in the newspaper *Direct Matin* (Bolloré Group), on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of the former French colonies in Africa. Among the personalities presented as having *"worked for independence"*: Louis Faidherbe.

Let's debunk the myth of the "good settler"!

Faidherbe had made this motto his own: *"One must take the interest of the natives as a rule of conduct."* Astonishing hypocrisy when one knows what scars he left in Senegal...

But what is even more appalling is that this hypocrisy was perpetuated after the independence of the former French colonies in Africa, which was proclaimed in the early 1960s. It has even become one of the favorite slogans of Françafrique, the perverse system that allowed France to maintain its domination over its former colonies *after* their official independence.

Surprisingly, Françafrique - which is nothing more than a system of indirect colonialism - has returned to ancient Faidherbian methods. Recognizing on paper the political sovereignty of its former dependencies, Paris has relied on their new leaders, who have become "friends of France," to control them from a distance. Thanks to this unofficial pact with Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Omar Bongo, French leaders kept control - economically, financially and militarily - of many "independent" African countries.

Françafrique, whose history is now known and documented, has always put forward "African interests" to justify and perpetuate itself. Yesterday as today, France invariably proposes to "protect" and "defend" Africans against all sorts of perils, starting with "terrorism" or "foreign" interference (British, Soviet, American, Chinese...). Emmanuel Macron on an official visit to Senegal in February 2018 gave an astonishing speech on the Place Faidherbe in Saint-Louis: *"Here in Saint-Louis, around the 1850s, the French were worried about the rise of jihadism. Sometimes history stutters."*

Yes, history stutters. The arguments used today to justify France's interference in its former colonies differ little from those that Faidherbe and his ilk brandished back in the 19th century. And the objective is always the same: to give a humanitarian veneer to a (neo)colonialism whose real objectives have never changed: to defend, on the backs of the people, strategic and economic interests.

of the hexagonal "elites".

It is this deadly hypocrisy, propagated without interruption since the time of Faidherbe, that must be unmasked today.

Speech Emmanuel Macron, Faidherbe Square in Saint-Louis, Senegal, February 3, 2018. While the celebration of Louis Faidherbe in Saint-Louis is contested by a growing number of Senegalese, especially since the statue in honor of the former governor fell in September 2017, the French president has promised to release funds to rehabilitate the site.

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Together against Françafrique!

The "Survival" association

The association **Survie Nord** is the branch of the association Survie in the North of France.

Survie is a non-profit organization created in 1984 that denounces all forms of French neo-colonial intervention in Africa and campaigns for a real overhaul of French foreign policy in Africa.

Survie proposes a critical analysis and action modalities encouraging everyone to demand real control over the political choices made in their name. It brings together citizens who wish to be informed, mobilize and act.

Survie, *through* its research groups, produces regular analysis of French policy in Africa and publishes pamphlets and books.

It has more than 1,300 members and 25 local groups and relays throughout France.

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