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## Chapter 8—“Non!” visible: How Guinée stamped its political leadership on Africa's decolonization, 1958-1962

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**Abstract:** Guinée was the only French colony that, bravely or foolishly, refused a close collaboration with France at the time of its independence. This choice was a political shock on an international scale. The famous “Non!” by Guinée’s leader Sékou Touré marked the beginning of a socialist era in which the regime slowly developed into a dictatorship on the one hand, but on the other hand became an internationally regarded leading voice in the global struggle for decolonization. Stamps from the first years after Guinée’s independence in 1958 do not strongly attest to any political fervor inspired by the “Non!” It is argued that Guinée’s stamps of the years after independence feature the country’s first steps in the international world order and illustrate the country’s search for a respected position in international politics. A comparison with neighboring state Mali shows, however, that Guinée’s stamps do actively attest to the governments’ national and international political concerns. **Keywords:** political history, Mali, Maninka, Senegal, French colony, metropole

### Introduction: “Non!”

During World War II the Allied Forces feared that their colonies would rise against them. This would have been catastrophic since the Allied Forces needed their military in Europe to fight Hitler and Mussolini and they were not available to battle uprisings in the colonies. The Allied Forces even needed soldiers from their colonies for their own armies in order to battle the fascist forces. On behalf of the “Free French,” General Charles de Gaulle guaranteed loyalty of France’s colonies in Africa by promising numerous concessions as soon as the war was won; these concessions were agreed upon at the Conference of Brazzaville in 1944.

After World War II Great Britain permitted independence country by country, starting in Asia with India in 1948, followed, in Africa, by Ghana in 1954. Portugal, which had a right-wing dictatorship until the Carnation Revolution of 1974, refused to give independence to its African colonies and violently suppressed liberation struggles. France, which was involved in a liberation war with Algeria, had a specific approach. France had always been more reluctant in permitting independence to its colonies and Charles de Gaulle, who had become its president, promised the colonies much structural support after independence if they agreed to establish a constitution inspired by the French one and if they accepted to continue to collaborate with the “metropole.” All colonies accepted, except Guinée; Sékou Touré and Charles de Gaulle clashed at a meeting in Conakry (Guinée’s capital) on August 25, 1958, and as a consequence of a referendum later that year, it resulted in the famous “Non!”

The impact of this “Non!” was huge for Guinée, because France completely withdrew its support from its former colony and ordered their colonial administrators to stop working (Cf [McGovern, 2013](#); [Schmidt, 2007](#)). True or not, the following story illustrates well the resulting situation. It was shared with me in 1992 by a professor of history in Conakry, at whose place I stayed for a few weeks for research: “The French returned immediately to France after the ‘Non!’ and the administrators were ordered either to take with them all their files or to destroy them. As a result, we didn’t know anything anymore. For instance, we had a sewer system, but didn’t know where it was: the French had returned to France with all the maps of Conakry. We had to wait until the sewer system broke down and the dirt erupted from the street in order to locate the sewer tubes.”

The year 2018 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this remarkable move, which nowadays is a source of pride for most present-day Guinéens and a historical marking point which has given to Guinée an important place in the history of the decolonization of Africa. The “Non!” is, however, as well closely linked to Sékou Touré’s presidency (1958-1984) which was characterized by increasing paranoia. At the end of the 1960s he was already systematically eliminating his former comrades with whom he struggled for independence. The violence and terror of the Touré era affected people of all ethnic backgrounds and all social statuses; it is vividly remembered in any family in (and from) Guinée.

## **A postal perspective: Why comparing Guinée and Mali makes sense**

In this chapter the political messages of Guinée’s stamps will be assessed by comparing them with Mali. This comparison has deep political and cultural logics. In both countries people of Maninka (“Malinké” in French) background were strongly featured among the political elite of the post-World War II era. Maninka means “the people of Mani/Mali/Mande.” They are the ethnic majority in present-day northeastern Guinée and southwestern Mali. The Maninka trace the origin of their society to the foundation by a warrior named Sunjata Keita, and the oral epic about Sunjata has been transmitted among Maninka bards from generation to generation. The Sunjata epic is centuries old; in the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Arab traveler Ibn Battuta visited a ruler of “Mali” and Ibn Battuta notes that this ruler was praised by a bard as a descendant of Sunjata. Medieval Arab sources attest to the magnificent kingdom of Mali and its enormous reserves of gold owned by its rulers ([see Jansen, 2018a](#)).

The status of a glorious medieval Mali is well illustrated by the creation in 1958 of the “Fédération du Mali,” a union between the former French colonies Sénégal and Soudan Français. When this union failed in 1960, it resulted in the two nations today known as “(République du) Sénégal” and “(République du) Mali,” thus transferring a concept from Maninka heritage into the global political order.

The Maninka also trace much pride from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Maninka empire builder Samori Touré who united a vast area of present-day Guinée and Mali and opposed the French during their occupation of West Africa in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Guinée and Mali’s political leaders of the independence era, who also became their first presidents, took great pride in their ethnic heritage. Their surnames tell us that this ethnic pride had a clear Maninka dimension. All West African ethnic groups have a relatively small set of surnames and at each surname’s origin is a legend about a male ancestor. Mali’s future president Modibo Keita (1960-1968) was considered, because of his clan name, a descendant of Sunjata. All Keita in name are descendants of Sunjata. Guinée’s Sékou Touré’s clan name refers to a religious scholar of the Sunjata era, but Sékou Touré claimed to also be a direct descendant of nineteenth-century empire builder Samori Touré. The popular image of Samori was much featured in the public media and the state sponsored music industry of the 1960s and 1970s ([Bertho & Rodet, 2020](#); [Counsel, 2009](#)).

The political ideologies of the two young states are additional good reasons to take Mali as the mirror when comparing Guinée’s stamp issuing policy. Both Sékou Touré and Modibo Keita were left-wing leaders. Guinée and Mali formed for a short period in the early 1960s the Casablanca Group, together with Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Libya, and Morocco. It was an informal association with a shared political vision inspired by Pan-Africanism that started with a conference in Casablanca. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casablanca\\_Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casablanca_Group)) Because of these deep political and cultural parallels between the two countries, Mali is an excellent candidate to compare with Guinée’s stamps from the early years of independence.

## **A state’s perspective?**

The literature unanimously subscribes to the idea that stamps implement “the state’s official outlook in the everyday life of ordinary citizens” ([Brunn, 2011](#)) and that stamps help to build “banal nationalism” ([Billig, 1995](#)). This is indeed true for richer countries, since they develop an internal process

leading to stamp-issuing in which the state maintains control over its own market. For poorer countries this practice is not the case as they often become pawns at the bottom of the global stamp market where the business model is different. The countries I have in mind here are the members of the Universal Postal Union that pay 0.5 membership, which is a Universal Postal Union contribution class reserved for the “least developed countries.” This picture of a poor country that becomes a pawn correctly illustrates most former French colonies; Guinée is used as an example.

During the colonial era stamps for the colonies were, of course, designed and printed in France. After independence outsourcing abroad of stamp design and stamp production became the rule. For Guinée, France was not an option anymore and for the country’s 1959 independence series it shifted to the US: one issue explicitly mentions the printer: E.A. Wright Bank Note Co Phila. The Wright company’s name can often be found on stamps from Liberia and it is almost self-evident that the Guineans turned in 1958 to their neighbors, who had strong ties with the US, for help in the process of producing stamps without France’s support.

Most other former French colonies in Sub-Sahara Africa, however, continued issuing similar stamps simultaneously every now and then as they had done during colonial times. It is likely that these stamps were still produced in France. This will certainly have been the case with a stamp issued in 1964 in many former French colonies in Sub-Sahara Africa – but not Guinée! – to commemorate... collaboration with France. The former colonies of France also produced some unique material, but, I suggest, for this task they depended on commercial designers who provided stamps for the African market. If one scans, for instance, for the 1960s the collections of Guinée, Togo, and Burundi, three different countries, politically speaking—Guinée was a former French colony with a left-wing government, Togo was a former French colony with a government that collaborated closely with France, and before its independence Burundi was governed by Belgium (as a United Nations Trust)—one feels that many stamps, in particular those with paintings of birds, fish, and folkloric themes, are products of the same designers.

The structural outsourcing of stamp production explains why stamp issuing stagnated in the former colonies during the late 1980s or early 1990s. In this period the many stamp businesses had collapsed for good, the number of stamp collectors had dramatically fallen worldwide, and African governments suffered severe budget cuts from the International Monetary Fund’s Structural Adjustment Programs which resulted in firing thousands of civil servants. Those at the philatelist and postal services would certainly have been among the victims. As a result, the business model at the bottom of the market collapsed. This stagnation in stamp issuing ends for most African states in the beginning of the 1990s when “they” suddenly start to issue numerous series of thematic stamps. The themes include dinosaurs, cats, dogs, sports, cars, trains, flowers, mushrooms, scouting, Lady Diana, Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, Walt Disney characters, Titanic, etc. Most of these stamps looked similar for many African countries and many of them never reached the post offices but went straight from foreign companies to stamp merchants; a new business model occupied the bottom of the market in which few space remained to express states’ perspectives. In between this mass production by foreign companies, some “real” or genuine stamps were issued, irregularly with large intervals.

Don’t get me wrong! I don’t argue that stamps can’t be used as expressions of states’ perspectives. The states’ perspectives from stamps exist in the minds of the millions of stamp collectors who may judge a country on the basis of its stamps and its stamp-issuing policy. Or, in the words of the Fédération Internationale de Philatelie: “FIP is convinced that postage stamps will always maintain their status as a ‘little ambassador’ of a Nation” (<https://www.f-i-p.ch/fip-organisation/about/>). Stamps thus definitely contribute to “banal nationalism,” but this is not produced by the states themselves, but by the stamp users and stamp collectors ([Cf Jansen, 2018b](#)).

I argue that poor countries have always been issuing many of their stamps outside the reach and control of their own national administrative apparatus. Regarding poor countries, only the few stamps with explicit political messages for the nation are credible to be analyzed as historical sources of the state’s

perspective. With this selection method in mind the following section discusses the stamps of Guinée's era of political transition from a French colony to independent state.

## The pre-independence era

The borders of the French colonies “Guinée” and “Soudan Français” were not changed when they became the independent nation-states Guinée and Mali. One may observe an administrative continuity here. This fact may explain why a map of Guinée never appeared on its stamps; the territory itself was a deeply colonial construction. When under French rule, these two colonies did not independently issue stamps; from 1944 onwards the postal union Afrique Occidentale Française (AOF) issued stamps for its eight members Guinée, Soudan Français (present-day Mali), Côte d'Ivoire, Mauretanie, Haute-Volta (present-day Burkina Faso), Sénégal, Niger, and Dahomey (present-day Bénin). As a postal union AOF was created in 1934, but during period 1934-1944 each colony issued its own stamps (with “AOF” added) even though the images of part of these stamps were similar for all the AOF members. In addition to the stamps for the eight members only, stamps with the same images were issued for all the colonies, for example, one in 1957 celebrating the centennial of African regiments in the army.

A close look to the images of the AOF stamps in the five years preceding the colonies' independences (**Table 8.1**) provides the following impression of the political climate that the metropole aimed to represent. During this decade a few air mail stamps were also issued.

**Table 8.1. Guinée postage stamp themes, pre-independence**

Year	Guinée's domestic postage	Guinée's air mail stamps
1954	Hunting and fishing (1 value)	The 10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Liberation (after World War II) (1 value)
1954	Famous French administrator (1 value)	Forests and development of infrastructure (3 values)
1955	Wildlife/nature protection (2 values)	
1955	Rotary (1 value)	
1956	Social and Economic Development (8 values)	
1956	(Production of) Coffee plant (1 value)	
1957	Maltese Order/Battle against leprosy (1 value)	Centennial of African regiments in the army (1 value)
1958	Tourism congress (1 value)	Centennial of Dakar (6 values)
1958	Day of the Stamp/AOF “Poste et Télécommunications” (1 value)	
1958	(Production of) Banana plant (1 value)	
1958	Flowers (5 values)	
1958	Celebrating 10th anniversary of Haute-Volta's constitution (1 value)	
1958	Celebrating 10th anniversary Declaration of Human Rights (1 value)	
1959	Day of the Stamp (1 value)	Inauguration of Nouakchott as new capital of Mauretanie (1 value)

These stamps clearly represent the ideals and practices of the French colonial agenda. Whereas the British colonial policy was characterized by indirect rule, the French had its evolution-inspired “mission civilisatrice.” It aimed to ensure that colonial subjects could reach the same level of political organization and culture as those for French citizens (“citoyens”). The stamps of the 1950s focused on social and economic development and progress, but always successes deeply rooted in French expertise and France's



historical experience and aspirations as well as their connectedness to the metropole. This policy was illustrated by the stamps with the themes infrastructure, transport, and governance (Fig. 8.1).



Fig. 8.1. Souvenir sheet (185 x 125 mm) for the celebration of the centennial of Dakar. Emphasis is on infrastructural projects, transport, and governance.

Much attention was given to famous persons, the principles of French administration, and military command. An example is the multi-layered story behind the 1957 stamp to celebrate the centennial of African regiments in the French army (Fig. 8.2). This stamp has the picture of a soldier plus the image of Faïdherbe. General Faïdherbe was the founder of the French colonial administration in West Africa, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the initiator of recruiting Africans for the French army. His portrait bust features too at the most current stamps in French West Africa issued in the decades after 1906 at a time when each colony issued separately, for several decades, stamps with similar images; the colony's name was later added to it (for an example, Fig. 8.2). The stamps with Faïdherbe's portrait bust must have empowered his reputation among the African population. Where British African subjects included a royal image on almost all their stamps in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Faïdherbe was the only person that French African subjects observed on stamps, as other commonly used stamps were pictorial. In present-day oral tradition Patarapa/Fèdèrèba, a figure definitely inspired on Faïdherbe's name and impact, is known as "the ancestor of the White people" and "a false imam who stole the Holy Book of Technology from the population of Mecca," thus leaving the people of Mecca with the Holy Book of Religion or the Quran (see [Brett-Smith, 1996, pp. 31-40](#); [Jansen & Diarra, 2006, pp. 9-13](#)). It will never be known whether Faïdherbe's postal presence in West Africa is (partially) the reason why his memory is stamped in the imagination of West Africa's present-day population (pun intended). But it is a great hypothesis worth further analysis!



Fig. 8.2. First-day stamped collector's item of the stamp celebrating the centennial of African regiments in the French army; two values of issues with General Faïdherbe's portrait bust that were current in all French colonies in West Africa in the first decade of the twentieth century; note the overprint Guinée.

### **Guinée's and Mali's stamps in the early years of independence, 1958-1962**

On the basis of stamp issues, one must conclude that the transition to independence went smoothly and was well prepared; Guinée hardly needed to overprint any AOF stamps and quickly issued its own stamps. Guinée issued from 1958-1962 a total of 133 regular stamps (including overprints) and 28 air mail stamps (including overprints). Overprints were produced nationally and Guinée's overprints are high in quality with detailed symbols; the print error in [Fig. 8.3](#) is exceptional.





Fig. 8.3. Politically inspired stamps from the early years of Guinée’s independence. Above, from left to right: Sékou Touré’s portrait bust on a series celebrating Guinée’s national motto; stamp with flag of Guinée and in superscript below the name of its American printer; stamp celebrating Guinée’s membership of the United Nations; stamp celebrating Guinée’s membership of the Universal Postal Union. Below, from left to right: 1962 stamp battle against malaria; stamp with overprint to celebrate 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations [uncatalogued double error in overprint: color overprint black instead of orange and text incorrectly “Anniversaires” instead of “Anniversaire”]; stamp in memory of Congo’s first president Patrice Lumumba; stamp celebrating the anniversary of the conference of Casablanca, with overprint “Aide aux Réfugiés Algériens” (= victims of the liberation war against France).

In several cases a series consisted of both types of stamps, with the higher values for the air mail stamps. This splitting up of series into postal stamps and air mail stamps was common practice in the French colonies, before as well as after independence; such series are marked with an \* in **Table 8.2** and **Table 8.3**.

**Table 8.2. Guinée postage stamp themes, 1958-1962**

Year	Guinée’s domestic postage	Guinée’s air mail stamps
1958	AOF-stamps with overprint “Republique [sic] de Guinee [sic]” (2 values)	
1959	Proclamation of independence, with portrait bust of Sékou Touré (5 values) Work/Justice/Solidarity (8 values) Diverse fruits (5 values) Flag of Guinée (2 values) Admission to the United Nations (4 values)*	Airplane (3 values) Carrier pigeons (5 values) Admission to the United Nations (2 values)*



1960	Healthcare (5 values) Year of the refugee (2 values) Anniversary of admission to the U.P.U. (Universal Postal Union/Union Postale Universelle) (5 values) Olympic games (overprints, 2 values) 2nd anniversary of the independence 15th anniversary of the United Nations (overprints, 9 values)	Olympic games in Rome (overprints, 3 values)
1961	Year of the refugee (overprints, 2 values) Antilope (6 values) 3rd anniversary of independence (3 values) Guinea fowls (6 values) Animal protection (overprints, 6 values)	15 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of United Nations (overprints, 2 values)
1962	Anniversary of death of Patrice Lumumba (3 values) Battle against malaria (overprints, 5 values) Anniversary of the conference of Casablanca (2 values) African Postal Union (2 values) Animal protection (overprints, 6 values) Traditional music (12 values)* Wildlife (6 values) Literacy campaign (4 values) African heroes and martyrs (5 values) Aid for Algerian refugees (overprints, 2 values) Tropical birds (12 values)*	Battle against malaria (3 values) Traditional music (3 values)* 5th anniversary of the Sputnik (4 overprints) Tropical birds (3 values)*

**Table 8.3. Mali postage stamp themes, 1958-1962**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Mali's domestic postage</b>	<b>Mali's air mail stamps</b>
1959	Creation of the Fédération du Mali (1 value [Fédération du Mali])	300 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town of Saint-Louis (1 value [Fédération du Mali])
1960	Fish (7 values [Fédération du Mali]) 10th anniversary of the Commission of Technical Cooperation in Africa (1 value [Fédération du Mali])	Tropical birds (3 values [Fédération du Mali])
1961	Fish (overprints République du Mali, 3 values) Mali's presidents (2 values) 1st anniversary of independence Artisanship, cattle rearing, agriculture (15 values)	Tropical birds (two sets of overprints, 5 values) Admission to United Nations (1 value) Air views of historic sites (3 values)
1962	Anniversary of the conference of Casablanca (2 values) Anniversary of death of Patrice Lumumba (2 values) Battle against malaria (1 value) Anniversary of admission to the U.P.U. (1 value) African Postal Union (2 values) Niger River irrigation project (2 values) Telecommunication in space (2 values)	

## **Guinée and Mali: Parallels**

When comparing the two countries what is striking is the attention paid to membership of and participation in global institutions, such as the United Nations and postal unions. Broader African themes

fatured as well, such as the conference of Casablanca and the cruel murder of Congo's first president Patrice Lumumba (see Fig. 8.3). Patrice Lumumba was the first Prime Minister of the former Belgian colony Congo; his murder in January 1961 was staged by his future successor Mobutu, while the international community failed to intervene. Lumumba thus became a martyr of Pan Africanism and African socialism.

Most of Guinée's regular stamps deal, however, with a national agenda and these are showing optimism, awareness, and progress: for the present a firm base of revenues from traditional activities such as agriculture, and a bright future thanks to improved healthcare, attention for animal protection, historical and cultural awareness, increased literacy, and development projects (Fig. 8.4). Today some of these changes are difficult to imagine as many have associated Sub-Sahara Africa for decades with poverty and weak governments. However, around 1960 the new independent nations of Africa were widely recognized as "young states" with a promising future. At that time the total gross national product of the nations of Africa was still 5% of the global product; a decade later it would fall to 1% because of dramatic drop in the global prices of minerals and some cash crops.



Fig. 8.4. Stamps inspired by historical and cultural awareness in Guinée: Samori Touré, nineteenth-century empire builder who resisted the French colonial armies; three stamps of series of artists playing West African music instruments; two stamps promoting literacy; two stamps with wildlife.

Remarkably little attention is given to glorify the political leadership in the country. Sékou Touré appears in one set of five stamps that celebrates Guinée's independence and another a series of the same year that celebrates Guinée's national motto "Labor, Justice, Solidarity" (see Fig. 8.4). It would not be until 1977 stamps when his image reappeared, this time in a series that celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Parti Démocratique de Guinée – Guinée was a one-party state. Mali was equally reluctant in showing its chief of state on a stamp; a 1961 issue includes one stamp of president Modibo Keita and one, probably for old times' sake, of Mamadou Konaté, Mali's highly respected leading politician until his sudden death in 1956.

### **"Non!" visible? – An analysis of Guinée's stamps as a political statement**

Guinée's stamps of 1958-1962 attest to national pride, development and progress, and a search for becoming a respected member of the global political society. The latter was a concern of all colonies that transitioned to independence. Guinée was, however, among the top group of countries celebrating the United Nations with stamps, with fifteen of them within the first five years (including overprints).

Compared to the other French colonies that acquired independence at that time, Guinée pursued an active stamp issuing policy: Guinée issued more series and larger series. Guinée issued, for instance, several large series: these included sets on traditional music (see [Fig. 8.4](#)) and birds each these consisted of twelve regular stamps plus three air mail stamps. Neighboring Mali issued in the same period one series of fifteen stamps, but its theme (the country's economic production) is not attractive and its design doesn't evoke the pride and ambitions of the issues from Guinée.

A legitimate question that might be asked is whether there was a deliberate attempt to obtain income from stamp collectors? Or was it part of a deal with (probably) American artists and printing factories? Or was it merely a form of impression management by the proud civil servants of Guinée's philatelist service? The same questions can be asked about Guinée's numerous overprints. Are they the product of political urgency, a bad business model, or smart marketing?

Guinée is famous for its "Non!" in 1958 as this was a radical political maneuver at the time. Guinée's stamps, however, do not seem to send such radical messages. If one looks for explicit political statements in Guinée's stamp issues, one may even suggest "Non!" is non-visible. A comparison with the adjoining Republic of Mali informs us that both countries expressed similar themes. However, while Mali followed designs that were used in many former French colonies, Guinée produced its own. The reason for this may be that Guinée had no access to the design and production network of "le metropole;" independence and exclusion had become two sides of the same coin.

An illustrative example of this independence of Guinée are the stamps about the battle against malaria. While one particular design was used by dozens of countries worldwide, not only the former French colonies, Guinée designed its own in 1962. To this it added a series of five overprints, using surcharge stamps on health as a canvas. Was this a philatelist intervention to raise more money for healthcare from these surcharge stamps? Or was it a sincere expression of the importance of the battle against this lethal disease?

In Cold War politics, Guinée was a satellite of the Soviet Union, but this is difficult to trace from stamp issuing policy. In 1962 Mali issued two stamps about telecommunication in space. The very same year Guinée issued a series of five overprints that, according to the catalogues, celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Sputnik. However, the stamps themselves are less explicit: to a canvas of the 1959 air mail stamps with carrier pigeons the overprint "Conquête de l'Espace" was added. A similar reluctant statement appeared on 1962 stamps with the overprint "Aide aux Réfugiés Algériens." Upon independence in 1962, almost one million European-Algerians fled to France in fear of the National Liberation Front's (FLN) revenge. Although the canvas of this overprint is the stamp commemorating the anniversary of the left-wing Casablanca group, the overprint "Aid for Algerian refugees" suggests aid to the families that had once colonized Algeria and that originally came from France. This would be an unexpected choice by a left-wing government with strong anti-French sentiments. Or do these stamps pay special attention to a particular group of Algerian refugees that were victims of French colonial rule and not the descendants of its actors?

## Conclusion

The period of transition in Guinée was one full of political rhetoric. The country's "Non!" was a diplomatic maneuver that created deep wounds in its relationship with the former colonizer and made Guinée an ideological leader in the struggle for decolonization in Africa, and beyond. It represented a maneuver that still has an impact today. Guinée's stamp issues of the period of transition 1958-1962 are clearly different than those years under colonial rule, but in this sphere the political rhetoric of "Non!" is next to non-visible. It is incorrect to presuppose that a country's strong political ideology is equally strong and present in all spheres of society; a study by Oude Elferink ([1994](#)) demonstrates, to give an example, that Russia and the Soviet Union, though aggressive and imperialist in their territorial claims for rule over land, were reluctant in their maritime claims. Guinée's stamps don't show much political rhetoric, but they

do, however, show a proud young African nation with much attention for both its heritage and its challenges for the future. Was this the choice of the ministry responsible for stamp issues or was it the logics of the stamp industry's business model for the African market? Stamps are produced in a market; a nation never issues stamps; however, stamps must give the impression that they are made by a nation. From that perspective one can say that Guinée produced great stamps with a strong message.

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