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# AFRICA REPORT

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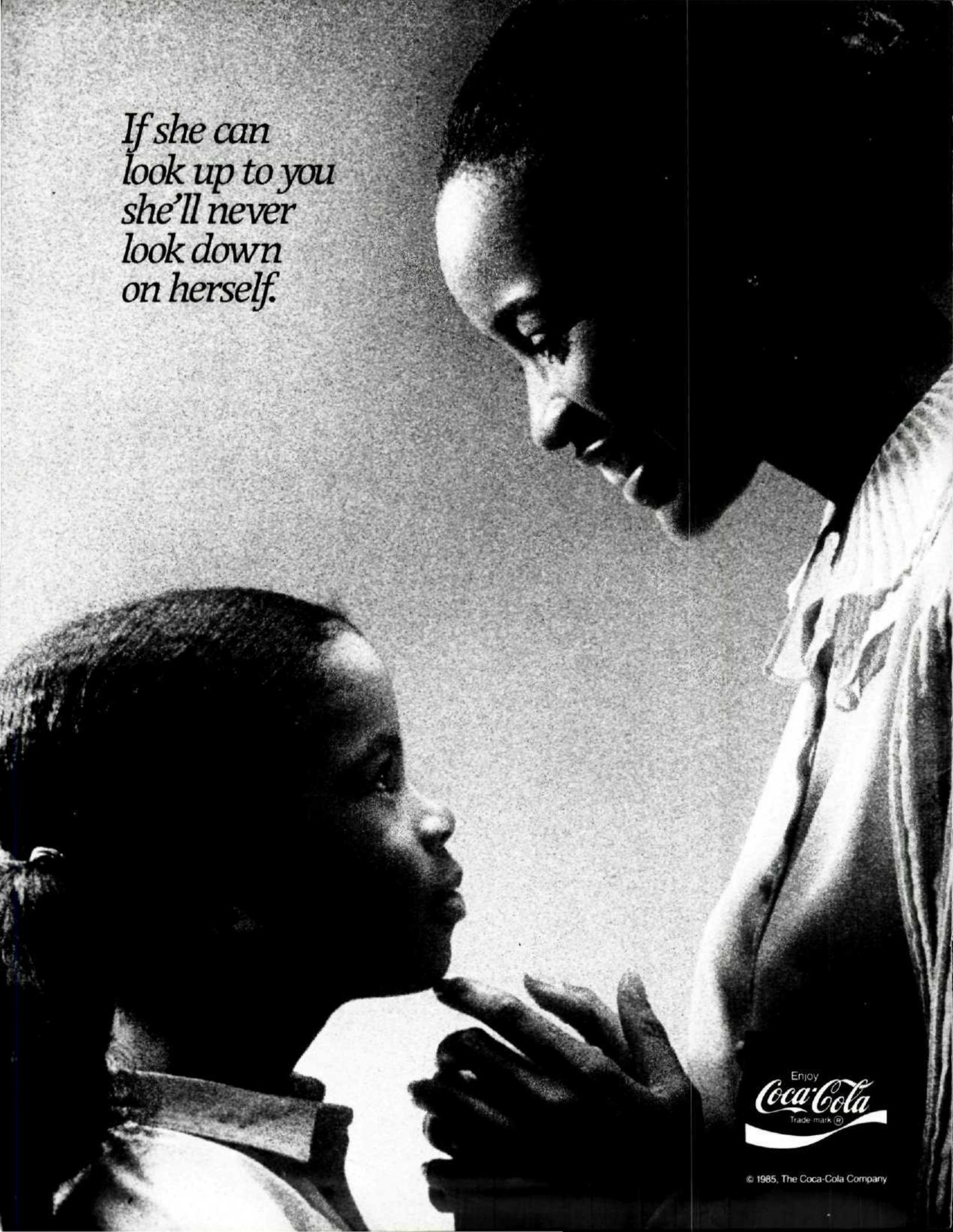
SPECIAL REPORT:  
**BEHIND BURKINA'S COUP**



**FOCUS ON EAST AFRICA**

**IN  
MUSEVENI'S  
UGANDA**

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look up to you  
she'll never  
look down  
on herself.*



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To the Editor:

Thank you for your informative article, "Africa's Forgotten War," by Jon Marks (September-October 1987). We are pleased with the balanced coverage of the Western Saharan war from both sides of the conflict and welcome the reversal of Morocco's policy of prohibiting visits by the press and other officials to the territory. This demonstrates an act of goodwill on the part of the Moroccans to resolve the conflict.

Recently, the Moroccan government allowed a UN technical mission to visit the occupied territory in preparation for a cease-fire and referendum as mandated by UN and OAU resolutions. This contrasts with the experience of the Swedish UN ambassador, Olof Rydbeck, who was declared *persona non grata* when he led a similar mission to the disputed territory on behalf of then Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim in 1976.

With regard to a UN-supervised referendum, Mr. Marks' article quotes King Hassan as saying that if the Saharawis voted for independence, "We will be the first to open an embassy in their capital and offer help." Although Morocco seems prepared to compromise in order to solve the problem and is offering "some form of olive branch," the obstacles to a fair and free referendum still exist. United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar referred to the presence of Moroccan troops and administration during the referendum as the major obstacles to a settlement.

In the government of Morocco's letter in response to Mr. Marks' story in your last issue, there was no reference

to the process of decolonization and the illegal occupation of the territory which are the underlying issues in the Western Saharan conflict. As long as Morocco continues to skirt the major issues and the obstacles are not removed, it is hard to conceive of a lasting solution to the conflict.

Madjid Abdullah  
Office of the Sahrawi Republic  
Washington, D. C.

To the Editor:

As a regular reader of your magazine, allow me to congratulate you for the objectivity with which you cover African events.

## Letters to the Editor

The article, "Africa's Forgotten War," by Jon Marks, illuminates the nature of the presence of the Moroccans in the Western Sahara, which is one of occupation. In the article, there is mention of the Moroccan "wall strategy" as a "success." On this point, I would like to make the following observations:

First, history has proven that this strategy always fails, as was the case in Vietnam, Algeria, etc. Second, since the strategy of the "walls" began, Morocco has had to double its occupation army in the Western Sahara, now at

about 200,000 soldiers, and according to observers, Morocco spends about \$3.8 million just for the daily maintenance of its troops.

Third, by building such "walls," the Moroccan military has become a fixed target for the Sahrawi army, allowing the latter to attack anytime, anywhere. Last, the "wall strategy" is an expensive one, therefore leaving the advantage to the liberation movement since the latter opts for war of attrition.

By reading the article, I see many similarities between South Africa and Morocco. Both regimes are challenging the international community by refusing to implement United Nations and OAU resolutions. Like any other occupying force, they deny the reality and the wishes of their peoples. They believe that the use of force is the best and only way to solve conflicts. And South Africa and Morocco are the only two African countries which are not members of the OAU due to the incompatibility of their policies with the OAU charter.

Mr. Marks refers to the "apparently widespread popular approval of the war within Morocco." This reminds me of a recent interview given by King Hassan in which he said: "The only political prisoners we have in Morocco are the ones who said that Sahara is not Moroccan." In other words, disapproval means prison.

As a poor Third World country, Morocco should use its resources for the development of its people instead of carrying out a colonial war at the end of the 20th century—a luxury it cannot afford.

Ruben Fraser  
Silver Spring, Maryland

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**Africa Report** welcomes comments from its readers on issues raised in the magazine and on matters relating to African political and economic development. For reasons of space, a contribution sent in the form of a letter to the editor stands a much greater chance of publication than one submitted as an article. Letters should be as brief as possible, normally between 100 and 400 words.

The editor retains the right to abridge or otherwise alter letters for reasons of space or other editorial requirements. It is editorial policy to maintain a balance of views on controversial issues.

All letters to the editor should bear the name and address of the sender. Requests for anonymity and non-divulgence will be respected, but such a requirement may render the letter less likely to be published.

# UPDATE

## IN THE NEWS

### South African kidnap plot remains shrouded in mystery

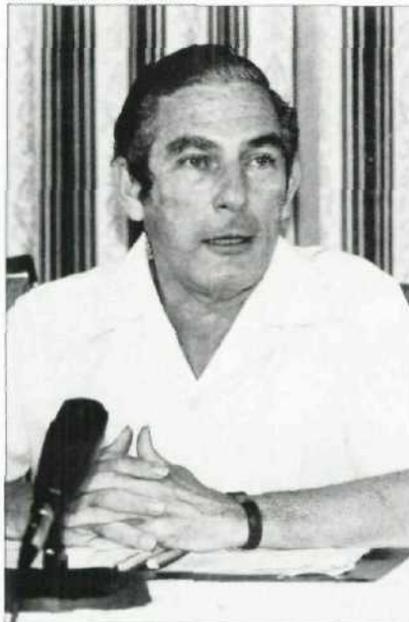
On July 9, when British police first arrested **Frank Larsen** in the lavatories of a central London hotel while on a routine homosexual surveillance operation, they had little reason to suspect that they had accidentally stumbled across a bizarre and complex undercover affair that would later threaten to put **Margaret Thatcher's** Tory government into real hot water. But after more than six months of trying to untangle the convoluted tale—involving a South African plot to kidnap prominent members of the African National Congress and a scheme by London-based exiles to overthrow Seychelles President **Albert René's** government—embarrassing suspicions of British complicity remain, together with a trail of other unanswered questions. As one police officer put it, "A *Smiley* novel looks dead simple after this."

Following Larsen's arrest, the police raided his home and found thousands of documents, forged passports, British government classified papers, and military manuals. There, they also unearthed the makings of an intricate plot to kidnap 10 leading ANC members, including **Solly Smith**, the group's chief representative in London. Details of a planned coup attempt in the strategically vital Seychelles were also uncovered.

Four men were originally arrested and charged with conspiracy: **Frank Larsen**, a Norwegian whose real name is **Vigo Oerbak**; **John Larsen**, who claimed to be his son, but who is also a Norwegian called **Hans Christian Dahl**; **Jonathan Wheatley**, a former British paratrooper; and **Evan Dennis Evans**, a former officer who served in Rhodesia and worked for the South African special forces. A fifth man was **Johann Niemoller**, Larsen's South African controller, who

was until recently a major in the South African special forces.

Frank Larsen was the key organizer of the group in Britain, having spent several years winning the confidence of Seychellois opposition leader **Pierre Ferrari**, and having convinced him that his mercenaries would help organize a British-backed invasion to overthrow the René government. But as it turned out, Larsen and his accomplices were merely setting up the Seychellois opposition, so that once the ANC members had been kidnaped, all suspicion would lead in their direction.



*René: The target of a convoluted plot*

If the plan had succeeded, Ferrari and other opposition leaders would have had their credibility destroyed and possibly have found themselves accused of kidnapping and murder. For the South African government, such a scenario would have allowed it to score a double success. The kidnappings would not only have greatly set back the ANC's struggle against apartheid, but also enabled Pretoria to improve its standing with the René government—a much-needed strategic ally for

sanctions-busting operations—in return for having helped to effectively neutralize the Seychellois opposition.

In spite of the incriminating material brought together before the court, Attorney General **Sir Patrick Mayhew** suddenly decided to drop the case against the four men in late October, allegedly because of a lack of evidence. He attempted to distance the British government from the plot by claiming that the documents were forgeries and that none of the men worked for the British security services.

The police, however, admitted that among the mass of forged documents Frank Larsen had in his possession, there were some genuine ones, including some that were classified. How he gained possession of them was never answered. Even after Larsen was hurriedly deported to Norway, he continued to maintain that he had been working for British intelligence and that now the government had simply "left him out in the cold."

Speculation has increased that the Crown was forced to abandon the case after the defense threatened to produce embarrassing evidence implicating the British authorities. In any case, there is considerable evidence that the British security services knew that Frank Larsen and Wheatley were posing as British army officers and plotting to overthrow the René government as far back as September 1986, but did nothing to stop them.

Although the suspected complicity of British and South African intelligence will probably never be fully revealed, the possible embarrassment caused the Thatcher government if the trial had gone ahead probably explains why the Attorney General did not even charge Larsen and his associates with the lesser offenses of impersonating British army officers, possession of forgeries, and illegal documents. ■

**Liat debacle leaves Momoh in limbo**

When Israeli businessman **Shabtai Kalmanowitch** was arrested in Britain on fraud charges last May, it caused President **Joseph Saidu Momoh's** government a great deal of embarrassment. But the scandal also has long-term repercussions that could seriously affect the balance of forces in Freetown.

Momoh, who had come to place great faith in his close friend Kalmanowitch—managing director of the controversial Liat Finance Trade and Construction Ltd—saw him as the key to breaking the political and commercial stranglehold of

the Afro-Lebanese community that had developed under former President **Siaka Stevens**. Liat, a company with strong South African and Israeli ties, had already gained enormous influence in Sierra Leone since Momoh came to power in 1985. In fact, before Kalmanowitch ran into his current legal predicament, Liat seemed poised to supersede Lebanese businessman **Jamil Said Mohamed**—once the most powerful and feared man in Sierra Leone—as the country's economic broker.

Kalmanowitch and his long-time business associate, **William Davidson**, were arrested in London at the

request of U.S. authorities, arising from charges of counterfeiting checks. In pursuing extradition proceedings for both men, the FBI alleged they had falsified checks worth \$10 million, having already drawn \$1.4 million on the National Bank of North Carolina, while another \$1.6 million was being deposited in Kalmanowitch's New York account when they were detained. Kalmanowitch, who maintains his innocence, was released on bail pending extradition.

Meanwhile, news of the scandal was a serious blow to the Momoh government, which had expected Liat to use its mining and import-export expertise to help revamp the economy—particularly in the country's key diamond industry. Instead, it only fueled speculation that Liat—with its extensive business interests in Israel and South Africa—was ideally placed to serve as a sanctions-busting operation. As *Africa Confidential* pointed out, Liat would be able to import South African goods into Sierra Leone, relabel them, and export them as Sierra Leone produce. Such an arrangement would have been especially relevant for the lucrative diamond market since both countries are major exporters.

Jamil, who virtually ran the diamond industry under Stevens, has had troubles of his own recently. Since the aborted coup attempt against Momoh by former anti-smuggling squad chief **Gabriel Mohamed Tennyson Kaikai** in March, Jamil has been living in London with a price on his head and a warrant out for his arrest. Although prosecutors at the trial of the 16 alleged plotters had claimed Jamil helped finance the operation, he has vehemently denied any involvement and claims that the authorities had full knowledge of the arms and ammunition police subsequently found at his home.

The accusations made against him, says Jamil, are merely a way for the government to divert attention from the embarrassing Liat debacle. But with both Jamil and Liat presently out of the picture, the question is: To whom will Momoh turn now? ■

**The uranium trade: All roads lead to Khartoum's black market**

For the growing number of Third World nuclear states seeking to secretly acquire the necessary materials to make their own atomic bombs, there is no place like Khartoum, according to a recent British television documentary, "Dispatches: The Plutonium Black Market." The trade in enriched uranium allegedly began in the 1960s to further Israel's secret nuclear projects, and in later years, other burgeoning nuclear states such as South Africa, Argentina, and Pakistan clandestinely bought materials on the black market in Khartoum.

Interest in the underground network again resurfaced in August 1987 when Sudanese authorities seized 8.8 lbs. of uranium which had apparently been smuggled into Khartoum from an unidentified African country. At the time, Prime Minister **Sadiq al-Mahdi** acknowledged the existence of a black market in nuclear materials and pointed out that a kilogram of uranium could sell for \$3 million in the capital.

But Mahdi soon reversed his stance. In early November, he denied that Khartoum was a uranium trade center and disclosed that laboratory tests revealed that the confiscated substance was not uranium.

*The Independent of London* reported that the Sudanese government subsequently arrested **Capt. Assem Kabashi**, a former state secu-



United Nations

*Mahdi: Knows of Khartoum's uranium trade*

rity officer who had provided details of the alleged uranium trade for the television program. Kabashi revealed that Israeli agents were still active on the black market, having bought highly enriched uranium in the past year, while poorer quality material had likely been sold to Libya, Iran, and Iraq.

Former CIA Director **Adm. Stansfield Turner**, who also acknowledged the existence of such a black market, said he believed the uranium is generally stolen from reprocessing plants in Western Europe's civil nuclear industry and sold in Khartoum. The Sudanese government has yet to respond to these charges, but did resurrect a top-level committee that had been set up earlier in 1987 to investigate the issue. ■

**CHAD**

The Reagan administration confirmed in early November that it would go ahead with its controversial decision to sell 24 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and seven launchers to President Hissène Habré's government, as part of a \$2 million deal which will significantly enhance Chad's military strength. As a result, Chad becomes the first African country to officially obtain the sophisticated shoulder-held, heat-seeking weapons, although the U.S. has furnished Stingers clandestinely to Jonas Savimbi's Unita rebels in Angola.

Until now, France has been the main supplier of arms to the Habré government and has provided Chadian troops with air cover in its war with Libya. But the sale of Stinger missiles suggests that the Reagan administration is now prepared to play a more active role in the region, despite growing congressional concern that the weapons are becoming too widely available and could wind up in hostile hands.

**SWAZILAND**

King Mswati III established a special three-man tribunal in mid-November to clear the way for a treason trial of a dozen Swazi leaders, including former Prime Minister Prince Bhekimpi Dlamini, three cabinet ministers, and several members of the royal family who were arrested last May. Prince Bhekimpi and former Labor Minister Prince Phiwokwakhe Dlamini face trial on charges of high treason and sedition. Another cabinet member, Natural Resources Minister Mhambi Mnisi, failed to return from a visit abroad following reports that he too would be detained.

Since the death of King Sobhuza II in 1982, the country has been plagued by political in-fighting among factions of the Dlamini family seeking to control the Supreme Council of State, the Liqoqo. The young king returned home for a premature enthronement in April 1986 in an effort to end the power struggle, and later disbanded the Liqoqo and dismissed Prince Bhekimpi.

**COTE d'IVOIRE**

President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who has long viewed dialogue and not sanctions as the vehicle for change in South Africa, openly broke ranks with most African countries in early November by granting South African Airways (SAA) full traffic rights through Abidjan's Port Bouet airport.

Although South African planes have been discreetly refueling in Côte d'Ivoire for years, months of secret negotiations between top-level government delegations produced the controversial arrangement that will now enable SAA to load and unload cargo as well as passengers in Abidjan. Fresh South African fruit has generally been found in abundance in the open-air markets of Abidjan—despite an official ban on goods from Pretoria—but the upgrading in air links should effectively end any trade restrictions with the apartheid regime.

**POLITICAL POINTERS**

**MAURITANIA**

Troops loyal to President Maaouya Sid Ahmed Ould Taya thwarted the most serious coup attempt yet against the three-year-old government, arresting 51 people in Nouakchott in late October. The plotters—most of them army officers drawn from Mauritania's black, non-Arab minority—had allegedly planned a bloody takeover to put an end to the discrimination that has made them second-class citizens in their own country.

Among those detained were former director of national security Capt. Djibril Diop, believed to have masterminded the coup attempt, and Capt. Sy Bocar, deputy director of Taya's military cabinet. Former Interior Minister Col. Anné Amadou Babaly was also arrested for complicity, although he denied having been party to the plot. Three people were subsequently sentenced to death in early December following a mass trial at Jréida military base, north-west of Nouakchott, while many others received long prison terms with hard labor.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

A major reshuffle took place recently in Umkhonto we Sizwe—the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC)—which may signal the beginning of a more aggressive guerrilla campaign by the exiled organization. Political commissar Chris Hani was named to replace Joe Slovo, who resigned as chief of staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe in March 1987 to devote more time to his new duties as South African Communist Party general secretary, while Steve Tshwete, a former founder and activist of the United Democratic Front, was elected to fill Hani's earlier post.

Both Hani and Tshwete are militants who are said to have considerable popular support among South African youths. Hani served in the ANC's internal underground for a number of years in the 1960s, and survived several assassination attempts by South African agents. Tshwete was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in 1964 for belonging to Umkhonto we Sizwe.

**MOZAMBIQUE**

Secret contacts between Jerusalem and Maputo over the past two years have produced a potential breakthrough in diplomatic relations, as Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano's government has reportedly agreed to allow Israel to start a \$1 million agricultural project in Zambezia province. The undertaking, involving the conversion of an abandoned 86,000-acre cotton plantation into a food crop-producing farm, would allow Israel to distance itself from the Pretoria-Renamo axis and step up its efforts to renew diplomatic links with the subcontinent's other African states.

Chissano recently hinted that his government's position toward the Jewish state had been altered by Israeli moves to impose limited sanctions against Pretoria and assurances that it no longer aids Renamo. But more importantly, improved relations could allow Mozambique to use Israeli influence to soften South Africa's support for the rebels, and isolate right-wing lobbyists calling on the U.S. to back Renamo.

## Ben Ali tackles reforms in post-Bourguiba Tunisia

When Prime Minister Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali announced that he had deposed President-for-Life Habib Bourguiba in a cleanly executed coup in early November, there was a sigh of relief among Tunisians that the country's long-awaited political transition had been so smooth and efficient. While there may have been some regret that the 84-year-old president had not departed with greater dignity, the deterioration of Bourguiba's mental faculties had seemingly left Ben Ali with no option but to put an end to his increasingly erratic rule.

On the day of the palace coup, Ben Ali, a former army general and the country's newly appointed prime minister, had assembled a team of seven prominent doctors to sign a statement declaring Bourguiba incompetent before telling the nation that he had "become totally incapable of undertaking the duties of the presidency." In reality, the Supreme Combatant could probably have been certified as mentally unfit to rule on several occasions over the past few years.

The constitution, which allows the prime minister to take over in the event of the president's "manifest incapacity" to govern, enabled Ben Ali to act swiftly and decisively. Bourguiba's progressively crazy rule became an open embarrassment last October when he named three different people within a few days to lead the ruling Socialist Destour Party (PSD).

But Bourguiba's growing obsession with severely punishing militants of the outlawed Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) may have been the final straw for Ben Ali and his backers. Bourguiba was furious that a major trial of activists in September had produced only seven death sentences and spared their leader, Rachid Ghannouchi. On the eve of his downfall, Bourguiba overstepped his mark, demanding death sentences in advance for another 12 to 15 militants who were

about to go on trial.

When Ben Ali also got wind of Bourguiba's plan to dispense with his services and to appoint Minister of Education Mohamed Sayah as his new prime minister, he put the coup's wheels in motion. After consulting with loyal supporters, he rounded up a dozen government leaders, including Sayah and Transport Minister Mansour Skhiri, and had them placed under house arrest. But as Hedi Baccouche, the new prime minister put it, the arrests were merely a "prophylactic measure."

In the aftermath of the coup, Ben Ali made clear that while there would be no major changes in foreign policy, a program of liberalization was necessary on the domestic front. Over the past two years, Bourguiba's rule was characterized by repression, as he virtually shut down the independent press, muzzled the once-tolerated opposition parties, and dismantled the influential trade union movement, leaving practically no room for mainstream dissent.

While the new government ruled out early elections, newly named government officials promised greater political and press freedoms in the months to come. Baccouche said the government "was determined to make pluralism a reality," and that even Muslim fundamentalists might be allowed to carry out political activities as long as they remained within the law. Leaders of the main legal opposition parties, the Social Democratic Movement (MDS) and the Tunisian Communist Party (PCT), conferred with the president, and were subsequently allowed to have their party newspapers back on the streets. Meanwhile, a large number of political exiles returned home, including former interior minister Driss Guiga who had left the country after having been made the scapegoat for the bread riots in 1984.

The Ben Ali government also released Tunisia's best known political prisoner, Habib Achour, the 77-year-old trade union leader who had been at odds with Bourguiba for

*Continued on next page*

## Niamey's army chief takes over from the late Kountché in a family affair

In an unanimous vote of the ruling Supreme Military Council (CMS) in mid-November, Army Chief of Staff Col. Ali Saibu was confirmed as Niger's new head of state just four days after the death of President Seyni Kountché, putting to rest any speculation that a long succession struggle loomed ahead. Kountché died of complications from a brain tumor in a Paris hospital after having fallen seriously ill in late 1986.

Saibu, who rather easily defeated a host of other presidential contenders within the top echelons of the military, was Kountché's cousin and the late president's most trusted aide. Upon taking over, Saibu made

clear he intends to follow in Kountché's footsteps by pursuing his predecessor's "ideals," and went on to reassure France and other Western allies that Niger's period of transition would be a smooth one. "There will be no revolution in Niger," warned Saibu. "The only revolution that will take place is the one which aims to lead the country from its underdevelopment."

Kountché had seized power in a bloody military coup in 1974, deposing civilian President Hamani Diori, whose government was characterized by political instability and widespread corruption. In the first years of his rule, Kountché sur-

*Continued on page 10*

TUNISIA... continued

several years and imprisoned on flimsy grounds. In early December, the government granted an amnesty to more than 2,400 prisoners, including 600 Islamic fundamentalists. The decree, however, fell far short of a general amnesty, as the group of MTI militants jailed in September for plotting against the state were not released. Nor did Ben Ali free other alleged MTI plotters in the national guard, police, and military, who were arrested in mid-November for having planned to assassinate members of the government.



Foto Souza/The White House

*Bourguiba: Declared mentally incompetent*

It thus appears that Ben Ali intends to court mainstream Muslim opinion while cutting the ground from under the feet of more extreme groups like the MTI. But the strategy to encourage the legal opposition to take over from the MTI as the primary channel for genuine dissent is likely to meet with some resistance from within the ruling party. Long accustomed to an entrenched position during Bourguiba's rule, PSD members may well be reluctant to open up the po-

## Cure in sight for river blindness

Merck & Company, a leading New Jersey-based pharmaceutical firm, recently announced the discovery of a new drug that will, in time, effectively wipe out onchocerciasis—one of the Third World's most devastating diseases known more commonly as river blindness. The U.S. company, moreover, has offered to make doses of its drug, ivermectin, available to the developing world free of charge, in an unprecedented multi-million dollar donation that could help eradicate river blindness by the year 2000.

Described by World Health Organization Director-General Halfdan Mahler as the "scourge of humanity since recorded history," onchocerciasis already afflicts an estimated 18 million people and potentially threatens another 85 million, particularly in much of West Africa. Onchocerciasis is caused by a parasitic worm which is transmitted to humans by the bite of the female blackfly, which breeds in rivers. The worm's minuscule larvae enter their victims and mature to produce new larvae that eventually lead to severe itching, disfigurement, and occasional weight loss. At a more advanced stage, the result can be a permanent loss of vision.

The Onchocerciasis Control Program, established in 1974 under the sponsorship of WHO, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and the Food and Agriculture Organization, has spearheaded with some success a massive spraying campaign to destroy the parasite-carrying flies in a dozen West African countries. But in recent years, the insects have reportedly developed a resistance to the pesticide spray in areas where the disease is most prevalent.

However, with the discovery of ivermectin, even some of the more heavily infested countries of West Africa should now be able to eradicate river blindness. As Mahler says, "Ivermectin will revolutionize the way countries face this debilitating disease."

Although the drug—produced in the form of a pill called Mectizan which needs to be taken only once or twice a year—does not cure a victim of onchocerciasis, it can arrest the disease's progression and prevent the invading parasites from reproducing. Because the larvae seem to survive only in humans, world health experts argue that once the drug is widely distributed, the flies that transmit the disease will have no source of new parasites, and river blindness will become a thing of the past.

While the discovery of ivermectin is undoubtedly heartening news, the battle against onchocerciasis is far from over. Merck and Company developed ivermectin several years ago for treating parasitic infections in livestock, and having made large profits from its sales, the firm decided to give away all the doses needed so that poverty-stricken countries could use their limited resources on distribution and development of health facilities.

But Merck has placed certain restrictions on ivermectin's distribution to minimize any negative side effects caused by improper application and to protect the drug's reputation in the profitable agricultural market. To ensure that its distribution is closely monitored, Merck is setting up an independent panel of public health specialists under the auspices of WHO. Those countries wanting to obtain ivermectin will have to satisfy the panel that they have the proper administrative structures for administering it.

While a number of countries should easily meet the panel's requirements and soon begin distributing the drug, some health experts fear that it will be some time before several of the poorer nations can ensure ivermectin's safe dispersal. Warned one specialist, "A lot of the countries affected have very primitive health services and the people at risk are in areas difficult to reach. Setting up the public health infrastructure is going to take years and it will be costly."

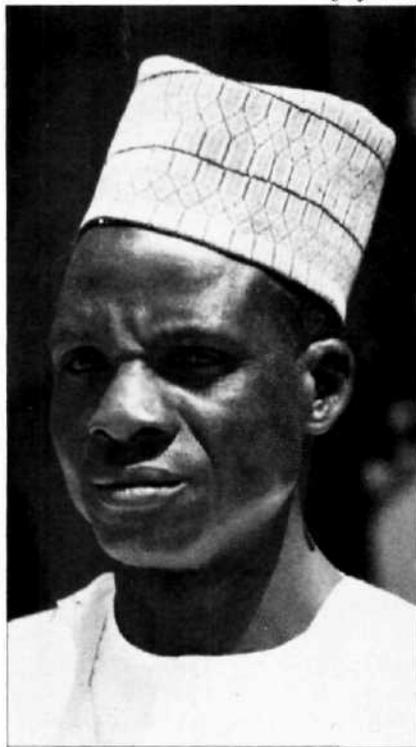
litical system and share with others the privileges they have acquired over the past 30 years. In coming months, Ben Ali's main challenge

will be to find a way of easing the pressure of growing discontent in the country without letting the lid blow off. ■

NIGER. . . continued

vived two coup attempts, including a major plot in March 1976 led by former Transport Minister Moussa Bayéré. He and his co-plotters were subsequently shot. Kountché later foiled a third coup attempt in 1983 when his personal adviser, Amadou Oumarou, tried unsuccessfully to overthrow the government and was forced to flee the country.

Niger, in the meantime, rebounded from the devastating 1969-74 drought that had crippled the economy, and the Kountché government was even able to enjoy the



Cambridge

Kountché: No succession struggle ahead

fruits of a brief economic boom in the 1970s—largely fueled by the growing world demand and high prices for uranium, Niamey's principal mineral resource. But another drought in 1984-85 and plummeting uranium prices combined to stunt Niger's economic growth, thereby undermining Kountché's efforts to lead the country toward food self-sufficiency.

On the political front, Kountché promoted a national charter which was overwhelmingly endorsed by Nigeriens in a referendum in June 1987 and is ultimately expected to serve as a guide for a new constitu-

tion to replace the one suspended by the military in 1974. Yet the new charter, which is supposed to restore a modest degree of civilian participation, leaves little doubt that the military is to remain squarely in control, as political parties will continue to be banned.

Kountché, who came from the small Djerma ethnic group which today holds many of the key positions in the government and the army, forged alliances with other minority tribes over the years in a bid to stabilize his rule. He was thus able to restrict the power of the Hausa majority that makes up 60 percent of the population.

France, which has always been concerned that a Hausa head of state would drag Niger into the Nigerian sphere of influence at its expense, directly intervened in the succession struggle during Kountché's year-long illness. French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac openly backed Moumouni Djermaakoyé, a former minister of foreign affairs and current prefect of

Zinder. During a visit to the region last March, French Minister of Cooperation Michel Aurillac took the opportunity to have a long tête-à-tête with Djermaakoyé on the succession problem. Djermaakoyé, a Djerma and one of Kountché's old comrades-in-arms, was thought by the French right to be the ideal candidate for preserving the former colonial power's interests in the region.

French President François Mitterrand and his Socialist Party, however, were thought to favor Saibu—a French-educated Djerma loyalist from the late president's powerful family clan. With Saibu now in power, the French government will encourage him to maintain close ties with France and to follow in the tradition mapped out by "Le Père Kountché"—as he was affectionately called in Paris. As Mitterrand himself put it, Kountché was not only "one of the most remarkable heads of state of black Africa," but was also "one of the most loyal friends of France." ■

## World Bank mounts Africa rescue plan

Major donor countries and international aid organizations recently pledged a massive emergency financial assistance package of \$6.4 billion for hard-pressed sub-Saharan nations with severe debt problems, following two days of fruitful talks in early December. Convened by the World Bank, the meeting of 17 donor countries agreed to provide the poorest African countries with an additional \$3 billion in bilateral aid, to go with the \$3.4 billion already committed over the next three years.

The pledge of \$6.4 billion is also separate from the \$2.9 billion that the World Bank has committed as soft loans through the International Development Association, its concessionary lending affiliate. These new concessional, quick-disbursing funds will be used in cofinancing with World Bank programs in the 1988-90 period, and are expected to play a key role in helping financially strapped sub-Saharan nations attain sustainable economic growth rates.

World Bank Vice-President for

Africa Edward Jaycox described the meeting as a real "breakthrough," and emphasized it was "a clear statement of support from the international community for the efforts of these countries to lift themselves out of this crisis." Such a successful meeting would have been impossible 18 months earlier, claimed Jaycox, because of "aid fatigue," but with the forging of a new partnership between donor countries and international organizations for channeling assistance to Africa's poorest, debt-distressed countries, the outlook for the future is now brighter.

The new African aid initiative first gained momentum during last summer's economic summit in Venice when leaders of the major Western powers publicly recognized the urgency of assisting 20 of the poorest African countries currently carrying out, or about to resume, adjustment programs. The Venice meeting called for special action to ease the debt burden of these countries, and proposed that steps be

taken to considerably increase low-interest lending by the IMF.

In line with this change in approach, President François Mitterrand recently announced that France would transform into grants some of its loans to the most financially hard-pressed African nations. Although Britain, Canada, West Germany, and several Scandinavian countries have already followed this course of action, France had always opposed outright debt forgiveness. It was therefore significant that Mitterrand told the Franco-African summit in mid-December that France now accepted that "it should be able to abandon a certain number of loans for the poorest countries, threatened with a fatal hemorrhage by the constraints of their debt payments."

Signalling what could be the start of a similar trend by U.S. banks, the Bank of Boston subsequently announced that is writing off some \$200 million of its \$1 billion worth of loans to Third World countries. In mid-December, Riggs National Corporation did the same with \$27.2 million of the \$133 million in loans it has outstanding to developing countries. It marked the first time since the debt crisis began in 1982 that major U.S. banks had written off some debt—decisions which have raised doubts whether the rigid approach that Western governments and banks have traditionally adopted is likely to continue much longer.

In the past year, the IMF has also taken a more flexible approach toward low-income countries. Since the Venice summit, it has promised to triple its Structural Adjustment Facility from \$4 billion to about \$12 billion, and to distribute that sum over the next three years to countries which pursue strong, "growth-oriented" economic policies. Through low interest, long-term loans, the IMF expects that countries carrying out its adjustment programs will now experience a better growth record than has been the case in the past.

As the World Bank's Jaycox previously told *Africa Report* [Nov-Dec 1987], "The main thing that has been missing from these adjustment

## Mobutu's games create chaos for UDPS

President Mobutu Sese Seko is up to his old tricks, sending the main exiled opposition movement, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), into a state of disarray and confusion. Mobutu, who has long made it a habit of toying with the fragmented opponents to his one-party rule—forcing government ministers, exiles, and even political detainees, to trade places—did it again when he triumphantly named UDPS President Frédéric Kibassa Maliba and several opposition colleagues to the central committee of the ruling Popular Movement for the Revolution (MPR) in early November.

Kibassa Maliba was a member of the so-called Group of 13, named for the 13 parliamentarians who authored a document critical of the Mobutu regime in December 1980. After having been released from house arrest, they had formed the UDPS in an effort to fight for democratic reforms, and it rapidly became the major opposition party. But over the past year, the Mobutu government appears to have succeeded in dividing the UDPS leadership, as a first step to breaking the party's back.

When UDPS President Mpinga Makanda died in Brussels last March, Mobutu jumped at the opportunity to woo a group of UDPS members back to the fold. Mobutu convened Kibassa Maliba and several other imprisoned or exiled members to a summit meeting in his home town of Gbadolite and called on them to rejoin the MPR.

But the UDPS leaders failed to come to terms with Mobutu, demanding their release from internal exile and the legalization of their party, and they were then taken back to their villages where they were reportedly harassed, intimidated, and tortured. Three UDPS members subsequently signed documents stating that they were leaving the opposition, while Kibassa Maliba and three others later pledged their allegiance to the MPR.

Much as he had hoped, Mobutu's public announcement that several UDPS leaders had joined the MPR, threw the opposition party into disarray. At a September press conference in Geneva, the UDPS denied having capitulated to Mobutu. Explained UDPS Secretary and former Interior Minister Etienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba, the party "will continue to fight peacefully for a pluralistic democracy in Zaire," but it will do so "within the confines of the constitution."

Tshisekedi said that the UDPS' pledge to respect the Zairean constitution and to recognize the ruling MPR as the "unique party" did not amount to a surrender. The UDPS, claimed Tshisekedi, had merely agreed to become a faction within the MPR—an argument that did not wash with the party's militants.

Some rank and file members, who admitted to being confused by Tshisekedi's perverse sense of logic, said they failed to see how it was possible to reconcile respect for a constitution they opposed and the continued existence of the UDPS inside the MPR.

The deal between Mobutu and the UDPS was also roundly condemned by a myriad of exiled opposition parties. When more than a dozen organizations, including the Congolese Democratic and Socialist Party (PDSC) and the Congolese Liberation Party (PLC), assembled in Switzerland in September to set up a self-styled Zairean government in exile, they excluded the UDPS on the grounds that it had "joined the Kinshasa dictatorship." In rejecting the UDPS accord with Mobutu, they called for the introduction of a multi-party system in Zaire, and the holding of free and fair elections. The main objective, said the new "government," would be "to overthrow the Zairean dictator by any means."

programs has been growth. . . The point is that growth is necessary and adjustment has been going on for four or five years in some countries, without them seeing the light at the

end of the tunnel. That's got to be reversed. Otherwise they won't pursue the course. Without that vision of growth, we really haven't got anything to sell here." ■

**LIBYA**

Libya won a landmark court battle recently to recover \$292 million of deposits that were ordered frozen by President Reagan in 1986, when a British High Court ruled that the London branch of Bankers Trust would have to pay back the money because the assets were governed by English law. The unprecedented ruling is a blow to the U.S. government's ongoing campaign to isolate Tripoli for its alleged link to international terrorism.

Bankers Trust had refused to repay the money following the presidential order, claiming that it would be in breach of U.S. law. The freeze prompted the Libyan Arab Foreign Bank to take legal action against Bankers Trust, winning the right to regain \$131 million deposited in London, an additional \$161 million that the U.S. bank had been instructed to transfer from an account in New York two hours before the freeze, and \$1.9 million in interest.

**BOTSWANA**

A new \$300 million joint venture between the government of Botswana and AECI, South Africa's largest diversified chemical group, will in future provide Pretoria with an annual supply of 240,000 tons of soda ash, but also give the apartheid regime an ideal loophole for a possible sanctions-busting operation. The deal for soda ash—which is used mainly for manufacturing glass and is plentiful in the remote and undeveloped region of Sua Pan in northern Botswana—will thereby allow Pretoria to cut its present dependence for supplies on American and European companies.

One of Pretoria's main soda ash suppliers, the American Natural Soda Ash Corporation (ANSAC), has urged all South African buyers to oppose the project, claiming that Botswana will be a more expensive and politically riskier source of supply than the U.S. But Pretoria has condemned ANSAC's threats to wage a price war and its attempt to "smother" the scheme, and has assured Botswana that it would, if necessary, use tariffs to protect their joint venture.

**NIGERIA**

After more than a year of tortuous negotiations, President Ibrahim Babangida's government finally reached an agreement with the London Club of commercial bank creditors in late November, enabling Nigeria to reschedule \$4.8 billion in short and medium-term debt. The accord also paved the way for a key loan facility of \$320 million—providing the government with much-needed breathing room for its debt-ridden economy.

Minister of Finance Chu Okongwu described the deal as "a major step forward" in the government's efforts to cope with the country's massive external debt of \$22 billion, which has proven impossible to service in the midst of a severe slump in oil export earnings. Revenues from Nigeria's main foreign exchange earner have fallen from a 1980 peak of \$24 billion to a forecast of only \$6 billion in 1987.

**BUSINESS BRIEFS**

**SIERRA LEONE**

President Joseph Saidu Momoh declared an economic state of emergency in November, barring residents from hoarding money and essential commodities. The unprecedented move, said Momoh, became necessary not only because of the country's grave economic situation, but also because of serious financial malpractices involving highly placed institutions and public officials.

As a result, Momoh outlined a total of 59 new regulations which would be put into immediate effect—with the police and army given wide-ranging powers to enforce the state of emergency. To relieve the country's severe liquidity crisis, people will no longer be allowed to hold more than about \$6,000 cash for more than three days, thereby forcing them to deposit their funds in banks. Other emergency laws introduced include the suspension of all diamond exporters' licences and measures to curtail the smuggling of produce and minerals.

**MOZAMBIQUE**

Government officials from Portugal, South Africa, and Mozambique met in Pretoria for two days in late November and agreed to work toward the revival of Cahora Bassa, the largest hydro-electric scheme in Africa, which has been virtually paralyzed since 1983 because of the war waged by Renamo rebels.

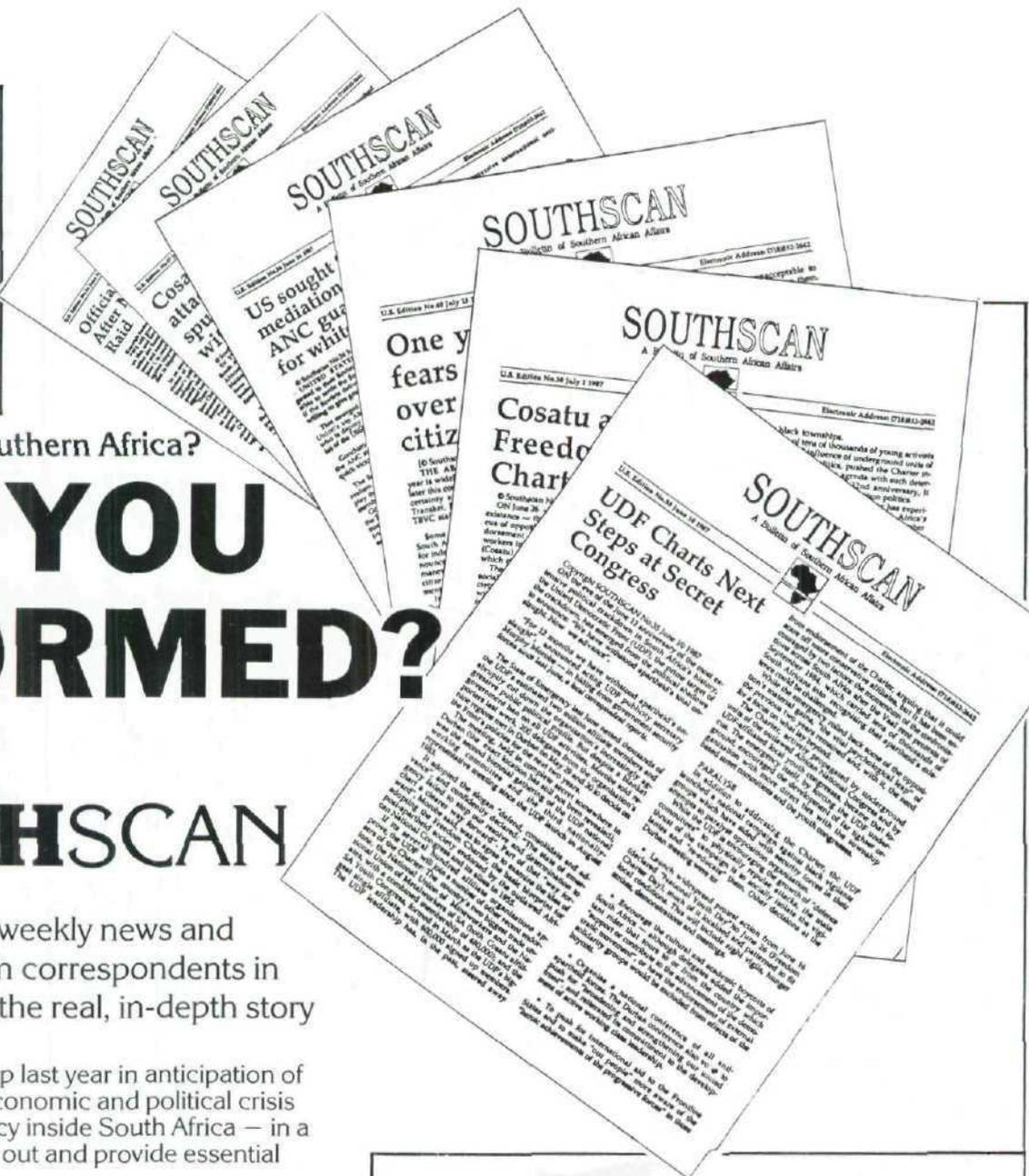
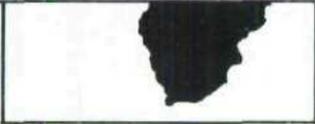
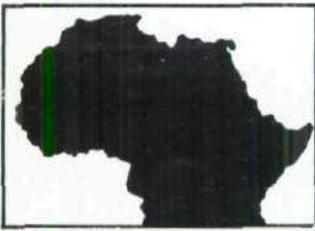
The giant hydro-electric plant in north-west Mozambique was built in the last years of Portuguese colonial rule with the intention of selling power to Pretoria, but extensive sabotage along the line in recent years has caused both Lisbon and Maputo to absorb heavy financial losses. Portugal owns 82 percent of the capital and has already spent a total of \$1.2 billion on the project.

The ministerial-level meeting pledged to set up a permanent joint committee to assess the cost and feasibility of rebuilding and protecting the power lines. Depending upon its recommendations, and Pretoria's willingness to curb Renamo's activities, reconstruction could begin in the first half of 1988, making Cahora Bassa operational by the end of the year.

**SENEGAL**

President Abdou Diouf's government recently launched one of the most ambitious privatization programs in Africa when it announced that 10 parastatals would be put up for sale under the auspices of the Commission for State Disengagement. This initial divestment is part of a more comprehensive privatization plan involving a total of 26 companies to be partially or wholly sold off, thereby fulfilling a key International Monetary Fund condition for allocating the second tranche of a structural adjustment loan totalling SDR 46.8 million.

The parastatals to be privatized involve companies in the light industry, construction, hostelry, automotive, tourism, and advertising sectors which were chosen primarily for their saleability. The hotels singled out for total privatization—the Teranga, the Meridien, and the Club Méditerranée—are some of the most profitable in the country.



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# Ending the Rule of the Gun

When the National Resistance Army marched victoriously into Kampala two years ago, war-weary Ugandans hoped for a new era of peace and stability. But renewed warfare by rebel forces and tensions with Kenya are jeopardizing President Museveni's efforts to overcome the legacy of Uganda's bloody and corrupt past.

BY CATHARINE WATSON

**W**hen Yoweri Museveni and his guerrilla force, the National Resistance Army (NRA), captured Kampala on January 26, 1986, they inherited a devastated Uganda.

"We arrived here to find a bleeding nation," said President Museveni in a speech last year. "Insecurity was the order of the day. The moral fabric was in decay. Production was at its lowest levels."

Two wars and 20 years of corrupt and reckless rule had reduced East Africa's most prosperous and promising country to a shadow of what it once was. Some 800,000 Ugandans were dead, 200,000 in exile, and hundreds of thousands displaced internally.

The 15 million Ugandans who had survived the bad years were poorer than they had been in the 1960s. The country was burdened by a \$1 billion foreign debt. And the road, rail, and power networks and the health and education systems, once among the best in Africa, were in ruins.

Two years after the victory of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), much has improved. The south and the west of the country are peaceful. The roads and factories are under repair. Aid money began arriving after an IMF deal in May last year. The Ugandan refugees are returning home.

*Catharine Watson writes for the British daily, The Independent, and works for the British Broadcasting Corporation from Uganda.*

Through "resistance committees," grassroots democracy is flourishing at village and parish level. The NRA, though hastily expanded to twice its original size, is still well-disciplined. A human rights commission is investigating past abuses. A new Inspectorate of Government is probing corruption and current human rights abuses.

But the country is still deeply troubled and although he does not say so in so many words, Museveni has probably not accomplished all he had hoped in his first two years. The obstacle has been yet another war, this time in the north and the east. Launched only seven months after the NRM took power, it has devoured scarce shillings and dollars, damaged even further the country's infrastructure, tied down the NRM and NRA's most dedicated and politicized cadres, held back economic recovery, and pushed inflation to 240 percent. By December, an estimated 10,000 people had died in this latest conflict.

In November, at Magamaga barracks from where he was overseeing the battle against rebel priestess Alice Lakwena, Museveni said his primary concerns now were "to finish the banditry and to implement a minimum recovery program."

In his usual open and confident way, he went on: "What I'm worried about is that people will keep suffering, that they won't know that there is an alternative. The crucial thing is to show them that there is a way out, that it is within our means to overcome this backwardness.

Anything else I do will be a bonus."

Museveni, a westerner from the Bantu cattle-keeping people called the Bahima, remains immensely popular two years into his presidency. A teetotaler with modest tastes, there has never been any hint of personal corruption.

He believes that the hope for Uganda lies in its new, upright leadership, in its disciplined "pro-people" army, and in the resistance committees. "No force can defeat us," he said at Magamaga. "We are very, very strong."

Museveni began his bush war in 1981, but its roots and those of the current war go back many years before. Idi Amin, who had seized power from President Milton Obote in 1971, left a power vacuum when he was finally driven from Uganda in 1979 by Tanzanian troops and a Ugandan exile force called the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA).

Politicians scrambled to fill the vacuum, and three governments quickly came and went. Finally in December 1980, elections were held to choose a government, but they were plagued by violence and fraud. Obote's Uganda People's Congress terrorized the other parties. Candidates were murdered, their houses bombed, voters threatened, and ballot boxes stolen, switched, emptied. Despite the intimidation and gerrymandering, however, the Democratic Party still scored a convincing win.

This result was unacceptable to Obote and his colleagues. Already in control of much of the UNLA, they seized Radio Uganda and announced their victory. In the weeks that followed, most opposition members of Parliament unhappily took up their seats. Meanwhile, Museveni, who had promised to go to the bush if the elections were rigged, duly did so with 26 other men on February 6, 1981.

Museveni's force grew slowly, based in Luwero, a fertile coffee-growing region just north of Kampala. Highly disciplined, its soldiers were mostly peasants from the south and the west, its commanders mostly from the west.

Milton Obote's regime fell in July 1985, under pressure from the NRA and toppled by a coup led by officers from the northern Acholi people. An

Acholi, Tito Okello, then became president for seven lawless months, until the NRA's victory in January 1986.

At the end of the war, the NRA numbered 20,000. Luwero, in contrast, had lost a third of its population. The UNLA killed about 300,000 people as punishment for their support for the NRA.

When the NRA took power, hopes were high that Uganda's bloodshed was finally over. Museveni commenced a power-sharing exercise, building a coalition by giving ministerial seats to representatives of all Uganda's political parties and to the four fighting groups which had battled Obote. He took care to balance the cabinet ethnically—between the Nilotic northerners and easterners and the Bantu southerners and westerners. Initially the Bantu predominated, but by early last year, balance was attained.

Recruitment was begun to bring northerners and easterners into the army. The resistance committees spread throughout Uganda, except in the remotest parts of the Acholi north. Political schools were set up to teach civilians and soldiers the NRM's Ten Point Plan. Western diplomats regarded the schools as indoctrination centers, but the NRM's platform calls simply for a mild blend of democracy, security, na-

tional unity, and a mixed economy. It also condemns tribalism, sectarianism, and corruption.

All was quiet for the first seven months. Then several thousand ex-UNLA soldiers regrouped in southern Sudan and northern Uganda. The attacks began in Acholi areas of Gulu and Kitgum, the rebels calling themselves the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA).

Museveni and his top commanders played down their significance. There were mere "pockets of insecurity." The rebels were "remnants" of the UNLA, "politically bankrupt," with no local support. They were the human rights criminals who had massacred the people of Luwero and could not come back to Uganda without facing trial. The NRA was carrying out "mopping up" operations. It would all be over soon.

But it was not, although it was contained within Acholiland for six months. Then in January last year, the war crept south. Two new factors were already at play. One was a upsurge of rebel activity in the east: Easterners were legitimately angry with the NRA for not protecting them against the vicious Karamojong cattle raiders, and exiled Obote politicians fanned this anger.

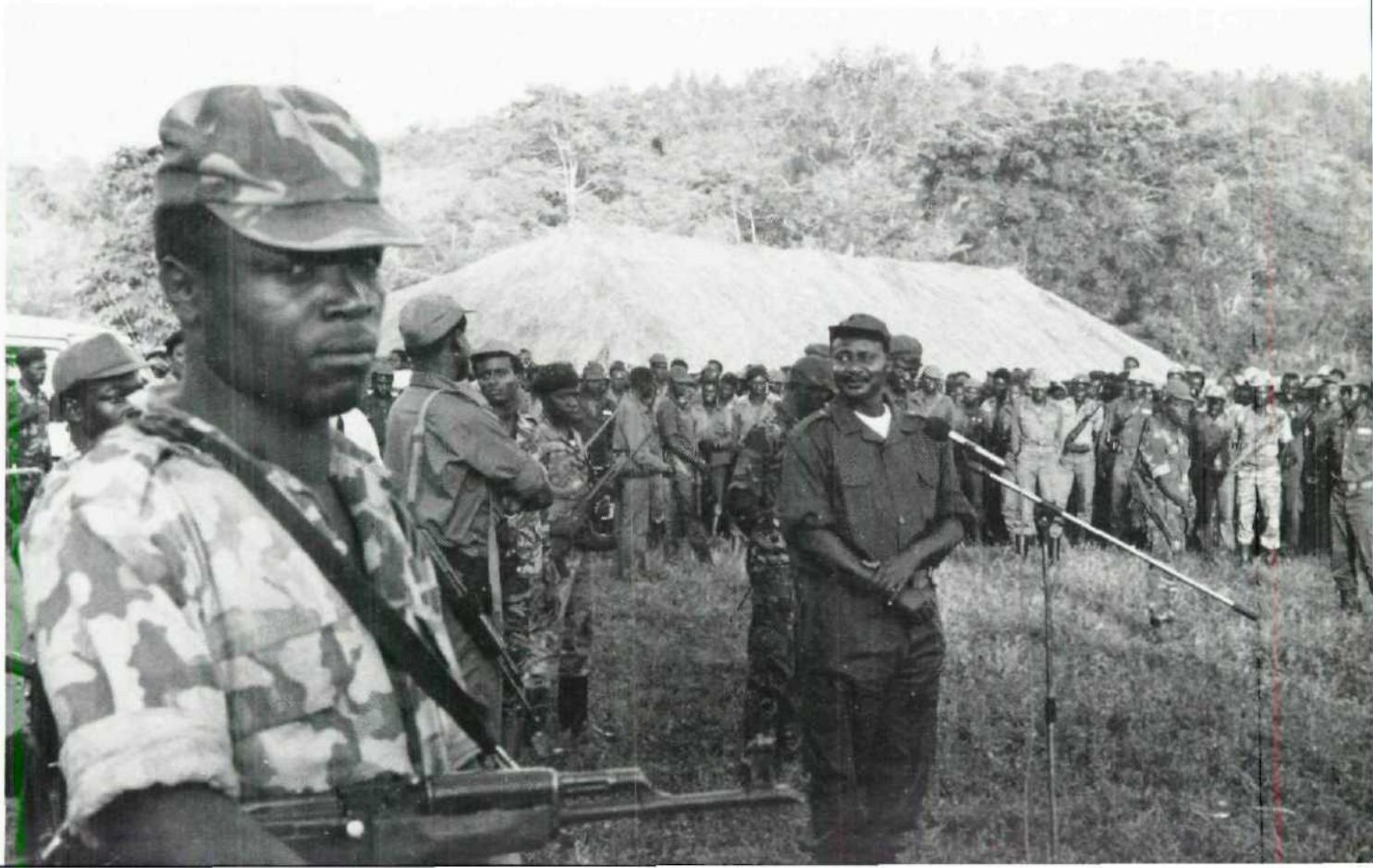
The other was witchcraft. In August,

a young Acholi woman, a herbalist and spirit medium called Alice Auma, joined the UPDA. By November, her Holy Spirit battalion was launching its own attacks. She left the UPDA—the UPDA says it expelled her—in mid-January after two battles in Kitgum in which over 700 rebels died, running barechested at the NRA's bullets, smeared with her potions.

More than any other rebel leader, she inspired a fanatical following. Some 2,000 UPDA rebels joined her. She then raided the UPDA and stole 4,000 of their guns (thereby greatly assisting the NRA). With a hard core of 1,100 men, she forcibly recruited more supporters in Acholi and further south. Those who refused to join were killed. Rebel captives say her henchmen murdered 750 men in Kitgum district alone.

Notebooks captured from rebel camps show that she preached and practiced a strange brew of Christianity, witchcraft, puritanism, and sadism. At least six spirits spoke through her, but the main one was Lakwena. He told her that her mission was to rid Uganda of evil people. The Acholi and Baganda peoples were particularly evil; war was good because the evil on both sides

**"No force can defeat us," Museveni said at Magamaga, "We are very, very strong"**



died.

Her fighters had to follow 20 commandments. Some were bizarre, such as "Have two testicles, no more no less," and "Never eat snake," (snakes were to be important on judgment day). The most lethal, however, was "Never take cover." She forced her men to fight upright, in broad daylight, accompanied by followers singing hymns, sprinkling water, and clapping. Seven thousand Lakwena rebels perished attacking the NRA between January and November last year.

In October, the Holy Spirit Movement—4,000 strong—reached Bantu southern Uganda. The civilians, remembering the atrocities meted out to them by the UNLA, turned on them in a fury. With such massive support—which had been lacking in the Nilotic areas further north—the NRA routed them: 1,500 rebels died, hundreds were captured. The remainder rushed in disarray through deep swamp and forests to the north and the east. Alice herself evaded capture.

Rebel captives were dazed, confused, and severely malnourished, raw cassava their only food for months. Some were naked. Most seemed immensely relieved to be in NRA hands, safe from Alice and from the civilians who wanted to lynch them. Many did not know why they were fighting.

"Only Alice knew," said James Okello, 37, a press-ganged librarian. "That was a question you could not ask," said John Odong, 38, a former soldier. Others said they were not fighting Museveni. "We had no problem with Museveni. We were fighting for judgment. I was with Lakwena because of the gospel," said Sam Anger Odwar, 22.

Many said that at first they had believed Alice's magic—that blessed stones would explode like grenades, that Alice's shea butter oil would protect them from bullets. "Then I saw it did not work," said Mosco Opira, a 23-year-old with an infected bullet wound in his leg. He said he would now like to join the NRA.

In August, the NRA had announced a partial amnesty for rebels and ex-soldiers. The government says 20,000 rebels have surrendered in the north, but men like Okello, Odong, and Opira

never had the chance. Deep in the bush and forbidden by Alice from listening to the radio, they never knew it was safe to come out.

Museveni calls these rebels "poor innocent chaps" and says they will not be punished for fighting with Alice. He calls Alice "a simple, ignorant village woman, who is being exploited by former politicians who want to return to power." Foremost among these politicians is Milton Obote, exiled in Lusaka since 1985. In contrast, Idi Amin, who now lives in Saudi Arabia, is not maneuvering to return. Nor is elderly and sickly ex-president Tito Okello, now living in eastern Sudan.

Other politicians heading rebel groups are former Obote ministers Peter Otai, who claims to head the Uganda People's Army, and William Omaria, who claims to head the Uganda National Front. Both these groups operate in eastern Uganda, their leaders based in Nairobi. Former Obote ministers David Anyoti, Masette Kuuya, and Wilson Okwenge also operate out of Kenya and are linked with a group called Force Obote Back Again. Obote's former prime minister, Otema Allimadi, and Obote's cousin, lawyer Akena Adoko, head the UPDA from London.

The eastern rebel groups are noteworthy for their infighting and thuggery. Their prime activity is stealing from civilians and killing village leaders; they rarely engage the NRA. Never as organized as the UPDA, they suffered a harsh blow in late November when the NRA captured Obote's former chief of staff, Smith Opon-Acak, who was entering Uganda from Kenya to command them.

Two small groups, the Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM) and the Federal Democratic Movement (FEDEMO), which fought Obote in the early 1980s, claim to have men in southern central Uganda. But the area is quiet, top members of UFM serve in the NRM cabinet, and top FEDEMO commanders remain in the NRA. FEDEMO may have been responsible, however, for a hand grenade thrown into a Kampala bar in October.

Rebel leaders in London and Nairobi say they are fighting because Museveni is a tribalist and because the govern-

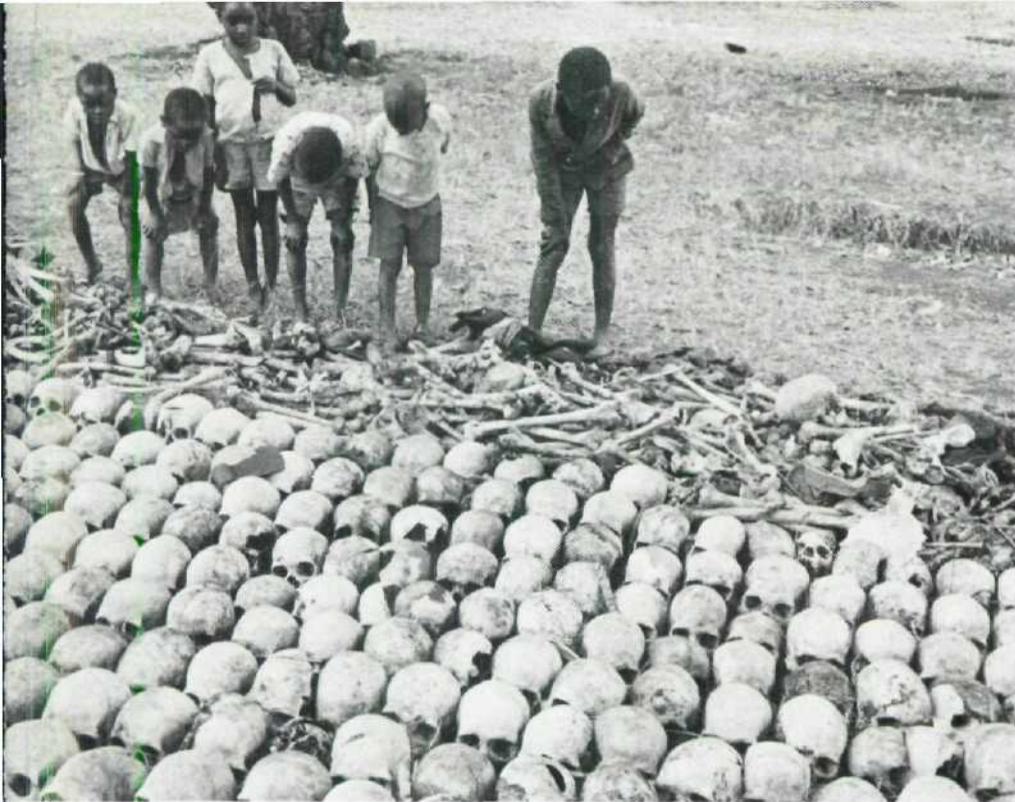


ment is dominated by westerners. They say the resistance committees are communist. And they claim that the NRA is backed by Libyan, PLO, Cuban, and Rwandan mercenaries and that it is abusing human rights.

Of these claims, only the last is true. In its July 1987 submission to the government, Amnesty International cites over two dozen cases of Acholi civilians dying at NRA hands, and it claims that several thousand suspected rebels are being held without charge in barracks and prisons. Amnesty recognizes, however, that the intimidation of civilians is not condoned by the government and that NRA soldiers are executed if they are found to have raped or killed a civilian.

Inside Uganda, the rank and file rebels are fighting for numerous reasons: some, like Alice's men, because they were forced to; some, particularly around Soroti in the northeast, because they perceive the NRA as a foreign occupying force; some because they have criminal records.

But the key reason for both the leaders and the men in the bush is that they have lost power and access to state wealth. Under the old regimes, soldiers could loot and steal with impunity. A minister could be openly corrupt. A district commissioner could run his area as a personal fiefdom—putting taxes di-



Cameroon/afrik

**"The UNLA killed about 300,000 people as punishment for their support of the NRA"**

rectly into his pocket, using government cars for his private businesses, evicting his political opponents from their homes, seizing properties he desired. This has now stopped, leaving thousands of Ugandans disgruntled.

As of December, northern Uganda was quiet, the UPDA confined to a wilderness area, the airstrip used to get supplies from Kenya in NRA hands. The east was still tense, but the problem was ambushes, not pitched battles. Museveni was describing the conflict as "a security problem, not a military one."

The key question would now seem to be this: Did Museveni and the NRM bring the war upon themselves through political misjudgments? Or was it inevitable, a playing out of forces already at work?

Probably the fairest answer is that it was inevitable—the elites of the north and east were not going to give up that easily. But the NRM also made errors: Indisciplined units alienated civilians in the north; the NRA should have done more to stop Karamojong raids; the radio and politicization campaigns should have better informed the Nilotic peoples about the NRM's intentions.

In addition to the war, Museveni's first years in power have been plagued by troubles with Kenya. They reached

their peak in December, when a gun battle erupted between Ugandan and Kenyan security forces along their common border. Uganda's two senior diplomats in Nairobi were expelled, and Kenya recalled its high commissioner from Kampala, after accusing the Ugandans of having insulted President Moi and having assaulted the integrity of Kenya's judiciary.

Between March and October last year, the border was intermittently closed to Ugandans; Kenyan papers said Uganda was on the verge of anarchy and collapse; Ugandan rebels made statements from Nairobi and moved freely in and out of the country and along the border.

Kenya, meanwhile, accused Uganda of harboring members of the left-wing dissident movement, Mwakenya, and of having dangerously close ties with Libya, which it believes is trying to destabilize Kenya. It expelled hundreds of Ugandans and a Ugandan schoolteacher died in police custody in Kenya.

Western diplomatic sources in Kampala say there are no Mwakenya camps in Uganda and that the main link between Libya and Uganda is simply a \$60 million barter deal, one of many the NRM government has entered into.

Some observers claim that the real

source of Kenya's displeasure with Uganda is not political but commercial. Kenyan trucking companies will lose \$55 million a year now that Uganda has shifted its exports and imports to the cheaper railways. With corruption on the wane in Uganda, Kenyans are also losing out. Under former governments, lucrative coffee deals used to be shared between top Ugandan and Kenyan officials.

If there is a political aspect to Kenya's anti-Uganda stance, it has to do with the serious internal dissent Daniel arap Moi's government faced last year. By focusing on Uganda as a troublemaker, Moi can rally support at home and deflect Kenyans' attention from their own grievances.

But Kenya is vital to Uganda, which needs outlets to the sea, and Museveni has no intention of falling out irrevocably with Moi. Characteristically, he has played the crisis down, and he has told the press to do likewise. "I'd like to ask you not to be too excited about this nonsense," he told journalists in July. "Some elements in Kenya think they can harass us, but we have no quarrel with the Kenyan people."

Throughout his two years in power, Museveni has stressed that the NRM will not export revolution against its neighbors. Mwakenya supporters are unwelcome and are bundled out of Uganda swiftly. The Sudanese People's Liberation Army has been denied access to Ugandan soil. The NRA has attacked and destroyed Zairian rebel camps in the western mountains. And on a trip to Rwanda, Museveni assured President Juvenal Habyarimana that Uganda would not help Rwandan dissidents.

But in Uganda, said Museveni in December, the NRM is going to make a revolution—against backwardness, poverty, high infant mortality. "And that should not cause discomfort to any African patriot," he added.

The NRM's revolution has, however, hardly begun. Set back badly by the war, it has still to define its position on women, land tenure, and a score of other key issues. The NRM's biggest achievement so far has been to remove the rule of the gun. The rest are still ahead. □

INTERVIEWED BY MARGARET A. NOVICKI  
and MARTINE DENNIS

**Africa Report:** What is the most pressing problem you are facing now? Is it national reconciliation?

**Museveni:** Yes, to some extent, but it is not an unmanageable problem. I think the main problem is just to get enough time to solve our problems. Just time, all these problems can be solved with time.

**Africa Report:** What are you doing concretely to deal with this problem of reconciliation?

**Museveni:** We have set up a broad-based government and we have evolved a system of treating leniently the people who have made mistakes, whenever we can. We have declared an amnesty. I think these measures will win over even those elements who may not have been with us to begin with.

**Africa Report:** What is your economic policy for Uganda for the future? Is it possible to liberalize the economy, while maintaining a certain amount of state control?

**Museveni:** We don't see any contradiction between liberalization and central control. The two can go together. In fact, the combination of them is very healthy, especially for an



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## Interview with President Yoweri Museveni

During a recent visit to the United States, President Museveni spoke with *Africa Report* about the continuing security problems his government is facing. Evaluating his two-year record, the Ugandan leader also reveals a refreshing approach to the continent's debt crisis, trade, and aid in this frank and wide-ranging interview.

Uganda

economy like ours which needs habitual government intervention to stimulate local entrepreneurship. Therefore, you find that the biggest sector of the economy is in the hands of the peasants who produce on an individual basis. Then there are medium-level, large-scale producers. We also have parastatal organizations and cooperatives.

The four of them work together. There is no problem at all. And they are coordinated by the central planning machinery, which uses different stimulants to do different jobs. For instance, if you want production, you increase prices or interest rates. So with these macro-economic tools, you can stimulate or discourage any tendency in the economy. And I see no problem at all as far as utilizing these four different forms of ownership and production.

**Africa Report:** What in your view should be the solution to Africa's debt crisis?

**Museveni:** My view is that some of these debts were incurred wrongly by ourselves. Therefore, the African leaders have a responsibility for having allowed themselves to incur such debts. But having said that, somehow a solution must be found on how to extricate ourselves from this quagmire.

Possibly one way would be to write off some of these debts or reschedule them. Any formula that can be used to liberate Africa from these onerous debts will be welcome as far as I can see. But I would like to emphasize that the responsibility also lies with the African leaders who accepted these debts in the first place.

**Africa Report:** You recently said that Africa's crisis is twofold: one, a crisis with African leadership itself. In light of that, how do you view recent events in Burkina Faso, in which a young, dynamic African leader was killed, a man often compared with you as one of Africa's leaders of tomorrow?

**Museveni:** It is tragic. I don't know the internal politics of Burkina Faso, but certainly the method of changing the government was brutal and very unfortunate. About comparing our government with that of Burkina Faso, I think that is not correct.

**Africa Report:** I meant you and Sankara, both considered young and visionary leaders.

**Museveni:** Yes, being young and visionary is one thing, but the method of government is also crucial. The weakness of these governments which come to power through military coups is that there is always a problem that it may not be easy

**Africa Report:** I meant you and Sankara, both considered young and visionary leaders.

*This interview was conducted jointly by Margaret A. Novicki, editor-in-chief of Africa Report, and Martine Dennis, UN reporter for the British Broadcasting Corporation, during President Museveni's October visit to the United States.*



Cameraspix

**"There is no culture of violence as such in Uganda. But the people have not been able to accept misgovernment without a struggle"**

to transform a coup into a revolution. There have been some two coups which started off as coups and became revolutions in the history of Africa. But coups are mere conspiracies. You get a handful of people, you conspire, and if there is no resistance, you take over. So there is always the problem of consolidation in my opinion. But ours, or if you take Frelimo in Mozambique, these were revolutionary struggles. Frelimo has been under a lot of stress from the South Africans, but it has held together precisely because it was a revolutionary movement and not a coup. There is a difference between coups d'état and revolutionary processes.

**Africa Report:** Can you tell me how much substance there is to reports of tensions between your country and Kenya? [Editor's note: This interview was conducted prior to December's outbreak of hostilities along the Kenyan-Ugandan border.]

**Museveni:** We have no tension with Kenya. Kenya is a whole country. Why should we have tension with Kenya? I don't see any reason, so if there is any tension, it is not on our side. It must be on their side. We have been complaining about some of our people who have been basing themselves in Kenya and coming to kill our resistance committee members. They have been targeting mainly these villagers, members of the popular committees. We have told the Kenyan leaders that they should stop it and that is all, but I don't see why we should have tensions between Kenya and Uganda.

**Africa Report:** So you think that recent reports in the press are misleading.

**Museveni:** They must be misleading, because I have no information that there is any added tension between us and Kenya. We have already informed the Kenyans about the problems which we have had, and we know and they ought to know how to solve them simply by removing these bandits from near the border. If they want to stay in Kenya, they can stay there provided that they are not causing problems on the border.

**Africa Report:** You don't think that they are being supported by the Kenyan government?

**Museveni:** No, but the Kenyan government has not taken the measures it is supposed to have taken under the OAU charter. There is an OAU charter which governs the behavior of refugees in neighboring countries when they have run from their own country. That is what they have not done. But that is no reason for having tension as far as I am concerned. We can resolve this by discussion, and that's what we have been trying to do.

**Africa Report:** But you do have troops stationed on the border with Kenya?

**Museveni:** Yes, near the border, to control smuggling, banditry, not only these opponents, but even cattle-rustling which has been there for many years. They are not aimed at Kenya at all.

**Africa Report:** How would you characterize the motives of the main opposition groups fighting against your government at this time? For example, Alice Lakwena and her Holy Spirit

Movement?

**Museveni:** Fear of prosecution for crimes committed in the past. This is the main motive, because these are remnants of the old army. They committed crimes when they were in power. Now they fear that they will be prosecuted if we consolidate our control in the country or they will be condemned to stay in exile forever because they committed crimes which they must answer for. They would not like us to follow up these crimes.

But it is not easy. There are certain crimes we can forgive. The fact that you harassed people, we may forgive you, the fact that you looted people's property, we may forgive you, but committing genocide is not forgivable. Murdering people is not forgivable, nor is raping women or kidnapping people with the intention to kill them. Those four, according to the amnesty bill which we published recently, are not excusable. Anything else we can forget about, but none of these people belong to that category. And that's their real motive.

If their motives were political, this broad-based government we have formed accommodates all the political tendencies in the country—the left-wingers are there, monarchists are there, liberals are there—there is nobody who is not accommodated in this administration. But these elements cannot be accommodated because if we try to accommodate them, they shall undermine our very existence. If we forgive somebody who killed people yesterday, how can we punish those who kill people today? There is no basis. We are punishing our own soldiers severely, if they violate human rights, if they kill people. We have executed our own soldiers. Now how can we execute our own soldiers for killing people when we forgive those who killed people yesterday and the day before? So we find there is nothing we can do about accommodating these people.

Now as for Alice Lakwena, she represents the desperation of these gangster groups. They tried to fight us before we took power, and we defeated them. After we took power, they tried to fight us, and we again defeated them. So they had to look for a way to artificially whip up the morale of their defeated groups and that's when they had to resort to this woman who comes along and says, "I've got some medicine and if you use it, the bullet will not penetrate you. If the NRA soldiers fire the bullets, the magic will turn around the bullets and kill the NRA soldiers themselves." She even draws diagrams showing the curves of the bullets, turning back to kill those who fired them!

So it is real desperation and trying to look for a way to galvanize their defeated groups. It is not really Alice Lakwena—these witch doctors are prevalent in our society. They are always there. Even when I was fighting, they used to be in my group. They would come and tell me to do this and that, I would listen to them with one ear and just ignore what they were saying. But if you have people who are supposed to be leading these groups who listen and accept what this woman is saying, then they are the ones who are responsible for the massacres which this woman has caused by throwing people in the face of bullets. The responsibility must be taken by the political leaders of these groups.

**Africa Report:** Their motive then is power?



**Museveni:** Yes. Power, but what for? For what reason? Power in order to guard themselves against prosecution for crimes committed!

**Africa Report:** Since these elements cannot be accommodated in any way, it appears the solution will have to be a military one. Some would say that Uganda has developed a culture of violence that feeds on itself. Do you agree and is there a way for Uganda to break out of this cycle of violence?

**Museveni:** The solution does not have to be entirely military. It can be largely political. For instance, this amnesty which we published was designed to fish out as many people as can be reabsorbed. That's why we categorized and excused all other crimes except these four. Even among the four, if you belong to a group which was deployed to commit genocide against the people, but you were there not in a leadership role, but as a follower, somebody who was acting under the orders of other people, then we fish you out. You can come. The only one we zero in on is the one who was in a commanding role, in a role of responsibility—a small group of people, not the broader groups who are being used. We make a distinction between the misusers and the misused and we reabsorb the misused. But the ones who must answer are the ones who misled the others.

There is no culture of violence as such. But what is true is that the people of Uganda are relatively sophisticated, so they have not been able to accept misgovernment without a struggle. This is the only difference. Otherwise, if they had been docile, this misgovernment would have gone on and we may



Catharine Watson

"How can we execute our own soldiers for killing people when we forgive those who killed people yesterday and the day before?"

**Museveni:** Precisely! Those types of distortions. The American officials are a bit misinformed, but I think they have learned a bit more after talking with them.

**Africa Report:** I assume you discussed the economic aid that the United States is providing to Uganda. Are you satisfied with the level of American aid?

**Museveni:** I didn't discuss aid really, instead I discussed trade with them. I don't emphasize aid very much because I don't believe aid can develop a country fundamentally. It can act as a catalyst if they give you some money—\$50 million or so—you can use it to play some catalytic role, but strategically speaking, the option that can cause development is favorable trading arrangements. That's what I was interested in and they were very receptive.

I mentioned the possibility of export credit guarantees where the American government guarantees the credit that American companies will give us, so that in case we default in paying, the American government would pay the companies and then we would pay the government. That type of arrangement is very good and dynamic and we can cover more ground in this way, because then it becomes a balance between resources on our side and technology and machinery on the other side. We find a balance of value of mutual transfers and that can cover more ground than aid, which must be limited, because nobody has enough money to boost all the countries of the world. So I concentrated on trade and I think they appreciated it.

**Africa Report:** It's been two years since you became president. What have been your major accomplishments and disappointments?

**Museveni:** As far as accomplishments are concerned, there are many. Peace, security, respect for human rights, the return of refugees, return of the professionals who fled the country, the rehabilitation efforts—repairing the roads, importing trucks to transport our crops to the towns, repairing our sugar, textiles, tea, and coffee factories. A lot of rehabilitation has taken place already and more is in the pipeline. So I am really happy with that progress.

About the disappointments, the only weakness I see is lack of cadreship. Cadres are people in each sector on whom you can rely, who are reliable and conscientious. Sometimes I get disappointed to find somebody who could do something and he's corrupt. So I think we need to pay more attention to that element—cadreship.

**Africa Report:** By political education?

**Museveni:** Yes, political education and also remuneration which would win them from these corrupt ways, some of which they have gotten accustomed to—rewards so they don't have to be tempted by corruption. We are making some movement on that—real incomes have improved. But what can somebody buy with the salary he is making? The purchasing power of the salary needs to be somehow improved. There is more to be done. I think through a combination of political education and better remuneration, we will be able to rescue them from their corrupt ways. □

have turned out like Haiti, where for centuries people were slaves. Now do you think that is good? I'd rather have reaction by the people against misgovernment! It's good, it's dynamic, it's progressive!

It's unfortunate, but given the circumstances in which we found ourselves, it was the best alternative. I wouldn't have preferred the alternative of Haiti, would you? Where you have a man like Papa Doc who kills people until he dies in his bed! It is tragic! I would be more concerned about Haiti than Uganda. Uganda is all right because these people know how to defend themselves. If you are a bad government, they fight you! Good! That's the American tradition of George Washington!

**Africa Report:** What was the aim of your meeting with President Reagan?

**Museveni:** Our aim was friendship with the American people and the people of the whole world. We don't know what all these struggles are for, East-West conflict, I have never known the aim of these struggles, so we want friendship with all people. And Mr. Reagan was very friendly, Mr. Bush, and all the others. They understood our position. There had been a lot of distortions of our position, because there is also a tremendous amount of ignorance in some of these institutions where people take positions without knowing the inside story. So that was my main aim and I think we achieved it.

**Africa Report:** By distortions, do you mean the way people tend to characterize your ideology and government—alternately socialist, progressive, pragmatic, nationalistic, pro-Qaddafi?

# The Dynamics of Discontent

Kenya

The Kenyan government's reaction to protests at the University of Nairobi, riots in Mombasa, and mounting tensions with Uganda has been to cast about for enemies—both foreign and internal. Human rights has become more of an issue for Kenyans and Western donors alike.

BY LINDSEY HILSUM

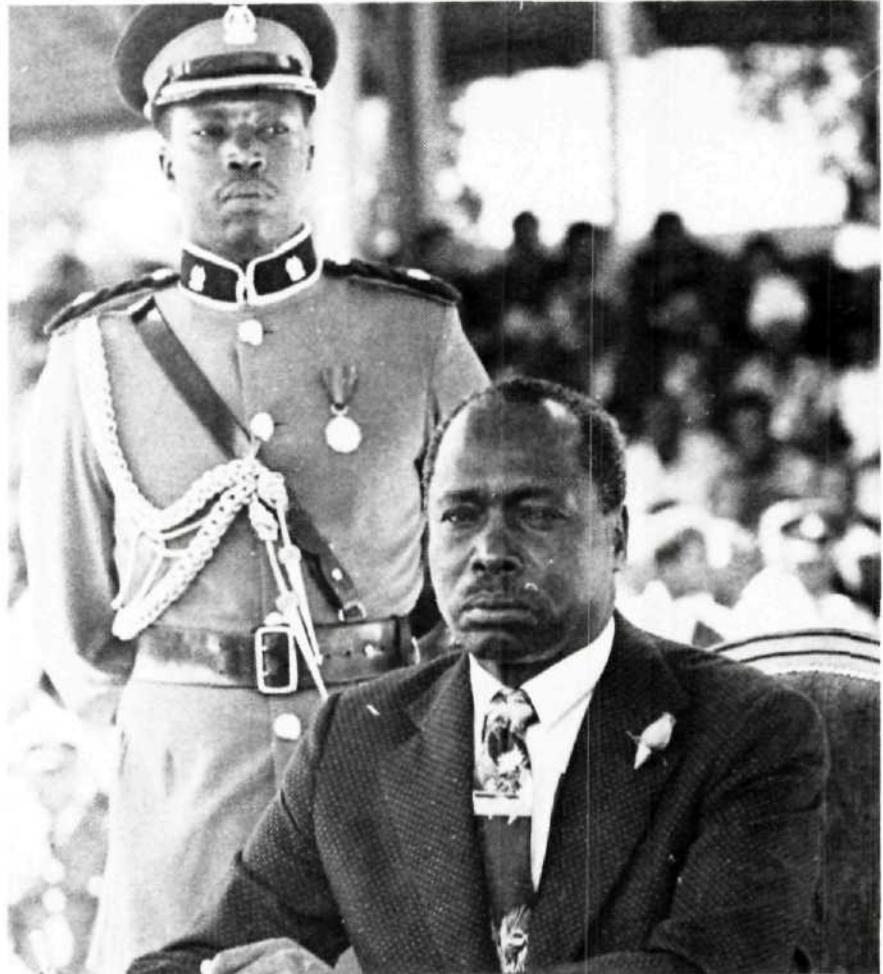
On November 15th, heavily armed riot police, backed up by the paramilitary General Service Unit, stormed the student residences at Nairobi University. They did it again the following day, whooping and hollering and beating their riot shields, smashing down doors and windows, clubbing and kicking students and anyone else in their path.

This was the Kenyan government's response to a campus protest which turned violent when students started throwing stones and taunting the police. After two days of clashes, in which 42 students were arrested and one shot in the arm, the authorities closed down the university and sent the students home.

It is debatable whether student policies are a barometer of the state of the nation. Students are a small, distinct, and—as many less educated and impoverished Kenyans point out—privileged group. Nonetheless, the events which provoked the protest, and the force with which it was quashed, show that the government takes the students very seriously.

Moreover, the disturbances came less than a month after riots in the coastal city of Mombasa. Angry Muslim youths threw stones at the police who had stopped a religious rally, and a few days later they tried to lynch Shariff

*Lindsey Hilsum reports for the British Broadcasting Corporation and the London Guardian from Nairobi.*



"The Kenyan government's reaction to criticism has been to hit out at those who speak it"

Nassir, a Mombasa member of Parliament who is slavishly effusive in his praise for President Daniel arap Moi.

The students are not the only group to be unhappy with an increasingly autocratic leadership, corruption in government, or the heavy-handed and often brutal behavior of the police. Critics also include lawyers and church leaders, and there is considerable unease among the wealthy Asian business community which controls a significant part of the economy.

At the university, trouble started when plain-clothes policemen arrested seven student leaders, dragging them out of their beds at gunpoint in the small hours of the morning. It seems that the authorities were uneasy about speeches the leaders had made at a student meeting the previous day. Plain-clothes officers of the ubiquitous Special Branch,

Kenya's security intelligence network, reported that the seven newly elected officers of the Student Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) had said that students should distance themselves from the government.

Since the attempted coup in August 1982, in which several students and lecturers were implicated, President Moi has kept a close watch on the universities. He has tried to co-opt student leaders, inviting them on official tours and to tea at State House. The newly elected SONU chairman, Robert Buke, said at the meeting that student politics should be more independent, and that the students should no longer "take tea" with the president. Such sentiments are regarded as "seditious" in Kenya today.

The government is reluctant to analyze the internal dynamics of discontent, preferring to cast around for an outside

enemy. At first, the president said that the students "grouped themselves with Boers who want to destroy the black man." A week later, he accused Western journalists, who were beaten up by the police while covering the disturbances, of "inciting the rioters."

Eventually the blame was laid firmly at the feet of the Libyans. Robert Buke was convicted of spying for Libya and jailed for five years. The deputy public prosecutor, Bernard Chunga, who handles virtually all politically sensitive cases for the state, said that Libyan diplomats paid Buke and others "to spread the gospel of socialism as understood by Libya to the students." Despite Libyan denials, their chargé d'affaires in Nairobi was expelled.

Buke, who had no legal representation, was convicted on his own guilty plea, and no other evidence was produced. It was the second such case in less than a year; in April, four ex-students were similarly convicted of spying for Libya and five diplomats from the People's Bureau in Nairobi were expelled.

The Kenyan government's choice of foreign devil is idiosyncratic. President Moi is a close ally of the United States, allowing the American navy facilities at Mombasa and receiving \$53 million per year in aid. There was, therefore, some surprise when Kenya suddenly expelled seven American missionaries, without giving notice to the U.S. embassy.

It was the strangest story of the year—"bizarre" was the word one American diplomat applied. In November, Kenya's three newspapers ran the story of a coup plot, outlined in a letter purporting to come from an American church, urging members of the Ku Klux Klan to give money for the overthrow of black African governments, starting with Kenya. The letter named the seven missionaries as needing funds to bribe Kenyan officials to further the coup.

Investigations by the State Department bore out the suspicions of diplomats and observers that the letter was a forgery and the alleged plot a hoax. The U.S. embassy put out a statement "seeking the support of the government of Kenya in explaining the facts to the public."

Sources within the Kenyan press say that government officials insisted that the newspapers run the coup plot story, absurd as it seemed, as front-page news. Moi used the opportunity to warn the *wananchi*—the ordinary citizens—to be vigilant about foreigners.

"There is a minority of non-Kenyans among us who have come to our country for carefully disguised purposes," he said. "They claim they have come to work with us in our development efforts, but. . . their real work has been sabotage and destabilization. . . on occasion [they have] deliberately sought to undermine the security of the state."

Similarly, after the riots in Mombasa, in which one man died and at least 20 people were injured, Shariff Nassir blamed an unspecified "foreign force." There were dark mutterings about Iranian fundamentalists infiltrating the youth, but no one appears to have addressed the local issues which ignited the anger.

Anonymous pamphlets circulating in the predominantly Muslim town complain of a "Christian bias" in the local administration. The pamphlets also mention the provocative way the administration broke up the Muslim rally, sending in police to disperse the crowd after it had gathered, instead of calling in Muslim leaders to discuss the reasons for banning the meeting.

The alien enemy can also be found within. Kenya's 60,000-strong Asian community is conspicuously wealthy, ethnically homogeneous, and deeply resented. Although they play no direct role in politics—there are no Asian members of Parliament or permanent secretaries—they control 70 percent of the urban retail sector and much of the manufacturing industry.

The government has clamped down on Asians sending money overseas, arresting four Asian bankers and two businessmen for failing to remit foreign currency earned from coffee exports. Few Asians deny that corrupt business practices exist, but they point out that African civil servants in the Central Bank and the Treasury collude. Yet so far, no senior civil servants have been sacked or brought to court.

"We are being used as scapegoats," said one Asian businessman. "Many

members of our community are packing up and leaving. They have British passports and they feel they have no future in Kenya anymore."

Previously, Moi was careful to keep the Asians on his side. Moving against them is popular politically, but economists say it is likely to rebound as the economy suffers. The black market rate for the dollar increased from 19 shillings mid-year to 30 by December, as Asians scrambled for foreign exchange. At the end of the year, foreign currency reserves were down to one month's cover, and manufacturers reported that their applications for forex to import essential raw materials were being rejected.

Only expatriates will complain when Australian honey and British chocolate disappear from Nairobi's well-stocked supermarket shelves, but economists predict that essential items, such as vehicle spares, will run short by mid-1988. The terms of a new IMF agreement have not been made public, but with the drop in the value of the shilling, higher inflation is inevitable, and economic stringency may lead to a cutback in social service spending.

"The effects of what the IMF is requiring will hit the average Kenyan quite severely," predicts Kenyan economist Robert Shaw. He points out that social services in the towns are already overstretched and the population continues to grow. "People are finding it increasingly difficult to get places for their children in schools, and it is quite common for someone to wait a long time before he can be attended to at hospital." Meanwhile, there are ever more unemployed youths ranging the Nairobi streets.

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**"Students are not the only group unhappy with an increasingly autocratic leadership, corruption in government, or the heavy-handed and often brutal behavior of the police."**

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Moi's relations with donor countries deteriorated sharply last year. A long-planned trip to Sweden and Norway was cancelled because Scandinavian human rights groups had criticized Kenya so severely that it would have been embarrassing for all the governments involved. When the president visited the U.S. in May, he met with criticism about human rights there too and for the first time, Congress made increased aid to Kenya dependent on an improvement in human rights.

Eleven people are detained without trial under Kenya's Public Security Act, while more than 80 have been jailed in connection with a secret anti-government movement known as Mwakenya, which was uncovered in 1986. None of the 80 had legal representation in court, and both Amnesty International and the American Lawyers Committee for Human Rights have published evidence that many were tortured into pleading guilty.

The Kenyan government's reaction to such criticism has been to hit out at those who speak it. Moi has described Amnesty International as "an agent of imperialism." In one of its more apocalyptic editorials, the government-run *Kenyan Times* referred to the BBC's reporting of human rights issues as a "satanic campaign." Foreign journalists who continue to cover human rights cases have been lambasted by politicians and the government-controlled press, and the president has threatened to reduce Nairobi's international press corps to a handful of correspondents.

Yet the issue of human rights is beginning to come into the public domain within Kenya. In May, a prominent Nairobi lawyer, Gibson Kamau Kuria, tried to file affidavits on behalf of two political prisoners alleging torture. He predicted that if he did this, he would be arrested himself. He was right. The Special Branch picked him up ten days later, and he was detained officially without trial until December 12, the 24th anniversary of Kenya's independence, when Moi announced the release of three detainees.

Kuria was interrogated by the police for only four days and then transferred to a maximum security prison. While the prison authorities treated him well, the

police questioned him after having forced him to strip naked and threatened to kill him. "The police seem to believe that no law governs them," he said.

Mohammed Abdullahi, a Kenyan journalist working for the BBC in London, says: "The Kenyan police have been brutal all along. They have not had the correct training, even after independence. Their training program has been one of suppressing at any cost, and this time the attitude has been: hit and hit again."

There is, however, a new consciousness that this is an issue. The Kenyan newspapers report more cases of suspects alleging torture or beating, and while the police deny that torture is a routine part of interrogation, they have been forced to investigate some cases. The most significant is the inquest into the death of Peter Njenga Karanja, a businessman who was arrested on suspicion of involvement with Mwakenya and died after 20 days in police custody.

The man in charge of the team investigating Mwakenya, senior superintendent James Opiyo, denied in court that force was used to obtain confessions. "That would be unethical," he said. However, photographs of Karanja's body, taken at the post-mortem, show it to be covered in bruises and wounds, including one on the left knee which the doctor who treated him when the police brought him to hospital described as "a big crater, with the edges of the skin rotten, and pus emanating." Opiyo testified that the wounds "came up spontaneously."

The focus on human rights has drawn attention away from Mwakenya itself. The government claims to have virtually stamped out the movement. There have been no incidents of sabotage for 18 months, although a spate of derailments in mid-1987 sparked off speculation that the movement was becoming active again. Occasionally a new document condemning Moi appears, but it is a crime to know of the existence of such tracts without telling the police, so few Kenyans will discuss them. There is no evidence that Mwakenya poses a real threat to the government.

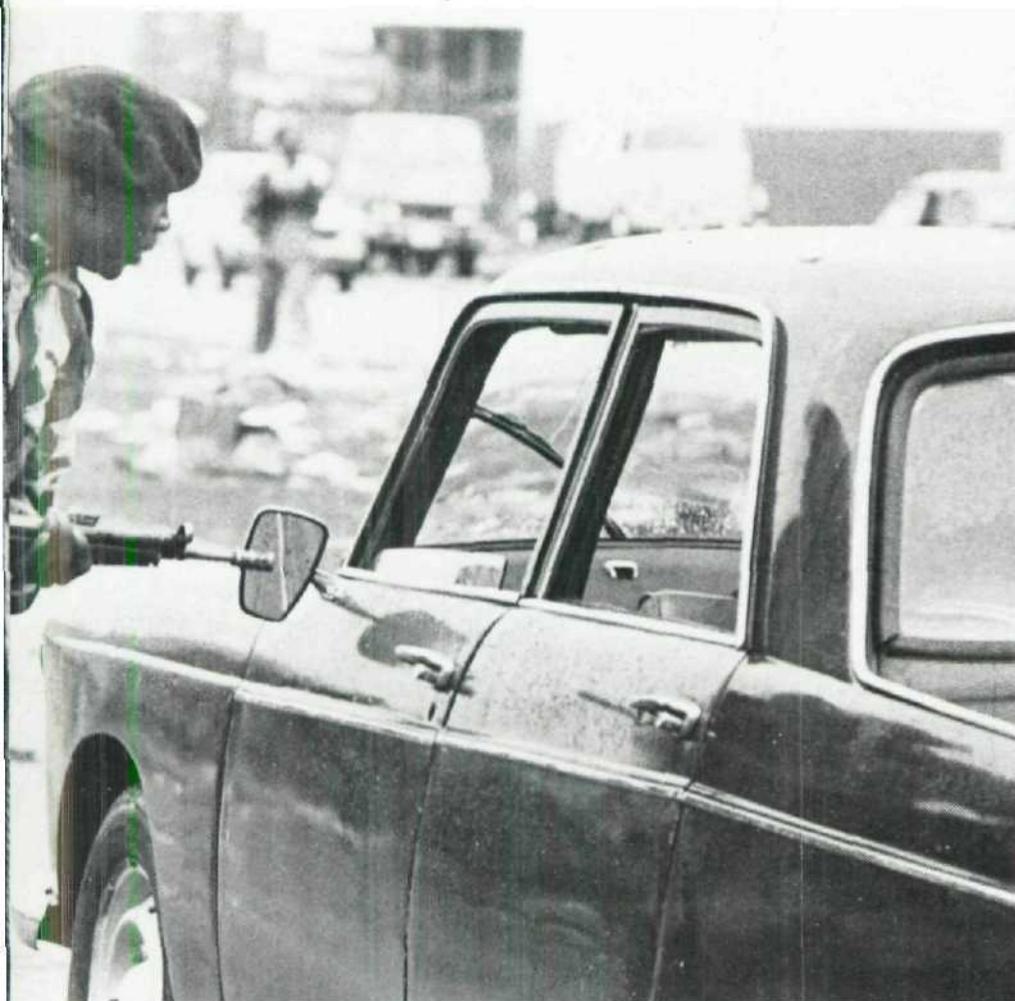
The clampdown on criticism, including the fear that one may be branded a



Mwakenya member for expressing disloyal thoughts, has prevented any real opposition from emerging. The lone, frail voice of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, vice-president during the early post-independence years and now in his seventies, was heard after five years of silence, but his attempt to emerge from history into the present has failed.

He wrote two letters to Moi, expressing his anxiety about the decline of democracy in Kenya, but the president did not reply. He still commands a considerable following in his native Luo area, and the people of Bondo, his former parliamentary constituency, sent a petition to the president asking that Odinga be readmitted to the sole political party, KANU, so that he can stand in the 1988 elections. They too received no reply.

Odinga's analysis, however, tallies with the views expressed in private by lawyers, church leaders, and even some politicians. "The sense of insecurity which today has permeated every level



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of our society is due to the erosion of democratic traditions of our country," he wrote.

"The narrow and exclusivist political base upon which the government is

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**"While relations with most neighboring countries have improved, Moi's differences with Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni have grown deeper and more acute."**

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working means that those who manage the affairs of state are so sensitive to criticism that they cannot draw a distinction between constructive criticism of

**Army security check in Nairobi, 1982: "Since the attempted coup, President Moi has kept a close watch on the universities"**

government policies and subversion. . . We have the urgent task. . . to stem this gradual slide toward tyranny and cultism."

The only other outspoken political opposition is overseas. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Kenya's most famous novelist and a vocal left-wing critic of Moi, has founded a movement called "Umoja," meaning liberty. Based in London, it brings together several groups from different European countries.

However, it is doubtful that its utterances will have much influence within Kenya, primarily because the rhetoric of intellectual revolution is not in the vocabulary of ordinary people. Kenyans may well resent the power of an authoritarian local chief, or the greed of a politician, or the force used by the police, but they do not, at the moment, see themselves as "the workers and the peas-

ants" united against the government.

Moi, by contrast, does know how to reach the people. He travels widely in the countryside and addresses local issues in his speeches. "I maintain that he's still very popular with the general mass of Kenyans," says Mohammed Abdullahi. "What he talks is development politics. This is his major appeal—that we're better than other people neighboring us, and we have been better than them because we're doing the basics: trying to improve our medical services, our education. And this is why up to now, not a single politician of any stature has been able to sway opposition against him."

With Somalia and Ethiopia beset by drought, Tanzania still struggling with an economic crisis, and Uganda and Sudan rocked by civil wars, it is not difficult for Moi to convince his people that they are better off than their neighbors. But while relations with most of these countries have improved, Moi's differences with Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni have grown deeper and more acute. Museveni, the guerrilla commander-turned-president, has an informal style, while Moi is an authoritarian figure, careful of protocol. Moi distrusts his neighbor's rhetoric of revolution and his alleged links with Libya.

For a while, the tension between the two countries, heightened by vitriolic and for the most part unsubstantiated scare stories in the newspapers on both sides, seemed likely to erupt into conflict. The Ugandan government claimed that Kenya was supporting Ugandan rebels, while Kenya accused Uganda of offering safe passage to Kenyan politicians fleeing into exile. The accusations and insults flew, and Ugandan exports were held up for weeks on the border.

Then in mid-December, fighting broke out between Kenyan police and Ugandan soldiers at Busia, the main border crossing between the two countries. Each country blamed the other for the shooting in which five Ugandan soldiers were killed. The border remained closed as Kenya expelled Uganda's two ranking diplomats from Nairobi and recalled its high commissioner from Kampala, claiming that Uganda had insulted President Moi and assaulted the integrity of the Kenyan judiciary.



# HINDUS RESPE THE CONSTITUTION

"Kenya's 60,000-strong Asian community is conspicuously wealthy, ethnically homogeneous, and deeply resented"

**"The clampdown on criticism, including fears that one may be branded a Mwakenya member for expressing disloyal thoughts, has prevented any real opposition from emerging."**

Neither side can afford such a dispute. Landlocked Uganda needs Kenya's ports and railways, while Kenya needs the revenue the trade routes provide. Yet the new—and often distorted—consciousness of what is happening in Uganda serves the Kenyan government well. The message behind the belligerence is clear: Uganda is in chaos. We must preserve our peace and relative prosperity.

Moi is equally determined to preserve his own supremacy. He carefully juggles cabinet ministers and senior civil servants, assuring that no one accumulates too much power. The head of the civil service, known as the chief secretary, Simeon Nyachae, was seen for a long time as the second most powerful man in the country, but he fell out of favor and was pushed out of power. At the end of 1986, the government amended the constitution to abolish the position of chief secretary, ensuring that no one would accumulate such power again.

Similarly, when the disciplinary committee of KANU seemed to become too powerful for comfort, the president simply disbanded it.

Nonetheless, it is still KANU on the ascendant, while Parliament is on the wane. A Christian magazine, *Beyond*, ran an article written as "A letter to Parliament." "Is it true you are relinquishing your supremacy to KANU?" it

asked. "Are you, without the mandate of the people, sacrificing the one symbol of democracy and stability to the altar of the party? What use is a parliament where there is no freedom of expression?"

Member of Parliament Martin Shikuku sees great danger in the decline of parliamentary debate. "There should be freedom, and there is freedom," he says. "But that freedom can get lost if you don't exercise it, if you've got to say 'Amen' to everything because it is said by so-and-so. If we get ourselves cowed down when we are afraid, then we could easily get one man or a group of people becoming dictators. But if we jolt them, we'll be safe."

Shikuku is one of a dwindling number of people within the system who dare do that jolting. Known popularly as "the people's watchman," he rails against corruption and has called for the resignation of the governor of the Central Bank and the minister of finance following the currency scandals involving Asian businessmen.

Dissent is likely to become even more muffled during the early part of 1988, as politicians concentrate on garnering support in their constituencies in preparation for the elections. The date has not yet been set, but electioneering—which involves sweeping promises of development projects, large donations, maligning political opponents, and extravagantly swearing loyalty to the president—has already begun.

The elections will be the test of KANU power. Many politicians who failed to be elected as MPs last time have since risen to high positions within the party, and they will be trying to oust those who represent the old-style parliamentary system. The preliminary elections to select candidates, in which only KANU members may vote, will be carried out by the queueing system. Any contender who gets more than 70 percent of the vote will go forward unopposed in the general election.

Moi has already identified some of his favored candidates, implying that they should stand unopposed. We can expect a parliament with even fewer members who are prepared to debate, and even more who listen to the president and say "Amen." □

# Interview with President Ali Hassan Mwinyi

INTERVIEWED BY MARGARET A. NOVICKI

**Africa Report:** Many observers credit you with having revived the Tanzanian economy by your pragmatic economic policies, commenting that your IMF-supported austerity program represents a reversal of the "socialism and self-reliance" approach of your predecessor. Would you agree with that assessment and could you explain the immediate and longer-term objectives of the economic recovery program?

**Mwinyi:** I think I should start by saying that when I assumed the presidency of my country, we were faced with gigantic economic problems. At that time, our agricultural production was very low and we could not produce enough food for our people. The volume of cash crops that we managed to produce was falling year after year—so much so that we were faced with an acute shortage of foreign exchange at a time when the food produced by the farmers could not satisfy the needs of the country. So we were forced to import massive amounts of food from abroad when we had no money with which to do that. That was one of the problems.

Another problem was that our economic infrastructure was in very bad disrepair. Our roads—or what used to be called roads—had deteriorated to just dust paths and we had to do something about that. We had hospitals that had no drugs, schools that had no books or teaching aids, and our debt burden was mounting. So these were the problems facing my presidency the moment I entered into the shoes of Mwalimu Nyerere.

Of necessity, we had to do something. We were advised by many friends, including the Americans, the Nordic countries, Britain, and others that the only "open sesame" was to enter into an agreement with the IMF. We had been negotiating with the IMF for the last six years. So when I entered office, we started an agreement.

My immediate plan in doing so was to get relief by rescheduling our debts, and I am glad I have succeeded in doing that. The donors have agreed to reschedule our debts for five years and in the meantime, we pay a little—2.5 percent of our debts—until we resume our repayments. So that has given us a breathing space. Another thing we thought we should be doing is to see to it that production of both food and cash crops increases so that we are able to feed ourselves without having to import massive amounts of grain from outside. At the same time, we could use what little foreign exchange we'd be getting to improve our economic infrastructure.

Under an IMF-supported recovery program, the Tanzanian economy is beginning to emerge from years of decline. In this *Africa Report* exclusive, President Mwinyi answers whether his policies represent a reversal of those of his predecessor, Julius Nyerere, and explains Tanzania's new relationship with the U.S.



Margaret A. Novicki

**"When I assumed the presidency, we were faced with gigantic economic problems"**

Fortunately, we succeeded in that when we entered into an agreement with the IMF. Some capital is flowing, though very, very slowly, but something is coming in. Because of the breathing space, this is helping us. Fortunately at the same time, we had two successive years of good rains and our people managed to produce as much food as possible—so much so that now we are faced with the problems of plenty, so much food in the country that we can't find storage for it.

So this is what we have been trying to do. And as I say, we seem to be succeeding. As to whether the steps I am taking are a reverse of what President Nyerere used to advocate, I think to be fair to him, it is not so. What we are doing now is to carry on where he left off. Nobody can cite any example to prove that we have reversed this or that. We are just carrying on from where he left off, because after all, I don't think any government can reverse party policies. In our country, the party is supreme and the government is only an instrument which implements the party's positions. Mwalimu Nyerere before and now myself are only implementing the party's directives. There is no change, no change whatsoever. There may be changes in style, but no change in policy matters.

**Africa Report:** IMF programs focus to a large extent on increasing the role of the private sector and allowing free market economic forces to take hold. Do you see that approach as consistent with your policy of socialism? Can the two co-exist?

**Mwinyi:** Yes, I think I should make it clear that Tanzania is aiming at becoming a socialist country. It is not yet a socialist country. We are on the road toward socialism. At the present moment, ours is a mixed economy. We allow private enterprise. At present, tourism for example is in the hands of both the public sector and private enterprise. Our agriculture is probably 80-90 percent in the private sector because all our cash crops—tea, coffee, tobacco, cashew nuts—are undertaken by private people. Our food crops—all the rice, maize—are produced by private people. Sixty percent of our transport sector is in the hands of private people.

So we have been living with this mixed economy since the time of Dr. Nyerere and we are continuing the same. If there is anything we have added to that, it is that we have allowed people to help in the distribution. Before, that was done only by parastatal organizations. So that is the situation as it was in the past and as it is at the present moment.

**Africa Report:** So you see more room for the role of the private sector in the economy, as there has been some discussion of privatizing the parastatals.

**Mwinyi:** Some of these corporations are working efficiently. Some are inefficient. There is a possibility that we shall continue with those which work and are efficient and do away with the ones that are inefficient. We did that in the agricultural sector. At one time, we nationalized certain sisal estates, but we did so primarily because those farmers had neglected the estates and they were producing very little. What we did was to step into the shoes of the absent landlords. But otherwise, no change.

**Africa Report:** As you mentioned, Tanzania and so many other African countries are suffering from very serious debt problems, while export prices of their primary commodities are declining. What strategy would you advocate to the creditor community to address Africa's debt crisis?

**Mwinyi:** You are right, we are very much indebted to the outside world. Our debt in Africa is immense. And much as we would like to pay, I don't think we are in a position to do so. What we would like the donor countries to do is to follow the example of the Canadian government, where possible, to write off these debts and if not possible, then at least to reschedule, giving us a long time. At the moment, in our agreement with the IMF, we have had our debts rescheduled for five years, but five years is not enough. It should be a minimum of 10 years, but 20-25 would be ideal, so that we could recover and then perhaps build up our economy to the extent that we find ourselves in a position to repay. But as it is now, much as we would like to honor our debts, I don't think we are in a position to do so. Not only are many of our countries unable to pay the principal of the debt, but they can't even pay the interest!

I think it would be more realistic for the countries that have lent money to Africa to also look into the possibility of decreasing interest rates—another factor which is affecting our performance in repaying our debts very considerably. Rescheduling, giving us a fairly long repayment period, decreasing interest rates, and better still, writing off some, if not all of them. Otherwise we shall remain in trouble!

**Africa Report:** What are Africa's options if the donor com-

munity doesn't develop a concerted response to this problem?

**Mwinyi:** We are respectable governments. We entered into agreements and asked for these debts of our own free will. I don't think it is fair on our part to disown them and stop paying. I wouldn't advocate that line of thinking, but I would certainly like to see our partners appreciate our difficulties and then work together to find a solution to the problem. But to say enough is enough and we are not going to pay anything—that is not the answer. Most of us are really unable to pay our debts although we really want to do so. We have our own self-respect to think of!

**Africa Report:** Many Western countries are supporting your economic recovery program. Could you talk in particular about the support the U.S. is giving to your program?

**Mwinyi:** I am very happy to say that the support the United States is giving to Tanzania is very encouraging. We were indebted to the U.S. government, and while the sum involved was negligible by American standards—\$7 million—it prevented the U.S. from giving us any further loans. So for a long time, we did not enjoy any financial support from the American government.

Lately, as a result of our agreement with the IMF and the debt rescheduling, the Americans are now coming up with very positive support, so now we know that they really were prevented by the Brook Amendment! Their contribution to our recovery program is very promising and we are looking forward to further cooperation. Britain is also coming up positively, as are our friends in the Nordic countries. So we are hoping that we will be able to come through this difficult period in a matter of years. I can't say how many years, but the horizon is now clearing and a time will come when we shall come out of the mess we are in at the present moment.

**Africa Report:** What role do your ports and railways play in SADC's strategy to reduce economic dependence on South Africa?

**Mwinyi:** The southern African region has two alternatives. One is to continue depending on South African routes to and from the harbor and the other is to go north through Tanzania. At the present moment, we are trying to use the railway system that traverses Mozambique, but this is under constant attack, and as you know, Zimbabwe and Tanzania have committed troops in guarding these railways. Unless South Africa changes its ways—and that is not in the foreseeable future—the only remaining alternative now is to the north, through the Tazara railway to Dar es Salaam. To this end, we have been trying to strengthen our capability of receiving bigger volumes of exports and imports from the landlocked countries.

We have received some assistance in developing Dar es Salaam harbor, and recently the Reagan administration offered us a substantial amount of money to strengthen the Tazara railway itself, some \$47 million. We should seek all assistance that we can get from friendly countries to really fortify the capacity of Dar es Salaam harbor and Tazara railway—as alternatives. At the present moment, some trains do get from Zimbabwe and Malawi to the Indian Ocean across Mozambique, but these are temporary measures, unless the hostilities cease in South Africa. In the meantime, the only reliable alternative route is Dar es Salaam and we are quite

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**“We know what led to President Reagan’s agreeing to the limited sanctions that were imposed—the U.S. Congress. I don’t think that for one moment, President Reagan would agree to seeing his ‘allies’ being isolated.”**

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satisfied with the way our friends are donating to help strengthen the harbor and the railway.

**Africa Report:** You mentioned Tanzania’s assistance to Mozambique in its struggle against Renamo. What made you decide to commit troops to assist the Mozambican government?

**Mwinyi:** First, we owe our solidarity to southern Africa and especially to Mozambique. Also, we share borders with Mozambique and if its government falls, ours will be next. So we didn’t want to wait until the situation worsens. If Tanzania has to do any fighting, it had better do it outside the borders of Tanzania! We know that Renamo is a surrogate of South Africa and South Africa is out to destabilize all the governments of southern Africa, Tanzania being one of them. So we thought we should assist Mozambique to withstand these destabilization activities by South Africa rather than waiting for our turn. We are helping them to reduce the impact of Renamo activities and to guard the railway to the ports.

**Africa Report:** What strategy would you like to see Western leaders adopt toward southern Africa and South Africa? Since efforts to impose comprehensive sanctions against South Africa haven’t gone anywhere, should the focus be on strengthening the frontline states?

**Mwinyi:** Well, I should like to see both, not one instead of the other. There have been ideas floating around that since Margaret Thatcher is adamant on the sanctions question, why not concentrate on assisting the frontline states in enabling them to withstand the pressures of South Africa? But we believe it would be wrong to adhere to that strategy because we would actually be neglecting the cause of the trouble and concentrating on its effects and that wouldn’t lead us anywhere.

We should do something about ending apartheid, which is causing all this trouble. Since we cannot engage South Africa militarily, the only peaceful means left at our disposal is to advocate comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. At the same time, we should see if Western governments can also assist the frontline states to withstand whatever destabilization activities might be mounted by South Africa. We should do both, but not one instead of the other.

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**“Mwalimu Nyerere before and now myself are only implementing the party’s directives. There may be changes in style, but no change in policy matters.”**

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**Africa Report:** What is your view of President Reagan’s recent judgment that the U.S.’ limited sanctions against South Africa haven’t worked and therefore he has no intention of adopting further measures?

**Mwinyi:** We know what led to President Reagan’s agreeing to the limited sanctions that were imposed—the U.S. Congress. All along he was against it. I don’t think that for one moment President Reagan would agree to seeing his “allies” being isolated. As long as South Africa is an ally, the government of the United States would not like to see it suffer. But I’m certain that sanctions do hurt and if the U.S. government were prepared to go along with world opinion on the question of sanctions, that would go a long way toward ending apartheid in South Africa.

Already, even with the limited sanctions imposed by the United States and the EEC, we find that some cracks have begun to show in the Pretoria government. We hear of delegates from the white community meeting the ANC outside South Africa—they’ve done it twice already. Why should they do that? They never did in the past. Why now? And who are these people who are doing it? They are mostly businessmen who care about their business. So even these limited sanctions are beginning to bite, and if and when the world community agrees to comprehensive, mandatory sanctions on South Africa, I think apartheid will be dismantled. Even though President Reagan doesn’t believe in that, I hope he lives long enough to see apartheid dismantled in South Africa! I hope the world will be persuaded to agree to these sanctions.

**Africa Report:** Is the U.S. contributing anything positive at this time toward a resolution of the southern African conflict?

**Mwinyi:** The American people are doing a good deal and Africa is grateful for the solidarity being shown by American citizens. It is only the Reagan administration which to us is the stumbling block, so we hope and pray that the next government will see eye-to-eye with the rest of the world and perhaps something more positive can be done in southern Africa. We have no quarrel with the citizens of America. We have seen what they are doing, and even the limited sanctions are in a way a result of their activities.

**Africa Report:** With former President Nyerere remaining as chairman of Tanzania’s sole political party, are you as president limited in fulfilling your program?

**Mwinyi:** I don’t think for me it will be a great handicap for President Nyerere to continue his day-to-day affairs as chairman because after all, as I said earlier, in Tanzania the party is supreme and it is the organ which lays down policies for the country. The government only executes the policies of the party. So whether the two functions are united in one person or in different persons, I don’t think will make a great deal of difference.

**Africa Report:** Is there anything else you would like to say to our readers?

**Mwinyi:** I don’t have anything else in particular to say except that the United States government, a superpower, for a long time was unable to assist Tanzania because of technical reasons. Now that those reasons are over, I would like to see our relations improving more and more, so that our cooperation becomes even more intense than it is today. □

# Politics After Dodoma

## Tanzania

Expected to retire from politics at the recent CCM congress, former President Nyerere surprised the nation by agreeing to continue in the role of party chairman. With "Mwalimu" remaining in a position of influence, will President Mwinyi's efforts to liberalize the economy prove short-lived?

BY PHILIP SMITH

After two years of speculation, rumor, and intrigue throughout this vast East African country, former President Julius Nyerere made his play at the very last minute. Dodoma, the venue of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party's third national conference, held its breath.

If the 65-year-old statesman was about to honor his word and retire as CCM chairman at the conference—as he had promised when handing over the presidency in 1985—a new generation of post-Nyerere politics was set to begin in Tanzania. Foreign investors, bankers, and donor countries eagerly awaited his decision.

In Dodoma, an edgy group of party hardliners led by their ailing secretary-general, Rashidi Kawawa, anxiously chewed their fingernails. They had more to lose than anyone, for a number of them would have been targeted by the only other possible candidate for the chairmanship, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi.

These hardliners have enjoyed a lavish and privileged life in Tanzania—thanks to their positions in the party and to Nyerere's personal policy of ignoring corruption as long as he himself was seen to be honest. Fully understanding the implications of life without Mwalimu (Nyerere's reverent Swahili name, meaning teacher), Kawawa launched an unofficial campaign for him to stay.

Weeks before the conference, the campaign intensified. On Zanzibar, a CCM meeting of the faithful old guard drafted a press release, "Zanzibar Calls

on Nyerere to Stay," and sent it to the state-run daily newspaper. Too obvious, their ploy was spiked.

While some party militants worried about their future, Nyerere himself had a number of factors to weigh. He had become publicly uncomfortable with the country's improved relationship with the International Monetary Fund, characterizing it as the "capitalist's watchdog." However, when handing over the presidency to Mwinyi in 1985, he knew that his hand-picked successor's first step would be to sign an agreement with the IMF.

By 1985, the economy was in tatters. From the time of his 1967 Arusha Declaration, Nyerere had succeeded in creating peace and unity among his 22 million people, but he had failed to come to terms with the country's growing debt, now at \$3.61 billion, and its overpriced currency, the shilling. An IMF agreement became inevitable, but Nyerere could not sign his name to it.

He was also concerned about leaving the political arena without ensuring that his major objectives had been achieved—the total integration of Zanzibar into the mainland and stability throughout the country to last long after his departure.

More than 1800 delegates and another 1200 observers gathered in the dusty future inland capital of Dodoma to attend the party congress in late October. One needed look no further than the banners draped around the streets to realize that little—if anything—was about to change in the ruling party's ideology. "Building of socialism and self-reliance is a permanent task," said one of the hundreds of banners.

Before the conference got underway and the first of many late night parties

was held, President Mwinyi went to Nyerere to ascertain his decision regarding the chairmanship. According to party sources, Nyerere said he was "flexible," which in his own way, meant: "I am staying—sort it out."

Possibly relieved that the huge burden of both the party and country were not about to fall on his shoulders, Mwinyi did just that. He reported Nyerere's feelings to the CCM central committee, which immediately renominated the former president as sole candidate for chairman. Mwinyi was then renominated for the vice-chairmanship.

The early announcement took everyone by surprise. The delegates, crammed into the huge cotton warehouse, were overjoyed at their chairman's re-election. Deafening chants of "CCM. . . CCM. . . CCM" could be heard in the far-off hills.

And it was on this note that the party congress began. Nyerere kept the momentum going in his first address. He lashed out at the growing wealthy class in Tanzania—the anti-socialist behavior



"Fully understanding the implications of life without Mwalimu, an unofficial campaign for him to stay was launched"

*Philip Smith is a Dar es Salaam-based correspondent for the Financial Times, Economist, and Reuters.*

of a small proportion of the community who have started to benefit from President Mwinyi's economic liberalization policies.

Nyerere's broadside encompassed the wealthy Asian traders (glued to their radios in Dar es Salaam) who run the country's black market economy, and a few members of his own central and national executive committees who have managed to glean tidy earnings from their privileged positions.

His comments sent the usually stable black market price up by 10 shillings to 85 to the dollar. Asians feared another economic crackdown which hit them hard in 1984. It was a false alarm, however.

Riding high on his renomination, Nyerere said the implementation of socialist policies was essential, "especially at times like these." He also explained the need for a capitalist sector, but added, "It must not lead to the whittling away of socialism and self-reliance as a goal."

The capitalist sector has been piloted by the former prime minister and now finance minister, Cleopa Msuya. The minister has earned a good reputation for his skills in haggling with the IMF.

In June 1986, the pragmatic Mwinyi announced a three-year economic recovery program (ERP) to revive the shattered economy. At the time, Tanzanians were queueing in the streets like Muscovites for the most basic food commodities.

The ERP detailed plans to liberalize Tanzania's inefficient, state-run economy by devaluing the currency, raising agricultural producer prices, liberalizing imports, and knocking the 400-odd parastatals into shape through an anti-corruption campaign. Following the classic IMF medicine for Africa, some state enterprises were offered to the private sector, interest rates were increased, and credit restricted.

Members of the largely Asian business community were encouraged to use foreign exchange held overseas to bring imports into Tanzania, with the government asking no tricky questions. This scheme provided about a quarter of the country's \$1.05 billion in imports in 1986. Imports were expected to increase to \$1.15 billion last year and to

\$1.22 billion in 1988.

However, the trend in external payments points to a need for a higher level of concessional aid flows over 1988. In 1986, exports were only \$347.6 million, with the difference paid by Western donors. Last year, they were expected to reach \$411 million and \$460 million in 1988.

The economy grew at 3.3 percent in real terms in 1986, matching the population growth rate, compared with only 2.3 percent in 1985. Central Bank officials predicted 3.5 percent growth for last year.

In the midst of Dodoma's endless socialist rhetoric, news of a new IMF deal reached Dar es Salaam. However, it would have been inappropriate to announce such a deal during the congress; hence it was conveniently ignored. The new deal, which was negotiated last July, will ensure the needed short-term aid money. The SDR 68 million (\$90 million) structural adjustment facility will follow Tanzania's current standby agreement when it runs out in February.

Nevertheless, foreign bankers and diplomats remain critical of Tanzania's implementation of the ERP. The program took a major jolt at Dodoma when the newly elected national executive committee decided to exclude the ERP's architect, Cleopa Msuya, from the central committee.

"It was the most significant result of the conference," commented one Western diplomat in Dodoma. "Msuya will be left to argue his complex theories from the backstalls of the NEC where, quite frankly, few people will understand, and even less will care."

Msuya never suffered fools gladly and his attitude, along with his theories, finally cost him his seat on the central committee. Remaining as finance minister—unless Mwinyi decides on a reshuffle, which is unlikely at this stage—Msuya will continue to negotiate with the IMF and pursue the government's liberalization policies.

Agriculture is critical to Tanzania's efforts to resolve its economic crisis, earning about 80 percent of the country's foreign exchange and accounting for 40 percent of gross domestic product last year. Agriculture also employs

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Tanzania Info

90 percent of the workforce.

Increased agricultural producer prices and good rains resulted in bumper crops in the past two seasons. Cotton production has doubled, with over 200,000 tons expected this season, compared to 103,000 tons two seasons ago.

However, as of early November, 159,000 tons of cotton were still sitting in the villages awaiting transport to ginneries. There is a shortage of trucks, badly knocked around on the poor roads, and huge bottlenecks at train stations. The ginneries are operating at less than 50 percent of capacity due to a lack of spare parts and electricity.

A major donor conference organized by the government and the World Bank was held in November to address the problem of bottlenecks in the transport sector. One agricultural official warned that farmers would return to traditional food crops if the cotton continued to be left to rot, unpaid for.

Incentives to cotton production received a further setback in early November when the government announced a ban on private purchases of any crops. Before, private buyers had undercut the state cooperatives by offering cash instead of credit. Farmers are owed millions of shillings of credit by the cooperatives. The ban will be impossible to enforce, however, and will only hamper a system which has allowed the private distribution of food from sur-

**"Cotton production has doubled, with over 200,000 tons expected this season, compared to 103,000 tons two seasons ago"**

plus to needy areas, utilizing transport and resources which the cooperatives lack.

Devaluation of the shilling remains the key economic issue. Again during Dodoma, rumors were rife of a step devaluation, expected straight after the conference. Around 72 shillings presently buy a dollar, but by January, the rate should be between 90 and 95. By mid-year, the shilling is expected to reach equilibrium at around 140 to 150 to the dollar. According to government officials, the step devaluation was agreed to, but stopped at the last minute "by the highest authority."

While President Mwinyi's moves to crack down on corruption and sell off the loss-making parastatals have been applauded, little has come of his promises. Said one aid official recently, corruption is institutionalized. The standard of living is well below the level in the 1970s, meaning that the average monthly wage is now only enough to feed a small family for five days. Somehow, money has to come into the household. The president has told the relevant ministries to relax controls on petty traders who are trying to earn extra shillings. Cottage industries are increasing.

But it is through higher-level corruption, where ministries fail to keep their books in order, that the country is los-

ing. Managers of parastatals, who technically earn around 7000 shillings a month (almost \$100), often enjoy lavish lifestyles. Corruption is a way of life, from the ticket man at the bus station to the head of a large state corporation. Mwinyi has made a gallant effort to combat the problem—sacking some prominent government administrators along the way—but he will need a miracle to end the backhanding tradition.

After the Dodoma conference, life returned very much to normal. Nyerere and Mwinyi dominated the newspapers like nothing had happened. However, political analysts are attempting to decipher what lies ahead for Tanzania. With the reformers rejected by the party hardliners who held sway in Dodoma, the socialist path will be pursued, with "moderate to hesitant" reform. With Msuya on the outs, nothing is certain in the long term regarding the IMF, although the new loan is encouraging news.

The big question now is who will lead the new vanguard of Tanzanian politics into the next century. The finger has been squarely pointed at Joseph Warioba, present prime minister and a Nyerere stalwart, who, like Salim Ahmed Salim, is favored by the boss. However, unlike Salim, he will win universal appeal as a mainlander if he is nominated for the presidency. A common theory is that this will occur in 1990 when President Mwinyi finishes the first of his two-year terms.

"By then, Mwinyi will be quite happy to stand down and retire to the good life," said one diplomat recently. "The ERP might be forgotten by then as well," he added. By 1990, Nyerere too may be ready to leave his position as chairman and return both jobs to one man. Many informed Tanzanians say Nyerere views Mwinyi as a transitional president and Warioba as the long-term choice. Thus, some significant changes could be expected as early as 1990.

But the coming years are not likely to be easy. While the economic reforms have generated increased trade, there has been little long-term investment. Most foreign investors will want incentives and clear guidelines—namely a foreign investment code—before committing their money to Tanzania. □

# A Revolution Derailed

In Burkina Faso during the October military putsch, our correspondent provides this exclusive report, tracing the factors which led to the death of the nation's most popular leader, Thomas Sankara. Has the Popular Front's coup scuttled prospects for greater popular participation in the process of revolutionary change?

BY ERNEST HARSCH

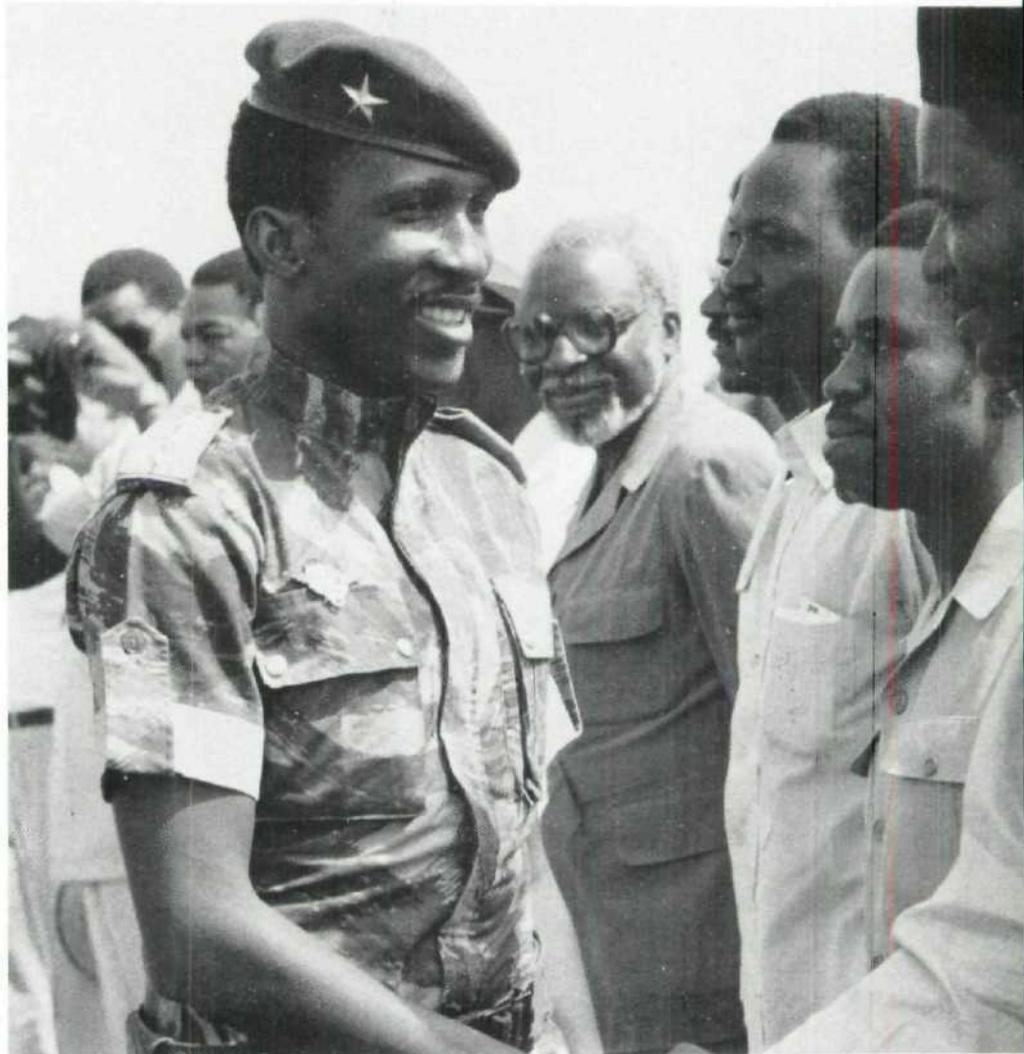
The same day as Burkina's bloody military coup, several hundred peasants had assembled in the marketplace of the small village of Pibaoré to express their support for the four-year-old revolution.

For several hours, they stood under the scorching sun, listening attentively to the speakers—whether the more polished orators who had come from Ouagadougou or the village's own representative of the Women's Union of Burkina, who, only recently literate, haltingly read out the text of her brief presentation. The crowd was not passive. The peasants applauded and laughed; they pumped their fists in the air and chanted in Mooré, the local language.

The villagers' enthusiasm was not so much for the words of the speakers, but for the changes that had come to Pibaoré: a recently formed peasants' union, a schoolhouse of brick and iron sheeting, a cereal bank to store surplus grain, literacy classes, several thousand newly planted trees to combat deforestation, improved harvests of millet and sorghum.

When a speaker mentioned Thomas Sankara's name, there was applause. A number of the younger villagers wore tee-shirts bearing Sankara's portrait. As in other Burkinabè villages this reporter has visited, the inhabitants of Pibaoré identified the revolution with their young president. "He doesn't just make promises, like the old politicians," one commented, "He gets things done." A moment's thought, and then he added, "He's shown us that we can get things done."

When the rally ended, scores of villagers remained behind, socializing and



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**"Sankara's open manner, the ease with which he mingled in crowds, and his willingness to solicit others' views generated public confidence"**

enjoying themselves. After a while, some youths listening to Radio Ouagadougou began hearing military music. As the solemn marches continued for more than an hour, their initial puzzlement gradually turned to alarm.

Then, around 6:15 p.m. came the stunning announcement: The "patriotic forces" in Ouagadougou had brought an end to "the autocratic power of Thomas Sankara." For the people of Pibaoré, a day that had begun in jubilation now ended in grief.

Back in Ouagadougou the next morning, it was clear that the residents of the capital felt the same way, as the news that Sankara had been killed in the coup spread throughout the city. Thousands began pilgrimages to the tiny, weed-infested cemetery where Sankara and 12 others had been hastily buried during the night. Flowers were deposited on Sankara's grave, also pieces of paper with messages on them: "We will all be Sankaras" and "Mama Sankara, your son will be avenged."

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Everywhere, people tuned in their radios to try to find out what was going on. All they knew was that Sankara had been overthrown and killed by some of his closest comrades, and that his long-time friend, Capt. Blaise Compaoré, had taken over the presidency. The new ruling body, the Popular Front, remained shrouded in mystery.

The Front's communiqués only deepened the sense of disbelief and distrust. Sankara was vilified as a "traitor" to the revolution, a "petty bourgeois" who "consorted with bourgeois potentates" and was guided by "mystic forces," a "messianist" who ran a "one-man show," a "fascist." The late president—known for his championing of women's rights—was even branded a "paranoid misogynist."

Realizing that such slanders were not very convincing and seemed to be increasing popular anger over the coup, Compaoré and his colleagues soon softened their personal attacks. Sankara, Compaoré said in his first national address on October 19, was a "revolutionary comrade who went astray." His death was now termed a tragic accident.

Though the language shifted, the new regime's accusations against Sankara remained essentially the same. Sankara, it was said, had been consolidating personal power, bypassing the other "historic" leaders and political tendencies within the National Council of the Revolution (CNR).

He was charged with heading a bureaucratic and militaristic tendency that sought to stifle democratic debate. His decisions, the accusations went, were becoming increasingly arbitrary and erratic, leading to "social and economic chaos." With Sankara's "degenerated faction" now out of the way, Compaoré promised that the revolution—which had "ceased to exist except in name"—could get back on course.

This reporter talked to many Burkinabè in the week after the coup—students, teachers, members of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), professionals, small merchants, government employees. With few exceptions, most could not accept the declarations of the Popular Front; the accusations did not match their image of Sankara or of the revolu-



tion he had been leading for over four years. Some observed that the charges of bureaucratic and repressive conduct applied much more to the perpetrators of the coup than to Sankara.

Apparently expecting popular acclaim, the Front had called for mass support marches in the first two days after the coup. Not one materialized. In a few instances, people attempted to demonstrate against the coup, but were stopped by prompt police action. Called to their schools for "explanation" meetings, students shouted down the speakers and staged walk-outs.

At the Zinda lycée, the largest in Ouagadougou, they chanted "Sankara or no one." The authorities quickly announced the school's closure for a week, and when it reopened, only those students taking final exams were allowed in. The military garrison in Koudougou refused to accept the Front's authority, before being overcome by troops sent from Ouagadougou and Pô. The Popular Front clearly had little popularity.

One key Sankara supporter commented, "They say they are revolutionaries, that they want to continue the revolution. But how can they continue the revolution without the people?"

**W**ith the people or without? Though perhaps oversimplified, that question seems to address the basic conflict among Burkina's leaders that finally erupted in the October 15 coup.

While the conflict itself had become especially sharp only during the pre-

**Peasants' rally the morning before the coup: "Enthusiasm not so much for the words of the speakers, but for the changes that had come to Pibaoré"**

vious year or so, elements of it can be traced to the first days after the August 4, 1983 revolution. From the beginning, among those proclaiming support for the new government, different conceptions coexisted of where the revolution was heading and of how it should be directed.

These differences were not openly expressed for the most part. Everyone proclaimed agreement with Sankara's October 2, 1983, programmatic speech, known as the "DOP" (*Discours d'Orientation Politique*), which characterized the process of change as a "democratic and popular revolution." Differences were reflected instead through varying nuances of emphasis through a myriad of organizational disputes and increasingly over time, through different approaches toward solving problems and conflicts.

Though not in a clear-cut manner, the differences also touched on the form and degree of popular participation in the implementation of decisions and in the decision-making process itself. Sankara and those who looked to his leadership tended to place greater stress on ways to involve broader layers of the population, particularly rural villagers, in the country's political life. Others, including some of those involved in the coup, became more sensitive to the interests and concerns of the small but influential layer of state functionaries, intellectu-



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als, civil servants, and military officers concentrated in the cities.

One of the most notable features of Burkina's August 1983 revolution was the seriousness with which the question of popular participation was addressed. Although it had its limits, the concept took root that ordinary people in the villages and in the poorer urban neighborhoods had a voice in matters that affected their lives.

When asked in early 1985 what he considered the revolution's greatest accomplishment, Sankara said it was "the transformation of people's outlooks." This, he said, "means that each of us now knows that wielding power is their business, that the destiny of Burkina Faso is the business of all Burkinabè and not just of some people. Each one of us demands an accounting of the other."

This was more of a long-term goal than an established reality, however. With an illiteracy rate of more than 90 percent, much of the countryside isolated by poor communications, and a population unaccustomed to speaking its mind, drawing people into active political life and debate would necessarily take some time.

Progress in that direction was nevertheless evident. A variety of "mass organizations" were established, some immediately after the revolution, others later. These included the CDRs, which were set up in every urban neighborhood and in each of the more than 7,000 rural villages. While their functioning was uneven and some were marked by serious abuses, they provided a new

framework in which young people could get together to discuss the problems of their areas and organize to solve some of them. The changes wrought by the CDRs were perhaps most notable in the countryside, providing an alternative source of authority to the chiefs and elders who had long dominated village life.

To an extent, the CDRs also made it possible for women to become politically active and to take on positions of responsibility. This was not always an easy process in a country where women had long been relegated to second-class status and often lacked the confidence to step forward. An important development in this regard was the founding of the Women's Union of Burkina (UFB) in late 1985, which provided women with a sense of mutual solidarity in confronting their many problems.

A few months later, the National Union of Elders of Burkina (UNAB) was launched. This rather unique experiment sought to win support for the government's revolutionary programs among the older strata of society, particularly the traditional village elders, who in many cases had been suspicious of or uncomfortable with the changes taking place. That Maurice Yaméogo and Sangoulé Lamizana, two former presidents of the country, were able to play a leading role in the UNAB was likewise a gesture of political tolerance that helped allay some of those concerns.

Other organizations functioned as well: student and youth groups, a writer's union, rural self-help associations known as Revolutionary Village Groups, the newly created National Peasants Union of Burkina, and cooperatives of many different kinds.

A spirit of active mobilization and community self-help was also taking hold. In virtually every sector of Ouagadougou and in all the provincial capitals, there are new schools, cinemas, sports fields, community halls, and other construction projects that were largely built through the efforts of the local communities themselves. The same spirit was evident in many villages. Peasants in Bazega Province proudly cited the new grain storage bins they had built themselves, and villagers in the arid Yatenga region constructed windbreaks

and anti-erosion dikes to combat desertification.

In a country as poor as Burkina, with few financial and material resources, the people themselves were seen as the major factor in economic development. The greater willingness of people to work harder came from the realization that their own efforts could make a difference and that the government in Ouagadougou was serious about providing them with whatever additional financial support was available.

Sankara's style of rule was important in reinforcing this belief. He projected himself as a man of the people, with a sense of humor, who listened to what ordinary folks had to say. His children went to the same public school as other children. His portrait was absent from government offices.

Similar propriety was expected of other office-holders. This was vital to overcoming the widely held view, developed under previous regimes, that most government officials were corrupt and self-serving. Sankara insisted that all top officials, starting with himself, publicly declare their assets and sources of income before a public anti-corruption commission. Many of the previous privileges of public office, such as large government cars, were done away with. Anyone caught embezzling or mismanaging public funds was hauled before a People's Revolutionary Tribunal.

In fact, the relatively privileged position of the entire civil service was challenged. Sankara never tired of pointing out that the salaries of Burkina's 25,000 public functionaries, who comprise just 0.3 percent of the population, have traditionally eaten up 60 percent or more of the annual government budget. In an effort to partially redress the traditional imbalance in resources allocated to the towns and the countryside, Sankara ordered cuts in civil servants' bonuses and salaries and mandatory contributions to development and famine relief funds. This applied to the army's officer corps as well.

A decree adopted in early 1987 required all civil servants to wear domestically produced cotton suits and dresses (known as Faso Dan Fani). This was intended to provide an assured market for Burkina's peasant cotton producers,

as well as for the indigenous garment industry.

Just a few weeks before the coup, Sankara began pushing more forcefully for administrative reform to decentralize the government apparatus. This would have included reassigning some 10 percent of the employees of all ministries out of Ouagadougou into the provincial towns. In the villages and poorer urban neighborhoods, such moves, evidence that the government meant what it said about giving preference to the "masses," reinforced Sankara's popularity.

Not everyone, of course, felt the same way. Opposition came from right-wing businessmen and traders, some military officers and village chiefs, and supporters of the ousted politicians of earlier regimes whose positions were threatened. Some of them sought support from abroad, judging that Burkina's revolution and Sankara's denunciations of "imperialism" would win sympathy in Europe or among the nervous rulers of neighboring states.

Sankara also confronted resistance and opposition from some of those who proclaimed support for the revolution—both hostility to certain specific measures and more fundamental political differences over the course of the revolution itself. Since Sankara's critics generally did not function openly, it is difficult to gauge the relative weight of the different factors that led up to the coup. But several stand out.

At one level, there was resentment and grumbling among a layer of senior civil servants and public functionaries who resented the sacrifices asked of them and in league with the leadership of some public sector unions, demanded restoration of their bonuses and an end to decrees like the one requiring them to wear Faso Dan Fani.

Others resisted Sankara's efforts to reassign them to the provincial towns, unwilling to give up the relative comforts and pleasures of life in the capital. For example, a current leader of the Popular Front, Kader Cissé, was dismissed from his position as president of the Revolutionary Economic and Social Council in October 1986 after refusing to take an assignment outside of Ouagadougou.

Nor did the government's anti-corruption measures sit very well with some functionaries, who continued to view government employment as a license for self-enrichment. Virtually every weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers had to deal with one or more dismissals from the civil service for cases of graft, embezzlement, or misuse of public funds. There were occasional purges in the CDRs to get rid of local officials who abused their positions to extort money from the population.

How much of a factor resentment over Sankara's policies actually represented in the coup itself is unclear. What is clear is that the new regime has very quickly sought to appease such feelings. Elimination of the Faso Dan Fani clothing requirement, reinstatement of all dismissed civil servants, and scrapping of Sankara's proposed civil service code were among the first new policy steps Compaoré announced.

**A**nother major difficulty Sankara faced was mediating in the bitter factionalism of the different left-wing organizations and tendencies represented within the CNR and other bodies. Although they claimed to speak in the name of the "popular masses," all the organizations of the Burkinabè left had their roots in the same strata of intellectuals, public functionaries, and army officers that have traditionally dominated the country's political life.

Even though the revolution brought some of their leaders to prominent positions, they remained tiny, urban organizations, their real influence limited to government ministries, universities and technical colleges, and army officers' clubs. The bulk of the population knew nothing of their political programs.

The oldest of Burkina's left-wing groups, the Patriotic League for Development (Lipad), was also known as the African Independence Party (PAI) after the old Dakar-based regional party from which it originally sprang in 1959. Lipad looked to Moscow for political inspiration and maintained close relations with the French Communist Party. Some of its members held leading positions in the public sector unions. Lipad's Ouagadougou chairman, Soumane Touré, was the president of the Burkinabè Trade Union

Confederation (CSB) until 1987.

During the 1970s, a large number of university students, in Ouagadougou and at French universities, were attracted to Maoism. But with the China-Albania split, they crystallized into different groupings: one, the Voltaic Revolutionary Communist Party (PCRV), following the dogmatic Albanian line, and the other, the League for Communist Struggle (ULC), more pragmatic in its approach.

Meanwhile, radically inclined junior army officers formed their own small study groups, out of which later emerged the Revolutionary Military Organization (OMR) which included the four "historic" leaders of the revolution: Thomas Sankara, Blaise Compaoré, Jean-Baptiste Lingani, and Henri Zongo.

During the months before and after the August 4, 1983, seizure of power, this military current forged a de facto alliance with two of the main civilian groups, Lipad and the ULC, which by that time had renamed itself the ULCR (the "R" stood for "reconstructed"; later a tiny split-off adopted the original name, the ULC). Both were represented within the first cabinet, along with others not linked to any political organization.

Within less than a year, the original August 1983 alliance began to break down. Lipad, using its positions within the unions, cabinet, and administration, forcefully sought to increase its power and influence through provocative actions, such as occupying the electricity company, post office, and television director's office, seeking to physically oust the mayor of Ouagadougou, and holding a counter-demonstration to an officially sanctioned students' march.

When Sankara formed a new government in August 1984, Lipad was dropped (except for one cabinet minister who distanced himself from the group's main leadership), and he relied more heavily on the ULCR. One of its central leaders, Basile Guissou, became foreign minister.

By the following year, two new groupings had been formed: the Burkinabè Communist Group (GCB) and the Burkinabè Communist Union (UCB). The GCB was composed mainly of dissidents from the pro-Albanian

PCR. The UCB, likewise drawing members from the PCR's former support circles, also had an important military component—but how important was not immediately apparent. In May 1986, the OMR, ULCR, GCB, and UCB issued a joint public declaration revealing that they were all represented within the governing CNR and proclaiming their intention to work toward "political and ideological unity."

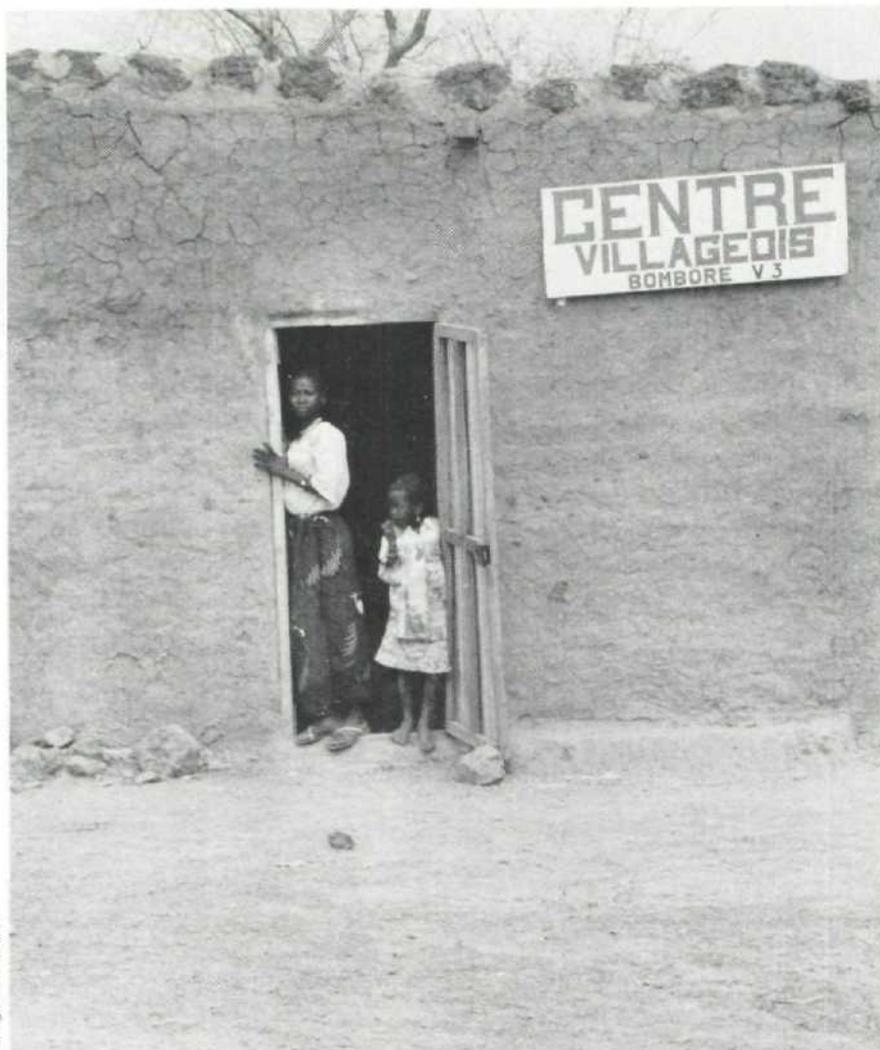
At the time, a central leader of the ULCR told me that while most CNR members agreed with Sankara that given the nation's minuscule working class, the revolution could not yet have a communist or socialist character, some members were becoming impatient with what they perceived as the slow pace of change.

The unity projected in the May 1986 declaration never came about. Instead, a fierce factional struggle for power began to unfold behind the scenes, with the UCB a central actor. Initially founded with Sankara's concurrence, the UCB eventually escaped his control and fell under the patronage of other military officers. Capt. Pierre Ouédraogo, the national general secretary of the CDRs, became the UCB's chairman.

But the greatest influence was that of Capt. Blaise Compaoré, who increasingly used the UCB as a stalking horse in his developing conflict with Sankara. According to one observer, Compaoré saw the UCB as a way to provide the military with a political "counterweight" to the other left-wing organizations.

Thanks to its powerful patrons, the UCB gradually entrenched itself. Since Compaoré was minister of defense and commanded the elite paracommando battalion in Pô, the UCB was able to solidify its base within the army. With Ouédraogo as head of the CDRs, UCB supporters were able to gain ascendancy over other tendencies within the CDRs' general secretariat and in some provincial leaderships. At the University of Ouagadougou, the UCB succeeded in displacing supporters of the ULCR in the leadership of the National Bureau of Students.

The UCB's gains, according to critics of the group, were accomplished largely through bureaucratic maneuvering and



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intimidation. Political debates were said to be difficult, since the UCB "militarists" would sometimes cut off discussion by slapping their holstered pistols.

With the UCB in a significantly strengthened position, Compaoré and his supporters pressed for the formation of a single, official "vanguard party." Such a party was to be composed of the four existing groups within the CNR—but some suspected the real aim was a party dominated by the UCB and its military backers.

Sankara strenuously opposed this. The established groups, he felt, were too narrow to form the basis of a political organization that was truly representative of the country's revolutionary forces. Many young activists did not belong to any of these groups, including those who most looked to Sankara's leadership (commonly called "Sankarists").

Apparently having in mind the examples of other official parties in Africa,

**"In virtually every sector, there are new schools, community halls, and other projects built through the efforts of the local communities themselves"**

Sankara stressed as early as August 1986 that it was necessary to avoid the emergence of a "nomenclature of untouchable dignitaries," that is, a Soviet-style list of state positions that could only be filled by approved party appointees. This, Sankara felt, would lead to high-level patronage, nepotism, and corruption, making it harder for people outside the party leadership to have a voice in public policy.

In June, Sankara argued within the CNR for the dissolution of the four groups, to clear the way for the formation of a broader party. Fearing that they might be swamped by an inundation of "Sankarists," Compaoré, Lingani, Zongo, and leaders of most of the groups rejected his proposal. Then Sankara tried a new tack, pushing the idea of forming a broad front or multi-

tendency party that would include other political forces in addition to the four groupings.

In two public speeches, on August 4 and October 2, Sankara dealt extensively with the issues in this dispute. He called for a "genuine unity, a militant unity of all the revolutionary forces of our country," appealing to Burkina's revolutionaries to "guard against making this unity an empty, paralyzing, sterile monologue. To the contrary, we prefer an expression that is pluralist, diverse, and enriched by many different thoughts and actions, rich with a thousand nuances."

Those who favored a tightly controlled party structure were also more heavy-handed in employing detention or intimidation against perceived "counter-revolutionaries." Sankara himself favored firm action against those who directly opposed the revolution or who were engaged in activities that were considered threatening to political stability. But increasingly he found himself trying to discipline those within the military, police, and CDRs who used their powers arbitrarily—excesses which often came from inexperience or political immaturity on the part of young activists.

But the bureaucratic, intolerant approach of some of the political tendencies also opened the way to such abuses. The fact that a number of the groups openly embraced Joseph Stalin in their pantheon of revolutionary heroes was not without consequence. The greatest problems were encountered in the CDRs. Almost from the beginning, there were instances of local CDR activists using their positions to lord over the population in their areas, to get rid of personal enemies, or even to engage in extortion. This alienated people, making them less willing to become active within the CDRs.

At the first national conference of the CDRs in early 1986, Sankara condemned CDR officials who acted like "potentates," denouncing those who enriched themselves and criticizing armed CDR members who used their weapons abusively. Steps were taken to purge the CDRs of such individuals and to provide greater safeguards in the future. While some of the worst excesses

were eliminated, the problem was a persistent one.

The heightening of factional tensions only complicated the matter. As the UCB pushed to gain dominance within the CDRs, it used the abuses and errors of its political opponents to undermine their positions, while engaging in the same methods itself.

Late in 1986, the CDR in Ouagadougou's Sector 29 arrested several prominent trade unionists, among them Soumane Touré. Like Touré, most were also members of the pro-Moscow Lipad. They were charged with printing leaflets calling for anti-government demonstrations. Other CDRs issued public statements denouncing Touré and his colleagues, employing the most virulent language, including calls for the execution of these "running dogs of international imperialism."

Presidential aide Frédéric Kiemdé, who died in the same fusillade with Sankara, told me the day before the coup that the detentions of the trade unionists had presented Sankara with an embarrassing *fait accompli*. Sankara opposed the detentions, which Kiemdé said, had "done damage to the revolution," particularly to its international image. But he felt he could not publicly repudiate an initiative appearing to come from the CDRs. In fact, the detentions were carried out at the instigation of the UCB.

Behind the scenes, Sankara pressed for the unionists' release, and several of the lesser-known ones were let go. He also argued vehemently against calls for their execution, including within the CNR itself. Sankara told a group of foreign journalists just a few days before the coup that as a result, "There's now a campaign against me. I'm accused of being a sentimentalist."

Sankara spoke out publicly as well against excessive use of repression. In a speech on August 4, the fourth anniversary of the revolution, he emphasized, "While the revolution means repression of the exploiters and enemies, for the masses it can only mean persuasion, to get them to become involved in a conscious and determined manner."

He returned to this theme two months later, in a speech in Tenkodogo. "We need a people that is convinced and



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not beaten. A beaten people means an unending succession of prisons. . . . For reactionaries, their victory is the construction of the greatest number of prisons. That is the difference between them and us."



Building a dam in Goden: "The concept took root that ordinary people had a voice in the matters that affected their lives"

The events around Sankara's October 2 speech marked a rapid sharpening

of the leadership split. Just before Sankara spoke, National Bureau of Students President Jonas Somé, a UCB member, gave an address implicitly countering Sankara's views on the character of the party. A few days later, members of the provincial government in Houet prepared a radio broadcast praising Somé's speech. This was seen as an open provocation against the president and led to the dismissal of the officials involved. They were ousted by order of the CDRs' general secretary, Pierre Ouédraogo, who by that time had broken with the UCB and was siding with Sankara.

According to some reports, at an October 8 CNR meeting, Sankara raised a new idea: the holding of national elections to choose members of an enlarged council of 120 members. This was said to have alarmed Compaoré and his supporters, precipitating the coup a week later.

**N**ot surprisingly, members of the UCB have emerged as prominent leaders and spokesmen of the new Popular Front. So have members of two smaller organizations, the GCB and Kader Cissé's ULC splinter group. The OMR was dissolved by decree. Most ULCR leaders opposed the coup, as did many individual Sankara supporters; some were imprisoned and others went into hiding.

Since the coup, the Popular Front has sought to portray Sankara as a proponent of repression, as an intolerant autocrat who tried to stifle the voices of those who disagreed with him. There were two tendencies in the leadership, Compaoré maintained, a "tendency of bureaucratization, militarization, and the affirmation of personal power" represented by Sankara, and a "tendency of democratic debate" represented by those in the Popular Front.

The facts do not fit this schema. Within the Popular Front are those who favored greater reliance on repression and who acted in a particularly harsh manner against supporters of other political tendencies. They also opposed Sankara's proposals to broaden political decision-making beyond the narrow circles to which it has been largely confined.

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**"Although they claimed to speak in the name of the masses, all the organizations of the Burkinabè left had roots in the same strata of intellectuals, public functionaries, and army officers that have dominated the country's political life."**

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The coup itself was consistent with their previous approach. A small group of army officers, acting in secret, chose to resolve their differences with Sankara through the method they knew best—military force. Hardly an auspicious beginning for a new era of democratic debate.

"These people say they are democrats," a primary school teacher in Ouagadougou commented after listening to Compaoré's televised address. "But why didn't they ever bring their charges against Sankara to the people and let us decide?"

The answer seems obvious. Sankara remained the single most popular leader in the country. Whatever mistakes he may have made—and Sankara readily admitted that there were many—most people probably would have chosen his side in the dispute if given the opportunity. His open manner, the ease with which he mingled in crowds, and his willingness to solicit other people's views generated a significant degree of public confidence.

The same cannot be said of the new team in power. The relationship of trust and confidence that had begun to develop between the people and the government—and which accounted for the extent of popular participation in the revolution's programs—has been seriously set back, if not destroyed.

Under such conditions, it will be difficult for the Compaoré government to continue pretending that the events of October 15 marked a "deepening of the revolutionary process." From their reaction to the coup, it is evident that the Burkinabè people do not believe that. □

# On Famine's Brink

## Ethiopia

Mukuria Damto looked grimly at the white clouds that hung low in the sky but brought no rain to his fields in Mekoy. He feared he would once again lose his crops, and perhaps relatives, as he did during the 1984-85 famine.

The "great famine" killed hundreds of thousands, perhaps even a million in Ethiopia. At the height of the tragedy, 20 people died every day at Mekoy, on the border between Ethiopia's Shoa and Wollo provinces. If the rains don't come, Mukuria said, there would be no crops and he would again rely on food aid. He hoped that would be enough for him and his family of three.

That was last August, at a time when relief officials in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa first warned of an impending crisis. "We are facing an emergency situation. The famine is there," Michael Priestley, coordinator of the United Nations emergency team, said at the time.

Now, it is becoming increasingly clear that impoverished Ethiopia may be facing a famine of similar or even worse proportions to the last one. And once again, relief may be too little, too late. Only a portion of the aid needed to avert starvation and death has been pledged, while civil war and lack of transport infrastructure are again threatening distribution. In addition, a number of Western donors believe that the food crisis could be further aggravated by what they call Ethiopia's inefficient agricultural policies.

The crisis is worsening rapidly, following poor rains in several regions, particularly the war-racked northern provinces of Tigray and Eritrea, the worst affected by the last crisis. Crop losses in the two arid provinces are estimated to exceed 80 percent and in some cases, crop failure has been total.

The remote northern provinces have only one harvest a year. Once they have used up whatever crops or reserves on hand, farmers will have to rely on food aid until the next harvest in the fall of 1988. Farmers are already selling much of their livestock, causing prices to

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As another disaster looms in drought-stricken Ethiopia, donors and government officials seek to avoid the delays in provision of food supplies that caused so many deaths in 1984-85. Ethiopia's agricultural policies, however, remain controversial, blocking the development aid needed to prevent famine's recurrence.



**Bati famine camp, 1984: "As a disaster looms closer, many believe the camps will be inevitable"**

plummet—a telltale sign of threatening famine.

Relief officials in the capital say between 3 and 6 million people are currently threatened by hunger. The official Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) told donors that food reserves were likely to last until the end of last year. After that, Ethiopia will have to rely on relief supplies if it is not to again become the world's hungriest nation.

The RRC has estimated food requirements at 1.046 million (metric) tons, but Western donors believe the actual needs may be much higher. But one

thing is certain: Unless the donor community responds urgently to Ethiopia's requests for food, the grim reaper of death will once again stalk the country. Pictures of emaciated children staring lifelessly at the scorched earth may again fill television screens worldwide.

Relief officials in Ethiopia are determined to do their utmost to avoid a repeat of the last disaster, but many warn it could well happen if donors wait any longer.

"There will be no such scenes this time. If you do get such pictures, it will mean relief has come too late," said David Morton, director of the UN World Food Programme operations in Ethiopia.

Officials insist that the supplies should be in Ethiopia by early 1988 to ensure

timely distribution and avoid the lengthy delays which occurred during the last famine. But so far, only about 350,000 tons have been pledged and much of it still has to be shipped. "There could be mass starvation, as bad as 1984-85," said Priestley.

In 1984, the international donor community came under harsh criticism for having waited too long before it reacted to Ethiopia's appeals for help. Many ascribed the delay to Western opposition to Ethiopia's Marxist political system. In turn, most Western donors accused Moscow of having done virtually nothing to alleviate the last famine.

A large part of the Kremlin's aid in 1985 went to support the war effort. Ethiopia now owes the Soviet Union some \$3 billion, mainly for military aid. When Ethiopia was recently declared a Soviet-style People's Democratic Republic, critics said this was part of the price Mengistu had to pay for Moscow's help.

The delayed donor response in 1984 meant that much of the food, which takes five to six months to reach its destination, arrived too late to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of villagers who abandoned their fields in search of food. Many arrived at the feeding camps too late. Others fell victim to disease, which was rife in the overcrowded famine camps. Those who survived often returned to their empty fields too late to plant any crops.

A few months ago, relief officials in Ethiopia agreed everything possible should be done to take food to the farmers in order to avoid the need to set up famine camps. "We have reasonable advance warning and have to avoid at all cost the need to put up feeding camps which get overcrowded and where disease spreads rapidly," Morton said at the time.

But now, as a disaster looms closer, many believe the camps will be inevitable. Reports from the north indicate that a number of villagers have already started moving toward towns and main roads in search of food—usually relief supplies.

"Camps will emerge. The question is how big and how large the scale of suffering will be," said U.S. embassy chargé d'affaires James Cheek in an in-

terview with a Western television network.

Relief officials hope they will be able to avoid massive movements of people away from their fields by prepositioning food and drugs early and distributing relief where it is needed. But the plan has already run into trouble, when rebels of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front attacked a relief food convoy, destroying 23 trucks and 100 tons of emergency food in October. Less than a month later, the rebels attacked another truck convoy transporting food and petrol for sale in northern Ethiopia.

The two incidents increased fears that relief agencies, already faced with a shortage of vehicles, may be confronted with formidable difficulties in bringing food to the affected areas. Much of Ethiopia's budget goes to fighting Africa's longest war, a 26-year-old struggle between Eritrean rebels and government forces. Tigray and the desert-like Oga-den are also in the grip of continuing, bitter civil war.

The latest available figures show that Ethiopia—according to the World Bank, the world's poorest country—spent 25 percent of its 1984 budget of \$1.75 billion on defense, while allocating only 2.8 percent for agriculture, industry, commerce, and mining.

In addition, President Mengistu Haile Mariam's government is facing increasing dissent throughout the country, largely from farmers. "If there is another famine, farmers will blame Mengistu for it, they will blame his agricultural policies and they will blame villagization and resettlement," said a diplomat who has lived for several years in Ethiopia.

Western donors too are highly critical of Ethiopia's agricultural policies, which they blame for the stagnation in food production and believe will lead to a sharp decline in output.

"This country follows the Eastern European agricultural model, which requires farmers to sell virtually all their produce to the government at low prices," said Frederick Machmer, U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) representative in Addis.

"There is also a huge investment in state farms and low support to the farmer, such as inputs and credit facili-

ties, and no free trade. A farmer in a surplus area is not at liberty to sell to a deficit area," he said.

Even the usually liberal Swedish government has harsh words for Mengistu's agricultural policies. In a recent report, the official Swedish International Development Association (SIDA) said agricultural stagnation was "primarily due to lack of incentives to the farmers."

The report, which concentrated on the southern province of Arsi—traditionally the country's granary—said that "the government set grain prices too low, input-output price relations are unfavorable, provision of inputs is irregular and biased toward producer cooperatives and state farms, and agricultural extension agents are misdirected." Partly as a result of the report, SIDA decided to abandon all its projects in the province, where it had been active for 20 years.

"We are no longer likely to support Ethiopia's agricultural policy in the future. We would be helping in efforts leading to a dead-end," said Bo Stenson, head of SIDA in Ethiopia. He said that the agency would concentrate on community-oriented projects aimed at combating erosion in the northern Wollo province. "There is less chance of government intervention there," he added.

Ethiopian and Western relief officials agree that rehabilitation of the country's degraded highlands is essential in breaking Ethiopia's seemingly endless cycle of drought and famine. Experts believe that almost 2 billion tons of soil are washed down from the northern highlands every year to disappear in the rivers and crevices of the lowlands—2 billion tons of rich soil wasted as millions face starvation.

"For today's children, over a third of the highlands could become incapable of sustaining cropping, while the population would treble within their lifetime," said a recent World Bank-financed report.

For several years, both the Ethiopian authorities and Western donors advocated the resettlement of 1.2 million farmers from the overpopulated and overgrazed highlands to the more fertile areas in the south. The concept won universal praise. But the implementation of the program at the height of the

last famine drew sharp criticism from Western governments and relief agencies, who accused the Addis government of coercion and often brutality.

One donor agency called resettlement "the most controversial and counter-productive program undertaken by the Ethiopian government during the famine. It diverted vital resources from the relief effort, entailed massive human rights violations as many people were coerced into the program, and its poor planning led to death and misery," the agency said.

Western relief officials said that at the height of the famine, up to 70,000 were moved in a month, often herded in transport aircraft and flown to their new homes where promises of assistance never materialized. The authorities, however, denied any violence was used, with the exception of a few "mistakes."

"The purpose of resettlement was to save lives. Those people gathered in the feeding camps during the drought were those who lost all hope, so to them, resettlement sounded like paradise," said Berhanu Jembere, Ethiopia's Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner.

Labeba Ibrahim, 25, was one of the 600,000 moved during the famine, after she lost parents, children, crops, and cattle. At the height of the calamity, she and her husband joined thousands of others at one of the many famine camps in northern Shoa. She said she volunteered to move to Horolle resettlement camp, 200 miles away. "Now we have a house again, my husband works, it is a good life," she said in the presence of RRC officials.

Horolle may be one of the most viable camps, but donors agree that the program has achieved a measure of success. Resettlement camps work along collectivist lines, a factor to which the authorities attribute the good yields achieved at least in some of them.

"The farmers using resources jointly are more successful than the farmer toiling alone," said Berhanu. "Everybody is given a share in accordance to a daily point system and the size of his family. Any surplus must be sold at fixed prices to avoid speculation." After all, he added, "Farmers should be farmers, not traders."





**"Relief officials are determined to avoid a repeat of the last disaster, but it could well happen if donors wait any longer"**

Resettlement was suspended in December 1985, largely as a result of donor pressure, but the program was discreetly resumed in November last year.

The government, however, has no intention of halting villagization, another controversial plan in which 31 million people—virtually all of the country's farmers—are to be moved from their isolated homesteads into villages.

Two years into the seven-year plan, the scheme continues to draw sharp criticism from Western governments and relief officials who believe the ultimate aim is to facilitate Soviet-style land collectivization. They have also claimed that force was often used to move people from their traditional homes.

According to SIDA, the aims of the scheme are "to advance the revolution and promote its ultimate goal of collectivization and to give the government the political control it needs to ensure that the rural society is reconstructed and agrarian socialism achieved."

But government officials maintain that the only intention is to group people—who traditionally have lived far apart from each other—in villages to facilitate provision of basic services such as health, water, schools, and agricultural services.

"By villagization we don't mean collectivization. Villagization has its own aim. Ethiopia is poor and we have limited resources. By bringing people together, we can use these resources collectively," said Betru Haile, head of the National Villagization Coordination Committee.

In 1984, Ethiopia launched a 10-year plan which envisaged the collectivization of 50 percent of all land over the plan period. But three years into the plan, 94 percent of farming is still private. "It is not because the country has failed to collectivize according to plan that we villagize," said Betru.

Waraki Arbijye, a wiry 90-year-old grandmother who was recently moved from the nearby hills to a village in Mekoy, said her husband still tilled the land alone. No one forced him to join the neighboring cooperative. The government has promised that her village will

soon have electricity. "But we did not ask for all this, we just wanted to stay where we used to live," she said.

There is clean water in the village she lives in—a few dozen huts lined in neat, military-style rows, simply known as PA (Peasants Association) 02. But the water, the nearby model farm, and the agricultural extension services were provided by a Western relief organization.

Critics say Ethiopia simply does not have the money to fulfill its promises and supply the basic needs of the new villages. And donors are locked in a Catch-22 situation: No one wants to be seen supporting villagization, but without Western aid, the people will suffer.

Several Western governments are not allowed to give development aid to Ethiopia, because of opposition to the country's policies. "We can and do give humanitarian aid," said Machmer, who heads AID, the largest donor in 1985. "We can assist in building a road to help move relief food, but if you build a road to get produce to the market, that's development. We can't assist, say in combatting AIDS, that's developmental."

But donors agree that without development, there will be famine in Ethiopia again and again. Klaus Hornetz, an official of the Lutheran World Federation in Ethiopia, is adamant: "There is no point in saving 100,000 people during the drought and then leaving them alone. If you feed the needy, you also have a moral duty to see that they survive after the famine, and to help improve the socio-economic patterns."

Ethiopia was the first African country to use the wheel, but its farming methods have hardly changed since. Priestley believes what the country needs is time and technology, "but above all they need money. They don't have the capacity to modernize their agriculture without money."

Mukuria Damto gazed at his fields mournfully. "If the rains don't come, we will have no water. Our irrigation comes from the rivers, the rivers are fed by the rains. It has always been like this, with no rains, no water, and no crops."

The tragic irony is that the water table is less than two meters below his fields. But he did not know this, nor did he know how to dig a well or to irrigate his fields. □

# Eritrea: The Food Weapon

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) burst into the headlines last October following its attack on an international relief convoy carrying food to the parched Ethiopian province of Tigray.

Some 450 tons of U.S. and UN-donated food were destroyed, sending a clear message to the international community as it prepared to launch a new relief effort: The war in Eritrea cannot be ignored as it was during the 1984-85 emergency. Indeed, the war may overshadow this year's relief effort.

"Drought is a natural disaster, but famine is man-made," explained Hagos Ghebregiwet, the EPLF representative to Washington. "The Ethiopian government is using the situation once again to further its own political agenda. We are saying nothing should be given to the government. Most of the people in need live out of their control and relief aid should be given to independent agencies who can ensure delivery to those in need."

No single EPLF battle has drawn such widespread publicity to the Eritreans' 26-year-old war against rule from Addis Ababa. State Department spokesman Charles Redman called the destruction of the food convoy "an outrageous action." UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar joined in the condemnation.

Defending its action, the Front said the destruction of the convoy resulted from Ethiopia's "mixing relief work with military activity," claiming that the convoy included Ethiopian government trucks carrying military supplies.

In a series of statements entitled "U.S./UN Dilemma Unresolved (Conflict and Famine in the Horn)," the EPLF lashed out at its critics. Pointing an accusing finger at the UN, the Front's representative there, Bereket Habte Selassie, wrote, "Few have dared to condemn Ethiopia for its record of devastation of property and disruption of the lives of millions of Eritreans and its stubborn pursuit of a military solution to the Eritrean problem."

Selassie continued, "The war policy of the government, which continues to reject the EPLF's proposal for a peaceful settlement, has been the cause of more casualties than drought. And the silence on this fact is tantamount to complicity."

The October EPLF attack did elicit a response from the *Washington Post*. In its lead editorial on October 28, the *Post* wrote, "The time is long overdue to see its [Eritrea's] agony as essentially political in origin. The UN federated this former Italian colony into Haile Selassie's Ethiopia in 1952. He absorbed it by force in 1962, and the Eritreans have been struggling for independence ever since—first against the American-oriented Emperor Selassie and now against Soviet-oriented Mengistu Haile Mariam."

The *Post*'s editorial concluded, "Relief crises of one sort or another are likely to recur with terrible regularity in Eritrea so long as the political sources are not addressed."

With international food supplies ready to roll, safe transport has become a primary concern of relief agencies,

with many calling for a "safe passage" agreement between the Ethiopian government and the EPLF. On October 27, the EPLF released a statement outlining its policy of "not obstructing relief activities." Its call for a "safe passage" resolution was rejected by the Ethiopian government, which does not comment on the fighting in Eritrea.

Then on November 12, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) launched an "Open Roads for Survival" campaign, calling for a "de facto commitment by any forces involved in the area not to attack, destroy, or disrupt vital supply lines, and to allow humanitarian aid convoys free access to civilians where they live." The ICRC's main objective is to allow for food distribution to people where they live, thus avoiding the agony of a "mass exodus and the creation of overcrowded camps."

One week after the ICRC proposal was released, the U.S. government signed on in support of the plan, and Interaction, the umbrella organization for U.S.-based humanitarian agencies, drafted a similar proposal.

Ironically, it was the U.S. government that sought to de-emphasize the war during the 1984-85 famine, opposing such "safe passage" resolutions. With Washington's ultimate foreign policy objective to woo Ethiopia back into its fold, the U.S. was reluctant to antagonize the Ethiopian government by focusing on the Eritrean conflict.

Although some American relief aid was sent to the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) to be shipped across Sudan's borders into EPLF territory, the tonnage was small given the needs of the people living in areas controlled by the EPLF. And it was only a small percentage of the total amount of food donated to Ethiopia.

With its foreign policy objectives basically unchanged, the U.S. has only "reluctantly acknowledged" the war as a primary obstacle to relief and development, according to a ranking American government official dealing with refugee affairs. According to the official, "It has not come to full consciousness that any safe passage resolution should apply to areas that are not accessible to the Ethiopian government."

"While the safety of the convoys is extremely important," says Karen Hauser of the Eritrean Relief Committee, the ERA's partner agency in the U.S., "it is only part of the problem." Hauser notes that the problem of access to the majority of Eritreans—living in EPLF-controlled territory—is more significant than safe transport. "These 1.2 million Eritreans could not be reached by the Massawa food aid convoys even if the trucks were rolling," she says. "The only way to reach most Eritreans is via cross-border operations from Sudan."

With another famine unfolding, it remains to be seen whether the U.S. and the UN will ensure that food is not used as a weapon, thereby contributing to a peaceful resolution of the Eritrean conflict, or whether they will turn a blind eye, dooming the region to continued bloodshed and recurring famine. □

—Michael Yellin  
New York, New York

# Prospects for Peace?

## Sudan

According to recent reports, the Sudanese government held secret peace talks with representatives of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in London in December—the first known discussions since July 1986. Although the two sides failed to come to an agreement to end the civil war, reports indicated that the SPLA had been flexible on key issues, leading to hopes that a solution may be found.

Earlier last year, in detailed statements by rebel leader John Garang in an interview with this writer and in subsequent interviews with a ranking Sudanese diplomat in Nairobi, both sides appeared to be closer on conditions for peace talks than has been generally recognized.

Without peace, Sudan's economy is likely to continue its downward spiral—in spite of any IMF agreement—and pressure will continue to build for a military takeover, as frustration with government inaction grows.

In early November, the Sudanese government convened a meeting of ambassadors from a number of nearby African nations to discuss prospects for peace. But at almost the same time, the SPLA seized the small town of Kurmuk, on the Ethiopian border, about 400 miles southeast of Khartoum.

"This was something of a blow to the peace initiative," said Ali Yousif Ahmed, acting Sudanese ambassador to Kenya. The takeover, after Sudanese military personnel withdrew, followed bombardment of the town. The Sudanese government claimed that the shelling had come from the Ethiopian side of the border and was not by the SPLA, but by the Ethiopian military.

\* \* \*

John Garang, leader of the SPLA, came out of the bedroom of his suite at the Intercontinental Hotel in Nairobi and sat somewhat formally on the sofa. He was wearing a light-colored suit instead of his usual military fatigues. Two aides sat nearby; two others sat in the hallway, near the door.

*Based in Nairobi, Robert M. Press is a staff writer for the Christian Science Monitor.*

Recent secret peace talks between the SPLA and the Sudanese government on an end to the civil war show that the two sides are closer than previously thought on many key issues.

Garang had just completed a round of talks in Addis Ababa, Kampala, and Nairobi with leaders of various southern political parties. They had agreed on the need for peace talks between the rebels and the government. Garang was hoping the agreement with the southern parties would strengthen his hand in calling for discussions with the government.

But his travelling diplomatic initiative was a bit like preaching to the convinced. The southern parties already wanted an end to the war. And the missing figure, obviously, was the Sudanese government. So nothing came of the initiative. In an hour-long interview, Garang made it clear that he is more flexible in his conditions for negotiations with the Sudanese government than is generally thought. He outlined two ways of addressing the problem:

- Preliminary peace talks: Garang said that the major political parties and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) should be invited to such talks. Often described as having preconditions, he said plainly that he had none if the talks were aimed at mapping out how to proceed in formal, full peace negotiations.

For such preliminary talks, he referred to the model of the 1986 Koka Dam Declaration, signed by the SPLM and the Prime Minister's Umma Party.

The other two major parties, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the National Islamic Front (NIF), did not sign. Garang hopes that at any preliminary peace talks, those "absentees" will attend. He said preliminary talks are the most likely route, rather than those in the form of a constitutional conference, as proposed by Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi.

- Full peace talks/constitutional conference: For these to occur, Garang does have preconditions—no state of emergency, an end to foreign military pacts, and an end to Islamic "sharia" law. These points, he says, are essentially those agreed to in the Koka Dam Declaration.

The Sudanese government subsequently showed some new flexibility on these points. In an interview with this writer, Ali Yousif Ahmed, acting Sudanese ambassador to Kenya, said the following:

- On the state of emergency: Until now, the government had tied this to an end to the fighting. But, said Yousif, "There is a possibility that the state of emergency can go without a ceasefire."

- On an end to foreign military pacts: The Sudanese Prime Minister has already announced the abrogation of a military pact with Egypt. Although there is no formal pact with Libya, said Yousif, Libya has given military aid in the past and may continue to do so. Yousif said, however, "If there is mutual trust and aspiration for peace, these treaties should not be a block" to the peace talks.

- On ending Islamic law: This has been a real stumbling block. Garang is "not helping us" move the peace process forward, said Yousif, by continuing to press for this. [Editor's note: Reports of December's peace talks indicated that the SPLA may have dropped this demand.] The NIF is not likely to agree in advance of talks that Islamic law be abolished. But Yousif said agreement on abolishment might win majority support at a national constitutional conference.

Whereas both Garang and Mahdi want to do away with the current so-called September Islamic laws, passed under former President Gaafar al-Nimeiry, the Prime Minister wants to replace them with some kind of modified Islamic laws, applied only to Muslims.

Garang wants them replaced with a universal code of non-Islamic law.

"The Prime Minister," Garang contended, "certainly wants a military victory," seeing the continuation of the war as a way to remain in power. But most analysts agree that a military victory by either side is unlikely.

Garang accused Mahdi of wanting to "Arabize" southern Sudan, pulling out a document which he said was from one of the Prime Minister's earlier writings on the future of Arabism in Sudan. The SPLA leader said Mahdi has called for an "Islamic Arab republic in Sudan." Mahdi, said Garang, "thinks he's a prophet. He thinks he can remake history."

Garang is adamantly opposed to Islamic law. He rejects the idea that non-Muslims are protected under Islamic law, saying he does not need nor want that kind of protection. Sudan's future law "has to be secular," he insists.

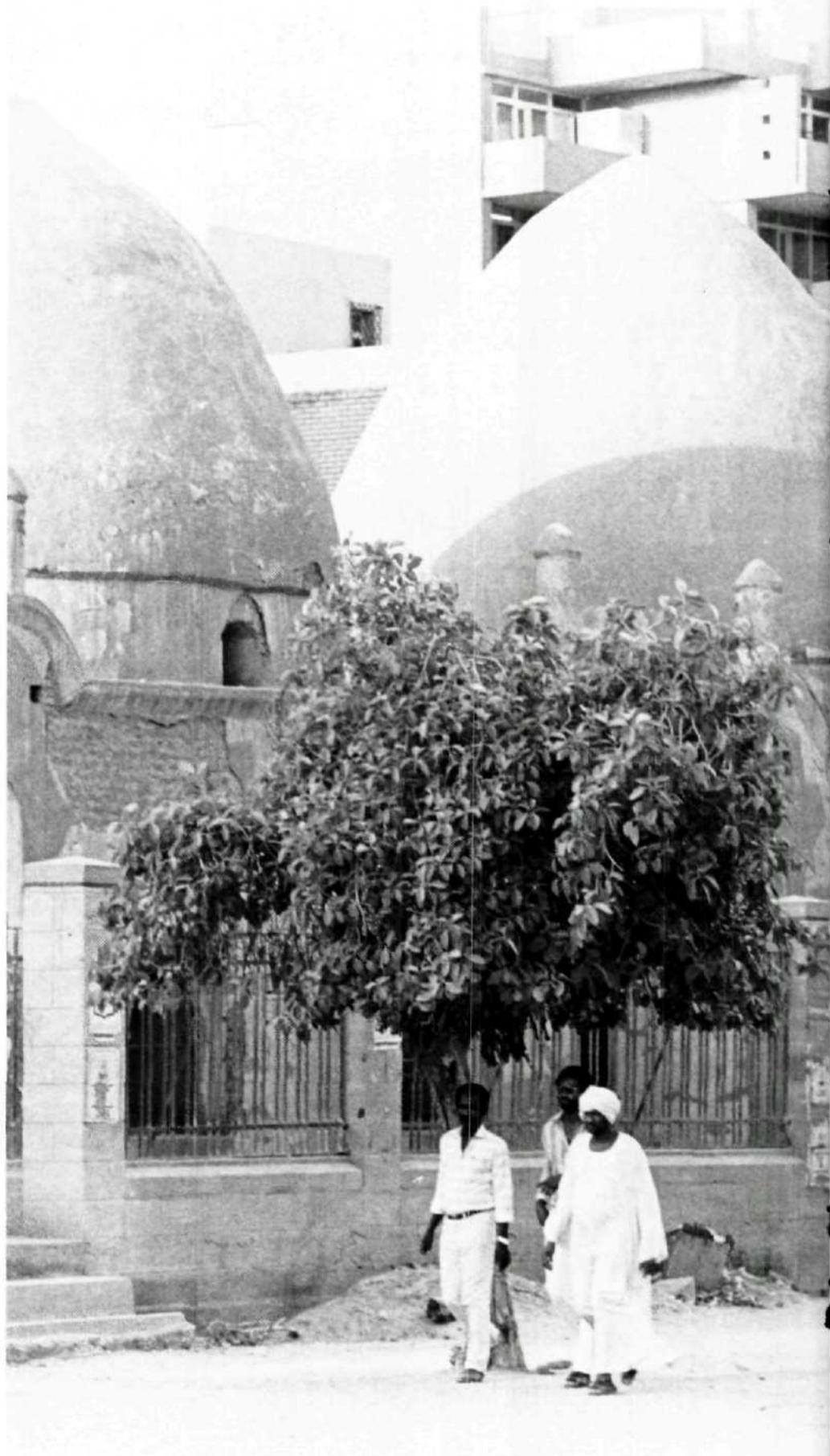
Moving to other topics, Garang did not deny there are differences of opinion on some issues within the SPLA. "In any organization there are problems," he said, "but there are no differences that would lead to a divorce" between SPLA elements.

There are fears among some southern tribes that a peace settlement in which the Dinkas are given a controlling voice in running the south would be detrimental to non-Dinkas. Dinkas provide the backbone of the SPLA. Garang answers such fears by saying that "the SPLA is not a Dinka organization." He went on to name the commanders of the various SPLA military sectors, pointing out that many of them are not Dinka.

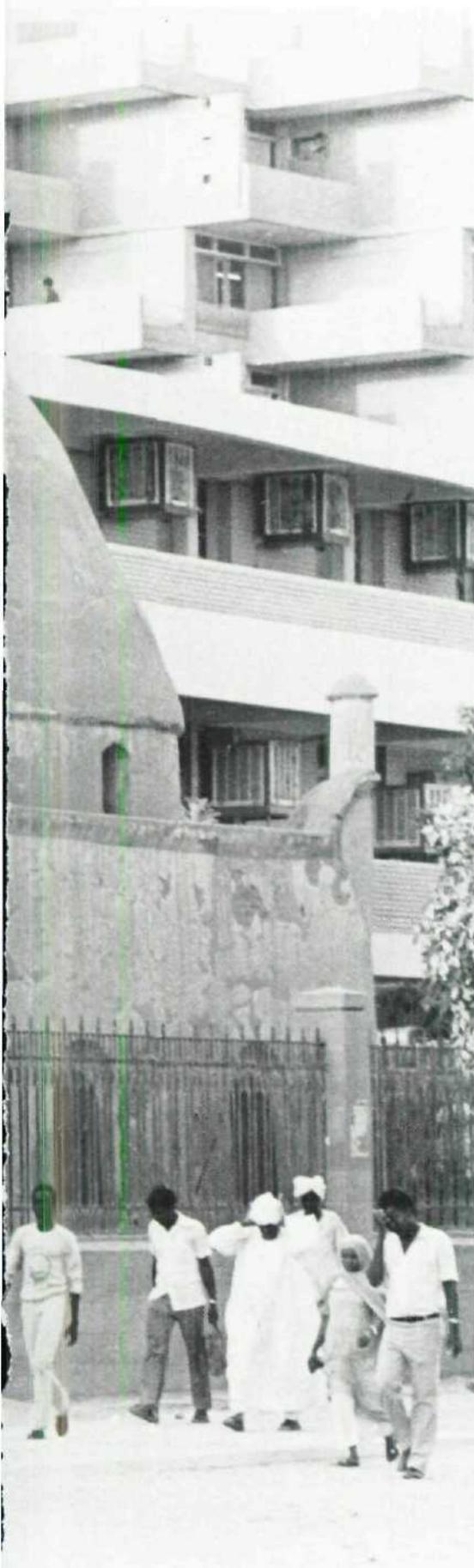
He said it was SPLA strategy to bring "outsiders" into the various areas that have been taken militarily by the SPLA. Local tribes "have traditional hatreds among themselves," so the outsiders help keep a balance and control over local conflicts, he said.

Often, brief summaries of what the SPLA is fighting for have focused on an end to Islamic law or autonomy for the southern region. But Garang stressed that his aim is bigger than that.

"We are not fighting for autonomy in the South. We are fighting for a restructuring in Khartoum. We envisage a system where power is [given] to the re-



Old Mosque, Khartoum: One of the major stumbling blocks is the ending of Islamic law



Betty Press

gions." He added that he wants autonomy for all regions and limited central government control. Then he remarked: "Eventually we [the SPLA] plan to take the whole of Sudan."

He then resumed his description of his vision of Sudan's future. "We are fighting a cultural, political, and economic war." He wants a united Sudan, but the key, he stressed, is the type of unity. The "old view of a united Sudan"—the government's view—is based on the power of a few families, said Garang. "Our united Sudan is devoid of that."

In July 1986, Mahdi and Garang held about nine hours of face-to-face talks for the first and only time thus far. "There was communication," Garang said, but it ended when the SPLA shot down a Sudan Airways plane that month, killing some 60 civilians on board. "I came out [of the talks] with the impression that Sadiq is a prisoner of history," said Garang. "He is fossilized," he contended.

Then, for the second time in the interview, he referred to the fact that leaders come and go. "He [Mahdi] is

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**"Without peace, Sudan's economy is likely to continue its downward spiral—in spite of any IMF agreement—and pressure will continue to build for a military takeover."**

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just one Sudanese; he can go. I am one Sudanese; I can go."

Is pressure growing for a military takeover—by the Sudanese army—in the face of the crumbling economy and no end to the war? Yes, he thought so, as do a variety of others this writer talked to in Khartoum last summer.

"I would expect a military man to take over. But he will find a lot of problems. The economy will only improve if there is peace," said Garang. Perhaps at least on that point both sides can agree, and with the beginning of peace talks in December, perhaps the Sudanese people may have grounds for hope. □

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# What Price Political Prisoners?

## Somalia

The long-awaited trials of several former government ministers and officials detained since 1982 are scheduled to take place in February. Their outcome may prove decisive in resolving the ongoing "Somali succession" crisis, as well as in unifying opposition to the aging Siad Barre's regime.

BY RICHARD GREENFIELD

Though once an outspoken opponent of tribalism and an inspiration to most Somalis, President Mohamed Siad Barre is now visibly aging and ill. On October 21, the anniversary of his 1969 coup d'état, hundreds demonstrated against his regime in many cities throughout the world.

But septuagenarian autocrats are seldom easily led to relinquish power. Rather, they tend to clamp down on human rights and encourage uncertainty by petty, devious, arbitrary, and often vindictive decisions and frequent government reshuffles. Sadly, at such times, the fate of possible successors—all too often maligned as political opponents and incarcerated in wretched political prisons—hangs on the finest of threads.

In Somali culture, few things are more admired than an alliterative verse or an apt proverb. It is said, for example, that "a desire for perfection in kinsmen will foster isolation"—in other words, when assessing one's relatives, one should relax normal standards of

*Richard Greenfield, a member of Oxford University's International Development Centre, was political adviser to the Somali government from 1977-86.*

evaluation. The aging president of Somalia, many argue, is doing just that.

Siad Barre's eldest son, Maslah Mohamed Siad, a comparatively inexperienced soldier fond of the good life, has recently been propelled to unparalleled prominence. It is barely a year since Maslah was promoted brigadier-general. Although a successful and wealthy contractor, he has very little military or political command experience. Even so, at the probable instigation of the president's influential senior wife, Khadidja Ma'alin, a formidable new command has been created for him.

The structure of the 77th Sector, which controls all units in the capital and the surrounding region, has been revised and expanded, endowing it with maximum influence over national security—and indeed potentially over the whole government. This move is clearly designed to protect the position and wealth of Siad's family and leading members of the small Marehan clan currently in power, but a corollary has been considerable resentment, expressed by others interested in the wider but not unrelated issue of the "Somali succession."

### All the President's Clan

Since the fateful car accident in May 1986, Siad Barre's health has remained problematic. It is quite remarkable that he recovered at all, but doctors insist that he will never again enjoy the stamina to singlehandedly balance the varied clans and interests in the Somali nation, which he has done with consummate skill and often ruthlessness for many years. Today government decisions are fiercely contested by rival groups and families and are by no means invariably initiated by him. Increasingly they reflect local rivalries and more generally, a dangerously narrowing power base.

As predicted in *Africa Report* (May-June 1987), Siad's constitutional successor, Lt.-Gen. Mohamed Ali Samatur, and those who support him, including



Cameroon

**President Mohamed Siad Barre: "He will never again enjoy the stamina to singlehandedly balance the varied interests in the Somali nation"**

Brig.-Gen. Ahmed Sulayman Abdulla, minister of interior, have lost some of their previously considerable influence. Samatur is no longer referred to on Radio Mogadishu as first vice-president, but only as "first" or "prime" minister, nor has he retained the vital portfolio of defense. A new minister has yet to be announced, but Siad has appointed three vice-ministers. Neither Samatur nor Abdulla are Marehan, although the latter is the president's son-in-law.

The Marehan are seriously divided and factionalism is rife even within the



president's own family. Siad's first wife bore him four sons and his second gave birth to 10 children. Then there are uncles and in-laws. Inside the extended family circle, powerful men and a few women—including the two wives—eye each other with the gravest suspicion. Siad's half-brother, Dr. Abdurahman Jama Barre, minister of foreign affairs since 1977, also aspires to leadership of the family, the clan, and the nation.

Outside, most leaders of other, often much larger clans and subclans are apparently content to look on for the time being. But several harbor resentment at being dispossessed and persecuted in the past. If economic stagnation worsens, as seems likely, and tension rises,

the passing months will present a built-in dynamic for instability.

Siad is nearly 80 years old and as with most military regimes, there is no clear successor. The potential for civil disturbance is very apparent—witness outbreaks of stone-throwing in Mogadishu last August, which greatly alarmed the government, not to mention foreign missions, some of which counseled against the customary violent reaction.

### The Politics of Detention

Several formerly prominent ministers and national leaders languish in Somalia's primitive prisons. The best known is probably Mohamed Aden Sheikh, who is reputedly in one of the worst—Labatan Jirow. A medical doctor by profession, he was president of the Somali Academy of Sciences and sometime minister of information and national guidance, and is often considered the intellectual behind Siad's "scientific socialism" period.

A Marehan himself, he fell from favor, was arrested with five other parliamentarians in June 1982, and charged with treason. It is currently rumored that he will be made out to have been a Soviet agent. That Sheikh for a period was close to the Italian Communist Party, which has unsuccessfully lobbied for his release, is well known. But Sheikh has never been to the Soviet Union, and any such charge will lack popular credence, the more so since several of his alleged fellow "conspirators" were much more right-wing in their views.

Although feared by his secretaries for a few outbursts occasioned by high blood pressure, Sheikh is more usually remembered as a genial, popular, and articulate nationalist. Many Somalis are watching his fate with foreboding. He and his colleagues have been adopted by Amnesty International as "prisoners of conscience," and the Council of the American African Studies Association has recently included his name and that of Abdi Ismail Yunis, formerly dean of education at the National University, in an appeal relating to imprisoned African academics.

Another imprisoned Marehan is Maj.-Gen. Omar Haji Mohamed, formerly minister of health and also acting

minister of defense and chief of staff of the armed forces. A man of considerable status, his detention illustrates that much of the "palace politics" in Mogadishu revolve around attempts to free or to incarcerate potential allies or political opponents.

Perhaps the best known of the prominent prisoners—because he once stood for secretary-general of the OAU—is Omar Arteh Ghalib. Now 58 and unfortunately for him, an Isaak by clan, his health is failing under the rigor of his imprisonment. The Isaak are the mainstay of the rebellion in the north led by the Somali National Movement (SNM).

Ghalib was a long-serving minister of higher education and then of foreign affairs. He was displaced in the early stages of the Ogaden war by Dr. Abdurahman Jama Barre. A tall and articulate man, Ghalib served in the presidency and was elected member of Parliament. At the time of his arrest in June 1982, he was first deputy speaker of the National Assembly. A devout Muslim and a nationalist, the charge that he too was guilty of treason and espionage for an unspecified foreign government borders on the ludicrous.

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**"Siad is nearly 80 years old and as with most military regimes, there is no clear successor. The potential for civil disturbance is very apparent."**

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More senior even than Ghalib is another detainee, Maj.-Gen. Ismail Ali Abokor. Abokor, an outspoken, efficient, and incorruptible administrator, was a graduate of Sandhurst Military Academy, assistant secretary-general of the ruling Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party, and third vice-president. He, too, is Isaak.

Ghalib, Abokor, and others anticipated the present crisis over succession and privately suggested that it might be prudent for their aging president to consider giving up that office, or at least secretary-generalship of the party, to

**"Neither the World Bank nor IMF have waxed sympathetic over the economic crises which are the day-to-day experience of all but a few Somalis"**

make way for a younger man. That is widely believed to have been the real cause of their arrest.

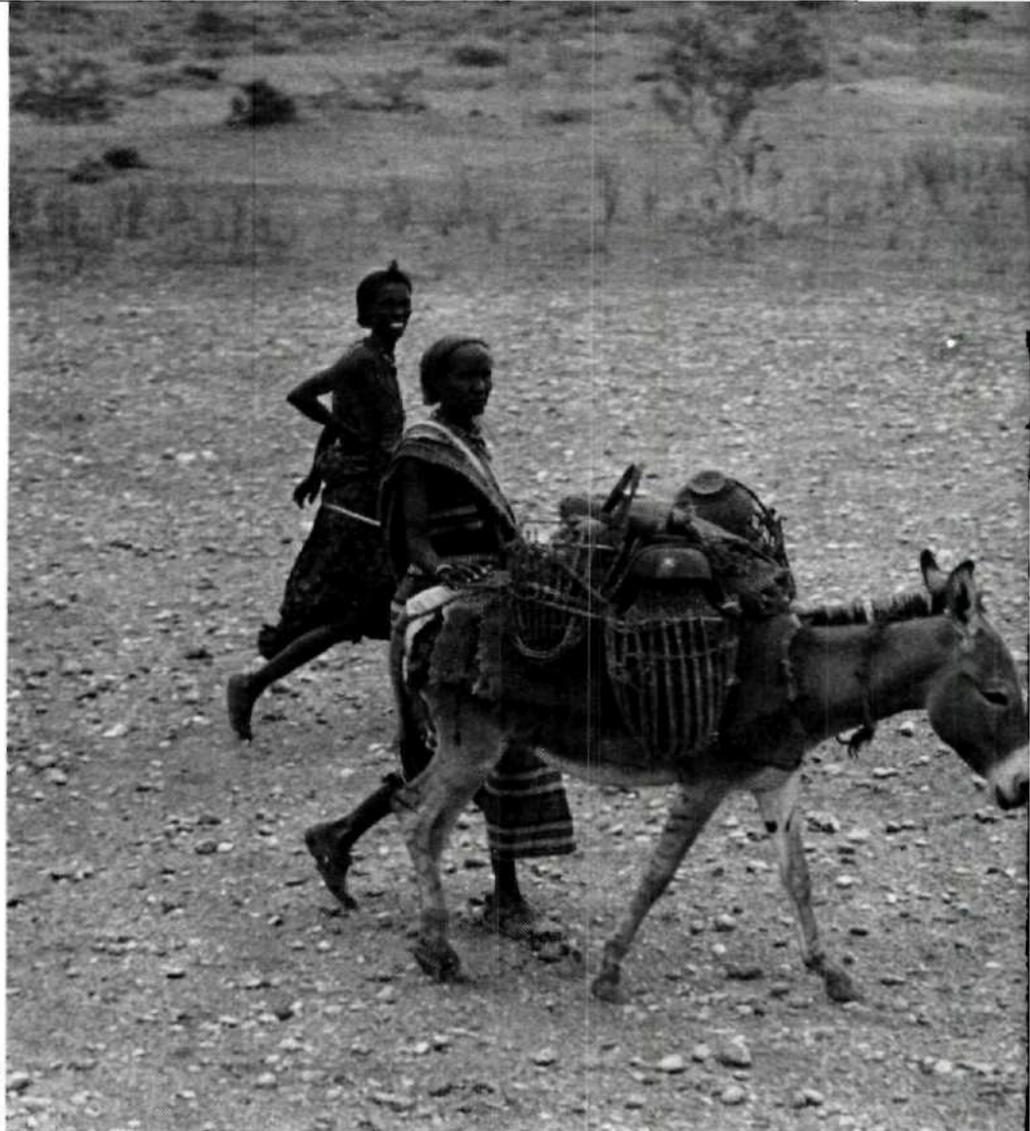
Sheikh, Mohamed, Ghalib, Abokor, Col. Osman Mohamed Ghelle (a former minister of livestock), Mohamed Yusuf Weiran (a former minister of finance), and 14 other officials are now said to be charged on counts varying from "organizing a subversive organization" to "conspiracy against the state," "banditry," and "possession of seditious material," all of which carry a mandatory death sentence.

Forty young persons—doctors, professionals, and students, all Isaak—who had founded a self-help organization and were arrested in 1982 around Hargeisa, are also to be tried. It has at last been announced that trial of the parliamentarians will commence on February 1, 1988, at 9 a.m. sharp. It is not clear, however, whether members of other clans will be tried at the same time as the Isaak.

### The Unsettled North

The number of security incidents in northern Somalia has increased in recent months. Demonstrations have led to curfews in the towns of Hargeisa, Berbera, and Burao and more recently, Borama. The military, under the command of Maj.-Gen. Mohamed Saeed Hirsi, nicknamed Morgan, is greatly extended by the demands of a deteriorating security situation. He has ordered his troops to destroy Isaak settlements if it seems the inhabitants are in support of the SNM. Wells have been sealed and crops burnt. Nomads have been harassed.

In the townships, suspected persons and curfew breakers have been arbitrarily arrested and released, if at all, only on the payment of a "ransom." Merchants suspected of sympathizing with the SNM have had their property and vehicles sequestered and their bank balances frozen—although some have been able to cash checks through friends of the regime, albeit at a ten or greater percentage discount.



Camerapix

Following the embarrassing leakage early last year of a secret policy paper advocating oppressive political and economic measures, Morgan may be hard put to fend off his rivals' efforts to have him transferred from command of the 26th Sector northwest. Maj.-Gen. Mohamed Hashi Gani, before his appointment as vice minister of defense, Morgan's predecessor as "viceroy" of the north, is a particular critic.

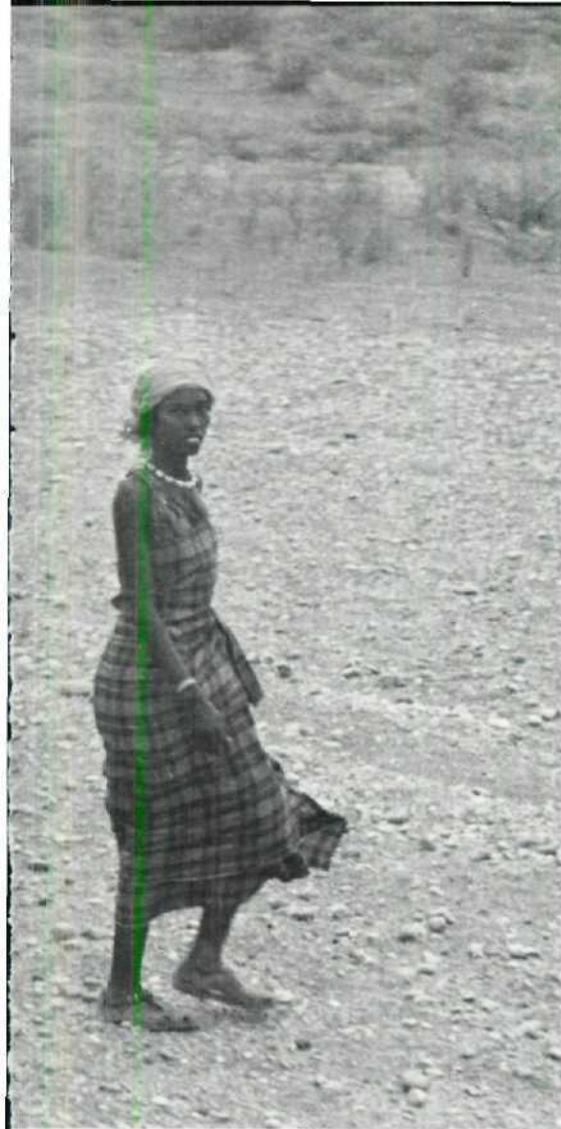
Several meetings have recently taken place between leading members of the "Marehan committee" and the Isaak elders, although the latter, of course, admit no connection with the SNM. Filial relationships being what they are, however, the Isaak elders will be in a difficult position if Siad is planning, as is strongly rumored, to demand their cooperation against the SNM in return for commuting death penalties on their political leaders and their articulate youth—flavored, doubtless, by the promise of development projects financed by

Western agencies.

### Economic Paroxysm

More significant, however, is the fact that neither World Bank officials nor the IMF have waxed sympathetic over the economic crises which are the day-to-day experience of all but a few Somalis. Nor have repeated devaluations of the Somali currency and the introduction of currency auctions proven the hoped-for palliative. Indeed, the exchange rate has again been pegged and auctions recently stopped. Officials close to the government report that as a further economy measure, a number of civil servants are to be suspended and certain embassies abroad closed.

In January, the cabinet is also expected to be reshuffled again and much reduced in size—perhaps to some 10 or 12 ministers. While relatives of the ruling Marehan families still manage to maintain villas in Washington and other



capitals, such is the shortage of foreign exchange that Somali diplomats in many countries have remained unpaid for long periods and one frustrated landlord even locked up the offices of the Somali Mission to the United Nations in New York.

Indeed, the state of the national economy remains quite desperate. In a paragraph of unusual candor in a confidential briefing paper issued in August, the Somali government frankly admitted that "annual debt service payments stand at 167 percent of export earnings." Somalia's crippling debts are by no means all owed to OECD countries and multilateral agencies. Among others, they include commercial borrowing from *Credit Lyonnais* at high repayment rates. Such debts were neither wisely incurred nor properly utilized and do not prove easy to reschedule.

Not only have climatic factors and the crisis in the north disturbed the livestock industry, but there is mounting competition in Somalia's traditional meat

markets. The Gulf war also continues to disrupt the import of essential petroleum products, causing sudden shortages which by themselves are politically unsettling. Over the years, such difficulties have often been resolved by "begging trips" to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

Aid in the form of cash grants is preferred by the regime, only partly because the civil service, although improved over the years, still lacks the infrastructure to process the quantity of supporting paperwork demanded by most donors. However, when Siad attended the emergency Arab summit on the Gulf war in early November, his request for a substantial handout was rejected as untimely, even tactless.

### Blood Money

In mid-1987, in a supposed good will gesture for the Muslim festival of Id al-Ahda—but actually in recognition of Saudi interest in the case—Siad commuted death sentences passed secretly by the National Security Court on nine mullahs accused of possessing anti-government literature. He substituted indefinite imprisonment. In Somalia, the preventative detention law of 1970 legalizes indefinite detention without charge or trial.

If they are found guilty as expected, it is rumored that an attempt will soon be made to barter the lives of the accused high officials in return for aid from the Gulf states. As architect of Somalia's joining the Arab League, Omar Arteh Ghalib is particularly well-liked by several Gulf leaders. Survival aid and an economic package may again be requested, despite recent negative responses.

There is no doubt that execution of respected figures can prove a last straw. Many prayers are being offered for political prisoners in Somalia today. For their friends—and for all friends of the Somali people—these are anxious times. For even if a stay of execution is granted, and the Somali government is once again bailed out financially by the Arab states, the impression may well remain in the West that only time has been bought. Future patterns remain obscure. □

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**"Opposition in Somalia is clearly fraught with hazard, but opposition movements have yet to establish a wide enough platform to provide an alternative to the ruling regime and Marehan plans for a 'dynastic succession.' "**

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Opposition in Somalia is clearly fraught with hazard, but opposition movements have yet to establish a wide enough platform to provide an alternative to the ruling regime and Marehan plans for a "dynastic succession." The Somali National Movement is active, but although it has made several attempts to appear truly national, it is still largely associated in the public mind with the Isaak. Moreover, based in Ethiopia, it is facetiously accused of being completely in the hands of the Ethiopian intelligence services.

Siad has also successfully played off the Ogadeen clan, who are still fairly powerful in the Somali military, against the Isaak, even while himself subtly degrading Ogadeen power as an obstacle to any unpopular deal he may feel pressured to make with Addis Ababa.

Against such a scenario, the vexing but delicate issue of human rights may yet provide a common platform for the growing number of Somalis who are demanding that their country return to democracy, free elections, and consensus politics. The February trials, if they are not once again postponed, cannot but provide a focus for the many strands and tensions in the unstable Somali political scene.

Indeed, there is another Somali proverb that says that if one's sandals become seriously fouled, it may be wise to discard them completely. One false move could prove disastrous for the family, and likewise for many of the factions currently jockeying for position in and around the ailing regime in Mogadishu. □

# The Politics of Isolation

Comoros

Coup attempts, mercenaries, and a controversial relationship with Pretoria have given the Perfume Islands a rather notorious reputation. Attempting to address its economic woes, President Abdallah's government is now caught between ties to France and to its new commercial partner, South Africa.



Camerafax

**"President Ahmed Abdallah is simultaneously the head of state and the chief executive of the country's largest import-export company"**

*Michael Griffin is a London-based freelance writer specializing in East Africa and the Indian Ocean.*

BY MICHAEL GRIFFIN

If the Islamic Republic of the Comoros Islands did not actually exist, a latter-day Jonathan Swift would almost certainly have been obliged to invent it, for the country's political evolution since independence in 1975 bears a startling resemblance to didactic, comic fiction.

After the first month of freedom, President Ahmed Abdallah was unseated by Ali Soilih, a French-trained agronomist whose far-sighted structural reforms of the islands' fledgling economy foundered when he attempted to suppress the tradition of "Grand Mariage." This epic potlatch which, in the space of a week, can consume the family's entire inheritance, lies at the heart of the islanders' religious and social fabric, and also partly accounts for the archipelago's low level of economic activity.

The three islands now share an uneasy federalism in which President Abdallah, restored to popular acclaim in 1978, is simultaneously the head of state and the chief executive of the country's largest import-export company. His personal security is provided by a black-shirted presidential guard commanded by 30 aging European mercenaries married to local women and to their place in the late afternoon sunshine due to a profession which, elsewhere in the continent, suffers from chronic unemployment.

Lapped by the Indian Ocean currents and scented by the perfumes and spices which are their sole exports, the islands are tenuously linked to the outside world by two telephone wires. According to one Western diplomat, there have been 13 coup rumors in the last four years.

But behind the country's colorful public image is an economic and social conundrum which is proving impossible to resolve. Adrift in the ocean with few natural resources and a market too small to support a manufacturing base, the Comoros are almost entirely dependent upon imported goods to feed, clothe, and employ its 400,000 inhabitants.

Shipping costs and membership in the franc zone ensure that the cost of living is far higher than in its more productive

East African neighbors, but there are few employers outside the government and the triumvirate of companies, including the president's, which control the import and export trades.

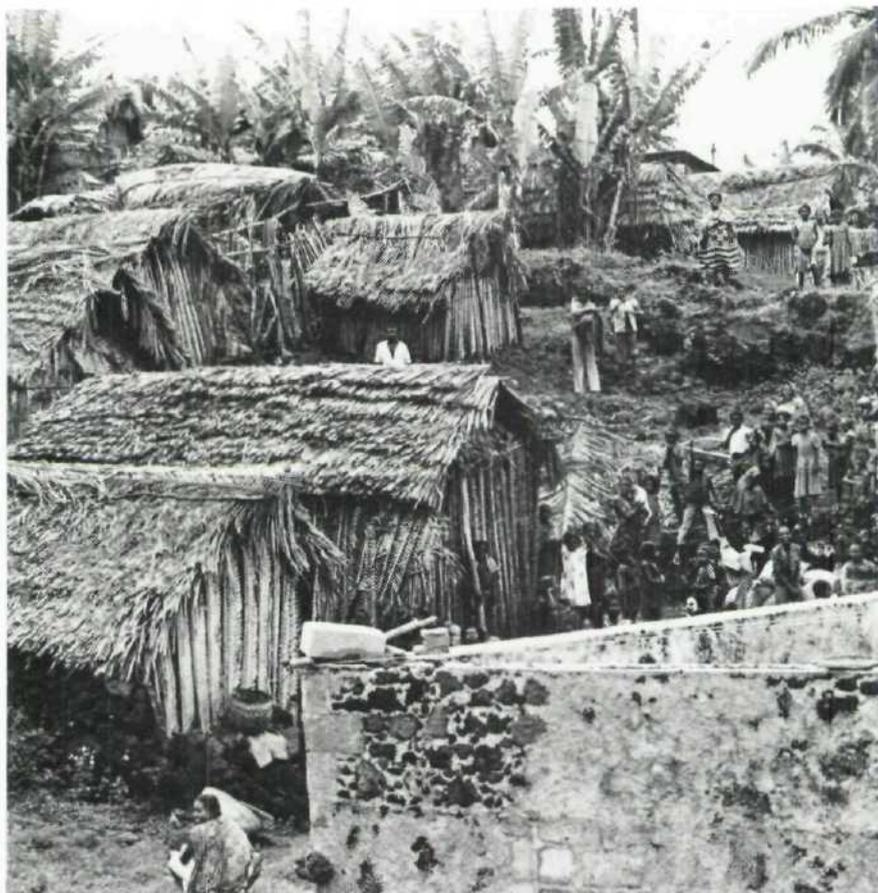
Economic expansion over the past decade has barely kept pace with population growth which is already one of the highest in Africa. Many of the best-trained minds of the past generation have moved to France, which hosts a 40,000-strong community, while a large number still live around the Malagasy city of Mahajanga.

Export revenues from its main cash crops, vanilla and cloves, have oscillated wildly, putting an additional strain upon an economy whose budgetary deficits are regularly absorbed by cash injections from France, the former colonial power. According to the World Bank, total external aid amounts to \$40 million per year or 80 percent of total public expenditure and more than half annual GDP.

In late November, a tripartite mission composed of representatives of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the African Development Bank visited the islands in a bid to define a structural adjustment program suitable to the islands' precarious economy. Minister of Economy and Finance Said Ahmed Said Ali described the visit as "preparatory" and denied reports in the Paris-based *Indian Ocean Newsletter* that talks between the World Bank and the government had broken down.

The Bank is due to present proposals to the governing body by Christmas and then to the several funds concerned by early January. Diplomatic sources say that despite the longer time-frame envisaged by the government, a consensus on adjustment is likely to emerge before the end of this financial year, thus permitting the Comoros to draw on a modest standby facility posted by the IMF for 1987.

Further pressure is provided by the islands' critical debt situation. External borrowings amount to \$150 million, of which \$68 million is owed to multilateral organizations and \$49 million to Arab funds. Though minuscule by African standards, debt service will consume \$8 million or over 50 percent of export earnings this year unless a rescheduling



**"Economic expansion over the past decade has barely kept pace with population growth, one of the highest in Africa"**

takes place, a figure that will rise to \$10.5 million by 1990.

Noticeable by their absence from the preliminary meetings were representatives of the Arab funds, particularly the Kuwaiti Fund, the Abu Dhabi Fund, and the Islamic Development Bank, all of whom are considerably extended in the islands. Reports of a rupture between the government and these traditional, conservative backers of the regime have yet to be confirmed, though it is clear that repayments over the past year have not been as orderly as planned. World Bank sources say that agreement on structural adjustment measures could help influence the attitude of the Middle Eastern banking community.

Indebtedness has risen sharply since the beginning of the decade when repayments stood at just 3 percent of exports. The present situation is the result of an investment program with an unfashionable accent on the creation of infrastructure at the expense of agriculture. The government goal was to end the

country's geographical isolation by improvements in transport and communications and it is a period that officials still point to as evidence of the progress achieved during President Abdallah's first mandate.

Per capita incomes rose from \$170 in 1978 to \$350 in 1985, while economic growth averaged between 4-5 percent over the same period. A new airport was constructed, the road system doubled in size, and on each island, a ring of tarmac makes most villages accessible to motor transport. But the World Bank argues in its 1986 report, *The Needs of Adjustment*, that this apparent growth was unreal, being subsidized by the imports required to fuel the modernization program.

Expansion has been concentrated in the construction and commerce sectors alone. There are new roads, but few agricultural products travel along them to market. There are new power stations, but no manufacturers to tap the flow of electricity which is more expensive than in France. The deepwater harbor of Mutsamudu, built at a cost of \$45 million, is still not finished and may never prove commercial, but the gov-

ernment has already started to repay its loans.

The interplay of politics and commerce in the Comoros is rarely far from the surface. The island's main trading houses clearly benefited from the government's focus on prestigious, capital-intensive schemes to the detriment of the nation's farmers and its educational and health services. A presidential economic adviser counters that the country's primitive port-handling facilities meant that insurance alone accounted for 35 percent of all import shipping charges to the isolated archipelago. Mutsamudu was essential, he says, if the Comoros were to trade in this modern world.

Though opinions differ as to the value of these investments, the government, in principle, agrees on the need for adjustment. The writing has been on the wall since the collapse of the vanilla market in 1984, when exports sank to less than \$10 million, and revenue, 70 percent dependent on buoyant vanilla sales, plummeted.

The following two years showed a marked improvement, according to the Central Bank annual report published early last year. Wage freezes on civil service pay were introduced in 1986 and continued through 1987, while revenue collection, long depleted by corruption and favoritism at the ports, has been tightened up. Imports fell by 22 percent in value, enhanced by declining world prices for rice, fuel, and cement.

But the argument for self-regulation does not go far enough to meet the requirements of the World Bank, and the Comoros is not strong enough to walk away from these negotiations. Rice prices have risen by 40 percent since 1986 in the wake of a global shortfall and in what seems like a replay of the bitter experience of 1984, the vanilla trade is once more in crisis. Less than eight tons of a 200-ton harvest have been sold this year, compared to 257 tons last year when the value of the dollar was assured.

Dealers like Kalfans et Cie., the island's largest vanilla exporter, blame the current situation upon Madagascar's sharp practice of offering discounts of up to 20 percent on the fixed price of \$72.50 per kilo agreed at the annual

meeting of producers and buyers held in Paris in March. The Comoros was then allocated a 250-ton quota, but this remains a moral, not a binding contract, as current sales testify. Traders say they have neither the stock nor the cash to match Madagascar's offer, which takes advantage of its 1,000-ton stockpile and the low producer prices paid in its inconvertible currency. In the Comoros, producer prices were fixed as high as \$7 per kilo in what many view as a pre-election sop by President Abdallah.

The loss of the vanilla market has had repercussions at every level of society. Left with a product that no one seems to want, the three main exporters have either burned their fingers on rising bank charges or simply postponed payments to vanilla farmers. This has led to diminished demand for rice, sugar, and other imported foodstuffs. Since 40 percent of all civil servants depend on vanilla revenues for their salary, many were kept waiting for up to three months before finally being paid off in October.

When it emerges, the adjustment program is likely to dampen economic activity even further, for its priority targets will be overmanning in the civil service, inefficient parastatals, and cuts in public investment. The government will attempt to delay the program for as long as possible, as unemployment has become a key issue among an electorate that already feels cheated following the government's heavy-handed rigging of legislative elections in March last year.

But a far more essential plank of government policy and the sine qua non of internal stability is the annual rice purchase, varying between 27-30,000 tons, which consumes as much as 50 percent of the country's export revenues. The World Bank claims that ONICOR, the state agency that took control of rice-buying when President Abdallah came to power, charges three times its purchasing price in Thailand, Burma, and Pakistan, but to tamper with food imports is to jeopardize the very foundations of government authority. Faced with a trade-off between public sector redundancies or a cut in rice imports, the government will not hesitate to adopt the former option.

The administration is publicly committed to a policy of food self-suffi-

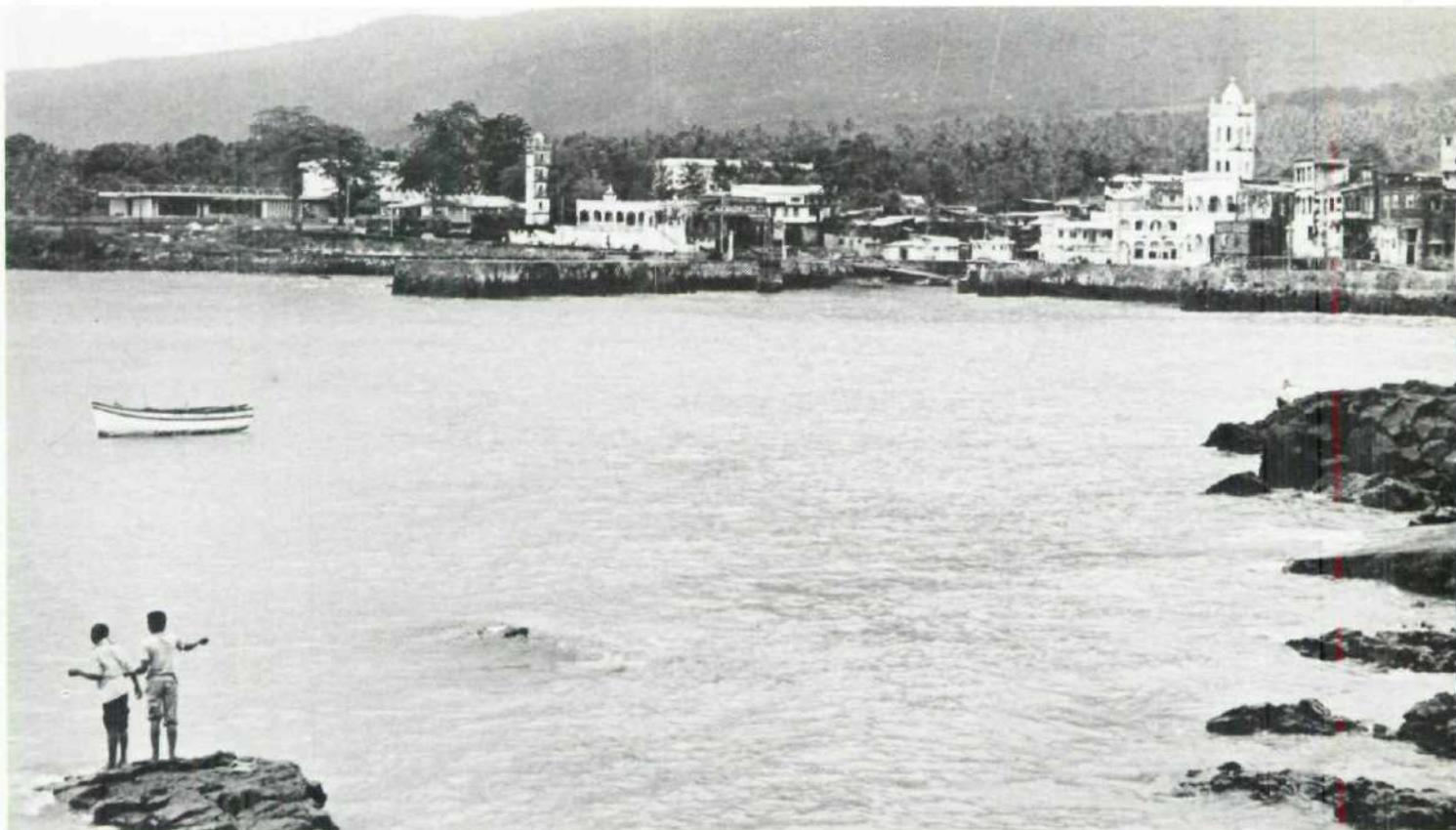
ciency, but this is no more than a "pipe-dream" in the words of one international agency director. Local production is less than a third of demand and local farmers are powerless to meet the needs of a population that is likely to grow to 700,000 by the end of the century.

The Grand Comoros enjoys abundant rainfall, but the volcanic rock supports no permanent streams and its inhabitants resort to water cisterns to meet their daily needs in the dry season. Anjouan, an island of misty peaks and seemingly lush valleys, is currently on the threshold of an ecological catastrophe that has already diminished the water-table and reduced total forest cover to less than 1,000 hectares. "With every rainstorm, six centuries of topsoil rush down to the sea," comments one expert. Donors are now seeking \$50 million to fund an intensive program of reforestation covering 3,500 hectares each year, but it may already be too late.

The sole gleam of light in an otherwise grim prospectus is tourism, but there are diplomatic and commercial drawbacks to the enterprise. A reputation for instability and external pressure to eschew links with South Africa have prevented the archipelago from making a name in the industry. In 1982, a development plan by Sun International was scotched following objections by France and South Africa, and arrivals remain stagnant at 1,500-1,800 each year. But since the election of Jacques Chirac as Prime Minister, France has stifled its resentment of increasing South African influence in the islands.

Nouvelle Socotel, a South African-led consortium with a 35 percent government interest, is now completing work on a 190-room resort hotel on Grand Comoros' northern coast, with additional plans for hotels on Anjouan and Moheli. Sun International, which is to provide an undisclosed amount of the 25 million rand capital, will also manage the chain, which is to be marketed as Orchid Hotels. Nouvelle Socotel anticipates 12,000 visitors in the first year of operation and a second South African Airways flight will be launched when the hotels open next August.

There is certainly a market to be tapped for the Perfume Islands, particularly in South Africa, which is starved of



Cameras

shorthaul holiday destinations. But with the high cost of living, guests will be corralled in the luxury ghetto and there are unlikely to be many opportunities for local enterprises. The government has already agreed to reduce import taxes for alcohol consumed on the hotel premises and most consumer items will be imported directly from South Africa, either by the SAA service or the freighter that calls from Durban every six weeks.

At this late date, the official attitude to the scheme is deeply ambivalent. "You seem to take a mad pleasure in presenting the thing with a view to bringing disgrace or to tarnish the name of the government," exclaimed Said Ahmed Said Ali, minister of economy and finance, when quizzed about the South Africa project. Mauritius, Seychelles, and to a lesser extent, Madagascar are all reconciled to the commercial reality of sharing the same ocean with the continent's superpower, with regard both to tourism and shipping links.

The Comoros government, however, remains supersensitive to the opinions of mainland Africa, recalling bitterly its ignominious expulsion from the 1978 OAU conference in Khartoum in the wake of President Abdallah's resto-

ration by white mercenaries. The president has since clawed his way back to regional respectability, but he depends upon OAU votes each year for the ritual—if justified—condemnation of France's continued occupation of Mayotte, the fourth Comoros island which voted to remain under French administration in 1975.

The two nations have played leapfrog over the affair for 12 years without injuring their special relationship, founded on France guaranteeing the island's safety from invasion. But since November 1986, when Prime Minister Chirac announced a one billion franc investment program for Mayotte, the links have become more strained. Observers regard the Sun International scheme as just the most visible emblem of France's declining interest in the archipelago and a sign that the Comoros have already become an asteroid in South Africa's firmament of client states.

Defense Minister Magnus Malan and "Pik" Botha, the minister of foreign affairs, have both made personal visits over the past 18 months. A tussle for control of the presidential guard between Durban-based Bob Denard, who masterminded the 1978 coup, and

**"There is certainly a tourist market to be tapped for the Perfume Islands, particularly in South Africa, starved of short-haul holiday destinations"**

"Commandant Charles," who allegedly represented French interests, ended with the latter's expulsion in late October. Was it coincidence when, a few days later, a Paris court finally opened hearings on Denard's involvement in the death of 58 people in the Benin coup attempt 10 years earlier? If found guilty, Denard faces arrest in French territory.

"Bob makes the law in this country," confided one member of the proscribed opposition. "He is the King. It has nothing to do with justice. It's Bob and no one else." The aging Denard may indeed play puppet-master to President Abdallah, but it is becoming increasingly clear that it is Pretoria, no longer Paris, who pays Bob. The *Indian Ocean Newsletter* asserts that his network of mercenaries currently costs some \$3.6 million per year to support. Whatever the outcome of the current talks on the Comoros debt, this is one service industry that the World Bank will be unable to trim. □

Anxious to take advantage of educational opportunities not available at home, African students benefiting from "scholarship diplomacy" often find life in the Soviet Union somewhat different from what they had anticipated.

# Innocents Abroad

## Education



Colleen Lowe Morna

BY COLLEEN LOWE MORNA

**Y**ou're having trouble making it into the local university, and then presto, a scholarship comes along. It could be to Washington or to Moscow—you don't really care. Fact is, you've had your big break, and there are only a few days to pack. What's one of the first things you do?

Like many other African students in Moscow looking back on those days, Stephen Tagoe, a Ghanaian, remembers giving away most of his few pos-

**Patrice Lumumba University, Moscow: "Scholarship diplomacy is as old as the superpower game"**

sessions to younger brothers and relatives, in anticipation of better times ahead.

He arrived in the Soviet capital at the start of winter, wearing a thin cotton suit and carrying "a little parcel of clothes," only to find that a pair of jeans, at least in those days, cost 200 rubles (about \$330). "I almost died," the jolly veterinary science major said in a recent interview.

Five years later, Tagoe (a pseudonym) is an old hand at getting around Moscow—as adept at buying and selling

goods from West Berlin as he is at performing surgery on a cow. "Most of us come out of here much better capitalists than we were at the start," he laughed—half-seriously.

Scholarship diplomacy is as old as the superpower game. Apart from the loftier goal of enriching cultural diversity, it's a way of gaining influence with the world's most promising minds—more often than not, tomorrow's leaders.

The Unesco statistical yearbook for 1981 shows that foreign student intake in the Soviet Union increased by 125.5 percent between 1970 and 1978, while that for the United States rose by 82.4 percent over a corresponding period. In 1985, the U.S. government announced that it intended to increase scholarships by 50 percent, in a bid to "catch up with Communist bloc countries in training the youth of the developing world."

Said the then-administrator of the Agency for International Development: "They are taking full advantage of these scholarships to shape young minds and increase their influence in the developing world. These young people are returning to their countries, not only with new skills, but with ideologies as well. . . America has some way to catch up."

According to official Soviet statistics, over 2 million Third World students have trained in the USSR since the 1950s and there are currently 53,000

*Colleen Lowe Morna, a Zimbabwean freelance journalist based in Harare, recently visited the Soviet Union.*

foreign students in the country.

Western propaganda centers, says one handbook, "keep spreading the lie that Soviet universities are training Red terrorists, Kremlin agents, etc." The Soviet Union, it says, does not seek any "unilateral advantages, either political or economic" through scholarship programs.

But, the pamphlet admits, the Soviet Union invests considerably in the training of personnel from developing countries. "And we stand to gain from this: we win new trade partners. And the strengthening of peace and friendship is also to our benefit," the pamphlet states.

While both superpowers clearly harbor ulterior motives, and there are undoubtedly long-term benefits, sociologists warn that the returns from scholarship programs are not necessarily automatic or immediate. "Familiarity breeds the right to be critical," writes J.M. Mitchell in his book, *International Cultural Relations*. "Foreign students usually find some fault with their host country of education and by so doing they help to maintain their own sense of identity in a status of tutelage."

According to an East African diplomat here, who studied in the Soviet Union himself for several years, many African students abroad are first generation scholars who come from poor, peasant families. "Their immediate concern," he maintains, is not so much with ideology as with "how to break free from squalor and poverty."

Most of the African students interviewed in Moscow had a pretty hazy idea of what to expect when they first arrived. But all of them anticipated a quick rise in their material living standards.

"I expected that I would be going to visit a superpower, very developed in the scientific and other fields," said a Kenyan political economy major at Moscow State University. "I expected a good life, a comfortable time. So naturally I was surprised when I found that I had to hassle just to get money to buy clothes."

Students on government grants here receive a stipend of 90 rubles a month to take care of all their needs apart from actual school fees. It covers the ba-

sics—a loaf of bread in Moscow costs 11 kopecks, a fat textbook goes for 2 rubles, and you can ride anywhere on the immaculate Moscow subway for a mere 5 kopecks.

But although jeans (which are now manufactured locally) have halved in price, clothing, gadgets, electronic goods, and any other "luxuries" remain exorbitant. Says Tagoe, "On 90 rubles a month I can feed myself, but I can't buy utensils, and if I had a visitor, I'd have to fast for a few days."

African diplomats point out that foreign students get twice as much as their Soviet counterparts and almost as much as some professors each month. A Zimbabwean diplomat recalls how one student came to the embassy to complain that he had to ride to school by subway, while his friend in West Germany drove around in a BMW.

But most African governments concede that it's a tight squeeze for foreign students and pay a supplementary stipend, usually in the order of \$30 to \$50 a month, made available in coveted hard currency.

Officially, at the bank a dollar is worth three-fifths of a ruble. Unofficially, on the thriving "parallel" market, the green buck fetches a tidy four rubles. Though of course it's not part of the plan, few students bother to go to the bank under the circumstances.

Even more common—because they have more latitude than the average Soviet student to travel to the West—most African students take the occasional trip to West Berlin or Bonn, use their savings to buy clothing or electronic goods, smuggle them in, and sell them for six times the price in rubles.

While Soviet officials know what's going on, they tend to turn a blind eye, explained one African diplomat, "because unwittingly the students help to satisfy local demand."

On campus, most students share four to a room—always a mixture between Soviet and foreign students. It's hard enough, says a Zimbabwean student, to get four people to agree "to a common code of behavior at the best of times." It's even harder when your perceptions are continents apart.

For starters, there is a new language and alphabet to be learned. Most stu-

dents finally get the hang of Russian after their first-year intensive language course. But as Joshua Ngwenya, a Zimbabwean philology student at Patrice Lumumba University, puts it, "It is no joke."

Then there is the general suspicion of foreigners which pervades society here. "It's not so much a function of socialism as it is a result of their historical background," explained Ndaba Dube, a post-graduate student at Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys. "The Soviets have been fighting for survival from the time of the civil war, through to the second World War, and then the Cold War. The general feeling is that they have to be on guard."

But it does increase tension. Most students are aware that extensive files are kept on them by university authorities. And while there is little direct evidence of any student being expelled because of his beliefs, African students tend to watch what they say to their roommates.

Interestingly, Ngwenya was the only interviewee who reported "very good relations" with his Soviet counterparts. He pointed out that Patrice Lumumba University, which was built in 1960, caters primarily to foreign students, and specifically those Soviet students being primed to travel abroad. "They study foreign languages and learn to live with us," he said.

But a myriad of regulations can hamper relations. A Soviet student wishing to invite a foreigner home has to get permission to do so, and often it's not worth raising questions. Similarly, foreign students have to obtain authorization to receive visitors. All the interviews for this article were conducted off-campus, and although students spoke openly and freely, most preferred not to be named. Permission is also required to undertake trips within and outside the Soviet Union.

Because most Soviet men have served in areas which are considered security-sensitive, they are not allowed by law to marry foreign women. Fewer Soviet women find themselves in this predicament, and a fairly high proportion of African male students have Soviet wives.

Courtships are not always easy and

marriage can present hard choices. If a Russian girlfriend lives off campus, she must receive a letter of invitation, for which approval must be obtained, before she can come over. Visiting hours are usually no later than 10 pm. Staying over involves a complex process of bribing the doorman and negotiating with roommates.

To get married, the foreign spouse must prove through various documents authenticated in his home country that he is not already married. Housing for married couples on university campuses is scarce, particularly if they don't attend the same institute. Often, the newlyweds have to live apart initially.

In general, foreign students are not allowed to stay in the Soviet Union once they complete their studies. Thus a Soviet woman married to an African student has the choice of giving up her citizenship and going to Africa, or shuttling back and forth on a temporary passport.

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**“While both superpowers clearly harbor ulterior motives, and there are undoubtedly long-term benefits, sociologists warn that the returns from scholarship programs are not necessarily automatic or immediate.”**

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Inlaws aren't always supportive either. According to one African student married to a Soviet woman, his inlaws boycotted the wedding. “They have grown up with their own prejudices and naturally they are afraid of how this might affect relations with the neighbors,” he said.

Virtually every student interviewed complained he had experienced racism at some time. The Kenyan political economy student said that during his one-year intensive language study in the southern town of Astrakhen, “White students often huddled on one bench, leaving me all alone in the lecture room.”

Though it's not an everyday occurrence, most said that they had been called a monkey. “When I first came,” said Tagoe, “I used to get angry and furious. Now I'm used to it.” Tagoe has found his own way of dealing with the problem. “They told me I was a monkey, so I let my tail wag,” he said. Now, when he meets a Soviet citizen, he explained, he introduces himself as a “monkey,” putting them in an embarrassing and defensive situation.

Regardless of what discipline they are pursuing, students at Soviet universities study three areas: social sciences (including Soviet history and scientific socialism), general science, and finally “subjects which determine the type of specific qualification.”

African students vary in their assessment of how free they are to be critical in the first of these categories, but one sums up the general consensus thus: “As long as you remain within a certain range of ideas, you are free to say what you want.”

And most note that with the advent of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, the intellectual atmosphere is gradually opening up to more debate. For example, a group of African students at Moscow State University recalls how one teacher came into class, upset over an article in *Pravda*, the widest circulation daily, exposing prostitution in Moscow. Such writing, she reportedly argued, would show up the “imperfections of socialism.”

The students countered that if the Soviet Union indulged in its own self-criticism, they'd effectively silence the critics outside. “Foreign journalists will have nothing to say, because you will have said it all yourself,” one African student told the teacher.

And among themselves, the students talk freely. “The economic strides made by the Soviet Union in 70 years are nothing short of impressive, especially when you consider that in between they fought a war which cost 2 million lives,” says Gandhi Mudzingwa, a fourth-year political economy candidate at Moscow State University, and publicity secretary of the Zimbabwe Students Union.

Equally, he continued, “the distribution of material wealth makes a very pleasant picture. A common man can af-

ford a house, heating, and basic food-stuffs. What one person has, the other has the capacity to acquire.”

But, he says, this has been accompanied by an undesirable level of control. “In addition, the Soviet system has not given due attention to the human being in his or her social context,” he said.

Others, most of whom felt that some sort of balance was needed between socialism and capitalism, criticized the inherent inefficiencies in the system. Said a medical student attending university in the southern town of Rostov: “I've grown so used to shortages that I no longer know what I'm missing and what I'm not.” It's no good having free medicine, he added, “if you have to bribe the doctor for treatment.”

“I've lived with queues for six years now,” another student in the room griped. “But I still can't get used to them.”

Still, very few African students throw in the towel. Interestingly, when challenged with some of the stereotype images of Soviet education back home, they become quite defensive. They argue eloquently, for example, in favor of oral exams, which are the main form of testing in Soviet universities, but are considered a no-no in the rather rigid French and British educational systems.

It is not true, they add, that everyone who gets into Soviet university passes—a perception perhaps borne of the fact that students who fail to make it into local universities still manage to get degrees overseas. Certainly, they say, it's no easier than going through an American college.

Indeed, predicts Tagoe, when most African students get home, they will probably be far milder in their criticism. This, he reflects, is perhaps the genius of scholarship programs.

The sponsors know, he said, “that we ultimately can't afford to talk negatively about our stay, because to do so would be to reflect negatively on our own achievements.”

It is quite probable, he admits, that generations of ill-prepared, excited youngsters will continue landing at Moscow airport to minus zero temperatures, clad in summer suits, looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. □

# A City on the Front Lines of War

## Letter from Harare

The filming of Richard Attenborough's "Cry Freedom!" in Zimbabwe, along with recent cases of South African-backed espionage and sabotage, have brought about a transformation in the mood of the capital city. Harare, says our correspondent, is bracing for the onset of war.

BY ANDREW MELDRUM

As they entered the theater in downtown Harare, those attending the gala world premiere of "Cry Freedom!" were confronted with gaping holes in the lobby where plate glass windows had once been. It was tropically hot that night, and the diplomats and government ministers who came to see director Sir Richard Attenborough and Prime Minister Robert Mugabe open the film about South African activist Steve Biko seemed not to mind that they were standing in the open air.

But they could not help but comment on the wide-open spaces left when the window panes were shattered by a powerful car bomb which injured seven people, including two well-known anti-apartheid activists.

"This film is about what the South Africans did 10 years ago and it looks like they are still at it," said a British diplomat, leaning on the window sill and looking down at the asphalt parking lot where the remote control bomb had left a six-foot crater.

*Andrew Meldrum, an American journalist who has been based in Zimbabwe for six years, reports on southern Africa for The Guardian of London, Agence France-Presse, and the Voice of America.*

Although no one has been charged in the incident, the Mugabe government has blamed South African agents, and police sources say that their investigations have led them to two white South Africans who have since fled the country.

Just as Paul Simon's controversial "Graceland" tour briefly focused international attention on majority-ruled Zimbabwe last year, Attenborough's movie—most of which was filmed here—has also shone a spotlight on the country. But what has been illuminated is a nation beset by bombs, spies, and violent rebel movements—all of them backed by South Africa.

"We heard that car bomb go off from miles away," said the British official before the "Cry Freedom!" screening. "I think it shook everyone, not just for the damage it did, but also because it brought home the realization that little Harare may be the target for more such terrifying incidents."

At the Harare opening, Sir Richard Attenborough said he had made the movie in Zimbabwe because the South African authorities would not have permitted him the freedom he required to make a strong anti-apartheid film. Further, Zimbabwe had many similar locales and the landscape to give the film authenticity.

Answering criticisms that the movie was more the story of Donald Woods than of Biko, Attenborough said, "This is not THE movie about Steve Biko. It is a movie about the friendship between two men. One happens to be black and the other white and the film shows the varying degrees of suffering that the obscenity of apartheid causes."

"The definitive movie about Steve Biko will have to be made in a free South Africa by an African," declared Attenborough.

Black and white Zimbabweans alike have lined up at the box office to see an

epic film about a nation with many parallels to their own. The Zimbabwean government invested 18 percent of the film's \$39 million total cost and hopes not only to reap profits from it, but also to promote Zimbabwe's budding film industry.

"Cry Freedom!" has inspired a Zimbabwean film-making team to produce a more serious documentary about Biko. "We presumed there were political gaps in the Attenborough film and so we situated it within the Biko legacy," said Mark Kaplan of the Capricorn Video Unit which wrote and produced the documentary.

The hour-long film, entitled "Biko: Breaking the Silence," features interviews with several of Biko's contemporaries and examines the roots of his Black Consciousness Movement, explaining how its philosophy fits into the current situation in South Africa.

"That political issue pivots around the question of whether or not there is a role for whites in the anti-apartheid struggle," said Kaplan, a Zimbabwean who spent several years working in South Africa.

"Many say that the Black Consciousness Movement was just a phase black activists had to go through. We showed activists who were close to Biko and who are now associated with the United Democratic Front [UDF] and therefore working shoulder to shoulder with whites against the apartheid system. The UDF embraces the non-racial position of the African National Congress [ANC]."

The opposing view of Biko's legacy, said Kaplan, comes from interviews with "members of Azapo [Azanian People's Organization] who have never really allowed whites any place in the struggle. Where Biko would stand today between Azapo and the outlawed ANC is still open to question. That is the key political question we explore in the documentary."

In the film, the ANC's director for information, Thabo Mbeki, reveals that Biko was in contact with the ANC shortly before his death in police detention. "It seems clear," said Kaplan, "that Biko was trying to dovetail the efforts of the Black Consciousness Movement within South Africa with the efforts of

the ANC from outside."

Another aim of the film is to document continuing torture and deaths in detention, the medical profession's role in covering up those abuses, and the limited avenues for legal redress. The informative documentary mixes those interviews, many of them shot in South Africa, with archival material about Biko, interviews with Attenborough and Woods, and footage from "Cry Freedom!"

Just as Attenborough made the life of Indian nationalist Mahatma Gandhi into a commercially successful film, his "Cry Freedom!" has utilized sweeping scenes of life in South Africa to make a powerful anti-apartheid statement. As in "Gandhi," most effective are the epic-scale, crowd scenes of mass rallies, funerals, and the police attack on the Crossroads squatter camp.

The two-and-a-half hour film lags somewhat in the second half, after Biko, convincingly played by Denzel Washington, dies from injuries received while in police custody. At that point, the movie shifts focus to depict the flight of Donald Woods, played by Kevin Kline, from South Africa to publicize the circumstances of Biko's death.

Although all the tension-building techniques of the escape genre are skillfully employed, it is hard for the viewer to remain as engaged in the Woods family's predicament as in that of Biko and the other black South Africans in the film. Attenborough as much as admits that the Woods escape took the film to a cul-de-sac, and he uses an unconvincing flashback to end the film with its most compelling scene, the 1976 Soweto student uprising.

However, Harare viewers were excited by seeing schoolchildren in Bulawayo's Mpopoma township reenact the Soweto uprising. Biko's funeral was filmed at Gwanzura stadium in Harare's Highfield township and the city's Epworth settlement became the infamous Crossroads squatter camp. Most were also sadly aware that the anti-apartheid struggle depicted in "Cry Freedom!" is now even more intense—spiralling to engulf the neighboring countries.

Attenborough's depiction of Biko's death in police custody was effectively underplayed and factual. A South African doctor had given the police permission to transport Biko's unconscious and

naked body some 700 miles in the back of a land-rover to a hospital in Pretoria—the rough journey resulting in Biko's death.

It took eight years before the South African Medical Council held an official inquiry into the conduct of the doctors who treated Biko and two doctors—one of them, Dr. Ivor Lang, district surgeon in Port Elizabeth—were merely reprimanded for professional negligence.

At a recent international conference in Harare entitled, "Children, Repression, and the Law in Apartheid South Africa," Dr. Wendy Orr, who worked with Dr. Lang, described how treatment of prisoners has remained essentially unchanged from the time of Biko's death in 1977.

Dr. Orr told the conference delegates that while she was working under Dr. Lang in 1985, she treated hundreds of detainees, more than half of whom complained of police assaults. She said that they had injuries consistent with such assaults, some of them serious. Many complained of torture during interrogation and again displayed wounds consistent with such mistreatment.

Dr. Orr told Dr. Lang that she was worried about the injuries. "He said we should treat the symptoms and that the causes of such injuries were not our business," she said. She then began compiling documentation of security police brutality against detainees. After she appealed publicly for a halt to such mistreatment, she was promptly taken off any duty in which she would come into contact with detainees.

"I became discouraged when I thought of all the doctors and other medical personnel in South Africa who have not spoken out against the police atrocities that they have seen," said Dr. Orr. "Why is mine the only voice against this?" She then appealed to the international community to strike the Medical Association of South Africa (MASA) from all international medical organizations.

South African lawyers and psychologists gave detailed accounts of how the thousands of children detained under South Africa's current state of emergency have been systematically brutalized and denied basic legal and medical care. According to figures presented at the conference, more than 30,000 people have been detained during South Africa's current state of emergency, one-

third of them under 18 years of age.

Much of the testimony at the conference could not be reported in South Africa because of restrictions on both local and foreign journalists. Just as Donald Woods had to flee South Africa in 1977 to get the facts out about Steve Biko's death, other concerned South Africans, both black and white, must travel outside their country to publicize the harsh facts of widespread detentions without trial and mistreatment of thousands of men, women, and children.

\* \* \*

As Attenborough's film premiered in Zimbabwe, Harare was fascinated by another South African-related story: the trial of a young, white South African woman who admitted she had been spying on the ANC in Harare for the Pretoria government.

Odile Harrington, 27, came to Zimbabwe in October 1986. Declaring herself an anti-apartheid activist, she sought refugee status and within months was living in a house with four ANC members. She was caught sending out information on the whereabouts of ANC members and offices in Harare that could have been used in South African attacks. The fact that the ANC office was bombed and a sabotaged television set exploded killing the wife of an ANC member in Harare last year made the threat of further attacks very real.

In court, Harrington coolly described her espionage activities as "her duty" to her government. She criticized the ANC for "using landmines to blow up innocent children," but when she was confronted with the proposition that innocent Zimbabweans may well have died in a South African attack caused by her information, Harrington said, "Those things happen in war."

While Zimbabwe and South Africa are not officially at war, that has not stopped the Pretoria government from sending other young, white women like Harrington to gather information. In 1986, Olivia Forsythe was traveling through Zimbabwe doing "research" on the Southern African Development Coordination Conference when she was exposed as a spy and disappeared, some say into the protective custody of South Africa.

What was surprising about Harrington's case is that she was sent to Zimbabwe with virtually no training and

was caught very easily. Harrington was convicted of espionage and sentenced to 25 years in prison because of her "unrepentant" attitude.

At the same time, the story of another sort of espionage came to light in Harare, when Zimbabwean citizen Patricia Hanekom was released after spending three years in a South African prison.

In December 1983, she and her husband, Derek, and a friend, Roland Hunter, were discovered collecting documents which proved that the South African Defence Force (SADF) was training and supplying Mozambique's Renamo rebels. Hunter was a corporal in the SADF and became personal assistant to Col. Cornelius van Niekerk, director of the army's destabilization projects.

Shortly after her release, Hanekom spoke to the press in an effort to publicize the damning evidence she and her colleagues had collected. She said that Hunter had documents showing that he had paid large salaries to Mozambican rebels who were being trained in South Africa. She said he had invoices showing that he had arranged monthly airlifts of thousands of AK-47 automatic rifles and rounds of ammunition into Renamo bases in Mozambique. There were also destabilization programs aimed at Zimbabwe and Lesotho, she revealed.

These incidents have given Harare a very new atmosphere—that of a city on the front lines of war. Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has proudly and militantly declared itself a frontline state. But now, the spy cases, incidents of sabotage, and growing security threats—from Renamo along Zimbabwe's eastern border and from dissidents in southern Zimbabwe—have added a threatening, sinister air.

Many Zimbabwean viewers watching "Cry Freedom!" found themselves reacting very emotionally to the film, because of its relevance to their situation. "I found myself sobbing throughout the movie. I had a lump in my throat," said a white Zimbabwean man. "Thinking about it afterwards, I thought that the story in South Africa is not over and neither is Zimbabwe's. We are living through something very historic and it will affect us all. Southern Africa now is like Europe just before World War II." □

## New Yorker Films



Faces of Women

### THE AFRICAN COLLECTION:

- ANGOLA** **SAMBIZANGA.** 1972. Directed by Sarah Maldoror. A powerful film of oppression in Angola, realized through the story of a young woman searching for her jailed husband.
- CONGO** **THE LION HAS SEVEN HEADS.** 1970. Directed by Glauber Rocha. Stylized allegory attacking colonialism, made by the acclaimed Cinema Novo director.
- IVORY COAST** **FACES OF WOMEN.** 1985. Directed by Desiré Ecaré. Politically and stylistically adventurous film exploring the links between feminism, economics, and tradition in modern-day Africa.
- SENEGAL** **BLACK GIRL.** 1965. Directed by Ousmane Sembene. Landmark African film about an uprooted Senegalese servant girl in France.
- CEDDO.** 1977. Directed by Ousmane Sembene. Far-ranging national epic centering on a political kidnapping to stop Moslem expansion in the 19th century.
- EMITAI.** 1972. Directed by Ousmane Sembene. A clash between French colonialists and a mystical African tribe in the closing days of World War II.
- JOM, The Story of a People.** 1982. Directed by Ababacar Samb. A rousing West African fresco that illustrates and illuminates the continuity of Senegalese history.
- MANDABI.** 1968. Directed by Ousmane Sembene. An intimate seige of modern life in Dakar, about a man who encounters an intimidating barrage of Third World bureaucracy.
- NJANGAAN.** 1974. Directed by Mahama Johnson Traoré. The story of one of the many boys enslaved by marabouts purportedly teaching them the Koran.
- XALA.** 1974. Directed by Ousmane Sembene. A Third World paragon topples ignominiously; social comedy in the great tradition.

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# A Jewel in the Smithsonian's Crown

At last, centuries of African cultural masterpieces have found the home and the critical recognition they deserve in the Smithsonian's new National Museum of African Art.

BY HOWARD FRENCH

**"I**n matters of religion, as of art, there are no 'simple' peoples, only some peoples with simpler technologies than our own. Man's 'imaginative' and 'emotional' life is always and everywhere rich and complex."

This epigraph, taken from the catalogue of the "African Art in the Cycle of Life" exhibition at the Smithsonian's new National Museum of African Art, fairly sums up one of the driving ideas that brought the creation of this institution to its belated fruition.

Little studied and under-appreciated in the West, African art merits nothing less than the serious treatment that only a museum devoted entirely to it can promise.

With the opening of this new Smithsonian museum, the first in the Western world dedicated solely to the appreciation and study of black Africa's artistic contributions to world culture, the continent is finally getting some measure of its due, and fittingly so in Washington, the capital of the country with the world's second largest black population.

The new museum flows out of the heroic efforts of Warren Robbins, a former foreign service officer whose devotion to African art led him to assemble a modest collection of works in an ill-suited series of town houses on Capitol

*Howard French, a reporter for The New York Times, lived in Côte d'Ivoire for six years.*



Ceremonial stool, Akan peoples, Ghana

Hill in 1964. After several years of lobbying in Congress to have the collection absorbed into the Smithsonian, visitors to the national museum's mall now have access to another jewel: a promising alloy of high quality exhibits, spacious facilities, and ambitious staff brought together to show off Africa's artistic grandeur.

Under the direction of Sylvia H. Williams, former curator in the Department of African, Oceanic, and New World Cultures at the Brooklyn Museum in New York, the National Museum of African Art has assembled five major exhibitions which will greet visitors during its initial months of operation.

Ample borrowing from major collectors and museums in the United States and in Europe have allowed the small group of academics and museum professionals working with Williams to augment the new institution's still modest holdings of 6,000 objects with enough art of consistently high quality to dazzle the uninitiated visitor wandering in off

the mall and sustain the interest of academics and others already familiar with the terrain.

**"Little studied and under-appreciated in the West, African art merits nothing less than the serious treatment that only a museum devoted entirely to it can promise."**

The museum's permanent exhibition, which draws on about 80 pieces taken from its own holdings, including some previously unshown recent acquisitions plus some 20 masterpieces loaned by major private collectors in the United States, serves as a general introduction to African art.

Neilson-Atkins Museum of Art

Visitors to the gallery, which is located on the upper level of the two-story underground structure, are wound through the major art-producing regions of black Africa. Beginning in West Africa and meandering through the Congo River basin and dense rain forests of Central Africa, the tour ends with a few well chosen samples taken from the somewhat less prolific regions of East and southern Africa.

The items shown here, a stone-hewn Nomoli doll from Sierra Leone, Akan fertility figures, a Benin "bronze," and a wonderfully abstract bullet-eyed warrior statuary from Zaire, among many other works, are displayed in an unobtrusive manner with a minimum of diverting literature, with the intention it would seem to wow the uninitiated with the sheer esthetic power and range of the continent's art.

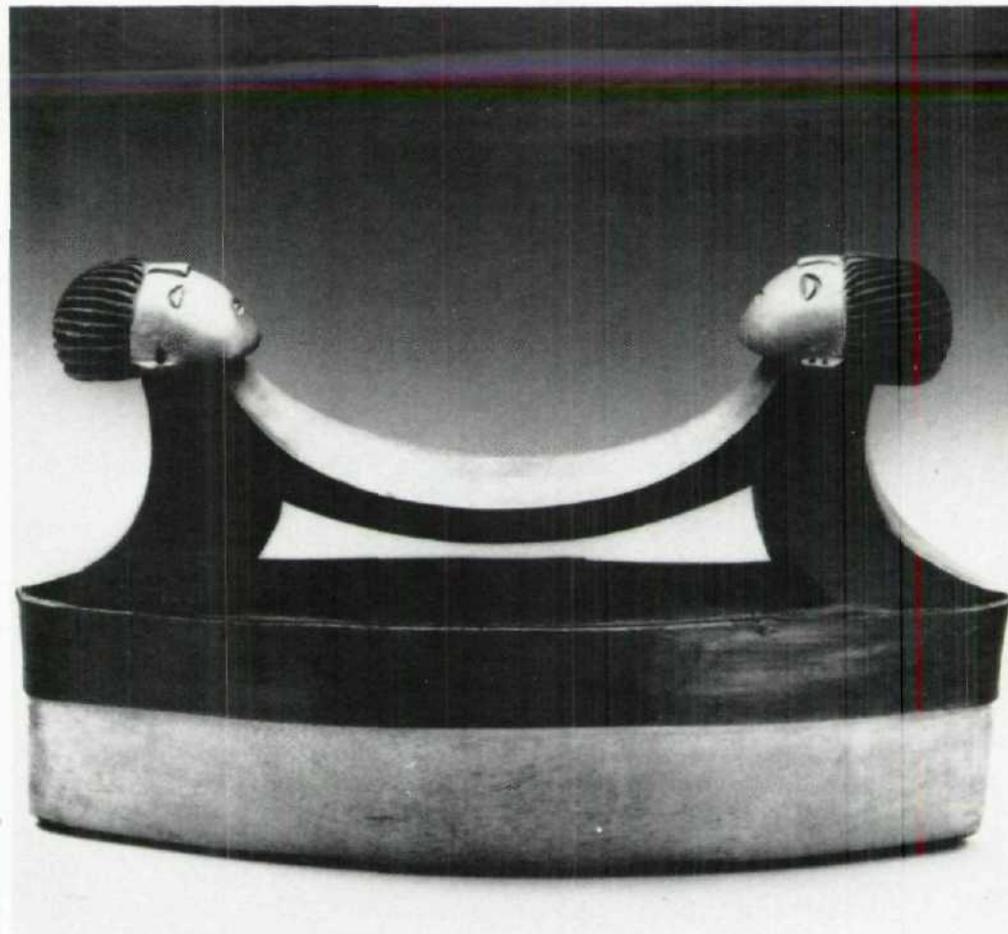
As the first black director of a Smithsonian museum and one of only two black woman directors of major museums in this country, Williams has conceived the National Museum of African Art, and the permanent exhibition in particular, with two missions in mind: to elevate museology in her field to the same level of professionalism as any other, and to make the shining products of African genius accessible to a wider audience.

"What this country is all about is the contribution of its many peoples," Williams said. "We as blacks have waited a long time for this."

For those seduced by the permanent exhibition who are moved to explore further, the museum offers four finely tuned installations that focus on specific forms or themes.

Perhaps the grandest of all, "African Art in the Cycles of Life," uses a diversity of forms to give visitors an appreciation of the rites of passage that are recognized and celebrated, albeit in widely varying ways, throughout much of the continent.

The show is divided into four separate modules that each illustrate a particular "phase" in life. Beginning with "Continuity," and proceeding through "Transition," "Toward a Secure World," and "Departure," the collection gives a sense of how each particular station in life—birth, childhood, adolescence,



Roger Asselberghs

Headrest, Zande peoples, Zaire

adulthood, marriage, procreation, and passage to the afterworld—is reflected or celebrated in art.

Appropriately, the exhibition excels in its treatment of infancy and procreation; two complementary themes that in traditional African societies take on a transcendental importance.

Infancy is portrayed with an ample selection of mothers with child. Examples ranging from a 12th century terra cotta from Mali to more recent wood, ivory, and soft stone carvings from Zaire, Ghana, Angola, and elsewhere show variations on the classic form of a mother breastfeeding her infant.

Some of the works celebrate childhood, some are meant to promote fertility, and still others are meant to mourn death in childbirth, but all reinforce the near-sacred position of the child, without whom a society obviously could not survive and in whose absence a woman cannot achieve completeness in so many traditional African cultures.

Beyond infancy, children are rela-

tively rare subjects in African art. Childhood figures in this collection in the masks and sculptures used in the initiation ceremonies that mark the passage into adulthood. In so many societies, this transition is performed during a passage of several weeks or months in a forest encampment, where hunting, first aid, the significance of tribal ritual, and often an apprenticeship into "magic" are taught to segregated groups of young men and women.

Fearsome-looking masks that are often "danced" during the initiation period are featured in this module of the exhibit, along with brief, but detailed texts that allow the viewer to understand their significance.

"Toward a Secure World" is a collection of masks and sculptures dealing with the communal celebration of seasonal agricultural rites, and divination and occult practices meant to assure prosperity and protection from malevolent forces.

Here some of the most sublime ob-

jects in the entire museum are assembled: an Elek, or ritual head from Guinea, whose long and graceful line, perched in seeming precarity on a cylindrical pedestal, combines human features, a bird's beak, and crocodile jaws; a Guere mask from Côte d'Ivoire, whose form evokes some alien horror, draws together animal forms, teeth, raffia, and a broad bloodied nose, quite plausibly capable of scaring away the forces the might menace a village; a Yuo, or wooden female bust from Burkina Faso, whose neat, classical lines are redolent of the sculpture of the ancient Mediterranean; a Mumuye statuary figure from Nigeria, shrouded in a helmet, eerily foreshadows with its abstract surrealism the "Darth Vader" character of Star Wars fame.

The final cycle of the exhibit, "Departure," is an artistic treatment of death, which in much of Africa lacks the sense of finality that it holds for Westerners. The deceased must be given the proper send-off, because in the afterworld he retains a tangible importance in the unfolding lives of the still-living.

The "Departure" module includes some of the earliest surviving example of terra cotta and wood sculpture from the continent, from 500 B.C. and the 10th century, respectively, as well as several hauntingly beautiful funerary objects from Gabon, Zaire, and Nigeria.

Three other modules in the installation, "Governance," "Status and Display," and "Imports," seem somewhat arbitrarily included, as they don't directly relate to the central theme of rites of passage.

Nevertheless, the felicitous selection of works makes them a welcome addition. The visitor is treated to exquisitely executed objects that symbolize the prestige and power of their owners, or alternately, a few pieces made to order by foreigners—primarily by Portuguese traders in the 16th and 17th centuries—that depart from traditional forms.

A third show, "Royal Benin Art," draws together a collection of 21 classic Benin lost wax bronzes, mostly donated to the Smithsonian by the renowned art collector, Joseph Hirschhorn.

The Benin works are perhaps the best known—and rightfully so—of the



Jeffrey Plosskonka

**Plaque, Edo peoples, Nigeria**

continent's many art forms. Their majestic classicism makes them the ideal standard bearer for a continent whose esthetic achievements have too often been treated as exotic curios or subjected to purely ethnological tradition.

The copper alloy panels and busts on display here lend themselves to the immediate appreciation of even the most unfeeling viewer, striking a familiar chord for the Westerner.

The final two exhibits are a collection

of traditional West African strip weaving, "Patterns of Life," and "Objects of Use," a collection of tools, implements, and pieces of furniture that were designed for use in traditional settings.

In both of the installations, the imaginative design and consummate execution of objects meant for everyday use illustrate a common point: In the continent's traditional societies, where art for art's sake is an unthinkable concept, esthetic excellence permeates even the functional. □

# "Sarafina!": The Music of Liberation

Culture

No other play about South Africa has had as much impact on its audiences as Mbongeni Ngema's "Sarafina!" A brilliant interplay of mbaqanga—the music of the townships—dance, and song, combined with a powerful political message, the production is preparing to take Broadway by storm.

BY DAPHNE TOPOUZIS

Standing on an armored truck behind a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire, four musicians, dressed in South African military gear and armed with guitars and trumpets, open fire with a slick mbaqanga tune. Next, 20 teenagers in black and white school uniforms and spiffy bowler hats fill the stage to defy apartheid with a dazzling display of song and dance.

Written and directed by Mbongeni Ngema ("Woza Albert!" and "Asinamali," see *Africa Report*, July-August 1987), with music by Hugh Masekela, "Sarafina!" has been acclaimed as one of the most original, exuberant, and irresistible shows to reach New York City. Subtitled "The Music of Liberation," the play celebrates the spirit of resistance and resilience of South Africa's black school children, using mbaqanga, the music of the townships, as the medium.

The idea for the play crystallized during a conversation between Ngema and Winnie Mandela, in which the resistance leader underscored the strength of the children in South Africa's liberation struggle. Subsequently, in a small London studio, Hugh Masekela and Ngema began working on a score revolving around the power of mbaqanga music.

Upon his return to South Africa, the playwright set up auditions throughout the country to select his cast. Nine boys and eleven girls aged 16 to 20 were chosen, and after eight months of training in voice, acting, and dance at the old Plantation Hotel in Fordsburg, "Sarafina!"

opened at the Market Theater in Johannesburg.

New York was next. The play was almost immediately sold out at the Lincoln Center Theater and is now going strong at Broadway's Cort Theater. Critics predict "Sarafina!" will be Broadway's hit of the season.

The year is 1976. The setting is the Morris Isaacson High School, the "parliament" of black students in the township of Soweto. As an ordinary school day begins, we are gradually introduced to the main characters of the play, most of whom are addressed by mischievous nicknames: Colgate, Crocodile, Silence, Florsheim, Teaspoon, and Schoolmistress "It's a pity."

Their laughter, teenage sensibility, and playful fighting are irresistibly engaging and infectious. Initially, the heroine, Sarafina, comes across as a "pretty mama," the most sought-after girl in the school—a girl who has boys on their knees singing, "You break me heart in pieces. You make I wanna cry."

The jovial and carefree atmosphere of the classroom is regularly and brutally interrupted with the grim realities of apartheid: security identification check-ups before class and the beating of the mistress, under an absurd pretext, for "subversive" teaching. Colgate wittily recounts how the omnipresent armed soldiers have taken the place of education inspectors and have rewritten the school syllabus. The smell of gunpowder "has become our perfume," he adds with a smile that fails to hide the tragic expression on his taut face.

Harassment, torture, and detention begin to unfold as part of the children's daily routine. A boy whose father is attacked by security police dogs asks: "What would you do if your father came home with no pants and blood dripping down his legs?"

Sarafina begins to emerge as a serious and committed activist with little time for teenage play and carefree fun. In a solemn voice, she tells the story of the savage rape of a black woman by a white police officer and launches a frontal attack on apartheid: "This whole place is filthy," she says with a stone-cold expression on her face. "It smells of the burning bodies of the informers. It smells of the government lies. It stinks of their jails. It stinks of their army. It stinks of their state of emergency."

Flashbacks into the history of the black struggle eventually lead to the story of Victoria Mxenge, a human rights attorney and member of the United Democratic Front whose defense work in the Natal treason trials cost her her life, murdered in August 1985 in front of her children by "unknown masked men."

Sarafina's vivid account of Mxenge's tragic fate is only matched by the cast's reenactment of the Soweto uprising of June 1976, when, after refusing to accept Afrikaans ("the language of oppressors") as the medium of instruction, hundreds of schoolchildren were massacred by the South African police.

And yet, "Sarafina!" is not merely a play about oppression—oppression is the context, not the focus of the show and certainly not its final word. With "Sarafina!," Ngema has taken "Asinamali!" one step further, leaving apartheid behind in order to bring out the power, positiveness, and resilience of the children of South Africa. The fact that the story line is somewhat thin is virtually irrelevant.

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**"'Sarafina!' celebrates the spirit of resistance and resilience of South Africa's children, using mbaqanga, the music of the black townships, as the medium."**

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Brigitte Lacombe

**"Their laughter, teenage sensibility, and playful fighting are irresistibly engaging and infectious"**

In fact, what is remarkable about this play is that the music and dancing communicate the story line with even more intensity and passion than any script could have. Mbaqanga both reinforces the spirit of resistance and smooths out the grief and frustration of the schoolchildren's uneasy endurance of apartheid. Similarly, dance is used not only to communicate the children's vitality, but to articulate what is not explicitly stated.

The unfailingly uplifting feel of the music and the pulsating dancing carry a clear message all by themselves. In one of the most moving parts of the play, the children cast off their uniforms and slip into colorful traditional African dress to perform "Freedom is coming tomor-

row," their fists clenched in the air.

Sarafina is detained and tortured twice, only to return stronger and more committed to the cause. On her initiative, the class chooses to devote the annual school revue to Nelson Mandela, with Sarafina as the protagonist. Masekela's "Bring Him Back Home" is sung in melodic whispers while the spotlight rests on her as she delivers Mandela's homecoming speech.

As tension recedes, the cast performs an explosive version of "Wololo," which sets in motion every muscle and every musical note available. Both times I saw the play, the audience invited itself to dance and applaud through this last number, mesmerized by this bewitching blend of music, dance, and energy.

The originality of this play undoubt-

edly lies in the fact that it has introduced a new dimension to a familiar, though by no means exhausted, subject. Like other South African plays, "Sarafina!" is narrated rather than dramatized, but it is narrated through every song and through each child's body, movement, and voice. It is not acted out, but re-enacted by children who have lived through what they are communicating.

Yet, if "Sarafina!" succeeds in communicating a grim reality with humor, infectious optimism, and uplifting spirit, the spectator does not leave with his conscience at rest. The continuous battle between the tragic truth and the youthful conviction that change is around the corner remains troubling—for the cast and the audience alike. The children's burden cannot help but become the spectator's guilt. □

# Learning from His Pupils

William Finnegan, *Crossing the Line: A Year in the Land of Apartheid*, Scranton: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1986, 418pp, \$22.95.

BY JULIE FREDERIKSE

William Finnegan's *Crossing the Line: A Year in the Land of Apartheid* is not only well written, but clearly authored by someone who cares for those he was writing about—by a teacher who managed to learn from his students. That distanced journalistic or academic tone that marks so much of what we read about "the crisis of apartheid" is refreshingly absent from Finnegan's prose.

The very fact that this account of encounters that took place more than seven years ago cannot be dismissed as dated reveals the essential validity of the author's motives—to chronicle experiences that changed lives, those of his students, and also his own.

Finnegan portrays himself as a traveling surfer who stopped off in South Africa to earn a bit more cash, en route to East Africa from the Far East. His purported motivation: the conjuncture of "the perfect wave" and air-conditioned pizza parlors offered on the Cape coast.

"Bill came for pizzas and stayed for the boycott," was the headline of a recent review in Johannesburg's independent *Weekly Mail*, one of several skeptical responses to Finnegan's claim that he arrived at Cape Town's Grassy Park Secondary School to take up a teaching post with a politically blank slate.

Ultimately, what is most instructive about *Crossing the Line* is the parallel that emerges between the 27-year-old university-educated American filling his slate at the same time and with the same enthusiasm as his teenaged Coloured high school students.

Julie Frederikse, author of *South Africa: A Different Kind of War* (Beacon Press, 1987) and *None but Ourselves: Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe* (Penguin, 1984), is based in Harare, Zimbabwe, and reports for National Public Radio.

## Review

By the time that Finnegan walks into his classroom to find hand-painted banners proclaiming "Down with gutter education!", we have come to understand enough of the particular and often ambiguous niche carved by apartheid for the black minority classified as Coloured to appreciate the euphoria of the boycotting students, but also to grasp the inevitability of many (also Coloured) teachers turning against the boycott in order to protect their jobs.

As the students plot strategy while their teacher prepares lessons for the "awareness sessions" that have replaced classes, we are offered a rare insight into the process—rather than simply the effects—of politicization.

My only complaint about the book reflects the concerns of one trying to unravel the political motivations behind the forces of resistance to apartheid. Finnegan's descriptions and perceptions often offer tantalizing clues that he does not go on to flesh out.

I wanted to hear more of his students' critique of the black consciousness philosophy, to trace their shift from a race-based to class-oriented analysis, to understand how the murmurings against "sell-outs" that Finnegan was privy to in

1980 have been transformed into the violent physical attacks on collaborators witnessed over the past few years.

After all, as Finnegan points out in an epilogue that packs in more overtly political data than is sprinkled throughout the body of the book, just two years after he left, a Cape Coloured township not far from the school where he taught served as the site of the launching of the most broadly based, legal anti-apartheid movement since the founding of the now banned African National Congress. Surely, many of the students Finnegan taught are now adults somehow aligned to the United Democratic Front, but *Crossing the Line* doesn't enlighten us greatly about that continuity.

However, as I noted at the outset, Finnegan's book is about his own political education as much as that of his students and he asks, and attempts to answer, the questions that occur to him in that process.

He himself observes that while a black student activist friend sees "a world to be unmade, and a brave new world to be made", he sees "something infinitely more static and fixed—a place to be contemplated, understood and described." Finnegan fulfills his own goals nobly, and for the Africanist as well as the uninitiated, *Crossing the Line* is a rewarding read. □

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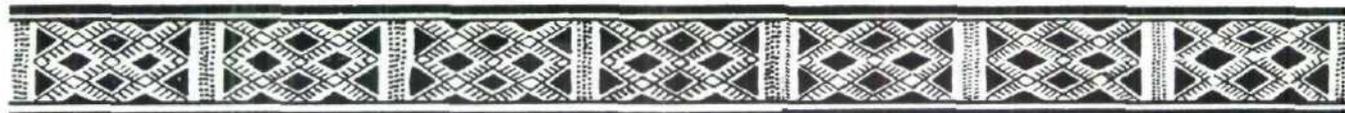
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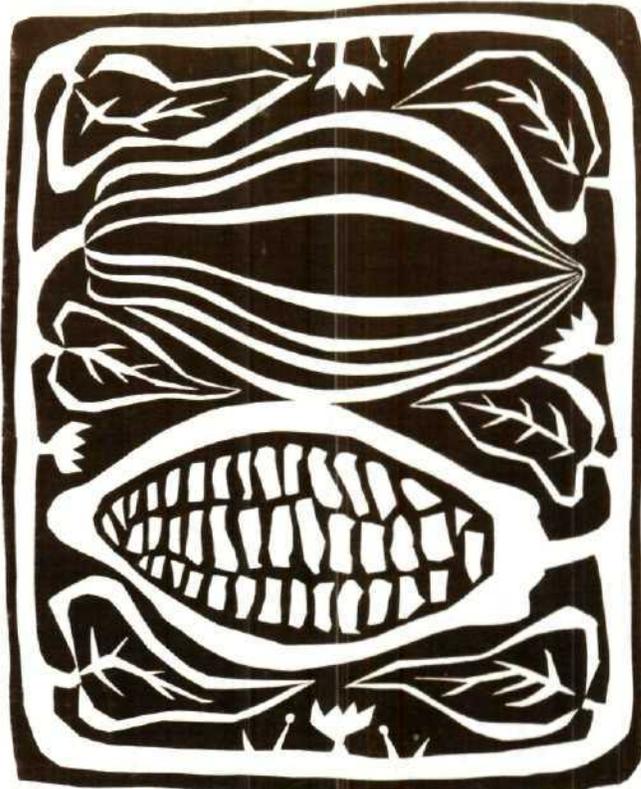


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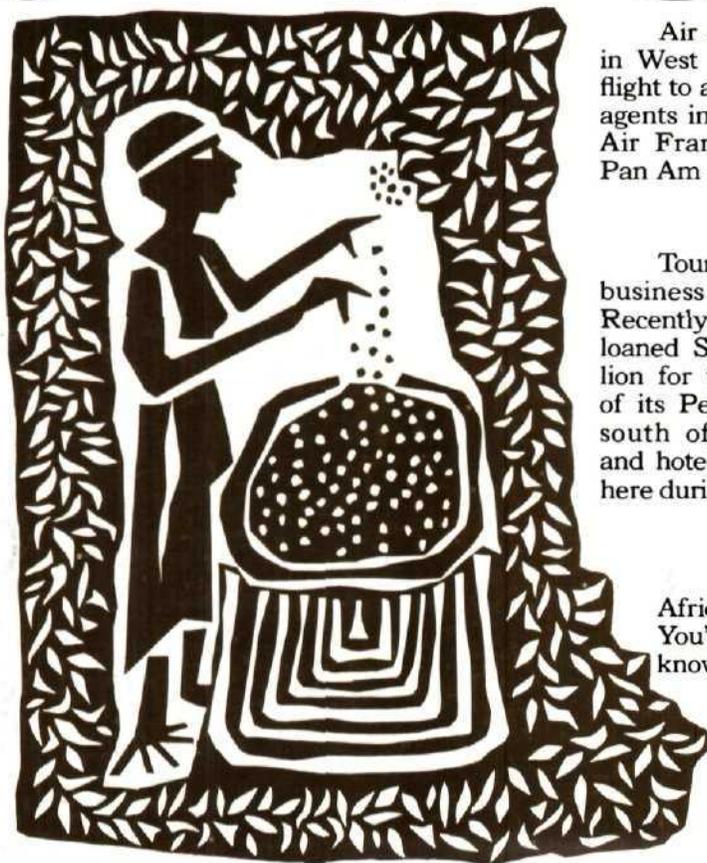
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