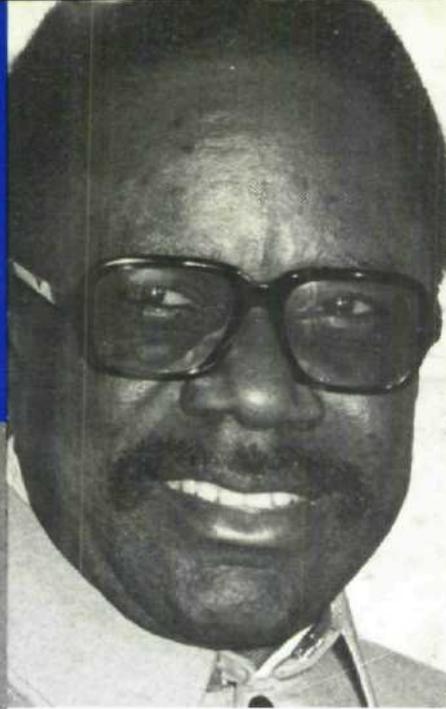
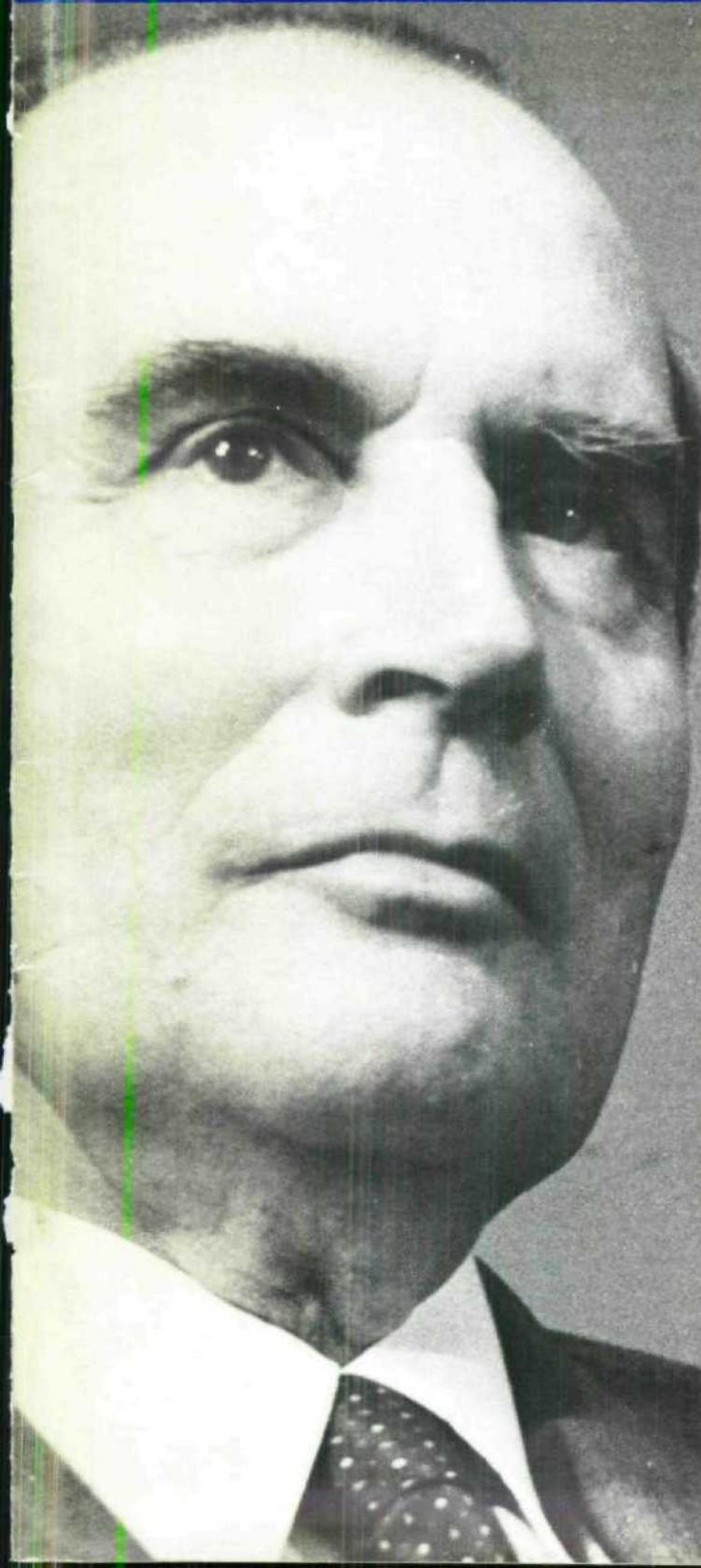


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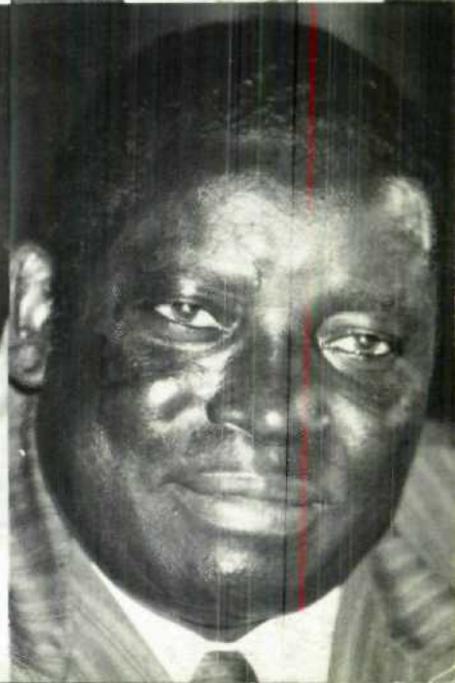
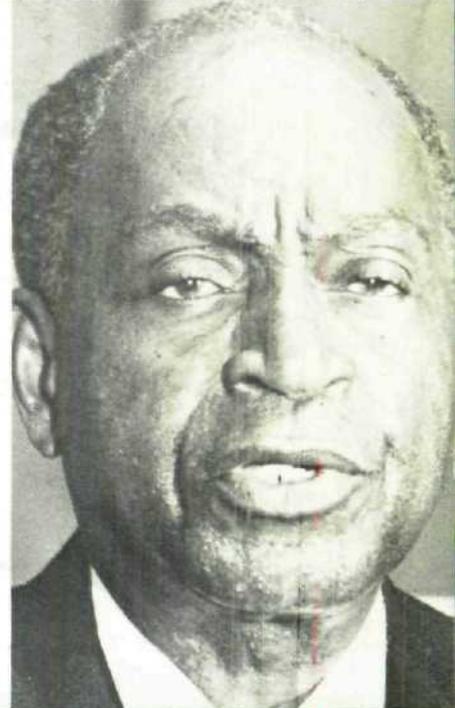
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UPDATE

IN THE NEWS

Habré Falls After Three-Week Rebel Offensive

The eight-year-old government of Hissène Habré collapsed in early December without even putting up a fight against the rebel forces of the Patriotic Salvation Movement (PSM) led by Gen. Idris Deby, who immediately proceeded to dissolve Parliament, suspend the constitution, promise a multi-party democracy, and declare himself president. Deby also appointed himself chairman of a 33-member state council in an interim administration that included three of Habré's ministers, but set no timetable for free elections. According to a state council member, the interim government could stay in power for at least a year.

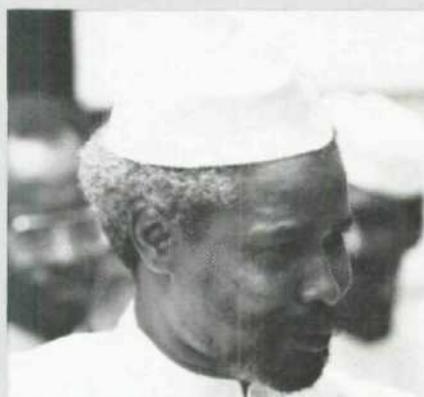
Deby has accused Habré of detaining and torturing thousands of Chadians, stealing vast amounts of international aid, and leaving the coffers of the treasury empty. "It was persecution that imposed on us the decision to take up arms," he said in a radio broadcast. Promising peace, justice, and freedom of association, opinion, religious worship, and the press to a nation torn by civil strife over the last 20 years, he added, "I stress that there cannot be democracy without political pluralism and secularism."

Deby was Habré's chief military aide in the 1982 coup d'état which brought the former president to power, and defense minister until April 1989 when he fled the country, after being charged with plotting to overthrow the government. He formed the PSM last March, grouping political organizations and guerrilla groups that reportedly favored a multi-party system, and has consistently denied having ties with Libya or Sudan. Deby has also urged a reconciliation with former president Goukouni Oueddei, whom he helped oust in 1982, and who is now exiled in Libya.

French Neutrality a Decisive Factor

This was the first time that France, which has a military cooperation pact

with Chad, supplying it with large quantities of Redeye and Stinger missiles, as well as having an 1,800-strong contingent in the country, did not intervene to support Habré's forces, thereby sealing his fate. The French argument was that the conflict was an internal dispute and personal vendetta between



Hissène Habré: A French casualty?

Habré and Deby, and it almost went as far as denying any Libyan involvement. "Arms deliveries are not enough to define a case of downright military aggression," said Jean-Pierre Chevènement, France's defense minister.

There have been reports, however, hinting that the real reason behind this aloofness is that President Mitterrand is no longer willing to perpetuate France's role as Africa's policeman. "The time has passed when France could pick and choose the governments in these countries, change them, or maintain them as it wished," argued Foreign Minister Roland Dumas. There are rumors, however, that relations between France and Habré had been uneasy of late, while the French Socialist Party and academic circles were openly sympathetic to the rebel leader.

Elysée did send an additional 150 paratroopers to Chad to bolster its forces in late November, but only in order to protect its expatriate community. It was even reported that French soldiers ensured a smooth handover of power by being present in the talks

between the rebels and the remnants of the Habré government, right after the former entered Ndjamena. In early December, France announced that it would maintain its contingent in Chad to ensure that the new government does not fall victim to foreign aggression.

U.S. and Habré Accuse Libya

The U.S., which, according to an Agence France-Presse report had pledged full support for Habré, claimed that Deby was backed by Libya. There have been several reports confirming that Col. Qaddafi indeed supplied Deby with arms, vehicles, and light armored cars. As a result of the Libyan connection, the State Department has not formally recognized the new government.

Much speculation surrounded the U.S. secret airlift of several hundred Libyan dissidents (originally prisoners captured by Chadian forces during an earlier Libyan offensive) to Nigeria in early December, an act which Libya immediately denounced as piracy. Libya had occupied northern Chad in 1986, but was forced to withdraw the following year, and a peace treaty was signed between the two countries. It is now believed that Qaddafi is taking advantage of the Persian Gulf crisis to make a comeback and reassert his influence in Africa, and this has become evident in his support of Charles Taylor in the Liberian civil war, of Touareg rebels in Niger, and more recently of Deby's forces in Chad.

Tripoli has argued that the rebel invasion in Chad was "a tribal conflict and a civil war between the Azakawas tribe represented by Deby and the Gorane tribe represented by Habré," but the former president accused Libya and Sudan of "duplicity and determination to destabilize." There were also rumors that the insurgents were Chadians from Habré's region and that two garrisons in southern Chad had defected to the rebels by mid-November.

The Rebel Offensive

Sporadic fighting—the first since last May—broke out in mid-November near the Sudanese border between some 2,000 rebels and the National Armed Forces (FANT). The attackers invaded from Darfur in Sudan and Ouenad in Libya, and first captured the region of Tiné in eastern Chad. The rebels claimed they wiped out two-thirds of the government's army in Tiné. This was confirmed by Radio France International, which reported that by the end of November, FANT had lost 2,500 men.

Next, the rebels occupied Iriba, Guéréda, and Adré. Reports cited clashes some 27 miles inside Sudan, during which Deby's men ambushed a Chadian government column, leaving between 300-400 dead according to official sources, or 700-800 according to French sources. Government forces briefly claimed to have recaptured the three towns and to have taken full control of the situation, but the turning point in the rebel offensive was the seizure of the strategic town of Abéché, 500 miles north of Ndjameña, after which the road to the capital was clear.

At that point, the offensive had acquired such momentum and events were moving so rapidly that there was no time for France or the U.S. to reconsider their position or effectively support Habré. FANT soldiers deserted en masse as news of Deby's advance toward the capital spread. Habré and eight of his ministers fled to neighboring Cameroon, and there were reports of looting in the capital.

A Libyan Victory?

Tripoli unilaterally suspended negotiations over the Libyan-occupied, mineral-rich Aouzou strip in northern Chad scheduled for late November, pointing to the fact, according to Radio Ndjameña, that "the Chad-Libya conflict had entered a decisive phase." It is believed that Libya will now reassert its claim to the territory, citing a World War II treaty between Italy and Vichy France. Deby claims he is willing to fight for the Aouzou strip. It remains to be seen what kind of relationship the two countries will forge. Some analysts believe that Deby's swift release of 400 Libyan prisoners of war and the heavy Libyan activity in Ndjameña by mid-December point to the fact that the interim president owes Col. Qaddafi plenty. ■

U.S. Boosts Africa Aid by 40%

Despite predictions that the urgency of economic reconstruction in Eastern Europe and the crisis in the Persian Gulf would plunge U.S. aid to Africa to new depths, in a surprise and last-minute move in early November, Congress raised African aid by \$240 million or 40 percent over the \$560 million mark originally appropriated by the Bush administration.

"I think that the most important reason that Congress increased the development fund for Africa is that a lot of congressmen have visited Africa, are very close to events there, and feel that the need is so overwhelming they they had to do more. Added to that is the fact that most African countries right now are going through some very wrenching economic reforms and are leaning toward free-market economies and democracy, and we feel that some extra aid at this point in time may really help them make that step," said Scott Spangler who manages disbursement of aid to Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S. AID).

In addition, Congress suspended all military aid to standing allies Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and Daniel arap Moi of Kenya, but also to Liberia, Somalia, and Sudan. New guidelines were voted upon on how the aid will be disbursed, and although democracy as such was not identified as one of them, it is certainly one of the underlying forces along with support for free markets. According to Spangler, Liberia, Somalia, and Sudan were cut off from regular development assistance by law because of their debt arrears to the U.S. In the case of Zaire, the decision was reached partly due to the country's poor human rights record and allegations of corruption.

Congress' decision to cut aid to Zaire caused much controversy in Washington. While the \$4 million in military aid that the Bush administration had requested was turned down, economic aid amounting to \$40 million was made available on condition that it is funneled through non-governmental organizations that had no connection with Mobutu. The U.S. State Department, which does not see eye to eye with Congress on this issue, contended that the Zairian regime's reforms of the political system and the press might be jeopardized by the cut-off of aid. How-

ever, reports that Mobutu has diverted huge sums of money as a result of his connections with Washington and amassed a personal fortune of \$2.5 billion, along with the massacre of 12 students at Lubumbashi University last April, have put his reputation at an all-time low and discredited his role as a regional peace mediator. "What jeopardizes the prospects of regional stability is the existence of a kleptocracy in Zaire that has driven the standard of living lower than it was at the time of independence three decades ago," argued Congressman Stephen J. Solarz, the Brooklyn Democrat.

Kenya has to meet four conditions in order to qualify for future military aid: It has to charge or release all prisoners, improve its treatment of prisoners, and restore the independence of the judiciary and freedom of expression. Tentative reforms were announced in early December, including the elimination of the unpopular queueing system, but they have failed to satisfy Kenyans and have not met U.S. conditions. Vice President George Saitoti recently argued that "Kenyans will not allow themselves to be dictated as to what changes to undertake," but government critics contend that eventually, these aid cuts will have a positive effect and pressure the regime toward political reforms and accountability.

Except for \$50 million which has been allocated to the Southern African Development Coordination Conference and \$3.5 million to assist South Africans in private enterprise development, the \$800 million development fund will be allocated to U.S. AID.

"We are going to use much of it to support improvements in the social sectors, many of the programs that we already have in effect: health, education, and family planning. Where we have experience and expertise and we have successful programs underway, we are going to expand them and make them, if possible, more equitable and more sustainable. I cannot be more specific about where the extra money is going because we are in the process right now of consulting with individual African countries and with our missions there to make sure we understand where the aid can be absorbed and where it will have the most effect," added Spangler. ■

C.A.R.

A virtual general strike was launched for 48 hours in late November by the Central African Republic (CAR) Workers' Trade Union, following the breakdown of negotiations with the government over salary increases, the regular payment of wages, and improved working conditions. Some 6,000 teachers, who have been on strike since mid-October for the same reasons, were joined by over 20,000 workers from the public and private sectors. The operation of businesses, factories, and public transport was brought to a halt, while health care, electricity, and water services were only minimally available. To date, President André Kolingba has refused union appeals to arbitrate.

Anti-government protests have been mounting in CAR since last May, when the opposition requested that Kolingba restore the multi-party system he scrapped after taking power in a coup d'état in 1981. Widespread looting and violence broke out in early October in Bangui, when the coordinating committee for the convening of a national conference on the country's political future, gathering most of the country's illegal opposition parties, was barred by the police.

TOGO

Following the October anti-government demonstrations in Lomé—reportedly the most violent since independence—that left between four and 17 people dead, 34 wounded and 170 detained, President Gnassingbé Eyadéma has agreed to the creation of a multi-party system, the revision of the constitution, and a constitutional referendum to be held in December 1991. The riots followed brutal police action against demonstrators protesting the trial of Logo Dossovi and Doglo Agbelenko, who were charged with inciting the army to rebellion and were sentenced to five years' imprisonment without their lawyers present. The two men were pardoned by the president in mid-October.

Meanwhile, a nationwide transport strike—reportedly the biggest movement of social unrest in Togo since Eyadéma took power in 1967—which began in late November deteriorated into violent clashes between truck and taxi drivers, and security forces, in Sokode, north of Lomé, leaving 30 people injured.

POLITICAL POINTERS

ANGOLA

In the recently published *Unita: Myth and Reality*, Italian journalist Augusta Conchiglia sets the record straight on rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, long portrayed by Washington as a freedom fighter, who over the past 30 years has been fighting for a "truly independent" and democratic Angola.

Conchiglia depicts Savimbi as a compulsive liar and megalomaniac, and provides documentary proof that his party was a willing instrument, first of the Portuguese colonial government, and then of South Africa. It is argued that Savimbi's desire to free Angola from the Portuguese was at best secondary to his thirst for power, that he let the colonial government use him to attack the MPLA in the hope that the latter would be destroyed, and that he conspired with the South African army during its 1975 invasion.

"Unita's guerrilla war—made possible by Pretoria's logistical and military support, and fought in tandem with direct aggression by the South African army based in Namibia, obliging the Angolan forces to focus their efforts on that main front—bears very little resemblance to a 'people's war,'" argues the report. "Horrendously murderous and destructive, it reflects Unita's military strategy of concentrating on the sabotaging of civilian targets and the intimidation of the population."

The report also documents how even within the ranks of Unita, Savimbi is seen as a tyrant who has not hesitated to torture or kill his own men on account of dissent.

Post-independence Unita is portrayed as a small, unpopular rebel force, which would not have succeeded were it not for substantial military aid from South Africa, the U.S., and various right-wing organizations around the world. Conchiglia argues that Unita owes much to its extensive public relations campaigns, particularly with regard to Jamba, the organization's headquarters, which was turned into a model town for foreign journalists.

NIGER

A five-day general strike—the longest ever in the country—was launched by the National Trade Union Federation in early November, pressing for the introduction of a multi-party system, the holding of a national conference, and an end to economic austerity measures imposed earlier this year in accord with the World Bank and the IMF. Budget cutbacks being protested included personnel retrenchment, a freeze on financial benefits accruing from civil service promotions, and legal action against the officials responsible for the February crackdown on student strikers, during which three students were killed and 33 were injured.

The general strike, which was the culmination of a wave of protests that began 10 months ago, virtually paralyzed trade, banks, insurance companies, the airport, and road transport. Uranium production and most financial services were stopped. Although the protest was peaceful in Niamey, several thousand striking demonstrators attacked the police station in Maradi, Niger's economic center. The Nigerien authorities declared the strike illegal, claiming that the strikers' demands have already been met, but in mid-November, President Ali Saibou conceded to the adoption of a multi-party system and the holding of a national conference, once political parties have been created.

CONGO

After fiercely resisting pressure for democratization, President Denis Sassou-Nguesso has acquiesced to a new constitution to be adopted in January, which will abolish the leading role of the ruling Congolese Workers' Party (PCT), legalize 22 registered political parties, and replace the all too powerful office of the president with that of prime minister in a transition government. The army will relinquish its political role, while an amnesty law is also being considered.

The reforms follow a wave of strikes, which has been attributed by the opposition to "the crisis of confidence among the people toward the regime." Schools and colleges were closed down in early November, and an official communiqué reported violence and looting in several towns. The following month, the prime minister resigned from his post and from the PCT, over differences on how to solve the country's political crisis.

AFRICAN OUTLOOK

Mubarak Wins Fair Elections Virtually Unopposed

In what was described as the cleanest election in years, some 2,500 Egyptian candidates contested 444 seats in a new Parliament in late November. The opposition abstained, accusing the government of routinely rigging elections, and demanding constitutional changes and the abolition of emergency laws, thereby leaving the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) virtually unchallenged.

cal purposes. On the whole, the elections ran smoothly, and for the first time, Mubarak ordered judges to oversee electoral procedures. Some violent incidents did occur, leaving five people dead and 92 were injured, with the worst violence in the port of Damietta in the north.

Egyptian elections have long been

dominated by personalities rather than issues, and the fact that the NDP had monopolized the electoral campaign both as a result of financial resources and access to the media reportedly contributed to the cynicism and apathy of the voters. While many Egyptians dismiss Parliament as a rubber stamp,

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Cameraspix



Hosni Mubarak: Winner by default?

Out of 16 million voters, only 30 percent voted in Cairo, but 70 percent turned out in the countryside. The NDP won by a clear majority, and out of 71 contested parliamentary seats, 18 were taken by independents. In the last elections of 1987, the NDP won 70 percent of the vote and 338 out of 448 seats in Parliament. The leading opposition bloc, which includes the right of center New Wafd Party, the Muslim Brotherhood (which is outlawed but tolerated by the government), the left of center Socialist Labor Party, and the centrist Liberal Party, occupied some 90 seats in the outgoing Parliament.

Mubarak's latest electoral victory is significant both because it legitimized his claim that Egypt is a bedrock of political stability in spite of the crisis in the Persian Gulf, and also because it somewhat discredited the opposition's claim that the president is using multi-party rhetoric to further his own politi-

Franco-Moroccan Relations Sink

A political crisis between France and Morocco that erupted in mid-October following the publication of a new French book that accuses King Hassan II of blatant cruelty and systematic repression threatened to cut cooperation agreements as well as diplomatic ties between the two countries, which have traditionally enjoyed close relations. The situation deteriorated further in early November, when the king cancelled his trip to Paris, accusing France of a massive defamation campaign. President Mitterrand's wife, who was to accompany a humanitarian aid convoy to Polisario refugee camps in Tindouf, western Algeria, had to cancel her trip, but her subsequent meeting with the wife of a Polisario leader fuelled tensions once again.

Gilles Perrault's *Notre ami le roi* (Our Friend the King), which is rapidly rising on the best-seller charts, reveals in chilling detail the ruthlessness of the 30-year-old regime, whose history, it is argued, is replete with repression and fraud. Under the pretext of democracy (which includes a multi-party system and a free press), the book discloses how the Moroccan government has routinely resorted to emergency laws, electoral fraud, censorship, political trials, torture, kidnaping, and assassination, according to the influential *Le Monde Diplomatique*.

King Hassan II, a self-proclaimed modern statesman, has effectively ruled like a sultan, and when Amnesty International visited Morocco last February, the king admitted to most of the human rights violations, which he justified by saying that "each head of state has his

secret garden," according to the same source. The book also praised the human rights group France-Libertés, headed by Danièle Mitterrand, for its anti-Moroccan stand, and described grim prison conditions of political prisoners.

In a speech, the king said: "More or less, they have accused me of being crazy. If that is true, all Moroccans must be crazy." Reuters reported that over half a million Moroccans sent tele-



King Hassan II: In search of friends

grams to French leaders in protest over the book. In addition, French newspapers were banned in Morocco, a cultural festival in France was cancelled, and television broadcasts were discontinued.

The French government tried to patch things up by issuing a statement confirming that King Hassan II was a

Continued on page 11

Cameraspix

INTERVIEW: ZAIRIAN OPPOSITION LEADER, ETIENNE TSHISEKEDI

Etienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba, a law graduate, has been involved in Zairian politics for the past 30 years. From the mid-1960s to 1977, he served as minister of interior affairs, minister of justice, minister of planning, and vice-president of the National Assembly. He was first imprisoned in December 1980 for publishing a letter to Mobutu calling for democratic reforms. Upon his release in 1982, he co-founded the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), which has stood for the introduction of a multi-party system, free elections, and an end to corruption. Since then, he has been arrested, imprisoned, and banished continually. Almost every time, his release came after pressure from Amnesty International, the U.S. Congress, or the intervention of President Mitterrand of France and Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada. In late September 1990, he announced that he will be the presidential candidate of the UDPS.

Africa Report: It was reported that on November 4, government troops attacked the UDPS as party supporters were gathering for a peaceful rally in Kinshasa. What exactly happened that day?

Tshisekedi: After much juggling, on October 6, Mobutu finally decided to abolish the law which regulated political life and came around to our demands of liberalizing political parties. Our militants then for the first time convoked a peaceful meeting in Fikin, Kinshasa's International Fair Grounds, where the UDPS was supposed to address its members and reply to their questions. I repeat, this was not a demonstration, but a first contact between leaders and party members. According to our schedule, the leaders would gather at 10 am, but from 8 am, Mobutu's militants—the infamous *Division Spéciale Présidentielle*, with which they tried to fool the public by dressing them up in soldiers' uniforms—arrived with bayonets, and proceeded to harass people, so as to prevent them from gathering for the meeting. Some 30 people were wounded and at least 10 were reported missing. A few days later, three dead bodies were found in the bush near Kinshasa International Airport. Under these circumstances, the meeting was not held, but the incident became known all over the capital.

Africa Report: What is the political climate in Kinshasa at the moment?

Tshisekedi: The climate is favorable to us for many reasons: The social climate is very tense due to high inflation. Everything is very expensive—even staple foods. And because of the scarcity of foreign exchange, I fear that food shops will be nearly empty by Christmas. All this points to the fact that the end of the year threatens to be the last one for this government.

Africa Report: Is the opposition united against Mobutu?

Tshisekedi: It is difficult at this time to speak of a united opposition against Mobutu because the so-called opposition consists of a great number of parties financed by the president. For this reason, it is too early to speak of opposition unity. At the moment, we do not know who constitutes the opposition: For example, the Christian Party's vice president is also minister of health in Mobutu's government.

Africa Report: In early November, the U.S. Congress suspended military assistance to Mobutu and stipulated that future economic assistance must be funneled through private voluntary agencies, in view of flagrant human rights abuses and rampant corruption. What in your view will be the impact of this measure?

Tshisekedi: The immediate impact will be the decline of the standard of living of Zairians, which will permit the people to recognize that Mobutu is at the center of the country's problems and will also allow the opposition to sensitize the people—because after all it is our people who have to chase Mobutu out of power, not foreigners. Even though as a result of these measures, the Zairian population will suffer, it will not be the first time it faces hardship; Zairians have been suffering for a long time.

The reason why I came to the U.S. is to meet with Congress and the U.S. government, whose attitude toward Mobutu we, the opposition, do not quite understand. We have the impression that the U.S. Congress will be the last in the world to understand that Mobutu is at the root of Zaire's ills.

Africa Report: What kind of scenario do you foresee for Zaire's political future?

Tshisekedi: Zairians will unanimously demand Mobutu's resignation. The process of democratization in Zaire is contingent on his resignation because as long as he is there, he will keep diverting us and the country will never have a chance to strive toward democracy. Next, we will need a transitional government led by the opposition, and especially the UDPS. We will rule along with other opposition parties, but we will have to exercise caution because Mobutu has financed a host of so-called opposition parties, which are in reality Mobutist parties.

After 25 years of Mobutism, this transitional government will have as its first objective organizing political parties, holding meetings, and educating the people so that they become familiar with the new values of democracy. Following this, legislative elections will take place. This will allow the people to elect real representatives, and it is at that point that we will see which parties actually represent the people. It is those newly elected representatives who will elaborate the constitution of the third republic.

In addition, the transitional government will have to take urgent economic measures because Zaire's economy is now in a lamentable state and it is important that we regain the confidence of foreign investors, so that we can begin redressing the economy. Our view is that Mobutu no longer has the right to draw up a timetable for change and elections. He no longer has the right to speak in the name of the people.

Africa Report: Do you think there is danger of a civil war in Zaire as has unfolded in Liberia?

Tshisekedi: I exclude that possibility because unlike Liberia, we, the opposition in Zaire, have opted for non-violence. We do not see who Mobutu will fight with. But it must be said that under the pretext of peace, Mobutu has killed thousands of people for political reasons. It is against this repression that the UDPS has fought and called the people to confront the dictator. We think that political pressure from the people will chase Mobutu out and not necessitate an armed conflict.

Africa Report: How much time do you give Mobutu?

Tshisekedi: Early this fall, I had anticipated he would fall within five to six months. Now, I do not think he will last more than two months or so. Over the past year, he has stopped coming to Kinshasa and has sought refuge in Gbadolite. To give but one example, he could have profited from the passage of Nelson Mandela through Kinshasa, but he did not even come to the capital for that occasion. Clearly, what Mobutu fears most at present is his own people. ■

One Settler, One Bullet, One Step Closer to Talks

The death of the revered Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) president, Zephania Lekoane Mothopeng, in late October marked the beginning of a crucial period in the 31-year-old anti-apartheid group, leading up to its national conference in Johannesburg in December. More will be at stake than the vacant leadership position. The organization has promised to take a stand on negotiations with the white government and reexamine its relationship with the rival African National Congress (ANC).

The likeliest choice to succeed "The Lion of Africa" is Mlami Clarence Makwetu, who was chosen as vice-president of the PAC after it was unbanned on February 2 1990. The former president of the Pan-Africanist Movement (PAM), the banned PAC's front organization, was initially supported by PAC general secretary Benny Alexander.

At the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) conference in Swaziland in November, Makwetu said that the PAC was ready to join in an alliance with the ANC. At the same conference, Nelson Mandela expressed optimism for the formation of a united front between the ANC, the PAC, and the Azanian People's Organization. The alliance would pressure the government to accept a constituent assembly elected by universal franchise as the means to creating a post-apartheid constitution. Mandela feels that with Makwetu as leader of the PAC there is a chance for such a front.

The British weekly, *Southscan*, recently reported a rift in the internal PAC between followers of Makwetu and the hardline Alexander, possibly as a result of the former's comments about a united front with the ANC. The PAC's internal spokesman, Philip Dlamini, asserted the day after Makwetu's remarks that a decision on a united front would not be made until the conference.

Alexander recently expressed that an alliance between the PAC and another liberation movement must include the encouragement of struggle, including armed struggle, and non-collaboration with government-created structures.

The majority of the external wing of the PAC, led by chairman Johnson Mlambo who also reportedly seeks the

PAC presidency, supports negotiations with the government, which recently invited it to join in the talks. This stance was reinforced when the head of the PAC's Harare office, Ramudi Michael Maphai, was arrested in Zimbabwe for attempting to smuggle almost \$20 million worth of Mandrax tablets from India into South Africa in November. The bust confirmed allegations made by both PAC and ANC sources that some PAC officials were involved in the drug trade. Two years ago, the Zimbabwean government reportedly chose to privately reprimand PAC officials for possession of the same drug. According to *Southscan*, the harsher action taken by the government this time signals that the PAC will not be able to rely on the diplomatic protection it once received in Zimbabwe.

The PAC's external wing has also been affected by the South African government's original refusal to grant temporary indemnity to 14 of the organization's external leaders to attend the December conference. The government only reversed its decision in the beginning of December, granting indemnity to 18 external PAC members.

The youth league of the Pan-Africanist Congress, the Azanian Youth Unity (Azanyu), has offered the stiffest resistance to talks with the de Klerk government. If the PAC maintains its traditional stance of rejecting negotiations, however, it risks being marginalized as the possibility of a negotiated settlement becomes greater. If it accepts negotiations, it risks losing its generally more radical support.

Five days before Mothopeng's death, a faction of the external PAC calling itself the Sobukwe Forum declared that the internal leaders of the PAC, who constituted the PAM, including Benny Alexander, were not the legitimate PAC. One of the groups members, A.B. Ngcobo, returned to South Africa in November in an attempt to "reactivate the original Sobukwe PAC." The break away group strongly supports improved relations with both the ANC and Inkatha, as well as negotiations with the government. The PAC's representative in Harare, Thobile Gola, dismissed the claims made by the forum that the current PAC leadership was not properly constituted.

It is not yet certain what sort of agreement can be worked out between the PAC, which broke away from the ANC in 1959, and its more popular rival group. The radical PAC has been more reluctant to compromise than the ANC over issues such as land and nationalization, but both groups have agreed that an interim government is needed in South Africa while a new constitution is being created.

The ANC's information officer Sakkie Macozoma said, "There are ways in which differences can be de-emphasised and the commonalities emphasised...the constituent members of any front would maintain certain features of their own strategies."

Largely as a result of the Inkatha presence at Mothopeng's funeral, reports were circulating in November that the PAC and the conservative Inkatha were planning an alliance. This was seen as a means to counter the political threat that the more popular ANC poses as negotiations with the government get underway. Reportedly, Inkatha's Transvaal youth leader Themba Khosa said that the two groups were closer to each other than to the ANC and that there was a good chance that they would form an alliance. The general secretary of Azanyu, Carter Seleke, rejected the reports and emphasized that the PAC has been dealing with all organizations, including Inkatha, as it seeks peace in South Africa.

The funeral of the uncompromising anti-apartheid leader, who had served to hold together the PAC, highlighted the resistance and divisions the PAC faces from within, as it adapts to the climate of political change created by de Klerk's February 2 speech. The ANC's Joe Slovo was initially met with jeers of "One Slovo, one bullet,"—a play on the "one settler, one bullet" slogan usually attributed to the PAC. The Inkatha delegation was greeted by shouts of "collaborator," but the hostile slogans were replaced with cries of "War against the enemies, peace among the Africans," by the end of the day, suggesting that despite the militancy of the PAC youth, the desire to find common ground is present.

It remains to be seen whether this can also be applied vis-à-vis negotiations with the government. ■

Egypt Continued

there is now hope that independents will revitalize it.

The elections were fixed after an October vote for a national referendum to dissolve the Parliament found it had been unconstitutionally elected by the Supreme Constitution Court in May. The referendum, which was hailed by Mubarak as marking the dawn of a new era in Egyptian political life and whose timing reflected the president's rising popularity resulting from his tough anti-Iraqi line, was called a day before the assassination of the Speaker of the Parliament, Rif'at al'Mahgoub, and five of his escorts, while driving in Cairo.

(While the assassination remains unsolved, police have severely cracked down on the Jihad, a Muslim fundamentalist group which was responsible for the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981. They believe that with some outside help, the Jihad was trying to kill Interior Minister Muhammad Abdel-Halim Mussa, but mistakenly shot Mahgoub. The group has denied involvement in the slaying, but a spokesman said Mahgoub deserved to die for his refusal to recognize *shari'a* [Islamic law].)

Mubarak introduced new electoral laws abolishing the party-list system, thereby allowing independents to run. However, the fact that he did not consult with the opposition bloc infuriated the latter. In addition, the opposition insisted that the interior ministry withdraw from supervising the elections and claimed that the new electoral laws did not provide adequate safeguards against rigging. Smaller opposition parties, however, have accused the bloc of boycotting the elections because they feared they would not win the 100-odd parliamentary seats under the new system of direct elections. Observers have pointed out that, in fact, the boycott only harmed its instigators and virtually eliminated the possibility of a representative Parliament.

While Mubarak's victory in the general elections will temporarily boost his image domestically as well as internationally, many analysts fear that a severe economic crisis is looming over Egypt and that if austerity is deemed to be the only antidote, it might well imperil the country's seeming political and social stability, and re-ignite calls for Islamicization. ■

Safe Haven for Liberians in the U.S.

President Bush recently signed a bill giving the attorney-general discretion to designate groups of aliens living in the U.S. as protected from deportation, under which safe haven status could be granted for some 14,000 Liberian nationals in the U.S. for the next 18 months. As the situation in their country continues to be unstable, Liberians have been reluctant to return home and have had a great deal of trouble receiving special dispensation to remain in the U.S. for an extended period of time.

The only protection currently given to Liberians is a program initiated by a cable that Commissioner Gene McNary of the Immigration and Nationalization Service (INS) issued to local officials last July, in which he asked them to treat requests from Liberians for voluntary departure status "sympathetically." This status, which allows for a six-month stay in the country with temporary employment authorization, is preferable to political asylum, a lengthy process which requires refugees to renounce their citizenship.

Unfortunately, due to the vague nature of the cable, its condition that requests be considered on a case-by-case basis and the fact that it was not widely circulated account for the fact that INS officials have for the most part either ignored it or denied that it exists. As of December, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, a New York-based organization representing Liberians, had not heard of more than two or three requests for voluntary departure being granted.

The INS has granted protected status to other nationalities in the past. Most recently, following the massacre in Tiananmen Square, Chinese nationals were only required to fill out a single form that granted them both a three-year stay and work authorization. Why the INS could not use a similar procedure for Liberians is not clear. Liberia has enjoyed a special relationship with the U.S. since it was founded by freed American slaves and has been a strategic ally in West Africa. Binaifer Nowrojee of the Lawyers Committee attributes the less than adequate response of the INS toward Liberian nationals to "elements of racism and neglect that typify U.S. policy in Africa." Allen Siegal, an attorney with the Liberian Emergency Center, also blames the "apathy and shock within the Liberian community and the fact that the African-American community has shown no support for the Liberians." As a result of these factors, Liberians have not been able to get jobs and have been forced to depend on friends and relatives, or to work illegally. Some have found it increasingly difficult to survive.

To remedy this problem, the House of Representatives passed a bill giving "temporary protected status" with work authorization to aliens whose native countries are victims of armed conflict, natural disaster, or other conditions that are deemed temporary. The bill also specifically designated Liberians, as well as Salvadorans, Lebanese, and Kuwaitis as having temporary protected status over a three-year period. The deadline for application for voluntary departure under the current arrangement is January 1, 1991, and the voluntary departure status itself expires for all Liberians on March 30, so the attorney-general must act soon to designate Liberians as protected under the new act or else most Liberian exiles in the U.S. will be left in limbo.

Morocco Continued

"good friend of France," and that his country was "an element of stability amid a turbulent Arab world," reported the French weekly *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*. French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said in mid-November that Franco-Moroccan relations were "strongly rooted" and that they "should be protected from any passing incident."

A new report released by Amnesty

International in late November argues that several hundred civilians, most from the south of Morocco and the Western Sahara, currently under Moroccan control, disappeared between 1975 and 1987 after being arrested by the Moroccan authorities, and might still be held. However, the Persian Gulf crisis and King Hassan's tough anti-Iraqi stance have again won him widespread support in the West and have largely overshadowed the regime's continuing abuses. ■

GHANA

Ghana has taken an important step in its effort to boost its economy by launching Africa's fifth stock exchange in mid-November. Although the concept of a stock exchange was proposed in 1971, it was not implemented until July 1989, when it was established as a private company limited by guarantee (which essentially means that it is a non-profit corporate body that does not pay its members dividends). In a bid to restore business confidence, 33 companies and one individual raised 170.5 million cedis (over \$500,000) in early November to finally activate it.

Trading began in government stocks and securities of the 17 listed public liability firms and was handled by the three registered brokerage firms. A 10-member council, headed by former Finance Minister Gloria Nikoi, set up the regulations for the Ghana Stock Exchange Market, which include two trading days a week; a requirement for a minimum capital level of \$50 million to be stated by companies desiring to be listed; and a rule that prohibits firms which, on their first listing supply less than \$30 million worth of public shares or, on their second listing, furnish less than \$15 million.

The stock market's small size has not hindered its prospects for expansion and incorporation of other tradable stocks, such as corporate debt bonds. Reflecting on the impact of the stock exchange, Ebenezer Aryee, managing director of the National Trust Holding Corporation, said: "The stock exchange is going to give industrialists and the commercial sector the opportunity to raise capital for expansion programs. Hitherto, they had resorted to bank borrowing with punitive interest rates for expansion."

Perhaps an even greater future lies in the revitalization of the gold industry. A program of rehabilitation and an influx of foreign investment from Western countries has led to the highest production rate since 1973. Two new foreign companies, Teberibie and Canadian Bogoso Resources, are expected to produce a combined total of 100,000 ounces each in 1991. The total projected output for 1991 is 828,000 ounces, up by 30 percent from this year. Ghana hopes to reach an annual rate of 1.5 million oz. by 1993, making it the eleventh largest gold producer in the world.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

FOREIGN AID

About \$8 billion in concessional aid was pledged in early November by a group of multilateral organizations and wealthy nations to help 21 severely indebted sub-Saharan African countries carry out structural adjustment programs over the next three years. The World Bank, which will coordinate disbursement of the funds, announced that the money will be used to fund the second phase of the Special Programs of Assistance (SPA-2), which were established in 1987 to aid severely indebted African countries redress their economies, particularly with regard to imports of goods and services to improve infrastructure, agriculture, education, and health facilities.

According to Edward Jaycox, the Bank's vice-president for Africa, SPA programs have helped boost economic growth by 4 percent in several African countries, 1 percent higher than the average population growth. Some countries, including Ghana, Kenya, Togo, and the Gambia, might soon not need further SPA assistance, according to the Bank. The second phase of the SPA will focus on long-term goals such as strengthening human resource development, improving governance, and reducing poverty, as well as continuing to alleviate the debt burden and assisting economies adversely affected by the Persian Gulf crisis.

In addition to the \$8 billion, the International Development Association, the concessional lending affiliate of the World Bank, will contribute \$3.5 billion to SPA-2, and the International Monetary Fund a further \$1-2 billion, for a total of about \$13 billion, or \$2 billion in excess of pledges made three years ago by a similar donor gathering.

Meanwhile, the World Bank and the IMF are in the process of reassessing their programs of technical assistance to developing countries. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, where there are more expatriate consultants today than under colonial times, the Bank reported that only three out of 19 such programs have been successful.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

A just released report on South Africa by the Syracuse, New York-based Political Risk Services projects that the climate for international business will continue to decline in the near future. If the present talks between the African National Congress (ANC) and the de Klerk government proceed unhindered, chances are that it will not be too long before a pragmatic ANC leadership takes the helm in South Africa. According to the report, however, there is a 40 percent chance of this scenario prevailing, and this could diminish further if the negotiations show no real signs of progress.

The prospects for a conservative backlash over the next 18 months or for a more radically-inclined ANC government are dangerously close to the 40 percent mark, while the likelihood of a repressive conservative government stands at 30 percent and that of a radical ANC government at 25 percent.

The most anxious observers of these developments are the foreign and domestic business sectors. A pragmatic ANC government would bring in a fresh stream of foreign investment, while a radical black government might undermine business confidence and instigate a massive outflow of skilled workers.

Even in the case of the former scenario, however, the ANC government's commitment to tear down hundreds of years of inequality will force it to maintain a substantially larger budget deficit. The ANC has already made clear its intention to nationalize certain key industries, placate the powerful black trade unions, and institute a comprehensive land reform program. In addition, it is expected that the education, health, and urban renewal expenditures will send the ANC budget into arrears. Nevertheless, the unleashing of black entrepreneurship, the freeing of the labor market, and the release of black consumption will invigorate the South African economy.

Whether this will be sustained or not will depend heavily on the willingness of Western investors and donors to pour money into the country despite the volatile atmosphere that is likely to prevail. [For further information contact: Political Risk Services, 407 University Ave., Suite 107, Syracuse, N.Y. 13210, tel: (315) 472-1224.]



A. Kit/Inter Afrique Presse

A New Broom?

By **GERALD BOURKE**

After unprecedented strikes and street protests last year, President Houphouët-Boigny eventually acquiesced to opening up the political system. In the first-ever multi-party elections, the ruling PDCI swept back into Parliament with a landslide victory in November. But the party's promise to undergo a "renewal"—streamlining the bloated civil service and fighting corruption—may alienate PDCI stalwarts who have benefitted from years of Houphouët's patronage.

Eighty-five year-old President Félix Houphouët-Boigny's reelection for a seventh consecutive five-year term on October 28 and the ruling Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire's (PDCI) sweeping victory in the legislative elections on November 25 have given life to the fundamental political changes which have occurred in recent months. But they have also shown that the road to genuine democracy will be a long one.

Frustration with almost a decade of economic austerity caused by the steady slide in cocoa and coffee prices boiled over last February when government plans to raise income taxes on public and private sector workers were leaked. There followed three months of sporadic but often violent strikes and street protests. For a country long regarded as one of the continent's few oases of stability, the demonstrations were unprecedented in their scale and intensity.

The PDCI's popularity and credi-

especially since the participants were widely perceived to be expressing legitimate grievances.

Although the government finally relented on the issue of pay cuts, the discontent had already assumed a strong political dimension. The president and other prominent members of the PDCI began to be vilified as self-serving autocrats who had shown scant regard for the well-being of ordinary Ivorians during the three decades since independence. Calls for the legalization of opposition parties became increasingly strident.

While Houphouët-Boigny continued to insist that any opening up of the political system to include parties other than the PDCI would raise the specter of tribalism and undermine national unity, he was finally forced to capitulate. On April 30, the government announced that underground opposition parties would be officially recognized. The ossified oligarchy had crumbled; unanimity was no longer the absolute political value. Côte d'Ivoire now has no less than 25 registered opposition groupings.

Nonetheless, the PDCI's formal commitment to multi-partyism failed

demanding higher pay and better working conditions. In most cases, Houphouët-Boigny promised that their requests would be given favorable consideration.

However, the man appointed by the president to chair the newly cre-

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bility were eroded further by the systematically ruthless and heavy-handed manner in which the security forces dealt with the demonstrations,

Gerald Bourke is a freelance journalist based in Abidjan.

to temper the ardor of the street protesters or put an end to the public vilifications of its barons. Army and air force recruits, police and firemen, customs and prison officers staged separate strikes during May. All

ated ministerial commission charged with drafting a plan to restore order to the wayward public finances quickly made it clear that no such concessions could be made. Alasane Ouattara, the 48-year-old governor of the Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, announced that while the planned tax hikes would not be introduced, there could be no pay increases until significant progress had been made in turning the economy around.

Meanwhile, the newly legalized opposition began to hold rallies and meetings. Surprisingly, many of their leaders heaped praise on Houphouët-Boigny, dwelling heavily on Côte d'Ivoire's relative stability and prosperity under his stewardship. This led to suggestions that a large proportion of the new groupings were creations of the PDCI.

Nevertheless, others, including

the left of center Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI), Parti Ivoirien de Travailleurs (PIT), Union des Socio-Democrates (USD), and Parti Socialiste Ivoirien (PSI), roundly condemned the PDCI and its record.

Disaffected PDCI members defected to the opposition, especially the FPI, in considerable numbers. The FPI's popularity derived to a large extent from the personality of Laurent Gbagbo, its general secretary. Gbagbo, a 43-year-old history professor who had spent most of the 1980s in self-imposed exile in France, has long been the government's most consistent and vocal critic.

However, the PDCI's commitment to meaningful democracy remained highly questionable. Numerous FPI rallies were violently broken up by the security forces, ostensibly because they posed a threat to public order. On September 6, for the second time within a week, a march organized in Abidjan by the FPI, PIT, USD, and PSI to call for the dissolution of the government and the convening of a national conference to designate an interim regime to run the country until the end of year

elections was dispersed by soldiers and riot police using truncheons and teargas.

The previous evening, a communiqué from the president's office declared the planned demonstrations illegal and described its organizers as "troublemakers" bent on "destruction, looting, and violence." However, the Ivorian Human Rights League issued a statement condemning what it called "the systematic recourse to

For a country long regarded as an oasis of stability, the demonstrations were unprecedented in their scale and intensity.

force to prevent peaceful demonstrations."

The complaint had little effect. Receiving the leaders of 19 opposition parties in Abidjan at the end of September, Houphouët-Boigny alleged that some of them—whom he did not specify—had orchestrated a plot to assassinate Pope John Paul II during his visit to Côte d'Ivoire earlier that month. The next day, Cardinal Bernard Yago, the country's Roman Catholic Primate, acknowledged that a young Beninois national had admitted being party to such a plot. However, he insisted that the man had in no way implicated any opposition party and roundly condemned the president's "political use" of the episode.

With the presidential, legislative, and municipal elections looming—the first ever to be contested by more

than one party—the PDCI sought to bolster its dwindling popularity. High-level delegations were dispatched into the interior, promising that the party would undergo a "renewal" to enable it to meet and head off the challenges posed by the opposition.

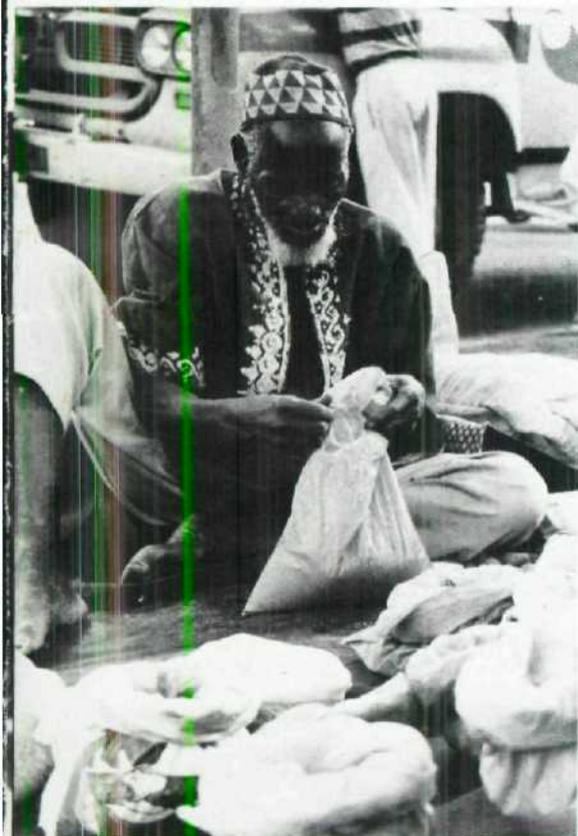
The PDCI's shortcomings were eloquently highlighted in a so-called "Renewal Manifesto" drafted by a group of senior party officials. With refreshing and uncharacteristic directness, it said the PDCI was bedeviled by laxity, nepotism, and generalized corruption. It also condemned repression over the years against dissidents and nascent opposition movements and acknowledged that there was an "obvious risk of political and electoral ruin...if the opposition can cultivate our lost values and show that they can behave responsibly." The document called for a "thorough and sincere self-criticism" to expose the "mistakes of political orientation, economic choice, and national resource management."

These recommendations were quickly acted on. During the October congress of the PDCI—a gathering convened every five years just prior to general elections—far-reaching changes were made in the party's structures. Houphouët-Boigny set the tone of the meeting on the opening day. He promised that if he was reelected as head of state and the PDCI won a majority of seats in the National Assembly, he would relinquish the chairmanship of the party and the post of prime minister. Decision-making organs in the party were scrapped or replaced. The congress was something of a victory for younger members determined to have a say in the way the country is run after a generation of rule by the old guard.

Electioneering began long before the formal opening of the campaign. PDCI rallies, meetings, and marches throughout the country during September and October were given extensive coverage in the official media. *Fraternité-Matin*, the government-controlled daily newspaper,

Man selling spices (left) and woman working in Abidjan (opposite page, top): What will the "thorough and sincere self-criticism" called for in the PDCI's "Renewal Manifesto" bring for them?

Betty Press



predictably heaped praise on Houphouët-Boigny. Unctuously sycophantic editorials variously highlighted what they saw as his wisdom, vision, munificence, experience, and his love of liberty, as well as his advocacy of peace, dialogue, and the need for national unity.

Laurent Gbagbo, the only other presidential candidate, was mercilessly vilified by the paper. His party's activists were unfairly dismissed as "adventurers, dreamers, and demagogues" who reduced political debate to "slogans and war cries." Editorials lamely attempted to trash the FPI's proposals to raise farmers' income, introduce wide-ranging health insurance and pension schemes, and embark on a vigorous industrialization drive based on the processing of local agricultural produce.

A decree passed by the National Assembly on October 10 obliging presidential candidates to advance a deposit of CFA 20 million was widely interpreted as an attempt by the PDCI to discourage prospective contenders other than Houphouët-Boigny. No deposit was required at previous elections. There was also a controversy over the government's insistence that African immigrants—who, at some 4 million strong, constitute about one-third of the country's population—should be granted the right to vote. The FPI claimed that immigrants were organized into national associations affiliated to the PDCI. Ironically, Ivorians living abroad were denied the vote.

According to the official figures, Houphouët-Boigny polled 81.68 percent of the valid votes cast in the presidential elections, while Gbagbo took the remaining 18.32 percent. The FPI, however, cried foul. It claimed that ballot boxes had been illegally stuffed with votes for Houphouët-Boigny and that tens of thousands of its supporters had been omitted from electoral lists or issued with polling cards deliberately invalidated by the authorities. It also alleged widespread intimidation of voters by PDCI partisans. Western diplomats who monitored the elec-

tions closely estimated that despite the PDCI's malpractices, Gbagbo still managed to poll 30-40 percent of the votes cast.

The more radical reformers within the PDCI were encouraged by the outcome of the elections, interpreting it as a vote for change. The old guard on the other hand was severely shaken by Gbagbo's relatively good performance. The staunchly conservative barons were acutely aware that the parliamentary poll would be a test of the party's—rather than the president's—record. *Fraternité-Matin* acknowledged that many sitting deputies were "unpopular and out of touch with the realities of their

The more radical reformers within the PDCI were encouraged by the outcome of the elections, seeing it as a vote for change.

locality." In the event, many of them were not nominated by their local branches to stand again.

On November 6, three weeks before legislative elections, the National Assembly unanimously adopted a bill altering article 11 of the Constitution to allow its speaker, in the event of a sudden presidential vacancy, to become head of state and complete the five-year term. Previously, the Constitution stipulated that the assembly's speaker would only become interim head of state and would have to organize fresh presidential elections within 45-60 days.

The change means that 58-year-old Henri Konan Bédié, long regarded as Houphouët-Boigny's own choice as successor, will almost cer-

tainly be Côte d'Ivoire's next president—assuming he is reelected speaker of the Parliament. The same day, the Assembly modified the Constitution to create the post of prime minister—to which Alassane Ouattara promised that a new government would soon be named and said that its members would be chosen on the basis of their "competence, rigor, self-sacrifice, and responsibility."

As canvassing for the parliamentary elections got under way in earnest, opposition party activists claimed that the PDCI was resorting to the same kind of unsavory tactics it had used in the run-up to the presidential poll. In the event, the PDCI won a landslide victory, taking 163 of the 175 seats in the National Assembly. The FPI won nine seats, the PIT one, and two so-called "independent" candidates were victorious.

Apathy appears to have played a large part in the ruling party's success. Officially there was only a 40 percent turnout—compared to 64 percent for the presidential—although the real figure was probably much lower. Analysts said that many would-be voters had trouble differentiating between the 19 contesting parties, while others feared intimidation or violence.

With the PDCI's parliamentary majority secured, Ouattara named his government on November 30. He reduced the number of ministers from 29 to 19, seeing off several of Houphouët-Boigny's staunchest allies within the party and replacing them by and large with young—and mainly unknown—technocrats.

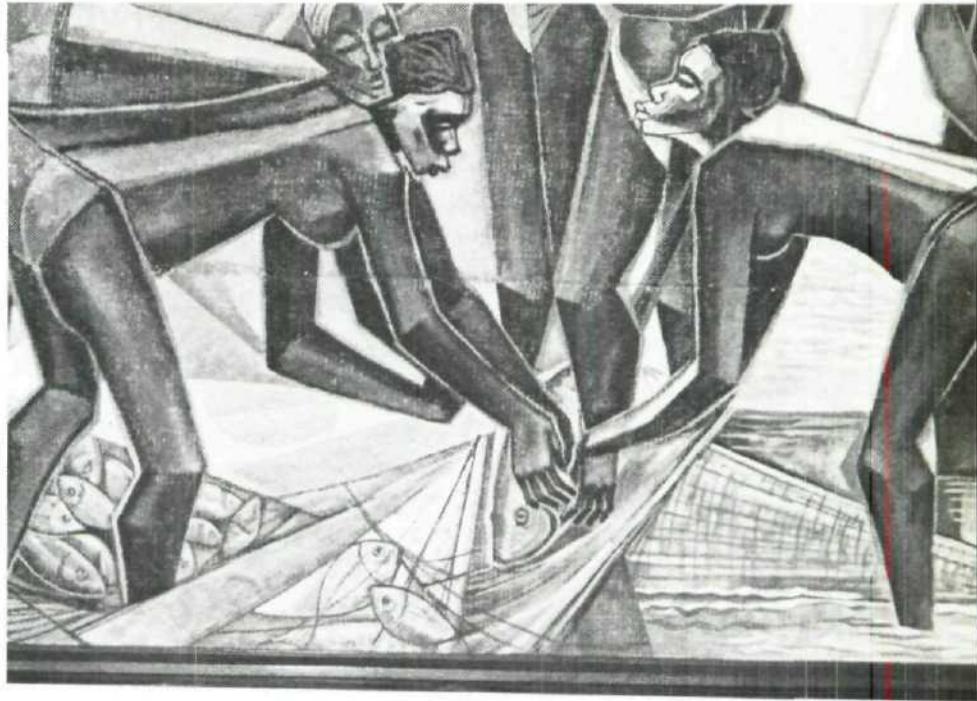
However, Ouattara and his ministers are destined for a fiery political baptism. His pledge to streamline the bloated public service and wage a war against corrupt officials will win him few friends among the wealthy and influential party barons who have profited immensely from the president's patronage over the years. For a man without any political constituency, such a path, courageous and laudable though it may be, is likely to be fraught with hazards. ○



THE GALLIC PARADOX

By **KAYE WHITEMAN**

The special relationship between France and its former African colonies has undergone a transition in the last few years, as francophone countries felt the “wind of change” sweeping across Eastern Europe. While swearing not to abandon his autocratic allies, President Mitterrand has nonetheless changed the rules of the game, by refusing to put down disturbances in Gabon and Côte d’Ivoire and standing by as Chadian rebels swept away the Habré government.



In May 1988, François Mitterrand was elected president of France for a second seven-year term. At the time, it seemed appropriate to question the future of France's Africa policy. Even then, it was possible to observe a double paradox of Gallic dimensions: that Mitterrand, having come to power in 1981 on a wave of expectations of change, proved to be the great consolidator of France's sphere of influence.

Then, as the grim 1980s plowed to a close, Africa's economic collapse seriously affected France's own economic posture, because there was a decline in both trade and investment, as well as an erosion of the successful position of the franc zone, seen in liquidity crises and banking collapse. It began to seem as if Mitterrand, in his second term, could very well preside over the unravelling of France's high-profile sphere of influence in Africa.

In the course of 1989 and the first half of 1990, this trend appeared to be accelerating dramatically. Even as the 1989 trade figures suggested a staunching of the economic drain away from Africa (and the champions of the special relationship did their best to imply that the worst was over), the political consequences of the economic and social crisis began to be felt.

The pioneer country in this movement was Benin, always in the forefront of experiment, a unique combination of economic disaster and over-developed political consciousness. In the 1960s, Benin had been a prototype of the chronically unviable African micro-state. It was only the breathing space offered by neighboring Nigeria's two oil booms of the 1970s that permitted Mathieu Kérékou to consolidate his power base of a purged army and to adopt Marxism-Leninism, temporarily placating and distracting the country's urban elite and intellectuals, over a remarkable 17-year power span.

But with the downturn of the 1980s, Benin was inevitably one of

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the first to crack. A series of coup attempts, the banking collapse of late 1988, and the strikes and demonstrations of January 1989 were all harbingers of the crack-up and the increasing unworkability of Benin as a nation-state.

In 1989, two external factors then added their own potent chemistry, which eventually caused the movement for change to extend beyond Benin. One, curiously, was the bicentenary of the French revolution. While its exact influence is difficult to assess, the contradiction of Mitterrand's commemoration of, for example, the Declaration of the Rights of Man in the presence of some of its most flagrant violators did not go unnoticed. And the French revolutionary tradition, although diluted in Paris, still works dangerous magic wherever French culture is found. The street demonstrations, tracts, and oratory of Cotonou and Porto Novo draw directly on that tradition. And even if the totems of the left have been brought down (the demonstrators in Cotonou stoned an unveiled statue of Lenin—now removed altogether), it was, ironically, the underground Dahomey Communist Party which was central to the major anti-Kérékou demonstrations of December 1989.

The second factor which had a direct and seminal influence all over Africa, but nowhere more than in the francophone countries, was the upheaval in Eastern Europe. Although the media in Africa tended to play down the events of Berlin and Bucharest at the end of 1989, the continent was entirely conversant with what was happening mainly through shortwave radio broadcasts. Benin took the cure more directly and immediately, but

the impact was considerable in many other countries, where democracy became the vogue word, and the hated secret police were dubbed "Securitate" and "Stasi."

Gabon's President Omar Bongo, whose country was one of the earliest to be touched, was quoted as saying "the wind from the East is shaking the coconut trees." In January and February 1990, there was unrest in Gabon, Niger, and Côte d'Ivoire. Once Benin held a national conference (in the manner of the *Etats Généraux* in France of 1789) which effectively unseated Kérékou, leaving him almost a figurehead, the currents seemed to become a tide. Gabon followed in April, with a national conference which adopted multi-partyism (although Bongo protected his own position much more effectively). And in Côte d'Ivoire, after a series of demonstrations by different "social groups," even the elderly Houphouët-Boigny, one of the greatest nemeses of multi-partyism, followed suit.

The risks of opening Pandora's

Betty Press



Gabon's President Omar Bongo: "The wind from the east is shaking the coconut trees"

box were clear, and France's high-density African relations were soon called into play. In Gabon in May, when there were riots in Port Gentil when an opposition leader was found dead in mysterious circumstances, the French sent 300 troops to reinforce the 600 already there, ostensi-

bly to protect French nationals. The intervention may also have bolstered Bongo's wobbly regime, but that was ever the case with such interventions, ostensibly with limited humanitarian or limited national interest motives.

What was perhaps more surprising around the same time was Mit-

An atmosphere of uncertainty and disarray built up toward the Franco-African summit in La Baule in June.

terrand's refusal to comply with a request from Houphouët in Côte d'Ivoire to intervene following a "mutiny" of army conscripts, who temporarily seized the airport in protest at their conditions. Even if it was a somewhat lightweight affair, which it might have been reasonable to suppose that forces in the country, including at least 800 French troops, would have been enough to handle if necessary, the refusal was still seen as a diplomatic rebuff.

The same month saw serious signs of restiveness in Cameroon, where pressure for new political parties led to arrests in Douala in March, and to six youths being killed after a successful if illegal rally of a new party in anglophone Cameroon. At the congress of the ruling party in June, a process toward multi-partyism, as well as a relaxation of the "security state," was begun, albeit cautiously.

Evidence of pending upheaval in the three richest and most influential countries in francophone Africa proved as demoralizing in Paris as the earlier signs of business decline

in the franc zone. There was increasing evidence of what was called "Afro-pessimism," a modern version of the Cartierist philosophy of disengagement and hostility to development aid which was current at the time of decolonization in 1960.

Afro-pessimism took different forms, but all found outward expression, to the point that people started blaming the French media for its disaster complex, for building a problem into a crisis. Magazines came up with "dossiers" on "Africa's shipwreck," of synoptic continental doom, basing themselves on the various protest movements and reacting to the unpopularity of leaders funded and propped up by France's Africa policies.

One of the most telling pieces appeared in *Le Monde* at the end of February 1990, under the title "What to do about black Africa?" by Victor Chernault, pseudonym of an "expert on African questions," obliged to remain anonymous probably because he was a highly placed functionary. The article, which carried the authority of an insider, said that Africa was "doomed," as a "conservatory of the ills of humanity," and not because of problems with the terms of trade or indebtedness.

Indeed, said Chernault, there was no real debt, because the personal fortunes of Africa's elites outside the continent were greater than the debts of the countries in question. In 1988, he said, the Bank of France had to buy back 450 billion CFA francs (\$1.8 billion) in bank notes, for the most part money transferred fraudulently in "full suitcases and diplomatic bags." The article also quoted a recent interview given by the ex-president of Burundi who said he had known only five honest African leaders—Kaunda, Nyerere, Museveni, Mugabe, and Sankara. Commented Chernault, "The only francophone was assassinated."

The article went on in this vein, pinpointing much of the blame on Western countries for wasting their aid ("our money is a reward for failure"), but above all reproaching France for still taking Africa serious-

ly when everyone else, the British and the Americans included, had already written it off as marginalized (a reference to Mitterrand's periodic comments that Africa would "not be marginalized").

This was Afro-pessimism at its toughest and most miserable, but while one may question some of the points, it must be said that the thinking is not too far out of line with some of the current international positions on the need for a new political conditionality, alongside the economic strings of structural adjustment assistance.

On a different level, those who saw the possibilities of a new shot at reforming the French "cooperation" system, as had briefly been tried in the early 1980s, were mobilizing. Former ambassador Stephen Hessel, who had always favored enlarging the field of France's overseas development assistance, produced a report for the office of Prime Minister Michel Rocard, an unusual expression of interest from this quarter.

"Cooperation," especially in Africa, had always been considered the reserved domain of presidents throughout the Fifth Republic. Although Hessel's actual recommendations were modest, the fact that the report existed at all was its significance. It worried the old "cooperation" lobby, both in Paris and in Africa, and to this day, although heavily leaked, it has not been published. Afro-pessimists also pointed to the likely diversion of resources following the opening up of Eastern Europe which could well exacerbate the disengagement trend.

The atmosphere of uncertainty and disarray built up toward the Franco-African summit in La Baule (a Breton seaside resort) in June. On the one hand, there was the feeling that any francophone African government was now vulnerable, allied to uncertainty over France's commitment (fuelled by statements that military aid was only given to protect French nationals and not to prop up regimes). Some leaders were also incensed by increasingly strong

signs that aid was going to be linked to democratic practices and human rights. Even those that conceded multi-partyism, whether from street or donor pressure or both, showed little sign of believing in what they were doing, and might even be tempted to manipulate things to show that what they were being forced to do would not work.

On the eve of La Baule, there were also curiously strong rumors that the parity of the CFA franc might be altered, to the point that the week of the summit, the Bank of France suspended exchange transactions in CFA. Needless to say, nothing of the kind happened and new commitments to protect parity were made. In many other directions as well, the summit was an anti-climax for those who believed that a major shake-up was imminent. In fact, it would have been quite the wrong place for it, as the whole tenor of these summits is intended to reinforce the "family" atmosphere of the special relationship.

All the usual noises which have dominated Franco-African relations over the past 30 years were made; Mitterrand swore not to abandon the continent and tried to defuse the argument about political strings with the oracular phrases "no democracy without development, no development without democracy," declining to examine which might come first. One was told that the one-party hardliners such as former President Hissène Habré of Chad and President Gnassingbé Eyadema of Togo were still disgusted at France's attitude. Houphouët-Boigny and Mobutu, normally pillars of such occasions, were conspicuously absent. While both could plead troubles at home, neither had any desire to be lectured.

La Baule, by design or by accident, seemed to buy time for France, even if the continuing tide forced concessions in the latter part of the year in other formerly rigid one-party states, such as Togo, Congo, Central African Republic, and Niger. The experience of the October elections in Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire, in

which ruling parties managed to survive, may have given heart to incumbents in general that multi-partyism need not be a disaster.

Moreover, on the economic front, apart from modest signs by mid-1990 of recovery in the position of both Franco-African trade and the franc zone, the Gulf windfall of rising oil prices was instantly beneficial for Cameroon, Congo, and Gabon, even while increasing hardship for most of the rest. It was surely going to help transform the 1990 performance of the franc zone. A surplus in the Central African Bank area could possibly put the whole zone back into surplus for the first time in five years. Even so, rumors of impending devaluation have persisted.

France's security commitment was also further tested, and if it was not found wanting in Rwanda, the same could not be said of Chad. In the former, after the invasion of exiles from Uganda in October, France joined Belgium and Zaire in sending troops, ostensibly to protect French nationals, but the collective effort effectively bolstered the Habyarimana government.

In Chad, the French military operation Sparrowhawk was reinforced from 1,200 to 1,800 troops, following an incursion from Sudan by the forces of Chad's leading dissident, Idris Deby. This looked like a repeat performance of what had happened in April 1990, when a similar incursion caused the French to suddenly reverse the scaling down of Sparrowhawk and provide some logistic support for Habré's eventual pushing back of the invading force. This time, however, despite the reinforcements, the French troops stood by while Deby's troops shattered Habré's army at an ambush at Iriba.

When garrisons in the south declared for Deby, and the latter captured the key town of Abéché, Habré fled to Cameroon, blaming the French for plotting with the Libyans, while the French sanctimoniously said that they did not prop up governments, and this was an internal Chadian affair. Supply of arms did not constitute "an aggression."

The French had little love for Habré, even while backing him. They have been especially critical of his human rights record. Once it became clear that their support was withdrawn, his replacement was rapid and was carried out fairly surgically. Significantly, one of Deby's first statements was to opt for multi-partyism. Chad had always been an area where France's Africa policy has conflicted with its Arab policy. Even so, the visible lack of support for a president, even with all France's high military profile, is likely to be discouraging for many others on fragile thrones.

Francophone leaders, looking at 1990, might congratulate themselves that the year did not end worse. By early December, only one, Habré, had actually fallen from office, even if Kérékou's presence at the helm in Benin looks notional. The democracy question, if it has not gone away, appears more containable than it did, partly because of recourse to the diversion of the Senegalese model of pseudo-multi-partyism. And the Afro-pessimists have been countered by activists such as Jean-Pierre Prouteau, head of the French Employers' Center for Investment in Black Africa, who believes that even if sub-Saharan Africa is still possibly risky (but rewarding to risk-takers), the potential of the Maghreb and of a reformist South Africa could combine to help turn around the continent as a whole.

Franco-African special relations, as I predicted in 1988, may still be in for a much greater shake-up in the wake of integration moves in the European Community. Both the 1992 single market and the impending monetary union are bound to have implications for such a close connection. Restructuring, at the very least, is inevitable. In addition, the ending of the careers (intertwined for 40 years) of Mitterrand and Houphouët-Boigny, even if they do not coincide, is sure to change a relationship so bound up with personal connections. Who knows, therefore, how long the present holding operation can continue? ○

The army is waging a fierce campaign against a tiny force of guerrillas who seek secession for Casamance, Senegal's southernmost—and richest—province. While the tough general in charge says he intends to nip separatist activity in the bud, a militaristic approach to the problem may not be the solution.



The Secessionist South

Ray Willin/World Bank



By **PETER da COSTA**

On September 21, helicopters and troops of the Senegalese army descended on the small town of Kanaw, which sits astride Senegal's border with its neighbor, the Gambia—their purpose, to flush out members of a secret guerrilla movement believed to be waging a campaign of secession against the central government. Witnesses testified that after interrogating and assaulting several villagers, the sol-

Casamance: In stark contrast to the bone-dry Sahelian north, the province has fertile land which boosts the nation's food production

diers rounded up five men. Their bodies, charred and bullet-ridden, were found a short distance away. All were members of the minority Diola ethnic group which claims the southern region of Casamance as its ancestral land.

The Kanaw flashpoint symbolized the extent to which the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC) has driven the government of President Abdou Diouf and served as a dangerous warning of escalated conflict between the forces of law and separatist guerrillas. Since April 1990, a spate of lightning attacks—on government officials and civilians alike—has been blamed on the MFDC, eliciting a strong-arm response from the capital, Dakar. The ensuing hunt for the enigmatic guerrillas has contributed to a toll which is currently estimated at 80 dead and several hundred injured.

Casamance is divided from northern Senegal by the sliver of land that is the Gambia. The province, in stark contrast to the bone-dry Sahelian north, has fertile land which boosts the nation's food production. Agriculture employs some 70 percent of the country's work-force, and agronomists believe the region's virtual self-sufficiency in rice could be extended country-wide. This, together with game parks, a burgeoning tourism industry, and the prospect of large petroleum deposits makes Casamance a region central to the future economic development of Senegal.

Since the escalation of separatist activity—in the form of ambushes on commercial transport and raids on customs outposts and local government headquarters—the national army and paramilitary gendarmerie has reinforced its numbers in Casamance. On June 6, Defense Minister Medoune Fall brought veteran commander Gen. Mamadou Abdoulaye Dieng out of retirement and installed him as military governor of the area, signalling an offensive against a group whose armed

strength is a subject of much speculation.

A concentrated effort by security services led to the arrest of some 40 suspects who are currently in detention in Dakar. Other alleged sympathizers have subsequently been picked up and are in custody pending appearances at the State Security Court. If precedent is anything to go by (between 1982 and 1989 hundreds of Casamançais were rounded up), the latest detainees are likely to be charged with compromising state security and being members of an illegal organization.

Doyen of the detainees is 62-year-old Catholic cleric Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, whose self-proclaimed leadership of the MFDC adds to the mystical nature of the separatist phenomenon. A vocal proponent of independence for Casamance, Diamacoune is no stranger to incarceration: In December 1983, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for anti-state activities.

The MFDC has its roots in the pro-independence movement, and was formed in 1947 by nationalists, notably Emile Badiane, Victor Diata, and Ibou Diallo. Wooed by Léopold Sédar Senghor into the Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (BDS) in 1948, Casamançais leaders were instrumental in the fight for independence from France achieved in 1960. MFDC sympathizers claim Senghor promised land rights and autonomy to his southern allies, promises which they say were subsequently shelved.

Diamacoune, whose father was active in the BDS struggle, has accused Senghor—leader of Senegal for 20 years—of betraying the people of Casamance. "When he became successful," claimed the cleric, "he neglected those who were ready to do anything to ensure his success. This is why the people of Casamance have not been happy." Letters to both Senghor and his successor, Diouf, demanding that the record be set straight, were responded to by aggression and detentions, the MFDC leader added.

Since 1982, MFDC leaflets have been in circulation demanding independence. The literature has often been accompanied by public demonstrations. A pointer to the current violence came when in December that year, a protest in the regional capital, Ziguinchor, culminated in the Senegalese flag being burned and a radio station attacked. Christmas has become the focus of independence protest, as it is a time of traditional Diola festivals. During the festive season in Ziguinchor, the town's population is augmented by large numbers of soldiers.

Diamacoune has openly acknowledged his leadership of the movement, though he is unlikely to be commanding the armed wing. "I told them [the government] that I would not hesitate to shed my blood for a free and independent Casamance...it was not a wish to engage in politics, I just wanted to speak the truth. I have told them they can kill me if they wish, that I will be more powerful after my death...the truth triumphs over lies. It is God who gave us this land."

Religion and language are significant factors in the insularity of the Diola people, the region's largest ethnic group. Mainly animists or Catholics in a predominantly Islamic state, they have clung fiercely to their languages and shunned the nationally spoken Wolof. Central government, ever-sensitive to accusations of tribalism and clientelism, has made provisions in the administration for Diolas: Interior Minister Famara Ibrahima Sagna and Transport and Housing Minister Robert Sagna are both from Casamance. However, a government scheme to increase agricultural productivity in the region has irked locals, who claim the land is being turned over to northerners the ministry sees as being more market-oriented.

Attempts to quantify the MFDC's guerrilla numbers have been difficult because of the group's hit-and-run tactics and the Diola culture of silence. Senegalese journalists report that there are 300 fighters organized in three cells who harry

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the hugely superior and numerically secret government forces. Gen. Dieng's approach to the separatists has been purely militaristic. He has publicly said his intelligence sources know the ex-servicemen and deserters among the MFDC's ranks, repeating his mandate to nip separatist activity in the bud. Other quarters, however, have advocated dialogue.

Asked about the government's position, a high-ranking official who declined to be named hinted that the state would be willing to open discussions with the MFDC while voicing the impatience that Gen. Dieng's belligerent military offensive represents. "We are prepared to talk to them, but the time is getting late," he said. "What is clear is that bartering over the sovereignty of Casamance is out of the question. It is part and parcel of Senegal...and their attacks show that they are real terrorists. If they fail to stop, they will be dealt with as terrorists are usually dealt with."

While some of Senegal's 16 political parties have spoken out against the MFDC, others demand the release of the detainees as a precondition for talks. Community leaders have articulated the futility of continued resistance; a recent attack on an Islamic Gamo festival in Ziguinchor led to imams calling for an immediate end to violence. Casamance deputies have toured the region trying to convince the guerrillas to lay down arms and negotiate. But the attacks show no sign of abating.

What is clear is that the MFDC fighting wing is a well-armed clique trained in bush warfare whose intimate knowledge of the terrain continues to frustrate army attempts at containment. The official line is that the separatists may be backed by Mauritania. Relations between Senegal and its northern neighbor have been strained since April 1989 when a border dispute led to bloody clashes and mass murder followed by repatriations of their expatriate citizens.

Mauritanian diplomatic sources deny the contention by Senegalese

intelligence that money to buy arms is being channelled to the MFDC via their embassy in the Gambia's capital, Banjul. They charge that Senegal is giving succor to FLAM, an African-Mauritanian dissident movement opposing the torture, murder, and illegal expulsion of African-Mauritians by the Arab-Mauritanian majority.

Amnesty International has reported on torture and extrajudicial killings in both Mauritania and Senegal. In May 1989, the organization presented President Diouf's government with a 13-page memorandum detailing allegations of torture in Casamance, and later that year sent a delegation to Dakar to discuss its findings. The government pointed to a June 1988 amnesty which led to the release of most Casamance detainees, but refused to launch an official inquiry.

Senegal's reputation as a defender of human rights will continue to be eroded by reports of torture of MFDC suspects, a damaging factor which analysts of the situation see as a heavy price to pay for what they argue is a small-scale internal problem. Some even theorize that there is no concerted guerrilla separatist campaign, merely isolated incidents of banditry, a claim repeated time and time again by Casamançais villagers and former detainees.

If the MFDC is indeed an underground organization seeking independence or at the very least some form of autonomy, its demands are generally acknowledged as unrealistic. Were the region to secede, argue experts, there would be little or no qualified manpower to govern or administer. Others identify the conflict as originating from a small area within the region radiating from the mouth of the 150-mile-long Casamance river.

Senegal's overtly militaristic approach to the separatist problem is a knee-jerk reaction that highlights the historical paranoia about security engendered by the existence of the Gambia—which Senghor, referring to its geographical position, once described as "the thorn in our side."

The fear is and has been that secessionist elements or invasion forces might launch attacks from the Gambia, whose immense border is virtually impossible to adequately police.

A pillar of Senegalese foreign policy has been to achieve some kind of union with its tiny neighbor. Since 1960, various forms of cooperation and union have been explored, partly with UN assistance. An attempted coup in 1981 by Gambian Marxists was quickly crushed with Senegalese help and resulted in a confederation that crumbled in September 1989. Since then, diplomatic efforts have concentrated on guaranteeing mutual security through formal structures. Gambian interior ministry sources say provisions do exist for hot-pursuit operations of the type that the Senegalese army has adopted, the condition being that Gambian soldiers take up the chase once suspects have crossed the border.

Internally, Dakar is going out of its way to alleviate Casamance complaints of marginalization. Agricultural policy-makers have curbed the transfer of farming land in the south to northern entrepreneurs. And a decision to make Ziguinchor the second venue for the 1992 Africa Cup soccer tournament which Senegal is to host will, say economists, pump much-needed cash into the local economy. An amnesty has been declared guaranteeing the liberty of MFDC guerrillas who hand in their weapons, but analysts say little is likely to be achieved while the military keeps its high profile in Casamance.

Ziguinchor residents predict that December 25 will be a day of protest and demonstration to highlight the independence demand, as is becoming the norm—so troops are unlikely to leave just yet. It remains to be seen whether 1991 will be characterized by an escalation of separatist activity or the end to a potentially damaging conflict. Much will depend on the fate of Fr. Augustin Diamacoune Senghor and his fellow detainees, whose future is inextricably linked to the solution of Senegal's perplexing problem. ○



Betty Press

The Velvet

By VIVIAN LOWERY DERRYCK

Unicef



President Mathieu Kérékou, top, and Beninois villagers at a rural health center: "Il faut que quelque chose change"

After 17 years of iron-fisted Marxist rule under President Kérékou, tiny Benin has undergone a revolution, smoothly and peacefully transforming its political system into a multi-party democracy. The nation's innovative methods to encourage citizen participation in the process may provide a model for other African countries in political transition.

In francophone West Africa, multi-partyism has raced through nations like the har-mattan, leaving a fine silt of chastened governments, burgeoning non-governmental organizations, and embryonic political parties. Hastily called elections have changed the landscape of civic life.

Almost lost in the fascination with Laurent Gbagbo's challenge to President Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d'Ivoire, stirrings of change in Togo, and the Economic Community of West African States' (Ecowas) francophone/anglophone split over Liberia, is the magnificent non-violent revolution going on in Benin, a revolution that was codified in the constitutional referendum of December 2, 1990.

By September 1989, Benin was in

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virtual economic collapse. Disaffected civil servants, school teachers, and thousands of private sector employees had simply given up going to work. The government, unable to pay its workers, owed three months' back salaries by the end of that year.

The country, in economic gridlock, only functioned at all thanks to the informal economy and the Lebanese merchants. Nowhere was Pope John Paul's often-quoted observation, "*Il faut que quelque chose change,*" more prophetic. And remarkably things did change—through a literal people's revolution.

In June 1989, a group of Beninois leaders who were dismayed by the economic and political turmoil and emboldened by their frustration, met

with Mathieu Kérékou, Benin's iron-fisted president for the past 17 years. Group spokesperson Robert Dossou, dean of the Law Faculty at the University of Benin and an elected member of the legislature, told the president that he represented a coalition of concerned legislators and citizens who wanted to work for reform. Kérékou, sensing the volatility of the situation, appointed Dossou as his new minister of planning. Dossou then worked with the coalition to bring needed changes to the table.

The seven months from July 1989 to February 1990 were a period of evolutionary change designed and

implemented by ordinary citizens—a classic case of people's power. Dossou and company got Kérékou's agreement to hold a national conference to discuss the country's decline and to develop a plan for recovery. Individual citizens seized the initia-

newly appointed Minister of Planning Dossou to determine the groups to be included and the numbers of persons each constituency could send. This thankless job earned him the undying enmity of many of the major actors in the pro-

cess. Nevertheless, the process continued and eventually nearly 500 people assembled from February 19 to 28, 1990, to chart the future of the country. This was truly a velvet revolution. A country of 4.7 million informally agreed on the legitimacy of almost 500 persons from all sectors of society and agreed to abide by the conference's decisions. Realizing that such a number was unwieldy to make decisions, the conference quickly appointed a 28-person High Council of the Republic (HCR). The council in turn was handed a two-part mandate. First, the HCR was charged to oversee the changeover to an interim government. Second, since the conference had decided to scrap the old constitution, the HCR's next task was to write a new one. A constitutional drafting commission was formed and the group took only three months to draft a new governing document for the country. The commission proposed a presidential system in which the chief executive would have broad powers. He would be aided by a cabinet chosen from the National Assembly. The proposed constitution made no provision for a vice president, for reasons that were variously explained as fear of rivalry or redundancy. The HCR also proposed a 15-member interim government to be led by a prime minister. The new government was carefully defined as a transitional administration, charged with three major tasks: revitalizing the economy insofar as possible, getting the domestic administra-

tive aspects of government going again, and most importantly, preparing for national elections for a new civilian administration. Delegates at the national conference wanted to give the interim government two months to organize elections so that a civilian government would be in place by May 1990. After heated discussion, the interim administration was given one year, until April 2, 1991, a date that is inviolate. The interim government was to be headed by a prime minister who would have the traditional powers and responsibilities associated with the office. Nicéphore Soglo, the new Beninois prime minister, is a competent, confident technocrat. A former World Bank official, he was chosen for his ties with the international banking and foreign donor communities. Widely viewed as apolitical and untainted by deep association with any of the past regimes, Soglo assumed office on March 1, 1990.

One of the most controversial aspects of the proposed new constitution was the age limits set for the presidency. Lower and upper age limits of 40 and 70 respectively were widely viewed as an effort to eliminate the possibility of the ancien régime—pre-Kérékou presidents Hubert Maga, 74, Justin Ahomadegbe, 73, and Emile-Derlin Zinsou, 72—running for office again. The age limitation proved to be the hottest item in the new constitution—so hot that the final referendum offered three ballots. The "oui blanc" supporters advocated adoption of the constitution as written, while the "oui vert" partisans were pro-constitution without the age provision, and the "non" advocates (red ballot) urged voters to reject the proposed new constitution altogether and demand a rewrite.

Referendum Day, December 2, 1990, dawned bright and clear. Even though the referendum had been postponed twice, through diligent organization, every aspect of the vote was ready. The Ministry of the Interior was charged with organizing the

Revolution

and organized the response, charting the future of Benin.

As in so many developing nations, only a few institutions had survived the rigors of a Marxist economy: the military, the church, and the university. The military remained in the barracks and its leaders let it be known that they would not intervene to prop up the regime. The church played an active role through the Catholic Bishop of Cotonou, Msgr. Isidore de Souza. The university offered the reformers the intellectual and spiritual safe-haven and vocal constituency that change advocates require.

Kérékou's role was pivotal. Had he decided to resist calls for reform, the story might have evolved differently. But Kérékou was responsive. The Beninois maintain that he is not a malevolent man. Dismayed by the degeneration and incapable of responding, he saw that his best alternative was to work with the would-be reformers. While Kérékou remained in office as head of state, a prime minister was selected to run the country and administer the day-to-day affairs of government.

It is thus that Beninois leaders can boast that Benin has added a new solution to the question of dealing with the leadership of a discredited regime. Traditionally, one of three fates has befallen deposed African leaders: imprisonment, exile, or death. Benin's leaders maintain that they have added a fourth—departure with honor and dignity.

The Beninois decided to organize for change through a national conference for reconstruction. It fell to

cess. Nevertheless, the process continued and eventually nearly 500 people assembled from February 19 to 28, 1990, to chart the future of the country.

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election. Minister Felicien Feliho, having received criticism about the glitches in the local elections and knowing the sensitivity of the issues, enlisted his brother-in-law, Nathaniel Bah, a high school history teacher, as the director of the ministry's cabinet and charged him with the organizations of the elections. Director Bah's attention to detail paid off, as the referendum proceeded without technical flaws.

Each citizen had a registration card with four perforations, one each for the referendum, local elections, legislative, and presidential balloting. Voting urns, the three ballots (yes without amendment, yes with amendment, and no), registration lists, indelible ink, and other election paraphernalia were delivered to the local mayors' offices on Saturday evening.

Voting bureau officials at the 4,038 polling stations reported to the polls by 6:30 am. At 7:00 sharp, the president of the voting station opened the urn, turned it upside down to demonstrate that it was empty, and locked it with a bright red lock. The polling had begun. Lines quickly formed by 7:30 am in the urban areas. Voters waited patiently, registration cards in hand. Once inside, the procedure took about three minutes from presenting the card to an official, signing the registry, obtaining the three ballots, going singly into one of two *isoloirs* in most stations, to finger-printing and retrieving individual voter registration cards.

Voter turnout was heavy, estimated immediately after the election as 72 percent. The "*oui blanc*," yes without amendment, won handily, thus insuring a presidential election free from the haunting memories of the past. The next steps are promulgation of the electoral code and setting the date for the legislative and presidential elections.

The beauty of the Benin referendum lies in the innovations used to encourage citizen participation. A contest among local carpenters and woodworkers determined the design of the ballot boxes. Involving local

craftsmen, the contest infused money into the economy and simultaneously reminded people of the referendum—grassroots civic education.

While the debate over the necessity of the secret ballot and closed voting booths rages from Senegal to Kenya, the Beninois solved the problem by having every voter use an "*isoloir*" or isolater, a portable voting booth of heavy cardboard. A gift from the government of Canada, the *isoloirs* were lightweight, reusable, and cheap. Beninois are now looking to manufacture the collapsible booths.

Fully 27 parties have registered with the government, so the natural question is one of ideological groupings and possible coalitions. At present, the parties are basically non-ideological with the notable exception of the Communist Party. In discussions with political leaders, their views vary little between social democratic and liberal philosophies. Questions about conservatism as a political philosophy are met with scoffs and guffaws. One politician mockingly asked what there was worth conserving of the past 17 years.

In many ways, the Benin revolution is a classic and in many ways, it breaks new ground. It is classic in that the underlying causes and precipitating factors were economic; classic in that the army's decision to cooperate with the challengers and not turn on the citizenry permitted success; classic in the crucial role of the Roman Catholic church in mediating between dissidents and the beleaguered regime; classic in the immediate post-change proliferation of newspapers and the profusion of political parties; and classic in the choice of a technocrat and not a politician to lead to government during the transition.

But Benin is an African success story filled with new twists as well. The unprecedented degree of citizen participation in choosing the representatives for a national conference may be a model for other nations. The sustained involvement of aver-

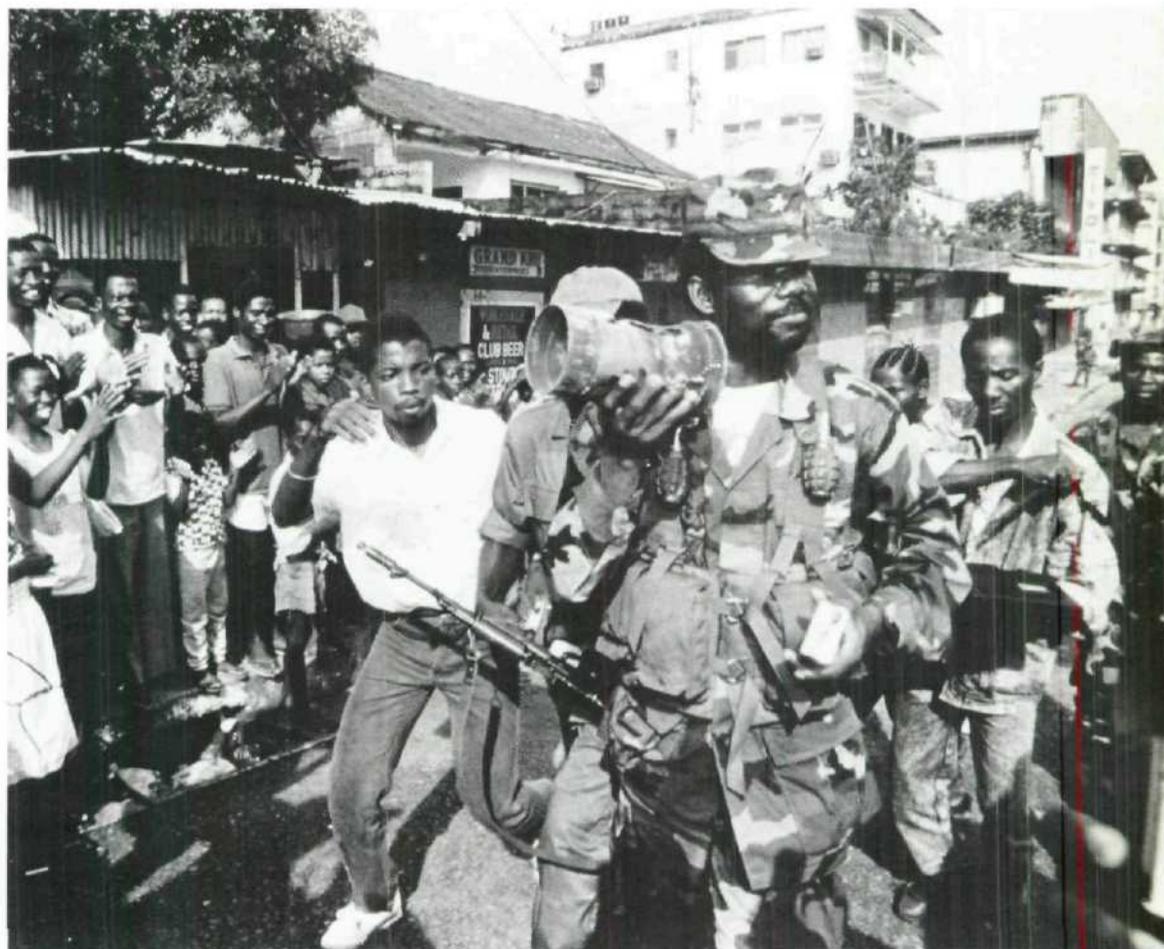
age citizens through the mass media enabled rural and urban, literate and illiterate, rich and poor to have equal access to information and thereby feel invested in the process. The unprecedented accommodation of the old regime allowed for a smooth transition by letting the president retain his dignity and self-respect. Finally, while not unprecedented, it is unusual that ethnic and regional conflict were subordinated to the national interest.

Enormous difficulties remain. The economy is in shambles. The World Bank estimates that it will take seven to 10 years to restructure basic financial structures. Government workers are still owed three months of back pay from 1989. With average per capita GDP of \$305, Benin is one of the poorest countries in Africa. The new administration will have to rapidly address these stubborn problems. Inevitably, after all the constructs of democratic decision-making are in place, intractable economic problems will continue to plague the new leadership. Moreover, newly empowered citizens, filled with a sense of their own efficacy, are impatient, demanding more rapid and visible economic progress and social change.

But perhaps Benin will avoid these pitfalls. With a vibrant intelligentsia, strong ties with the francophone community, mutual respect among the military, the government, and the HCR, and an impressive track record in reform, Benin, with strong international financial support, has a bright future. Most important, the Beninois have faith and pride in their own abilities.

Pointing to Benin's volatile history—10 coups between independence in 1960 and the Kérékou ascendancy in 1972—a skeptic queried whether officials would be able to organize and hold two national elections for the most important offices in the country in time to meet the April 2 deadline. Beninois leaders responded that they had kept to the timetable thus far, and after all, this was Benin.

The harmattan will have ended by April. ○



Patrick Robert/Sygma

THE

POWER

By MARK HUBAND

VACUUM

After the Bamako cease-fire agreement, the interim government led by Dr. Amos Sawyer is nominally running Liberia, but it controls only a few square miles of the capital, protected by the Ecomog military force which installed it. The two other armed factions vying for the leadership, led by Charles Taylor and Prince Johnson, both have their eyes on the prize, promising a protracted power struggle.

Liberia's disintegration into separate enclaves of military power has dragged the country toward interminable political chaos and ethnic conflict for which none of the current leaders is capable of finding a solution. Despite a cease-fire agreement between the forces of Charles Taylor, Prince Johnson, and the late President Samuel Doe, hammered out at the Bamako summit in late November, peace remains tenuous, famine rages unabated, and chances for a political settlement appear slim.

More than a month after the interim government of Dr. Amos Sawyer finally installed itself in Monrovia, the balancing act between political reality, military power, and the ambitions of those involved have ensured that any rapid attempts at either confronting or solving the country's tragic crisis of identity are still a long way off.

For Sawyer, there are three main political considerations determining the course of his government of national unity. Having installed himself in a city which is divided between Prince Johnson's rebels, the late President Samuel Doe's troops, and the peace-keeping force sent by the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), Sawyer has stepped into a military minefield.

Prince Johnson, the rebel leader who agreed in September to pull his forces out of the city center if the Doe forces did the same, has remained consistent in his demands for multi-party democracy and elections overseen by the interim government. But at the same time, he has used his position as the only effective Liberian (as opposed to the foreigners who make up the peace-keeping force) military power in Monrovia to dictate the make-up of the interim government.

Johnson accused the former Doe foreign minister, Bacchus Matthews, and the leading Democratic Party (NDPL) activist and Doe adviser Bai

Bala of having been too close to the dead president and declared that he would not allow them into the country as members of the interim administration. He also banned former Finance Minister Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, based on his mistaken belief that she was also a member of the government.

Johnson is unlikely to accept a role which he perceives as secondary to the interim administration. Since August, when a conference of exiled Liberians met in Banjul, the Gambia, to form the government, Johnson has said that he will accept its authority and will "go back to the



Ernest Harsch

barracks"—unless it takes a course with which he disagrees. His refusal to recognize a role for all politicians, however closely associated to Doe they may have been, is the first sign of strain.

The threat to peace is made greater by Johnson's own view that he is the rightful commander of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), the national army whose disastrous military campaign led to Doe's defeat. Johnson's volatility makes him a hazardous contender for the post, though it is a post difficult to refuse him.

As protector of the interim government, the Ecowas force (Ecomog) has taken on the responsibility of using pure military force to install an administration which has only a limited claim to being truly representative of the current political climate in the country.

Liberia's main financial backer of the last 10 years, the United States, is

known to be wary of Sawyer's government. Sawyer and at least four of the government's leaders are former members of the left-wing Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA). Others have links with organizations which laid plans for the overthrow of Doe during the late 1980s, but whose efforts were largely hijacked by Charles Taylor and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Their involvement in the interim government has been interpreted as an attempt at taking political power, under the protection of the Ecowas force, by sidestepping Taylor. The United States has criticized the interim government's claim that it is representative by reminding its members that it will be truly credible only when Taylor becomes a part of it.

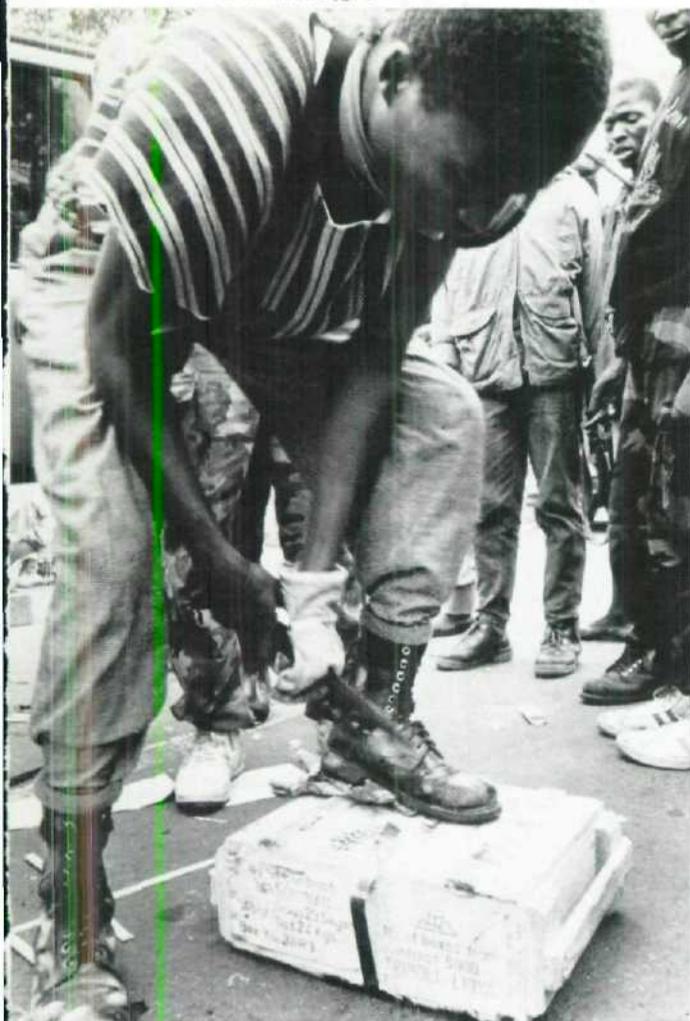
Before the interim government was set up, Taylor was strongly critical of those he described as "political gurus" who refused to join him. During the years before the invasion of December 1989, Taylor traveled throughout West Africa looking for backers, determined that his own invasion would be the only successful one, with himself as leader. This

Having installed himself in a divided city, Amos Sawyer has stepped into a military minefield.

isolated his political adversaries within the anti-Doe camp and set the stage for the current crisis of relations between Taylor and the Liberian political establishment, which had been largely sent into exile by Doe and which is strongly represented in the interim government.

While the Sawyer administration

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Dr. Amos Sawyer, left, and National Patriotic Front of Liberia rebel, above: Solving the country's tragic crisis of identity is still a long way off

continues to hold the view, in public at least, that Taylor is welcome to join it and then fight the election it intends to oversee, there is no expectation that this will happen. Members of the interim government who were previously involved with the NPFL in the mid-1980s, before Taylor took over the organization, are wary of his intentions after experiencing his attempts to outmaneuver potential rivals to ensure that when the invasion happened, he would be able to take the lead. Following the Bamako summit, Taylor, noting that the cease-fire accord did not provide for a political settlement, said that Sawyer's interim administration was "null and void."

For its part, the interim government is increasingly aware that the five countries who sent troops to

Liberia on August 24—Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Gambia—have to bear the domestic political consequences of their decision to become involved in somebody else's war.

Ecowas casualty figures are not clear, but hundreds of foreign troops are thought to have died. With its control of only a few square miles of Monrovia, its limited political representation, and its reliance on foreign troops to protect it, the pressures on the interim government to resolve the conflict quickly are as intense from the internal Liberian viewpoint as they are from the regional perspective.

This pressure is increased by serious divisions within the NPFL, which are threatening to draw surrounding countries further into the civil war. Ethnic links across national boundaries and a potential clash

between rebel forces and Liberian Muslims are pushing the tides of the war throughout West Africa, increasing the determination of regional leaders to destroy Charles Taylor's army before the conflict spreads further.

Evidence that Taylor is coming into serious conflict with his own forces has led to his taking drastic action to secure his own position as NPFL leader. Distrust between Taylor and his Gio and Mano fighters, who make up the bulk of the NPFL force, has led to his making extensive use of non-Liberians within the army, many of them dissidents from neighboring countries. This has led to increased concern among the regional powers that if Taylor ever becomes president, he will allow Liberia to be used as a base for dissidents trained during the war.

To the bulk of his army, Taylor has promised the ultimate prize of leadership. If he were to compromise

too far on this promise, his troops would feel cheated. At the same time, the regional powers would find it very difficult to deal on any long-term basis with Taylor as president after the military campaign which has been waged against him.

On October 21, Taylor installed himself as president of his own interim government at his capital Gbarnga, in central Liberia. The make-up of his government reflects the current state of relations within the NPFL. The rebel movement's leading Mano, Samuel Dokie, was only given the position of internal affairs minister, while the vice presidency went to a Taylor protegee, Enoch Dogolea.

Taylor has become increasingly estranged from the Gio and Mano whose traditional conflict with Doe's Krahn was what provided him with a ready-made, if untrained army prepared to overthrow Doe. Taylor's bodyguard is made up of Ghanaians, Gambians, and soldiers from Burkina Faso. Such is his distrust of the Gio and Mano that even ministers from these groups are searched before being allowed to see him, one senior NPFL member has said.

With the death of Doe on September 9 at the hands of Prince Johnson, the Gio and Mano have lost much of their reason for fighting, particularly with Taylor at their head. The NPFL is from the Americo-Liberian background of those who were overthrown by Samuel Doe, with the support of all indigenous Liberians, in 1980. Taylor has received over \$1 million from Americo-Liberians in the United States to finance his campaign, though many of them withdrew their support as the war dragged on.

As early as March 1990, Taylor is said to have confided to close colleagues that he did not trust the Gio and Mano to support him throughout the campaign. Similar sentiments about the NPFL leader are reported to have been expressed at the same time by at least one leading Gio who is still fighting with Taylor.

Since the beginning of the campaign in December 1989, Taylor's fear of being overthrown by his own

army is believed to have resulted in the execution of leading NPFL members who could have overthrown him. Two separate accounts of the death of the former NPFL commander Elmer Johnson now suggest that Taylor's men may have been responsible. Johnson was ambushed outside the rebel-held town of Buchanan in June. Government forces claimed they had killed Johnson. At least one eyewitness to the killing says it was Taylor's men who attacked Johnson and then allowed the death to be claimed by government troops.

Senior members of the NPFL have also confirmed that Taylor ordered the execution of the Gio politician Jackson F. Doe. Doe, who was no relation of the late president, was recognized as the victor in Liberia's 1985 presidential election, which Samuel Doe rigged in his own favor. Taylor accused Jackson Doe of being in contact with rebel leader Prince Johnson, and had him executed last August. It is believed four of his close associates, also Gios, were executed with him.

Members of the NPFL who remained with Taylor when the organization was turned from a political body led by Liberian exiles into a fighting force led by Taylor in 1989 have also become victims of the internal power struggle. Cooper Teah, who sent untrained Gios to Libya for Taylor in 1987, was executed on September 19, NPFL sources said. Moses Duopu, who was chairman of the NPFL, a position Taylor claimed for himself after the outbreak of war in December 1989, was killed in June while visiting Taylor's camp, NPFL sources now confirm. Other NPFL fighters who trained with Taylor—first in Libya then in Burkina Faso—have also been executed.

This growing distrust has led to Taylor's use of dissidents from other parts of the region and has in turn become of increasing concern to the countries who have sent troops as part of the peace-keeping force. Political exiles from Gambia and Sierra Leone who have joined the NPFL are believed to have already

begun using rebel-held territory in Liberia as a base for planning the destabilization of their countries.

Up to 65 Sierra Leoneans who had been fighting with Taylor were arrested in Guinea in November while attempting to cross the border as refugees. Taylor has threatened to attack Freetown international airport, from which fighter jets from the peace-keeping force have launched attacks on NPFL troops in Liberia. So seriously does Sierra Leone take the threat that it closed all its borders to refugees fleeing Liberia and dispatched extra troops to guard the frontier.

Taylor's main backer, Libya, has also been a haven for dissidents from Sierra Leone. Both political dissidents and members of the Muslim hierarchy in the country have received assistance and asylum in Libya since the military government of President Joseph Momoh took power in 1985 and severed links with Libya.

Taylor is known to have last visited Libya in September in the hope of retaining military support for the NPFL. Since then, the Libyan leader has received two delegations of Liberian Muslims hoping to end his support for the NPFL. Many Liberian Muslims are from the Mandingo group. The Mandingos have a long association with Samuel Doe's Krahs. The NPFL has carried out the same kind of revenge killings against both tribes, forcing many Mandingo to flee to Guinea from where they originally came.

Several hundred Mandingo are now reported to be gathering in Guinea on the Liberian border. Led by two Liberian Muslims, Al Hadji Kroma and his brother Lansana, they are believed by senior Liberian politicians to be planning a reprisal against the NPFL rebels for the killing of Muslims during the conflict. It is not yet clear how this will affect Taylor's relations with Libya. However, a delegation of West African foreign ministers visited Colonel Qaddafi on November 19 and asked him to stop his support for Taylor. According to the Gambian

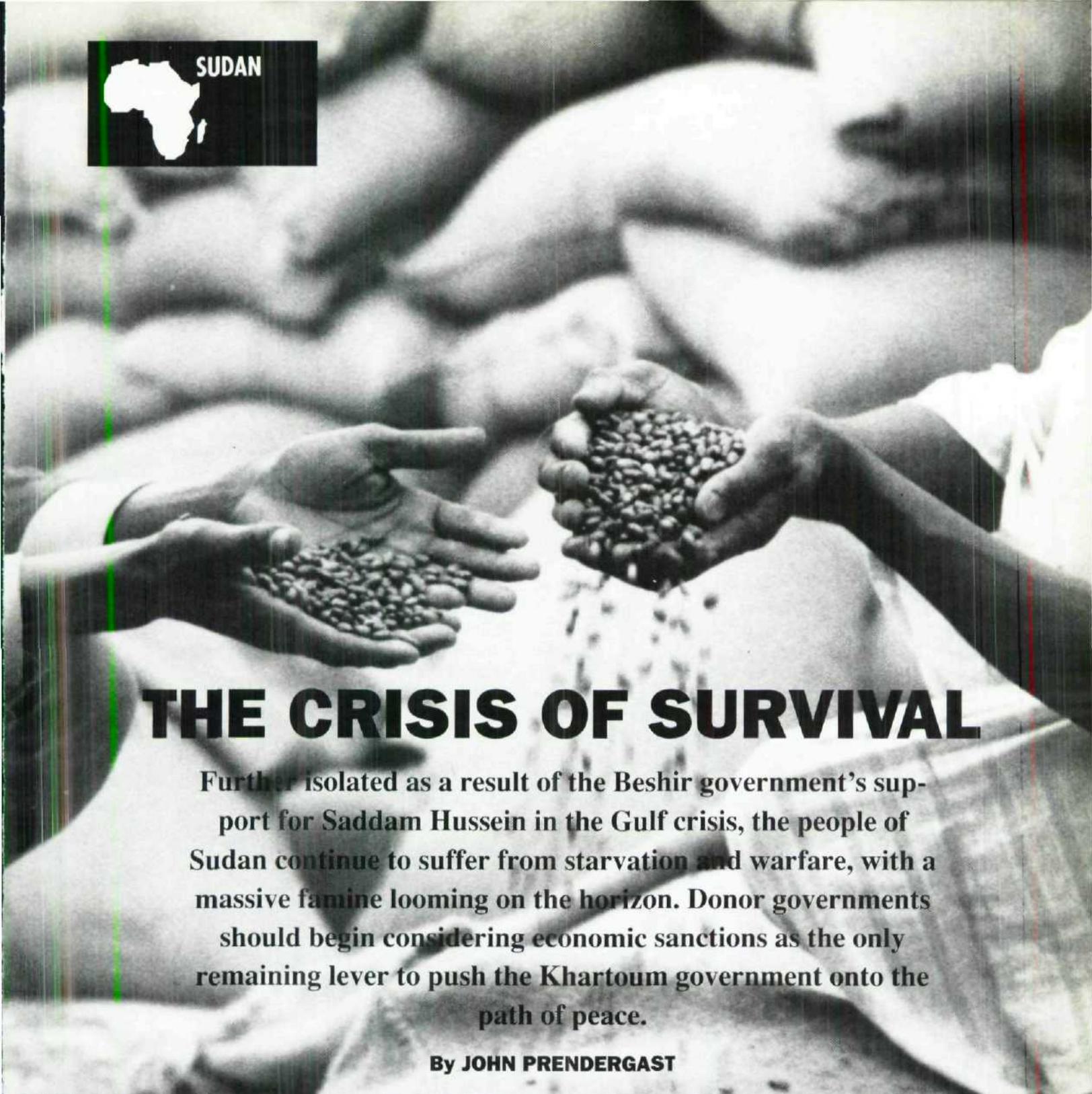
foreign minister, Omar Sey, Qaddafi said he supported peace proposals put forward by Ecomog. This suggests he is reviewing his support for Taylor.

Taylor's moves against possible rivals within the NPFL have also forced the conflict across the borders by leading to large-scale defections from his movement. John 'Prince' Quiwonkpa, whose brother Thomas led a failed coup attempt against Samuel Doe in 1985, is said to have deserted with up to 2,000 Gio fighters across the border into Côte d'Ivoire in October. The Ivorian government has facilitated Taylor's war since last January by providing the NPFL with access to supplies across the border, although at the Bamako summit, both Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso pledged to cease their support to Taylor.

The Ivorians have so far been silent about the influx of rebel deserters, though the fear that the war could spill over borders has always influenced Ivorian policy. The deserters' presence is thought to have been behind efforts by francophone countries in West Africa to seek a peaceful settlement, despite having provided support for the NPFL's military campaign for most of the past year.

Senior diplomats from the five-nation peacekeeping force have declared their intention of making the NPFL an "untenable military force," ostensibly to force Taylor to negotiate. But negotiation does not appear to be an easy option for Taylor, and it is unlikely he would survive as NPFL leader if he failed to take the presidency.

As Liberia's neighbors were drawn into the conflict, West African military leaders became more determined to hit Taylor hard before fighting spread across borders. This threat is ever-present, even as the tenuous cease-fire holds. "The Liberian problem is no longer a Liberian problem. It's a regional problem, and the countries of the region are dealing with it as they would deal with their national problems," Dr. Sawyer has said. ○



THE CRISIS OF SURVIVAL

Further isolated as a result of the Beshir government's support for Saddam Hussein in the Gulf crisis, the people of Sudan continue to suffer from starvation and warfare, with a massive famine looming on the horizon. Donor governments should begin considering economic sanctions as the only remaining lever to push the Khartoum government onto the path of peace.

By **JOHN PRENDERGAST**

In the aftermath of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, few countries have suffered as much as Sudan. Besides the inevitable skyrocketing energy bills and lost remittances from the 20,000 expatriates who used to work in the two

John Prendergast is author of The Struggle for Sudan's Soul.

countries, the Sudanese military junta has compounded its problems by being one of a handful of countries to line up in Saddam Hussein's corner.

Outside of Libya's attempts to ameliorate the repercussions of Gen. Omer Hassan al-Beshir's decision to support Hussein, the international

backlash has been unified and devastating. Beshir has lost any thread of support he had from Egypt, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and other Middle Eastern countries. There are reports that the Saudis have actually thrown their resources to the insurgent Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Further, the

Mariamouella Peroulineci

International Monetary Fund issued a declaration of non-cooperation for Sudan, which joins Liberia as the only two countries on that dishonor roll.

All of this could not have come at a worse time for the people of Sudan. With up to 11 million people at risk of starvation, and the south and west of the country engulfed in war, the crisis of survival has reached epic proportions.

The Famine Early Warning System figures assert that 4 to 5 million people are already "entirely dependent" on food assistance. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's preliminary report has found a 1 million ton grain deficit for 1991. To put this figure in perspective, it is ten times the amount of grain moved in the relief operation in 1989 which ended Sudan's most recent famine that killed over 250,000 people.

A number of different population groups and geographic areas are most at risk of starvation. First, localized famines are occurring throughout southern Sudan. Failed crops and government bombing in SPLA-held territory, and uncertain supply lines to hostage populations in government-held towns, account for most of the suffering.

Second, most of the small-holder farmers and herders in Kordofan, Darfur, and Red Sea provinces are close to exhausting their survival strategies after suffering from two consecutive droughts and plundering Arab militias. Third, an area that traditionally has not experienced acute food shortages is the central region and its main cities. Hunger in these areas has resulted from rapidly escalating grain prices and a breakdown in marketing systems.

Fourth, 30,000 new refugees have recently arrived in the Ethiopian camp of Itang. Malnutrition and death rates are very high, and indicate the situation may be even worse in the areas of southern Sudan where these people came from. Fifth, the internally displaced southerners and westerners in the 27 camps around Khartoum are being forcibly removed and told to go or be

transported southward with no resources.

Individual and community coping mechanisms are fast being exhausted. Livestock prices plummet as grain prices soar, cash crops on small-holder plots weren't planned or failed, firewood and charcoal sources are greatly diminished, and employment opportunities in agricultural labor are limited due to poor yields in the mechanized sorghum areas.

Operation Lifeline Sudan II has delivered nearly 70,000 tons of grain, but has recently slowed to a trickle. In late September, the International Committee for the Red Cross suspended all flights because of difficulty in getting clearance to land in SPLA-held areas. Bor, Torit, Ler, Kongor, Waat, and Ayod have all been bombed by the government, disrupting relief operations and driving populations into the bush. Non-governmental organizations have constantly been harassed, trains and barges have been immobilized, flights have been interfered with, and access to certain areas has been regularly denied.

The U.S. has placed stern conditions on its full involvement in relief operations in Sudan. If these conditions are met, the U.S. has pledged to provide one-third of all assistance that can be channelled through relief agencies. The U.S. also says that it will reject all proposals for new contracts for concessionary wheat sales to Sudan.

The first condition the U.S. has pushed for is that the Sudanese government must declare a food emergency and make a normal request for assistance from the international community, which has not been done yet. In response, Col. Salah el Din Karrar, chairman of the economic affairs committee for the junta, said, "We will never accept any food assistance, even if famine is declared."

War in the South

The ruling Command Council and the SPLA are as far away from the negotiating table as they ever have been. As the government air force

carried out a campaign of aerial intimidation of civilian areas in SPLA-held territory, the SPLA launched an offensive in both Upper Nile and Bahr al Ghazal.

To buttress his traditional Iraqi and Libyan supply lines, Beshir has left no stone unturned in his quest for resources to fuel continued military operations. With a military budget of nearly a billion dollars (according to *Africa Economic Digest*), drastic measures had to be taken. First, nearly all grain reserves were sold to earn foreign exchange for weapons purchases. These reserves would have been critical in preventing famine in 1991. Secondly, the government has rapidly increased the money supply to pay for the war, devastating the value of the Sudanese pound and contributing to hyperinflationary conditions. Thirdly, Beshir has gone to China, Japan, and other countries in search of any kinds of aid for any purpose, in the hopes that new money can replace resources redirected for the war effort.

War in the West

Two particularly ugly conflicts are being played out in the western province of Darfur. In the far west, a group of nearly 2,000 armed Chadian dissidents set up a staging base for incursions into eastern Chad, and in the last week of November launched a final offensive which pushed the government of Hissène Habré out of power. Chadian government forces had been pursuing the rebels at least 90 miles inside Darfur. During the last year, the head of the Chadian national military police was killed, the commander-in-chief of the Chadian army was wounded, and rebel leader Hassan Djamous was captured and killed, leaving Idris Deby as the leader of the opposition forces. The Patriotic Salvation Movement's platform had included a call for a federal, nonreligious state, and Deby announced his intention of holding democratic elections as soon as possible.

An interesting element in this scenario is the future role of Col. Muam-

mar Qaddafi in the region. Libya was heavily involved in Darfur with its Islamic Legion militia, with the full support of Beshir. Humiliated by Chad in the "Toyota war," Qaddafi was looking for another route to get at deposed President Habré. Large convoys of Libyan lorries had been seen crossing from Libya into Darfur. Libya was distributing weapons to numerous Arab Muslim tribes, such as the Zaghawa, Masolit, and Baggara. This ensured easy transit of anti-Habré rebels from Libya through Sudan to Chad. Now that Deby's Libya-supported movement has consolidated its position in Ndjamena, and Libyan ally Beshir is holding on in Khartoum, Qaddafi's dream of regional unification may be closer to reality than ever.

Libya's troubles with Chad stem from the contested, coveted Aouzou Strip, and Qaddafi's now-achieved desire to impose a more favorable regime in Ndjamena. To complicate matters further, some analysts contend the U.S. and Chad had been training a "contra" force of Libyan POWs to fight Qaddafi.

In addition to the Chadian/Libyan entanglement, Darfur has its own two-year-old civil war. The above-mentioned Arab troops armed by the governments of Libya and Sudan have repeatedly attacked the villages of the Fur people, the largest non-Arab group in western Sudan. Government troops are now involved with the militias in destroying Fur villages and detaining leading Fur chiefs. The governor of Darfur has moved his headquarters from El Fasher to Zalingei, in the center of the disputed area, and has arrested Fur leaders under the pretext that they are supporting the SPLA.

The situation began heating up after the famine in 1984-85, when economically devastated Arab groups began migrating southward into Fur areas in search of grazing patches and land for farming. The ensuing land disputes were often bloody, but heavily favored the Arabs because many possessed automatic weapons. The *Al Ayyam* newspaper estimated that in Darfur, there was

one modern weapon for every 16 men, and that a Kalashnikov rifle cost the same as a calf. Africa Watch has pointed out that "the manner of the raiding [by the Murahaliin militias] indicates that the intention was not merely looting and brigandage, but making villages uninhabitable and driving the farmers from their land."

Three NIF politicians in Darfur defected from their party in January 1989, claiming that there was a conspiracy between the Libyan and Sudanese governments to depopulate Fur areas in order to open the areas up for Arab settlement. Qaddafi has constantly talked about opening up the Sahara Desert for this purpose. Africa Watch concluded that the problem in Darfur "is not a tribal one: The Fur may defend their land as a tribe, but the Arabs attack as a militia force. The attacks are intended to render the Fur tribe politically powerless, so that Arabs with allegiances to Libya and the current Islamic fundamentalist government in Sudan come to dominate the region."

The London-based newsletter *Africa Confidential* has reported that a Fur-based political movement has begun to arise which includes an armed militia. Beside the Fur, the group includes Messalit and Reizegat Arabs. The movement is apparently split between those who seek autonomy and an alliance with the SPLA, and those who want an alliance, or even integration, with Chad.

Policy Debates

The U.S. has outlined stiff conditions upon which its full commitment to any relief operation is contingent. The problem with this approach is that every week that large donations of food are delayed, and more people come closer to the brink of starvation. Africa Watch has appealed for a "twin-track" approach, which would deliver large amounts of grain even if a famine is not declared by the government, while continuing to negotiate with the government over issues such as access, NGO involvement,

and a myriad of logistical items. In terms of SPLA areas, Bishop Paride Taban of the New Sudan Council of Churches and others are advocating a relief and rehabilitation operation for southern Sudan independent of Operation Lifeline II, and hence government approval.

On the issue of overall U.S. policy toward the Beshir regime, Roger Winter, director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, testified in front of the House of Representatives Africa subcommittee that economic sanctions against the Sudan government are one option that must be considered to help isolate Beshir from external support for his war efforts. The Bush administration replied that Sudan has no economy to embargo. The State Department is overlooking two important conduits for resources, though.

First, a company in Bahrain has contracted to buy all of Sudan's export crops, most notably cotton, for the next ten years. Second, the Sudanese economy relies on two Islamic banks almost exclusively for its foreign exchange, the Faisal and Bakara Islamic banks. These two institutions were given a monopoly by Sudan's minister of finance to market all of Sudan's produce. Consequently, they were primarily responsible for the export of the all-important grain reserve in 1990, which the FAO estimates was 300,000 tons, and the *Indian Ocean Newsletter* believes was twice that amount. Both Faisal and Bakara are Saudi-based banks.

As two of the primary beneficiaries of the U.S. troop build-up in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain could help make Winter's call for multilateral sanctions an important lever in encouraging change in the Sudanese regime's position toward the wars and famines raging throughout the country. Many NGOs believe that it is already too late to avoid thousands of deaths, but it may not be too late for the hundreds of thousands that could survive if strong and coordinated steps are taken immediately by donors seeking to avoid a repeat of previous famine relief fiascos. ○

Soaring oil prices stemming from the Persian Gulf crisis have dealt a blow to southern Africa's precarious economies, as limited resources earmarked for other areas have had to be diverted to pay inflated fuel bills. While only Angola stands to benefit from rising oil costs, other countries, particularly war-torn Mozambique, will need infusions of economic aid from donors if their hard-pressed budgets are to survive another setback.

Southern Africa may appear far distant from the turmoil of the Persian Gulf crisis, but certainly its economic effects have hit the region hard. Drastic hikes in the price of fuel have ensured that the region's man in the street has quickly felt the pinch of how a far-away news event can affect him.

Most southern African countries must import all their petroleum requirements, and the increased international oil prices have badly exacerbated Zambia and Zimbabwe's economic troubles. The most tragic consequences are in Mozambique,

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where the higher cost of fuel means that less emergency aid can be delivered to the war-torn country's hungry thousands.

Angola's rich supplies of oil make it the only country in the region to benefit from the higher prices for the precious black commodity, but that financial bonus does not appear to be helping the country move significantly closer to a peace settlement.

Southern Africa first saw how the Gulf crisis would directly affect the region when a shipment of oil destined for five countries was impounded in Yemen. The order of 200,000 tons of Kuwaiti oil had been placed by Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and the Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius, Seychelles, and the Comoros.

The oil was purchased from the Kuwaiti Oil Company and was sent to Yemen to be refined before Iraq

invaded Kuwait on August 2. But the United Nations trade embargo against Iraq and occupied Kuwait extended to that Kuwaiti oil in Yemen and the UN ruled the oil could not be delivered.

The southern African countries appealed the decision, and in late November, the UN agreed that as the oil had been ordered and partially paid for before the invasion, it could be delivered. The UN committee stipulated that final payment must be paid to the Kuwaiti Oil Company's London office. The cost of the oil is set at pre-invasion prices, so the southern African countries will save on sky-rocketing oil costs.

Unfortunately, it is obvious that this one oil delivery will not solve the fuel shortages and economic problems throughout southern Africa caused by the Gulf situation. The dis-

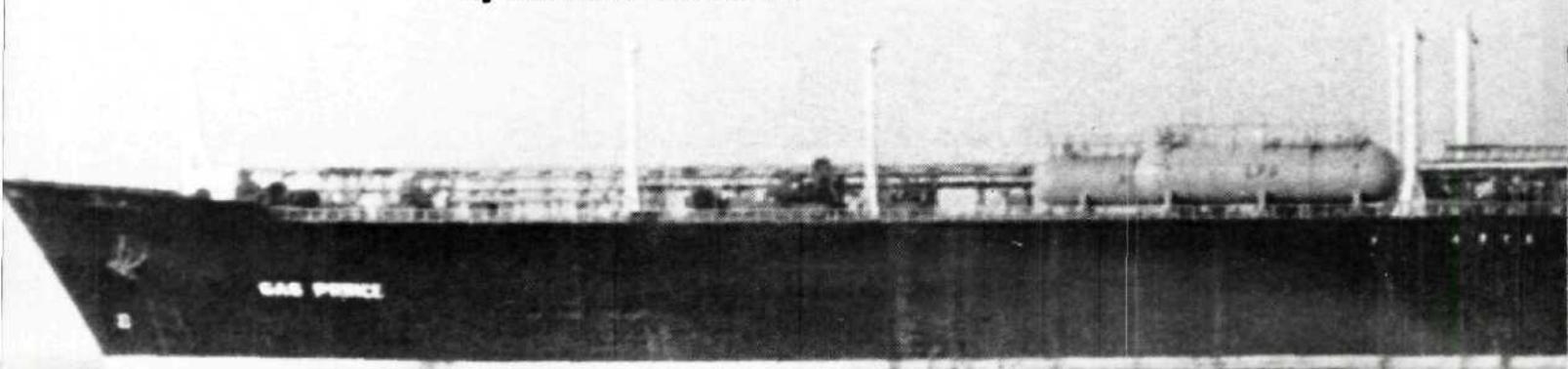
U.S. Navy/Sygnia



ECONOMIES

The Ripple

By **ANDREW MELDRUM**



astrous effect of drastically higher oil prices on Zambia's continuing economic problems and therefore its political problems was made painfully clear in the new 1991 budget.

"Sharp increases in oil prices have diverted resources away from other needy areas to meet the soaring imports bill," Finance Minister Gibson Chigaga told the Zambian Parliament when presenting the budget in late November. Zambia's oil bill went up from \$100 million in 1989 to \$180 million in 1990, and the cost is still soaring. A series of hikes have already sent the consumer price of petrol up nearly 400 percent.

The unexpected fuel price rises have made a precarious economic balancing act look nearly impossible. Zambia's miserable economic performance is at the root of the popular demand for the end of 17 years of one-party rule by President Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP). Sadly, Zambia's dwindling copper deposits and burgeoning debt mean that there is no easy answer to the country's economic crisis. The \$7.2 billion foreign debt gives Zambia's 7.5 million people claim to one of the world's highest debt per capita ratios.

Despite his political troubles, including food riots in which at least 26 people were killed in June, Kaunda has stuck to the economic restructuring program designed by the International Monetary Fund

(IMF). Finance Minister Chigaga stated that Zambia will aim for a 3 percent economic growth rate in 1991, up from the 2 percent decline registered in 1990. Chigaga also hopes to reduce the inflation rate from 80 to 40 percent. He said government income would be increased by new taxes.

Chigaga admitted that large-scale external help is needed to resolve Zambia's money troubles. "Zambia will need substantial foreign assistance on the most concessional terms possible, to support the adjustment program," said Chigaga to Parliament.

Clearly, Zambia's economic hardships are set to continue, which means that Kaunda will have difficulty in winning the elections set for October 1991, in which he will face opposition from other parties for the first time in 17 years. Yet, by a different token, the budget did not appear tough enough, as diplomats in Lusaka said it would not win the confidence of potential donors.

Ever the political showman, Kaunda offered a bit of light relief for Zambia's dire economic and political outlook by holding a highly publicized prayer breakfast for African leaders on November 7.

The heads bowed in prayer included Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha, and

leader of South Africa's Transkei homeland, Gen. Bantu Holomisa. Kaunda had hoped for more heads of state, but leaders like Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and South African President F.W. de Klerk declined.

The breakfast featured a star turn by Pik Botha, who asked all present to stand and hold hands. He then dramatically stated, "Apartheid is over," as if his declaration could wipe away the continuing discrimination and violence in South Africa. Botha's counterpart in the African National Congress, Director of Foreign Affairs Thabo Mbeki, appealed at the breakfast for improved communication between the two sides, but it was clear that the pleasantries spoken at the breakfast table did not herald any breakthrough in the South African situation.

With the prayer breakfast, the first such event held in Africa, Kaunda once again managed to bask in the journalistic limelight and promote his image as a leading African statesman. In the past, Kaunda has been able to put forward his reputation as a key player in regional politics to deflect criticism of the country's slipshod economic management. But as Zambia's economic crisis has deepened, the prayer breakfast could bring only the most temporary relief.

In comparison, Zimbabwe's economy is relatively healthy, but the Gulf crisis has forced a 45 percent consumer price hike for fuels, with bus fares raised by 22 percent. More

Effect



hikes were expected by the beginning of 1991, which will further fuel the country's inflation rate, already estimated to be more than 20 percent annually.

Before the Gulf crisis, Zimbabwe's oil supply had remained steady, with the country getting 643,000 tons of petroleum through its pipeline from Beira, Mozambique, in the first nine months of 1990, compared to the 593,000 tons received in the same period for 1989. The supplies may be adequate, but the rising costs of oil products are expected to give a hard knock to Zimbabwe's new trade liberalization program.

It is war-torn Mozambique, however, where the Gulf crisis has had the most devastating effect. With more than 2 million displaced people in the country and millions more dependent on food aid, the increased fuel price means that the cost of delivering emergency food aid has become unbearably high. As Renamo attacks have made road transportation impossible, the Mozambican government must fly food assistance to virtually all corners of the country. The oil price hikes mean that it now costs \$1,000 to airlift a ton of maize to the famine-stricken areas of central Zambezia province, up from \$580 per ton last year, according to UN sources. The maize itself costs \$140 per ton.

Dependent on foreign assistance, Mozambique cannot afford this fuel bill increase and the end result is that less food will be provided to the ever-growing numbers of hungry people. Officials gloomily warn of widespread famine and starvation in the first few months of 1991.

Mozambique currently receives the bulk of its petroleum products from the Soviet Union at very favorable rates, but that agreement will end in May 1991. Struggling with its own array of economic crises, the Gorbachev government may not be able to offer another special oil deal. Mozambique may have to begin purchasing oil on the open market and conservative estimates are that its fuel bill will double from \$75 million to \$150 million.

The only glimmer of hope for the millions of hungry and suffering Mozambicans is progress toward hammering out a ceasefire between President Joaquim Chissano's government and the right-wing Renamo rebels. Five rounds of peace talks have been held in Rome, but progress has been grindingly slow.

Chissano skillfully pushed the peace process along by reinvigorating the country's democratic process and getting a new constitution written, which came into effect on November 30, ending the one-party rule of his Frelimo party and establishing a free market economy. These were the two major demands put forward by Renamo, leaving the rebel movement only one thing to complain about—the presence of some 7,500 well-armed, well-fed Zimbabwean troops supporting Chissano's rag-tag army.

That issue was settled in the Rome talks at the start of December when both sides agreed that the Zimbabwean forces would be withdrawn to the two transport corridors that link landlocked Zimbabwe to Mozambique's Indian Ocean ports. An eight-nation team, including U.S. and Soviet representatives, will monitor a ceasefire along the two transport corridors, the 180-mile route to Beira port and the 320-mile railway stretch along the Limpopo River to Maputo.

Mozambique edged even closer to a ceasefire when both government and rebels agreed in Rome to respect the neutrality of the Red Cross to carry emergency assistance to the country's brutalized civilian population. Such progress brings Mozambique to the brink of a negotiated settlement. Even then, massive foreign assistance will be needed to repair infrastructure, restore the rural areas to normalcy, and of course, pay the country's soaring oil bill.

Mozambique's Portuguese-speaking African cousin, Angola, is also war-torn and threatened by large-scale famine, but Angola is cushioned by the proceeds of its current production of 450,000 barrels per day of high-quality oil. The rising oil

prices are good news for the Angolan government, which has foreign debts of nearly \$7 billion. But even the windfall of significantly higher oil prices will not be enough to solve Angola's economic problems, as currently a whopping 70 percent of the government's revenue goes to the war effort.

The rounds of peace talks in Lisbon between President José Eduardo dos Santos' MPLA government and Jonas Savimbi's Unita rebels came tantalizingly close to achieving a peace, but did not produce the concrete agreements needed to bring about a ceasefire. However, in mid-December, after a series of meetings in Washington between the Soviets, Americans, Savimbi, and the Angolan government, a tentative agreement was reached to set a date for free elections and the signing of a ceasefire accord. Both the U.S. and Soviet Union will halt military assistance to their respective allies once the ceasefire is signed.

Following the lead of the Mozambican government in rewriting its constitution to pave the way for a peaceful settlement, President dos Santos has led Angola's creaking MPLA party to reform itself. The MPLA leadership has agreed to rewrite its constitution to allow for multi-party politics and a free enterprise economic system. Those changes, expected to be ratified by the MPLA Congress in mid-December, were necessary preconditions for a settlement with Savimbi's rebels, and it appears they helped bring about the December agreement. If all goes well, the bitter war, which has eaten up Angola's oil fortune, may soon be over, allowing the government to spend its oil revenues on repairing the country's shredded infrastructure and rehabilitating the traumatized population.

Southern Africa has more than enough problems of its own—wars, famines, and collapsed economies—but it is painfully clear that the continuation of the Gulf-inflated oil bills will only exacerbate those problems, with potentially tragic results. ○

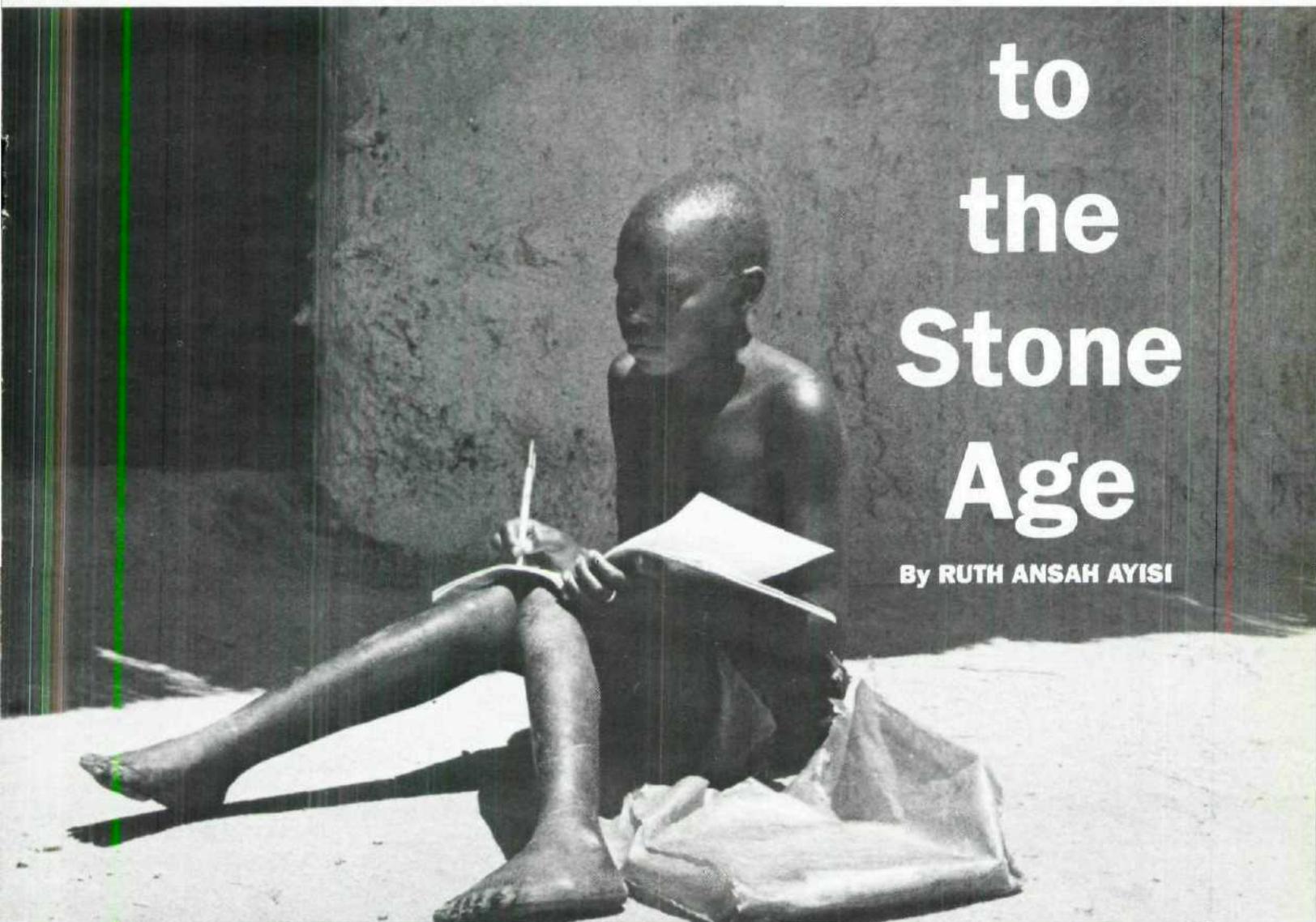


MOZAMBIQUE

Ruth Ayisi

Back to the Stone Age

By RUTH ANSAH AYISI



Zambezia province used to be the breadbasket of Mozambique, supplying half the country's export earnings. Now, after years of civil war and Renamo destruction, it is a wasteland, refuge for tens of thousands of homeless, starving people. As a settlement of the war appears closer than before, Western nations must resist donor fatigue, and increase emergency relief until the Mozambican people can get back on their feet.

Once a thriving commercial center in the agricultural heartland of Mozambique's fertile Zambezia province, M'Bauane has been

reduced to a burned-out shell of a town. The health center has no medicines to give the emaciated patients milling around its doorstep, and since April, a swelling population of at least 3,000 people gathered here have been completely dependent on

emergency food relief for their survival.

M'Bauane is typical of many rural areas in Zambezia affected by Mozambique's 15-year-old war. The food supplies are too little, they arrive too late, and signs of severe

malnutrition are evident among both children and adults. While no exact records are kept, people are dying of starvation and preventable illnesses. In October, for example, measles killed at least 60 children already weakened by hunger.

Some of the stronger children, however, attend a new primary school built by parents and made completely out of local material—mud and reeds. "It took us two months," said Elías Calíma, a teacher. "But we need more classrooms, books, and more teachers." Another 200 children are waiting for a place at the school, and some 50 of the 220 pupils do not have books or pencils.

All the pupils were raggedly dressed—many just in tree-bark—went barefoot, and showed signs of malnutrition. But what is possibly more disturbing is the suffering that most of the children endured.

Like the other children, Lucas João, 13, lived in the area when it was under rebel control for two years. "I did not go to school at that time," he said quietly. "I just stayed inside my home all the time. The bandits killed my father, so I just stayed with my mother in the house." His two sisters and brother died of illnesses during that time. Now João hopes for a better future. "I would like to leave the countryside when I grow up," he said. "I would like to be a driver in the city."

The adults too have grown weary of relentless misery. "Since we arrived here, we have suffered so much from hunger and exposure," said 20-year-old Bonifácio Chale, who, like everyone else here, was dressed only in a piece of bark wrapped around his waist. "I would prefer to go somewhere else, but it is not possible. So we are here always suffering from hunger, exposure, and lots of deaths. I have my wife here, but other members of my family have died of illnesses since they arrived, including my nephews and my uncle. I would like to return home and farm again. Here, we have

no tools or land to cultivate. Life here is twisted with the anger that lives in this land."

Before April 1990, the people of M'Bauane were living under the control of the rebels of the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (Renamo) who have been battling against President Joaquim Chissano's Frelimo government. But like many regions in this northern province of Zambezia, the government army, with the help of a traditional militia—known as Naprama—liberated M'Bauane this year.

Ironically, the military successes have worsened the already critical emergency situation in the country by bringing huge numbers of people under government control for the first time in several years. Their plight offers just a taste of what is in store if the government and the rebels implement an effective cease-fire throughout this vast, yet sparsely populated southeastern African country.

The war has pushed 4 million people from their homes inside Mozambique and 1 million more into neighboring countries, and a peace deal will unleash a massive return of people to their land of origin. International aid requirements will be huge, since the returnees will need everything—from seeds and tools to cooking utensils and medicines. Most of all, though, they will need food until they can clear the land and harvest their first crops.

"Peace is something that everybody is devoutly hoping for. But, for the emergency program, peace could in fact be a disaster," said Mark Latham, the director of operations for the World Food Programme in Maputo, the capital.

Once the immediate emergency needs are met, then the bigger task of reconstruction must begin. The rebels have destroyed hundreds of schools and health centers set up by the government after independence from Portugal in 1975. Hundreds of teachers and nurses have been kidnapped. The social fabric of entire regions has been ripped apart.

"It has been referred to me as hav-

ing gone back to the Stone Age," said Latham. "These people have no clothing, they have no tools, they have no implements, utensils. They can construct a roof over their head using simple local materials, but they have nothing else. They are totally dependent on outside help to survive. Some of them have been living in such wretched conditions that they die before outside help can get to them."

The war has indirectly caused the deaths of 900,000, according to the UN Economic Commission for Africa. It is estimated that 350 of every 1,000 children die before reaching the age of five, giving Mozambique one of the highest child mortality rates in the world. While the level of malnutrition varies dramatically throughout the country, in some areas it affects as many as 40 percent of the children.

Maria Ernesta walked for three hours carrying her five-year-old boy, João, to the health center in the district capital of Ile, in Zambezia province. "I noticed he wasn't playing with his friends anymore," said the 20-year-old mother, sitting beside her child on the hospital spring-bed with no mattress.

But there was no milk at the hospital to give João. He was deteriorating daily. João's spindly legs could no longer support his swollen belly that was covered in sores and looked like it was about to explode. João just sat staring into space, occasionally whimpering for his mother to scratch his back.

"He's my only child, and his father is a soldier. I haven't seen him for a long time," said Ernesta. "I just want food to arrive so my boy will get better."

João's chances of survival seem slim. The new kits of emergency supplies of milk, oil, and sugar had not arrived at the hospital, and the nurse had no idea when to expect them. "It makes our job difficult," said Augusto Aniva. "We just have to watch on. We feel helpless."

There are many reasons why the apparently simple life-saving help does not arrive. First, the \$136 mil-

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lion United Nations emergency appeal last April underestimated the amount of aid needed in Zambezia by about half. Ironically, Zambezia, twice the size of California and the country's most populous province, was once known as a breadbasket, supplying over 50 percent of the country's export earnings.

The UN appeal for Zambezia province was for only about 429,000 people, whereas more than double that figure in the province are now dependent on emergency food aid, largely as a result of the new tide of military victories by the government army and Naprama militia. The Naprama soldiers, using only spears against the standard Renamo weapon, the AK-47 assault rifle, have brought into accommodation centers hundreds of thousands of people uncounted in the appeal.

Naprama's leader, 28-year-old Manuel Antonio, said his army receives spiritual protection against Renamo's bullets from God. Antonio explained that he died of measles two years ago and had risen from the dead to liberate the country from war.

"The rebels run away when they see us coming," said a Naprama soldier, carrying a double-headed spear, barefoot, and dressed only in shorts. "They are frightened of us."

Much of what was pledged by international donors has been arriving behind schedule. Often the delays are due to the weak transport system, lack of trucks, and government red tape. There have also been increasing reports of theft of food at the port of Quelimane, the provincial capital, and by soldiers escorting convoys. In Pebane, home for 200,000 displaced people—the largest concentration in the country—poor organization by the European Economic Community has caused at times severe delays in deliveries of the 2,000 tons of maize per month which the EEC has funded. In August, for example, Pebane received 900 tons of maize and in September only 250 tons.

The Gulf crisis, too, is having a harmful impact, escalating the cost

of the relief operation, said Peter Simkin, the UN coordinator for the emergency. For example, the cost of air-lifting food from the ports into the districts has shot up to about \$1,000 per ton, not counting the expense of bringing it from Europe and the United States to Mozambique. "So maize which is only worth about \$120 per ton is costing about \$1,400 to move—that is plainly very bad economics," Simkin said. "We are worried about the effect increases in oil prices will have on this operation."

Today, 120,000 to 200,000 people, mostly in Zambezia and neighboring Sofala province, rely on air-lifts for their food supplies because the war has made road transport impossible

Mozambique is already in its fourth year of emergency—the usual appeal is two years—and analysts believe that "donor fatigue" has set in.

to many of the districts. But with the military gains and the peace process, more roads have opened up.

In late November, for example, thousands of lives were saved when a convoy of 18 trucks carrying 54 tons of food aid got past several damaged bridges to the Zambezan town of Murrua. But it was a daring venture. A staff member from the non-governmental organization, World Vision, drove a motorcycle ahead to see whether the trucks could get through. He returned safely, reporting that three out of the six bridges needed to be repaired. The trucks drove behind a bulldozer

and tractor which cleared the way.

Yet fuel for road transport is also in short supply, and when peace comes people will disperse, making it even more difficult to feed them than before, when hundreds of thousands were concentrated in accommodation centers.

There are no plans for another emergency appeal. Mozambique is already in its fourth year of emergency, and analysts believe that "donor fatigue" has set in. Usually an emergency appeal lasts only for two years, and now with the needs of Eastern Europe, the Gulf crisis, and famines in other parts of Africa, such as Sudan, emerging, the international community is unlikely to see Mozambique as a priority, however great the country's needs.

Instead, the Mozambican government, in coordination with the United Nations and the World Bank, planned to issue an overall development appeal in December in Paris, which would include a statement of emergency needs.

The emergency relief needed to support the estimated 5 million people coming out of the bush, from refugee camps in neighboring countries and accommodation centers, is likely to dramatically exceed any previous amount. Mozambique is one of the poorest nations in world, and the war has eaten up about 35-45 percent of government expenditure in recent years.

The government, NGOs, and the UN agencies in Mozambique hope that the international community will get caught up in the euphoria of a peace settlement and will be more willing to support Mozambique when they see that there is a chance for the country to develop a self-sustaining agricultural economy.

"I sound optimistic, because I don't think the world will like to see people just piling up and dying," said Emmanuel Owusu, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees representative. "It is a moral obligation for the world to come to the aid of Mozambique and to help them to solve this problem which has gotten out of hand." ○



Enticing INVESTMENT

By COLLEEN LOWE MORNA

Foreign investment is no longer a dirty word in Africa. On the contrary, it has become one of the most sought after—and scarce—commodities on the continent.

"It is as though everyone is dressing up for a beauty contest," says Ariston Chambati, executive director of TA Holdings, the largest locally owned company in Zimbabwe.

But, notes the Zimbabwean businessman, who recently toured the U.S. with a group of entrepreneurs from the continent under the auspices of the African Development Bank in an effort to drum up investment, the response is still lukewarm. "There is a lot of curiosity," he said, "but many foreign businessmen remain cautious. They are still not sure that their investments are safe in Africa, and that they will get the return they are looking for."

This, he says, is disappointing, given the massive effort that African governments are making to woo investors, previously regarded with considerable suspicion for fear that they would wield too much power over fragile governments and milk poor countries through the remittance of profits.

But the debt crisis has served to highlight the advantages of direct foreign investment as opposed to commercial or even concessional borrowing. For countries struggling to increase their manufactured exports in order to narrow trade gaps and reduce their dependence on aid, foreign companies also poten-

tially open doors to much needed technology markets and expertise.

Global developments have added a sense of urgency. Events in Eastern Europe, coupled with the planned emergence of a European Common Market in 1992, have jerked many African governments into realizing that unless they become competitive, the continent will be doomed to stay behind forever.

The most dramatic turnarounds have occurred in former Marxist and socialist countries like Mozambique, Angola, and Tanzania, where governments have introduced new investment codes and centers, and have launched aggressive overseas campaigns.

Other staunchly nationalistic countries like Zimbabwe, which has experienced a net outflow of foreign investment since the country became independent in 1980, have also changed their tune. As part of a homegrown structural adjustment program, Zimbabwe has introduced a new investment code and center. The Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) has hosted two major conferences in London and Paris to show off the country's wares.

Conservative African countries, which have long welcomed foreign investment, are also sprucing up their act. Togo, Cameroon, and Kenya, for example, are setting up export processing zones. Malawi is drafting a new investment code, and

has sent a mission to the U.S. in search of business.

Newly independent Namibia has lost little time in jumping on the bandwagon. Despite the fact that companies like De Beers and Rossing (uranium) flagrantly violated UN bans on the exploitation of the coun-



Major new and proposed investments include the rehabilitation of Maputo's world-famous Polana Hotel by the South African-owned Karos Hotel Group

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try's natural resources, the new government has welcomed these companies and is holding a major investment conference early in the new year to woo more.

The last year has also witnessed an unprecedented number of continent-wide initiatives by multilateral agencies in support of Africa's efforts. The African Development Bank and *International Herald Tribune* earlier this year hosted a conference on foreign investment in Africa in London. Late last year, the International Finance Corporation's Financial Advisory Service (FIAS) organized a symposium on foreign investment in Africa to coincide with the IMF and World Bank annual conference.

During the conference, four new African countries—Swaziland, Ango-

la, Zimbabwe, and Botswana—signed up with the bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the U.S. government's Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) launched a \$30 million "Africa Growth Fund" aimed at providing capital for corporations

willing to invest in the continent.

Soon afterward, MIGA sponsored an investment conference in Ghana; the U.S. Agency for International Development paid for delegations from Malawi, Swaziland, and Mauritius to address American businessmen in Washington and the ADB set

After decades of reticence, African governments are putting a lot of effort into wooing foreign investors, but businesses are playing hard to get, put off mainly by uncertainty over repatriation of profits. African governments have to learn how to create a favorable investment climate, as well as specifically target the enterprises they want to attract.



up an African Businessmen's Roundtable (of which Chambati is a member) to visit the U.S. in April.

A few African countries, notably Botswana, Gabon, Mauritius, Swaziland, Cameroon, and Nigeria (largely because of its oil) have started to experience inflows of foreign investment, ranging in quantity from about \$24 million per annum in Botswana, to about \$300 million per annum in Nigeria.

In Zimbabwe, the new Investment Center reports that it has received pledges of \$40 million in new direct foreign investment—about two-fifths of total inflows for the entire first ten years of independence. But this is still small, compared to the vast potential of the country.

In other countries, the picture is dismal. In Ghana—which has one of the oldest structural adjustment programs in Africa—the London *Financial Times* reports that the country has experienced a net direct flow of foreign investment of \$100 million since 1980, most of it negotiated before the start of the IMF and World Bank-sponsored structural adjustment program. Neighboring Togo—one of the most free market-minded countries in Africa, has been getting a pitiful \$10 million in new foreign investment annually.

French private investment in Africa, which used to average \$1 billion a year in 1981-1983, dropped to \$53 million in 1985, and then to a net outflow of \$824 million in 1988, according to a February 1990 report issued by the French Employers Council.

Overall, the ADB/*International Herald Tribune* conference heard, the net inflow of foreign investment to Africa is running at only \$200 million to \$300 million annually. Yet, for Africa's fragile recovery to be sustained, the IFC estimates that this will need to increase tenfold, to \$3 billion a year.

The problem, according to one prominent foreign businessman, "is that in Africa you still find a confusing combination of inducements to investment on the one hand, and constraints on investment on the other."

The incentives offered in new investment codes do not amount to much.

On the economic side, structural adjustment programs have undoubtedly paved the way for foreign investors by making exports more competitive via devaluation, increasing access to foreign exchange for vital inputs, removing price controls, and reducing government's involvement in the productive sector through privatization programs.

But some of the effects are contradictory. In Ghana, for example, the IMF-imposed restrictions on money supply, while helping to hold down inflation, are causing a severe credit squeeze.

The banking sector is in a mess; as IFC president Sir William Ryrie conceded at the IFC meeting in Washington, "financial sector reform has been a late starter in the adjustment process." For many African countries, domestic markets are small, buying power is weak, and regional cooperation has not yet reached a level where it can offer big companies large enough markets to make business worthwhile.

Often, despite sounding good on paper, the incentives offered to businessmen in new investment codes do not amount to much. In most cases, weak revenue bases demand that African governments continue to tax companies heavily—usually at the rate of 45 to 50 percent, except in a few cases, like Lesotho (where company tax is only 15 percent) and Botswana and Mauritius (35 percent).

A recent survey of U.S. businessmen carried out by the U.S.-based Center for Strategic and International Studies showed that one of the fac-

tors they rated most highly in determining whether or not to invest in Africa is whether they can repatriate profits without restrictions.

A few African countries, like Malawi and Lesotho, guarantee full remittance of dividends, though it might take some time for the money to pass through the pipeline. Some countries, like Zimbabwe, only guarantee full remittance if the dividends accrue from recent investment, or if the enterprises are wholly export-oriented.

The unfavorable perception of climate also continues to dog many countries. A study carried out by the World Bank in Zimbabwe, for example, concludes that even before the new investment code came out, the country provided foreign investors with ample incentives to make a good profit. The main inhibition to foreign investment was "the actual or perceived risks of doing business in Zimbabwe, especially for foreign firms," the report says.

According to Rory Beattie, managing director of Olivine Industries, a joint venture between Heinz (USA) and the Zimbabwean government, and one of the few post-1980 investors here, the company has been "pleased with our Zimbabwe investment in every respect." On the other hand, he noted, the company made a conscious decision to invest in Zimbabwe, after shopping around in many African countries. Few companies would bother to do that, especially with the many options open to investors these days, he said.

One of the main lessons to be learned from the Far East according to Ryrie, is that welcoming tones have to come not just from government officials but also in the newspapers, airport procedures, and all that goes into making up an "investment climate."

Recent studies also suggest that Africa would benefit from being more targeted in its approach to foreign investment. Since the U.S. placed restrictions on textile imports from Far East countries, for example, some of the more enterprising African countries, which have prefer-

ential access to the U.S. market, are advertising themselves as an ideal location for Far East textile concerns.

Recently, for example, Hong Kong Company Cha Chi Ming bought a textile firm in Togo, and Lesotho has garnered pledges of \$40 million in new investment mostly from Tai-

wanese firms. Ghana and Malawi, among others, have sent delegations to the Far East in search of business partners.

In southern Africa, a major new development is the courtship of South African businessmen by countries in the region, following improvements in the political climate

there. Growing interest by South African businessmen is evident in Mozambique (*see sidebar*), Angola, and to a lesser extent Zimbabwe. "It may sound ironic," says a western diplomat in Luanda, "but the Angolans trust the South Africans more than they trust us. They are a known quantity here." ○

OLD ENEMIES, NEW INVESTORS

Ask any Mozambican official today what is wrong with foreign investment, and you are likely to get a blank look. "The more of it we can get, the better," says Dr. Augusto Sumbarane, director of Mozambique's foreign investment promotion center, known by its Portuguese acronym, GPIE.

According to Sumbarane, between 1985 and September 1990, the foreign investment office has approved 82 projects worth \$283 million. The largest chunk, 44.4 percent, are in agriculture, followed by hotels and tourism (37.2 percent); petroleum and gas (7.1 percent); and transport and communications (4.6 percent).

Countrywise, Britain, with \$18.5 million worth of prospective projects, is the largest investor (most of these are accounted for by Lonrho, which has sizable agricultural and mining interests in Mozambique). Next in line are the U.S., Holland, South Africa, Portugal, and Spain in that order.

Of particular significance has been the GPIE's efforts to solicit investment from South Africa. With 16 approved projects, valued at \$7.9 million, South African investors are only fourth in rank.

But since the signing of the Nkomati peace pact between Pretoria and Maputo in 1984, Mozambique has been making a concerted effort to woo South African business back to the war-torn country. Recent political reforms in South Africa, coupled with President Joaquim Chissano's declaration that he believes South Africa is no longer formally aiding Renamo rebels, have paved the way for more cordial relations.

At a seminar for potential South African investors held in Johannesburg in June, Mozambican officials stressed that for historical and geographical—if not political—reasons, South Africans ought to be leading the way.

"The closeness of South Africa to Mozambique, the economic power...of South African entrepreneurs, and the cultural ties between Mozambican and South African people" should help South Africa to "reach the position it deserves, at the top of the list," said the deputy

minister of industry and energy, Octavio Muthemba.

Echoing a theme now common among South African politicians as they seek to gain international credibility through improved economic relations with neighboring states, Fernando Sumbana, director of the Mozambican office in charge of import programs, alluded to the need to cooperate in the face of global developments.

With the prospect of a European Common Market in 1992, he told the conference—which was attended by 120 senior South African executives—"South African investors, Mozambicans, and other business people from the southern African region should get together and try to organize themselves to face the business environment that is coming in the next couple of years."

For their part, South African businessmen—like many white Zimbabweans when the Beira Corridor Project was launched in Mozambique—are excited by the prospects of reviving an old historical relationship, as well as making fat profits.

Mozambique's "proximity to South Africa, the nostalgia many South Africans hold for Lourenço Marques (the colonial name for Maputo), the large Portuguese community in South Africa—many of whom had business interests there—plus the vast natural wealth...will encourage the bold investor," comments a South African business newsletter circulated during the investors' conference.

Major new and proposed investments include the rehabilitation of Maputo's world-famous Polana Hotel by the South African-owned Karos Hotel Group, a joint venture between the South African Pulp and Paper Industries and the Mozambican government for a huge forestry project, and an agreement between Trans Natal Coal Mining Corporation, Lonrho, and a Brazilian company to mine coal in Moatize. Should peace be restored, Anglo American Corporation is waiting in the wings with \$200 million worth of mining and agriculture projects. ■

—C.L.M.



By DAPHNE TOPOUZIS

From Mauritania to Nigeria, rice is the staple food of at least 65-70 million West Africans, or 40 percent of the region's population, by conservative estimates. Over the last decade, per capita rice consumption in the region has doubled from 26 to 52 lbs., yet production has grown at an annual rate of only 3.3 percent, barely exceeding population growth.

Neglect of a Food Crop
Part of the reason why rice has been neglected is that until recently, it was widely assumed that Asia's Green Revolution could be easily replicated in Africa through technology transfer. This assumption proved to be misleading for a variety of reasons: Asian rice varieties demand reliable rainfall or irrigation, while in Africa, drought periodically affects most of the sub-region and irrigation is a relatively new development that goes back only 30 years. Rice varieties that were resistant to certain constraints in Asia did not withstand African conditions in a similar way and technologies developed in Asia were often inadequately tested in the various West African eco-systems. In addition, African farmers, unlike

in the words of one Ivorian, the "civil servants' staple," and its vital role in the West African diet was largely underestimated. A recent study, however, found that the poorest third of urban households in Ouagadougou obtained one-third of their cereal-based calories from rice and spent a large part of their food budget on this staple. In cities like Dakar, where subsidies on rice are being removed in compliance with structural adjustment programs, the ones who suffer most are the poorest urban dwellers. Sharp rises in the price of rice have directly threatened the livelihood of the urban poor, triggering riots in several cities in the sub-region during the 1980s.

Rice imports have markedly widened the gap between supply and

Relying on

Today, rice consumption is growing faster than any other food crop in West Africa except wheat (which the region does not produce), and is gradually replacing traditional staples of the West African diet, such as sorghum, millet, and maize.

To keep up with demand, rice imports have been growing by a staggering 30 percent each year, or 250 percent over the last 10 years, costing West African states over \$500 million in scarce foreign exchange. Clearly, any attempt to address food self-sufficiency and security in the region will necessarily involve rice. And yet, this staple food crop has been neglected by donors and development planners alike. Thus, despite some costly investments in rice development projects, the unit costs of producing rice in West Africa are among the highest in the world (significantly higher than the cost of importing rice), and yields per unit area are among the lowest, and therefore economically unviable for the farmers and for most countries in the region.

West Africans are extraordinarily reliant on rice as a staple part of their diets, even though production of the crop has been neglected by governments and development planners, causing massive annual increases in imports. In Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, the West Africa Rice Development Association is working hard to encourage new technologies and farmer incentives so that one day the region can be self-sufficient in one of its most important foodstuffs.

their Asian counterparts, do not grow only rice, but are mixed crop farmers—intercropping or rotating rice with maize, yams, vegetables, and other crops—and have little, if any, access to inputs.

Yet another factor that has contributed to the relative neglect of rice as a staple food is that until recently, rice was generally thought of as a predominantly urban, luxury food, or

demand in two ways: Cheap rice has been imported on a massive scale mostly from southeast Asia, then subsidized and sold at a fraction of the price of locally produced rice, making it virtually impossible for African farmers to compete. More significantly, because it is so inexpensive, imported rice has radically changed the West African diet and is rapidly becoming a staple of low-

income families not only in urban, but also in rural areas.

And last but not least, the absence of up-to-date empirical studies on the economics of rice production in the sub-region accounts for the lack of consensus on basic questions relating to whether rice should be promoted at all, and if so, how it should be done and where.

Self-Sufficiency in Rice?

Given West Africa's present dependence on imports, it may come as a surprise to note that only a few years ago, several countries in the sub-region were nearly self-sufficient in rice. Sierra Leone once produced enough rice to export to Liberia and Guinea, but today imports nearly 100,000 tons annually. Nigeria was

farmers, rice production can increase dramatically," he added.

This is in effect Warda's objective: to develop the technologies that will improve productivity and to provide local governments with information and recommendations so as to influence policy-making and boost incen-



tives to rice farmers. An inter-governmental association, Warda was founded in 1970 to assist member countries to become self-sufficient in rice, with help from the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa, and the Food and Agriculture Organization, and financial support from a variety of donors, including the African Development Bank, the European Community, and the World Bank. Today, the organization comprises 16 West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo) and recently Cameroon has also expressed a desire to join.

New Focus on Research

Until recently, Warda was foremost a development association, working to support the national agricultural research programs of its member-states. It introduced improved rice varieties into the various

rice environments in West Africa, produced and distributed foundation seed, and identified appropriate pest control methods. However, by the early 1980s, Warda became stifled by management, governance, and research-oriented problems, which its current management frankly admits to, and which nearly resulted in the death of the organization.

In 1986, however, the institution was revived and became a full-fledged member of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), a network of 13 international agricultural research centers, monitored by the World Bank, that focuses research on food rather than cash crops. What this meant in effect was that the organization underwent a radical shake-up in terms of direction, governance, and staff. In mid-1988, Warda moved its headquarters from Monrovia to Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, and it is now building its own research station at nearby M'Bé.

The organization's focus is "to provide and strengthen a growing West

Rice field in Liberia: To keep up with demand, West Africa will have to produce more rice as consumption rises.

African capability in the science, technology, and socio-economics of rice production that will improve and sustain the livelihood of small-holder farm

families (Warda's principal target group), increase the opportunities for rural employment, and contribute to increased food security in the region," said Terry. The principal areas of activity are research, training, and communication with the national agricultural research programs still being the principal clients.

"Our scientists will be working directly with the national programs and the farmers to understand their needs and problems," said Dr. Anthony Youdeowei, director of communications. "Training complements research, for it is only through training that research results can be properly utilized. A mechanism is needed to transfer information to farmers; otherwise research remains

Rice

importing the lowest quantity of rice in the region before the mid-1970s. Today, Nigeria, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire rank among the highest rice importers in the world, averaging over 300,000 tons annually. Future forecasts anticipate rice consumption to keep rising dramatically throughout the region, but in view of scarce foreign exchange, the availability of imported rice is likely to plummet. To keep up with demand, the region will have to produce more rice.

The realization that Asia's Green Revolution was not going to be replicated in Africa as originally anticipated brought into sharp focus the need to adapt rice research to the specificity of West African conditions. The question remains, however: Can West Africa become self-sufficient in rice? "Without any hesitation, I have to say that it can," argues Eugene R. Terry, director-general of the West Africa Rice Development Association (Warda). "With the right type of technologies and the right incentives to local

shelved," he added. As an international organization, Warda will also be able to bring to the rice farmers technologies developed in other parts of the world from which they are often cut off.

Research activities prioritize the three distinct rice growing environments of the sub-region: the upland/inland swamp continuum, the Sahel irrigated rice environment, and the mangrove swamp environment. Dr. Peter Matlon, director of research, pointed out that research is now shifting from maximum yielding rice varieties to varieties more resistant to stresses, such as drought and pests. There is also increasing concern about developing environmentally sustainable technologies that will not upset West Africa's fragile ecosystems.

Research needs in all three ecosystems are enormous. "To give you but one example, we believe we still do not quite understand the Sahel," said Terry. "We do not yet know what factors are having an impact on the Sahelian environment: Is it only heat? Is it heat and moisture? Is it salt? We need to know how the big irrigation schemes, such as the one in Manantali, Senegal, work and how they affect rice production. We are now conducting a study of the environment, not only the physical, but also the biological and socio-economic environment, to find out things like the types of investments farmers make and assess if they can manage an irrigation system, if they have enough money to pay for the water, etc."

One of Warda's strong points has been its contribution to training extension workers and scientists in the region. Trained manpower in rice science is alarmingly scarce: Only three in 16 countries have more than two full-time rice scientists. Since 1973, Warda has trained just under 2,000 West Africans in rice research and production. Courses, seminars, and workshops cover all areas of rice production, technology transfer, and research (including post-harvest technology, seed multiplication, integrated pest man-

agement, farm mechanization, and appropriate technology.)

Warda's approach is that the national agricultural research programs should be part and parcel of the organization's activities. To this effect, an integrated information dissemination service is being introduced to link scientists from the member countries who are often working in isolation and ensure a two-way flow of information relating to research findings and problems. A technical newsletter, manuals for trainees, occasional papers, and a research highlight newsletter are also in the process of being introduced in both English and French.

Warda's training program suffered a serious setback as a result of the civil war in Liberia, where its training headquarters were located. More importantly, a germplasm bank was also lost along with a costly post-harvest technology unit and other equipment. An effort is underway, however, to assist Liberian farmers by giving them rice seeds so that they can begin planting. "This is a case where we are of direct service to the African farmer," said Terry. "In an emergency situation such as this one, we can immediately produce the seeds that will help Liberian farmers get on their feet again, because we know which varieties they like and which can be grown in Liberia."

Incentives for Rice Producers

While research can improve the technologies available to rice farmers and help make the operation more cost-efficient and increase yields, local governments have to give farmers a good price in order to encourage production. Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire have attempted to eliminate and gradually curtail rice imports to improve production incentives, stimulate local production, and save foreign exchange. The former stuck to it and rice production increased substantially in Nigeria, even though the move was interpreted as an unfriendly act by the U.S., (which supplies rice to most of the sub-region under the controversial Public Law 480), on the grounds that

it blocked trade between the two countries.

Banning imports in a carefully planned and systematic fashion, investing in research and in inputs, and subsidizing rice farmers until such time as they have the capacity to produce rice cheaply are essential steps in encouraging rice production in the region, argued Terry. "If you give a farmer a fair price for his commodity, there is no doubt that he will produce it," he added. This view has increasingly gained ground among experts and African policy-makers alike, as a result of the controversy surrounding PL-480, a major component of U.S. foreign aid in Africa, which has been widely criticized for being used as a political instrument.

Investing in Research a Necessity

After a three-year transition period, Warda is now ready to concentrate on specific research targets, which include the development of improved rice varieties and production methods and the investigation into ways of reducing post-harvest losses, increasing the impact of new technology, and analyzing policy options, with an emphasis not on rice per se, but on the small-scale rice farmer. In the future, Terry would like to see Warda's role expand further to include involvement in food crop production, with an emphasis on rice.

Warda's work as a rice research institute is only just beginning, as research and training under the CGIAR system are commencing in earnest this year. However, at present, the organization is encountering formidable obstacles in attaining its modest budget of \$10 million a year needed to build its permanent facilities and meet its ambitious program.

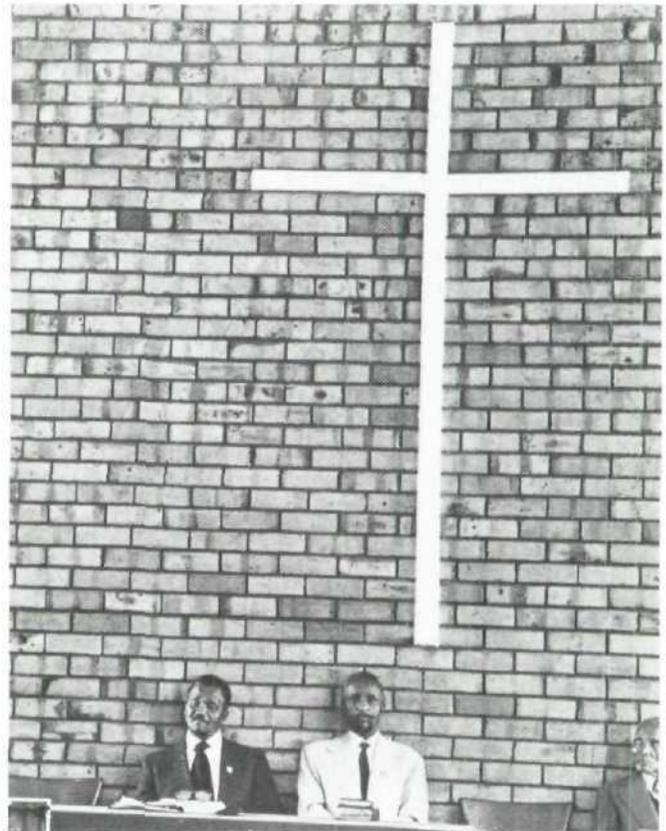
As rice becomes the staple food for an increasing number of West Africans and rice imports place additional strains on struggling West African economies, Warda's contribution to food self-sufficiency and food security in the sub-region becomes all the more urgent and worthy of support. ○



PIETY AND POLITICS

By CHARLES VILLA-VICENCIO

While South Africa edges closer to the threshold of majority rule, the Afrikaner church is still agonizing over whether apartheid is a sin. And as Afrikaner hegemony begins to crumble, the church's efforts to find a way not to antagonize either conservative Afrikaners or blacks demanding democratic government provides a window on the soul-searching of South Africa's white population.



The agonizing soul of the Afrikaner church was exposed for all to see in a five-day conference in early November held outside Rustenberg, a small rural town in the western Transvaal. The occasion was the

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largest and most representative gathering of churches since the famed Cottesloe conference met in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. The attempt was to have the church, long divided over apartheid, speak with a united voice as South Africa prepares itself for a new political era. At one point, there was a sense of expectation that this was

about to happen. Then came equivocation and disappointment. "What we have witnessed here," suggested a conference delegate, "is a parable of what South Africa is all about. One moment we're filled with expectation, the next with disappointment."

The Euphoria

The expectation came when Pro-

fessor Willie Jonker, a delegate of the white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), interrupted his prepared speech to state: "I confess my own sin and guilt and my personal responsibility for apartheid," adding that he was also confessing the sin for the DRC and the Afrikaner people as a whole. His authority, he said, was derived from the new policy statement of the DRC synod which met in Bloemfontein in October.

The Bloemfontein synod had indeed gone further than any previous synod in rejecting apartheid, while a careful reading of the complex wording of the policy statement reveals a measure of ambiguity that has left some critics skeptical of the true intentions of the DRC. Affirming the right "to remain true to one's own cultural heritage," the statement continues:

"The Dutch Reformed Church had not sufficiently perceived that in its struggle against integration, apartheid had inter alia also received an ideological and ethnological basis...The church made the error of allowing forced separation and division...to be a biblical imperative...Apartheid began to function in such a way that the largest part of the population of the country experienced it as an oppressive system...

"Any system which in practice functions in this way is unacceptable in light of the Scriptures and the Christian conscience and must be rejected as sinful. Any attempt by a church to try to defend such a system biblically and ethically must be seen as a serious error, that is to say, it is in conflict with the Bible."

The debate is long and complex. Does this mean that apartheid need not necessarily be oppressive? Is there still room to speak of an understanding of apartheid (by whatever name) within which people can be separate but equal? Is the ground being prepared for a new South Africa based on "voluntary" ethnic divisions through group representation in a second parliamentary chamber? Does the DRC statement simply reflect the de Klerk regime's reformist policy, in the same way

that it has reflected other changes in government policy over the years?

Willing to accept the personal confession of Jonker, most black delegates remained skeptical concerning the position of the church as an institution. "We've heard this stuff before!" retorted an angry, veteran campaigner of the "Coloured" Dutch Reformed Mission church. "They've come close this time, but again seem to have fallen short of what is required," suggested a delegate from one of the English-speaking churches.

But then came the turn of the newly elected moderator of the DRC, Professor Pieter Potgieter. For a while at least he seemed to have stunned his critics, by officially associating the DRC with Jonker's statement, and the euphoria was near complete when Archbishop Tutu rose to accept the confession "on behalf of those who have been sinned against." His cautionary word was to come a full 12 hours later, when he observed in a television interview that the confessions by Jonker and Potgieter were important but only the beginning of a *process* which he hoped would ultimately lead to reconciliation between the long estranged churches.

Others insisted that the white church was now obligated to give expression to its words in deeds. "The expectation from the majority of the people," said Frank Chikane, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, "is that there must be a reparation or an effort to undo the damage that has been done by apartheid." "Is the DRC now ready to join the other churches in calling for the scrapping of all apartheid laws? Is it ready to prepare the nation for majority rule? This is the ultimate litmus test of repentance," insisted a later speaker.

The Agony

The battle had only started. Dr. Andries Treurnicht, leader of the right-wing Conservative Party, rejected the DRC's statement. Rumors were rife of further resignations from the DRC, which had lost

30,000 members and 60 ministers in response to a much milder attempt to distance itself from apartheid in 1986. P.W. Botha, the retired state president, in turn, phoned both Jonker and Potgieter to warn them of the peril they faced and insist that they withdraw their confessions.

The shades of Cottesloe were all too obvious. On that occasion, a similar church gathering cautiously rejected apartheid. Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, prime minister at the time, rebuked the DRC delegates to the conference, accusing them of allowing themselves to be influenced by the liberal ideology of the World Council of Churches. He reminded them of their duty to the Afrikaner nation, ordering them to recant.

And recant they did. The DRC, together with the more conservative Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (which refused to even attend the Rustenburg conference), immediately resigned from the World Council of Churches. Beyers Naude, who refused to accept the submissive position of his church, was driven out of the DRC.

But things have changed since the 1960s. The homogeneity of Afrikanerdom has given way to fragmentation, the ruling party is waiting for more space in which to move, and the DRC is looking for acceptance from the other churches. So this time around, the recantation did not come—although the moderation of the church did blink. They recognized the danger, from the perspective of Afrikanerdom, of moving too quickly.

If religion (in addition to all else) be the spiritual aroma of the nation, the Rustenburg event provides an important window into the soul of the Afrikaner people and church as the first year of the de Klerk reforms comes to a close. Turmoil and conflict, the burden of history and the fear of further division, the desire for ecumenical affirmation and the longing for acceptance, as well as the quest for spiritual integrity and moral decency are all struggling to come together.

What was enacted in Rustenburg

is a microcosmic reflection of where South Africa is at the present time. Afrikaner hegemony is crumbling from within. There is a reluctance among Afrikaners within the ruling bloc, whether to the left or the right, to fuel the fires of schism any further.

English-speaking South Africans, who have long condemned the Afrikaner style of politics (rather than too much of the substance), are as hesitant and reluctant to opt for unqualified change as any Afrikaner—and their churches were as severely condemned by speakers supporting the liberation process as were the Afrikaner churches. Blacks, in turn, are becoming increasingly skeptical about the cautious and reluctant nature of the spirit of reform and the timidity of the churches, as they demand the transfer of political power to a democratically elected government.

The urgency of this encounter placed a large variety of issues on the agenda of the conference, including the transfer of land, the redistribution of wealth, and the importance of a new economic system. "The real issues were debated here with more candor and honesty than what I perceive in political circles," suggested a reporter from a London-based newspaper. "To ignore the churches in South Africa is to make a grave political error," he added.

There are several reasons why the church is important in this situation. One, nearly 80 percent of the population professes to be Christian. (More than 90 percent of the country's churches were represented at the conference.) Two, they do more than profess their Christianity. In the white population, especially among the Afrikaner majority, everyday life is characterized by a measure of God-fearing devotion; and among blacks, the white missionaries have laid a solid foundation for a deep-seated religious piety.

Three, perhaps because of the shifting sands of political certainty and the threat of cataclysm, South Africa is an overtly religious country. Four, even the more religiously skept-

tical South African politician knows that if one side fails to win the support of the churches, some other party will. They cannot be ignored. Simply stated, without suggesting that the churches control the political inclinations of their members, the churches do have access to a large portion of South African society—which makes them influential political players.

The Disappointment

This is why, when the DRC balked in response to the Rustenburg Declaration, the euphoria which marked the earlier part of the week gave way to disappointment. In discussions behind the scenes in open debate, the DRC delegates had shown an openness to change and the members of the black and non-racial churches a desire to accommodate

Perhaps because of the threat of cataclysm, South Africa is an overtly religious country.

their fears and concerns. "You have created expectations which you cannot afford not to fulfill," a leading DRC delegate was told. "To retract now could have implications for your church for decades to come." The major concern was for honesty to prevail, any suggestion of duplicity to be sidelined, and cheap reconciliations to be excluded.

All this seemed possible when the DRC delegation informed the conference that they would identify the specific clauses in the statement with which they disagreed. The conference was, in turn, ready for compromise, despite the objections coming from some of the delegates that the DRC was being allowed to determine

the character of the statement. Consensus seemed, in turn, to emerge around a key sentence in the preamble to the Rustenburg Declaration: "Some of us are not in full accord with everything said in this conference, but on this we are all agreed, namely the unequivocal rejection of apartheid as a sin."

After the conference, it was clear that the assumed consensus had not fully held. The DRC moderator told a press conference that while the DRC stood by its confession of guilt, his delegation did not know what the declaration's "unequivocal" rejection of apartheid meant. He also stated that the call by the conference for a "democratic elective process based on one-person, one-vote," was a matter for politicians, not "the church."

Potgieter did not say it, but his problem lay in the pews and pulpits of his church. It is estimated that as many as one-third of the white church's 1.5 million members belong to the Conservative Party. It is going to be traumatic enough for the Afrikaner people to share in their religious leaders' self-abasing admission of guilt, let alone to embrace a statement coming from a gathering of churches which they have long been conditioned to believe is subjected to an anti-white, leftist political agenda.

The DRC has taken a cautious step forward, but there is still a long way to go before the church speaks with one accord in South Africa. "They have found it difficult to go the whole way with us," said Chikane. "We have nevertheless started a process and I just hope the DRC will be willing to move further down the road with us. I understand their constraint. They have to account back to their constituents." This kind of response in itself reflects a new willingness for dialogue in South Africa. The less accommodating response of Sam Buti, the moderator of the black DRC, is equally reflective of the response of black Christians: "Their confession of guilt is cheap...you simply cannot trust them." South Africa is a complex society—the two responses are not contradictory. ○



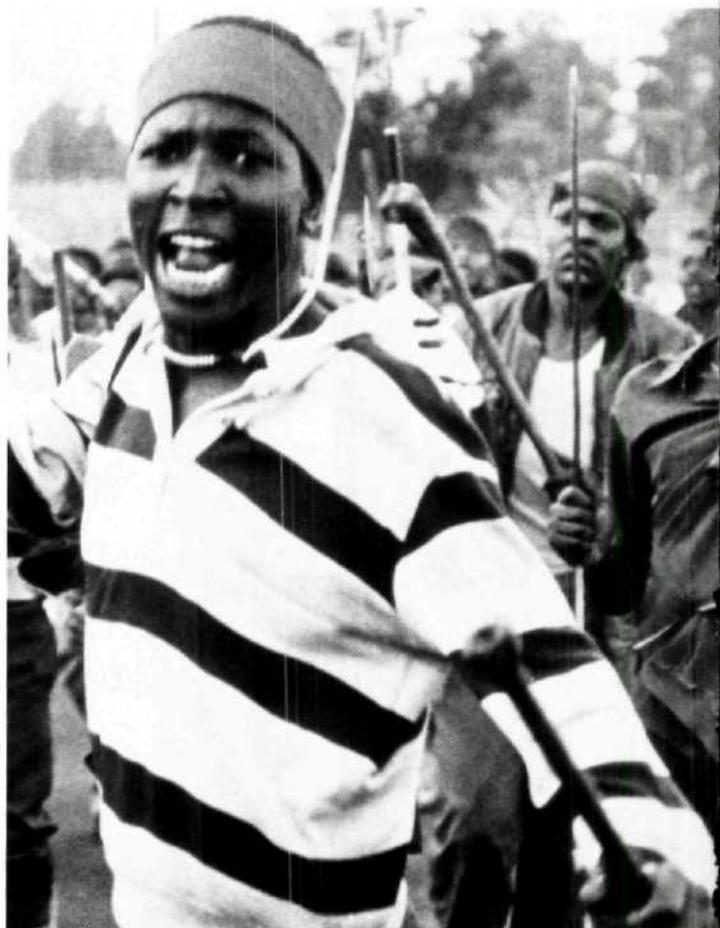
Peter Auf Der Heyde/Afrapix



By **PETER TYGESEN**

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, leader of the KwaZulu homeland and the Inkatha Freedom Party, is a paradox. At one moment, he is the suave international statesman, jetting to conferences and meeting heads of state. Then, he is the Zulu warrior of royal blood, delivering fiery speeches, and verbally attacking the African National Congress. As he tries to gain a foothold in negotiations on the nation's future, Buthelezi's supporters wage a fierce and bitter war against ANC sympathizers, costing thousands of lives and setting back the peace process.

The MAN You Can't Ignore



Sebastian Batic/Sygnma

Fighting tooth and nail, Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi has worked his way into the center of South Africa's political scene. Aside from Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, no other black South African has managed to stay above the shifting sands of the country's volatile political situation. Buthelezi has also managed to gain ground and the African National Congress (ANC) is still battling to find its response to his challenge.

To visit Buthelezi, one drives out of white-ruled Natal's lush green cane fields, up the long, rocky mountain slopes, and into the increasingly dry and depressingly barren highland that constitutes KwaZulu. After hours of penetration into this African thirstland, prefab matchbox dwellings suddenly pop up behind yet another windswept hill. This is the KwaZulu capital, Ulundi.

Passing the turnoff to Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Airport, a

turn up Prince Buthelezi Avenue takes you straight to the two government buildings where the chief minister rules. Typical of modern South African government architecture, the futuristic buildings sit amid this solemn landscape like a set of hostile aircraft carriers, with their cold, reflecting windows and weather-worn glossy finish. Meant to impress the natives at inauguration day, but not to cost the white taxpayers too dearly, homeland capitals invariably look shabby and drab only a few years later.

But the Ulundi government quarters are neat. The manicured lawns and trees lining Prince Buthelezi Avenue bear witness to the discipline and will that characterize his governance in yet another striking contrast to the rest of the homeland capitals.

Inside the hall, nobody loiters, and the quiet and stillness are overwhelming. Security guards urge you through the metal detectors with a whisper. A plainclothes officer then leads you past a huge display of the royal Zulu family tree which features Buthelezi with the same prominence as the legendary warrior King Shaka of the last century. Deeper into the vaults of the building, his anteroom is lined with awards and portraits and the air is hot and stuffy, filled with importance. There are no windows. The hushed conversations between the receptionist and Buthelezi's two male personal secretaries are hardly distinguishable above the hum of a fluorescent tube, lighting the royal purple decor.

Buthelezi receives you in the doorway to his huge, circular, black leather-chaired boardroom. The walls are adorned with pictures of foreign dignitaries, each of them with Buthelezi. There are no windows.

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, top: "A man without a policy and with an unquenchable thirst for power"

Left, Zulus near Soweto hunting down "enemies": "To most blacks, Buthelezi is not a moderate, but a radical warmonger"

Answering questions, Buthelezi closes his eyes in

concentration and is soft-spoken to the point of seeming shy. Yet ask a question he perceives as controversial and he explodes in rage: "You're stupid!" he yells. Again, you are declared stupid for asking him to clarify one of his vague answers: "If you don't want to understand that, you are stupid!" he snarls and recedes deeper into his chair, waiting for your next move.

At 62, Buthelezi has come a long way since the early 1950s when he defeated his brother in a struggle for the chieftainship of a small Zulu sub-tribe. Today, he is chief minister of the KwaZulu self-governing territory; he is spearheading the Inkatha movement's foray into other organizations' traditional home turfs, and he has an international standing highlighted by the fact that he is the only black South African to be received in the White House by every president since Richard Nixon.

He claims to have the same objectives as the ANC, dresses his Inkatha members in the same green-black-gold colors, and has even had a gold coin produced with Mandela's portrait on one side and his on the other. ANC members claim that by bathing in the light that shines from the fame of their organization and its martyrs, Buthelezi is trying to steal the legitimacy he lacks as a "genuine" black liberator.

Since it was legalized in February, the ANC has consequently tried to rally all other black organizations behind it and to isolate Buthelezi's Inkatha. Mandela's lieutenants have insisted that the ANC leader should not meet Buthelezi on a one-on-one basis. This would boost Buthelezi's strength further, they argue. As events have unfolded, it is clear that this "isolation at all costs" strategy has fatally backfired for the ANC.

The two organizations have been engaged in a low-key, but insidiously brutal war since 1987. Five thousand lives have been lost in this battle, originally fought for control over the dismal townships and overcrowded shantytowns of Natal province, but since exported to the nation's industrial hub around Johannesburg as



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the power struggle took on a wider, national significance.

Today, the ANC badly needs an agreement with Buthelezi to stop the factional fighting between supporters of the respective organizations. Every morning, new horror stories of blacks hacked or burned to death surface from this township or that mine hostel, and fear of another major blow-up like the one in August-September which took 800 lives is ever-present. The constantly chilling thought that another one is just around the corner puts a serious damper on the entire process toward peace and a democratic future.

The confusion and despair this delay is causing in the black community takes a heavy toll on the ANC, which has promised results from its talks with the government and its decision to lay down arms. As Buthelezi has not been included in any talks, he thus has no disillusioned supporters to appease. On the contrary, he is still in a position to issue promises for free.

Buthelezi can capitalize on being isolated. For every additional organization that lines up behind the ANC, Buthelezi has yet another argument for his claim that the ANC intends to dominate the country and introduce a one-party system. Buthelezi markets himself tirelessly as a strong alternative to this monolithic power bloc. As the ANC's isolation strategy rumbles on, he will make a virtue out of standing as the only alternative.

He seems to have precious little to offer a black constituency in return for this position. While the ANC is working hard to map out policies for the future, and has already published suggestions for key areas like the economy and land issues, Buthelezi apparently has little idea of how the coming transition to the much talked-about "new South Africa" should be financed, managed, or shaped.

"Who am I to dictate this?" he replied, when asked about his suggestions on how to finance the improvement of the neglected black education system.

"I am not willing to be interrogat-

ed by you on that," he said, when asked about how to solve the intricate problem of resettling the hundreds of thousands of blacks forcibly removed from their land as a result of Grand Apartheid schemes. "These issues will be decided upon by the negotiations" is his standard reply to any such trying questions.

After the interview, Buthelezi relaxes and even displays some of his acclaimed charm. But as one loosens a sweat-dampened tie while rolling down Prince Buthelezi Avenue, a general impression keeps nagging: Buthelezi is basically a man without a policy and with an



Sebastian Balle/Sygnia

unquenchable thirst for power.

He does not have much national popular support either, and opinion polls conducted through the 1980s indicate that it is even fading on his home ground. But numbers do not as yet count in South African politics; that is for a majority rule future. Today, mainly muscle and the tactics with which muscle is applied or withheld matter. In this light, Buthelezi needs neither a policy nor a large number of followers.

The ANC and its allies have plenty of muscle, but it is basically a power of disruption, stoppages, strikes, and destruction. It is a might which must be applied with great caution, in tiny, concentrated drops in order to nudge the process ahead. The South African peace process is still mired in white fears of "black radicalism." Perceived by them as a "moderate," Buthelezi is above the ANC's dilemma.

To most blacks, however, Buthelezi is not a moderate, but a radical warmonger. Nowhere else in South Africa has bloodshed taken place on such a scale as in Buthelezi's Natal, and by exporting this conflict to the Witwatersrand, he has plunged South Africa's most populous area into horrifying carnage. The vast majority of blacks squarely put the blame on Buthelezi, as the ANC has been operating everywhere for decades without such conflict. Equally, if the fighting in the Witwatersrand was grounded in tribal rather than political reasons, why then, people are asking, did we live

Zulu gathering at Thokoza: "The carnage of the Witwatersrand broke loose with the coordination and ferocity of a concerted campaign"

in peace for generations?

Buthelezi's support is consequently dwindling. A recent survey conducted by the Markinor polling agency and published in the Johannesburg daily, *The Star*, lends strength to this conclusion. Polling blacks all over South Africa about their political allegiance, Buthelezi came out badly bruised, receiving a dismal 2 percent outside Natal. This is far below the support blacks gave "their" white President F.W. de Klerk, who attracted 7 percent. The ANC got 53 percent.

The survey is consistent with previous polls, all of which strongly indicate that far from all Zulus inside his homeland support Buthelezi, and most Zulus outside the area do not support him. For this very reason, in June, Buthelezi transformed his

Inkatha movement, originally formed as a Zulu cultural organization closely linked to the government of the KwaZulu homeland, into a national political party, renamed the Inkatha Freedom Party.

In promoting his new platform, he has spent no time wooing blacks—apart from addressing supporters at Inkatha rallies where a heavy presence of armed warriors scares off anybody not Zulu. Instead, Buthelezi has embarked on a tireless campaign, daily addressing whites at luncheons and seminars in South Africa, and visiting Europe and the U.S. hot on the heels of Mandela and de Klerk.

White South Africans have known Buthelezi for a long time. They have overcome their initial fear of this loud-mouthed, but well-mannered Bantu, and during the 1970s came to see him as someone they could cut a deal with. In contrast to the deeply corrupt, uneducated, and brutal despots of other homelands, Buthelezi stood out by being university-educated and urbane, and no one has ever suggested that he has used his position as chief minister for personal gain.

Whites were soothed further by statements such as "my ideal is one-person, one-vote in a unitary state, but I have always said we cannot afford to destroy the country in seeking that." More than that, while loudly rejecting independence for KwaZulu, he nonetheless avoided rocking the scheme of Grand Apartheid by ruling and controlling the territory as if it were an "independent" homeland like Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana, and Venda.

But the violence in Natal has tainted his image in the white community. After de Klerk legalized the ANC and released Mandela, whites began to reconsider their attitudes toward the ANC. Their fear of the "commie terrorists" began to ebb and their confidence in the ANC surged with each successful round of talks with the government. Buthelezi seemed to be relegated to the sidelines.

But he is back in the center now, eagerly working the conference cir-

cuit, speaking at the Highveld Regional Association of the Transvaal Society of Chartered Accountants annual meeting and the Euromoney Conference on Economic and Financial Prospects for the Country among others.

Will it work? "Buthelezi probably has a very small role to play as soon as a new constitution is in place," his right-hand man through 14 years, Oscar Dhlomo, says. Dhlomo left Inkatha earlier this year to set himself up as an independent commentator and power-broker, apparently disgusted with Buthelezi's infamous temper and his unwillingness to take counsel. "His power base is too small, it does not reach beyond Zululand." But in the interim, Buthelezi "is a man you cannot avoid," concludes Dhlomo. "He does have a constituency, whites have faith in him, and he wields power. He is not to be ignored."

With a majority-rule constitution, numbers will finally count and alliances become important. Buthelezi's chances of attracting nationwide support and forging the necessary ties depends on his ability to appear as the alternative. He accordingly provokes, irritates, and attacks the ANC, and so far the organization's ability to form a quick, coherent response is paying his way.

While the ANC takes a daily beating from the frightened white business community for its adherence to socialist principles and nationalization, and painstakingly tries to explain any backtracking to its hungry, impoverished mass of supporters, Buthelezi is waiting for the festival feeling of Mandela's release to recede. He is waiting to take advantage of the ANC's mistakes.

His war against the ANC is fought with skill. When he lashes out at the government for not speeding up negotiations, he knows that this attack is equally aimed at the ANC. It is fought with a masterly command of language: "Our black experience has instilled a wisdom into our minds which tells us that we must avoid at all costs being made cannon fodder by people who want to use our

corpses to stand on in order to be seen as leaders," he recently wrote in a letter to *The New York Times*.

Buthelezi also fights with weapons, the ANC claims. The carnage of the Witwatersrand broke loose with a coordination and ferocity that bore all the signs of a concerted campaign, it charges. But the organization has not yet been able to furnish the necessary proof to win the moral high ground on this issue. Some attempts have been outright disastrous, and Buthelezi has immediately lashed back and won.

To Natal's poor rural Zulus, Buthelezi has restored tribal pride by building Zulu institutions. To this end, there seems to be two Buthelezis. One is the chief with royal blood, clad in the traditional leopard skin attire and with fiery oratorical talents. The second Buthelezi is the one that engenders additional awe in his supporters by wearing business suits and jetting around the world shaking hands with leaders of mighty nations and giant corporations. For this, he is dressed impeccably in the international statesman's uniform of tailored suits and golden cufflinks.

"There might even be a third Buthelezi," suggests Professor Gerhard Maré of the University of Natal. "Outside Inkatha circles, people in Natal firmly believe that Buthelezi has a personal hand in the war against them. They are convinced that his public peace talk is followed by closeted war talk."

Buthelezi does little to dispel such rumors. Nobody has ever been able to link him directly to the violence in Natal, but an alarmingly high number of his Inkatha MPs, cabinet members, KwaZulu police, and local Inkatha leaders—the so-called warlords—have been convicted of murder, instigation of violence, and assaults on ANC supporters.

Buthelezi has always supported these men to the very end and his rhetoric is regularly peppered with crude threats: "The same hand which is held out in friendship is the hand of a people with warrior blood," he says. "Violence is not alien to us." ○



LIBEL OR LIABILITY?

By PHILIPPA GARSON

Were the hit-squad “confessions” of renegade police captain Dirk Coetzee just a product of his “fertile imagination,” as the Harms Commission ruled, or were they “plausible,” as a South African civil court judge has maintained? Therein lies the key to a libel suit which pits the respected head of the police forensic laboratories against two independent weekly newspapers which printed revelations about South Africa’s secret death squads.

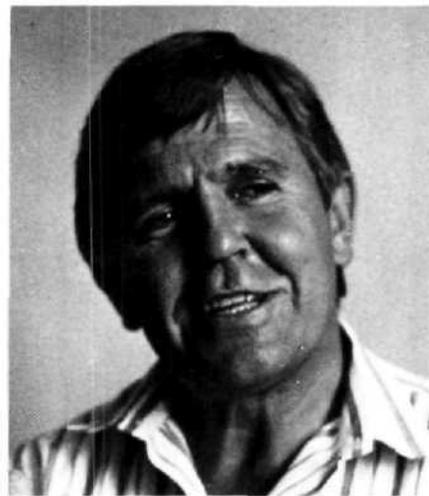
While the Harms Commission inquiry into police and military hit squads has effectively swept the dirt under the National Party’s carpet, a dramatic civil trial in Johannesburg threatens to cast new doubt on exonerated security force officials.

The head of the South African police forensic laboratories, General Lothar Neethling, has sued the two left-wing (and cash-strapped) newspapers, *Vrye Weekblad* and *Weekly Mail*, for a combined amount of R1.5 million for defamation. The state is paying his legal costs.

Last year, both newspapers published the “confessions” of renegade police captain-turned-African National Congress member Dirk Coetzee, who claimed he was intimately

involved in one of several police hit squads which murdered ANC activists and, perceiving itself above the law, was capable of various crimes such as illicit diamond smuggling and theft. Coetzee claimed that poison and “knock-out drops” to aid with abductions and assassinations of activists were supplied by Neethling, who saw fit to provide his drugs for lethal experimental purposes, and in so doing, further his career in the police force. Coetzee also alleged that Neethling would “spike” bottles of whiskey to be sent to ANC members in neighboring states.

While the outspoken Afrikaans weekly, *Vrye Weekblad*, broke the story in November 1989, splashing Coetzee’s macabre story across pages and pages, the *Weekly Mail*—like several other newspapers—published extracts of what then seemed to be, beyond doubt, incriminating testimony. Coetzee’s story at last seemed to go some way



Sarah-Jane Poole

Dirk Coetzee, above: “Discredited by the Harms Commission”
Max du Preez, opposite page: “*Vrye Weekblad* has repeatedly targeted for its provocative approach”

towards solving the mystery of the countless murders and disappearances of scores of anti-apartheid activists, including human rights lawyer Griffiths Mxenge, renowned anti-apartheid stalwart David Webster, high-profile Swapo member Anton Lubowski, and a string of less well-known activists.

The findings of the Harms Commission have been described by human rights activists as a “white-wash.” Both Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok and Minister of Defense Magnus Malan are as firmly seated around the cabinet table as they were in the days of the “total onslaught” reign of P.W. Botha. And the same goes for hordes of security officials who will never be brought to book.

Not all the exoneration can be

Philippa Garson is a reporter for the Weekly Mail in Johannesburg.

placed at the door of Justice Louis Harms however. While he made a much-criticized judgment that police hit squads did not exist, he did make a finding that underground military cells—known as Civil Cooperation Bureaux (CCBs)—were operating. And he has referred a murder case (of the Ribiero couple who were killed in 1986), three cases of conspiring to kill activists, and other minor charges to the attorney-general for prosecution.

In his report, Justice Harms pointed out that the minister of defense "is of course politically responsible for his department and that includes the CCB." While it emerged that R27 million was spent annually on the covert cells and luxury benefits for secret agents, Malan, however, claimed the report excused him. He denied all knowledge of the secret organization and put the blame on a few baddies in the force. This, it seems, was enough to absolve him.

But the public is far from satisfied. People are wondering whether this would have happened in many other so-called democratic countries, whose principles the South African government claims to uphold. And what Harms did acknowledge was that the commission had failed to achieve one of its main aims, "to restore public confidence in a part of the state administration." Whether coming from the left or the right, whether perceiving the hit squads as legitimate or not, few seem to doubt their existence.

The Harms Commission was up against an extremely uncooperative security force, with missing files, destroyed records, and security officials turning up in disguise to give evidence, leading Harms to conclude that "their conduct before and during the commission creates suspicions that they have been involved in more crimes of violence than the evidence shows."

Furthermore, it was inherently limited in its jurisdiction—confined to examine those alleged hit-squad activities within South Africa's borders. While the CCB had operational structures in six regions, only one of

them was in South Africa. And the bulk of evidence concerning police hit squads (Dirk Coetzee's testimony) concerned cross-border raids and abductions. For human rights organizations like Lawyers for Human Rights and the Independent Board of Inquiry into Informal Repression (IBIIR)—legal representatives of many of the families of the dead—the matter is by no means over. Says IBIIR researcher Chris Orr, "We will continue our investigations, we are following these people, and also we are hoping something will come out of the various prosecutions."

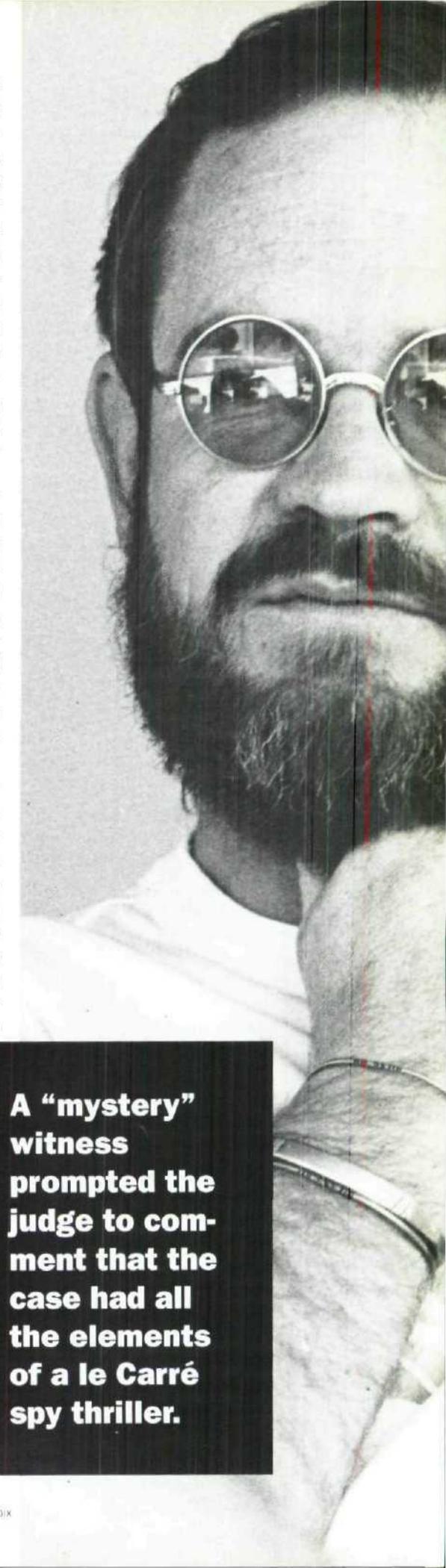
When General Neethling last year notified the two newspapers of his intent to sue for publishing his alleged involvement in the elimination of activists, few thought that the small-time operations would stand a chance: First, the case was state-backed, and secondly, the colorful testimony of Dirk Coetzee—containing allegations against Neethling—was discredited by the Harms Commission.

Coetzee told *Vrye Weekblad* journalist Jacques Pauw he had visited both the general's laboratory in Pretoria and his house, to fetch poisonous substances and that it was common knowledge in the police force that the formidable officer was referred to as "Doper Neethling." He told of an incident when two activists were shot and burned to ashes after poison administered to them had no effect.

Justice Harms found the ex-police captain Coetzee, who is now working for the ANC in London, to be an unreliable witness, with a "fertile imagination" and "psychopathic tendencies."

But the startling about-turn came in November when Justice Johan Kriegler, presiding over the the civil case, frequently intimated that he had closely examined Coetzee's evidence and found parts of it completely plausible or difficult to disprove.

Justice Harms threw out



A "mystery" witness prompted the judge to comment that the case had all the elements of a le Carré spy thriller.

Coetzee's testimony because he said he could not separate the truth from the lies, but Kriegler, who has been able to examine his story in full, has said things in court which leave no doubt as to the fact that he is "worried" by some of Coetzee's inconsistencies. If he was telling a tissue of lies about his and others' active involvement in brutal slaughters, how did he know of incidents of which he would normally have no knowledge, if stationed as a regular officer at the police farm at Vlakplaas, instead of travelling around southern Africa in pursuit of activists on the hit-list?

Why was he in possession of the general's private work telephone number, which was not listed in the police directories, and how indeed was he able to describe certain minute details of Neethling's office? These are problems which are undoubtedly bothering the judge—he has gone as far as to say so. He recalled an analogy of a beggar suspected of being a German spy who for 15 years behaved as a beggar but on one occasion was heard to speak German. "The rest is all irrelevant," Kriegler concluded, intimating that the inaccuracies of Coetzee's story may well be undermined by the minute detail he so often recalls.

Neethling, the 55-year-old forensic expert who came to South Africa as a German war orphan, who has a string of qualifications and decorations and a high standing both here and abroad, denies ever having known Coetzee, let alone supplying him with poison.

He has time and again lost his temper in the highly charged courtroom, its benches filled with security officials clad in grey suits and shoes, donning sunglasses as they leave Johannesburg's Supreme Court each day. Neethling's defense, led by 84-year-old Willie Oshry, has argued that Coetzee, who had mentioned his desire to write a book about his experiences, wanted to introduce poison into his story to make it more interesting. "The only poison in the case was that written by the 'poison pen' of *Vrye Weekblad*," said Oshry.

A "mystery" witness, sparking

great media interest and prompting the judge to comment that the case contained all the elements of a Le Carré spy thriller, was brought by the newspapers' defense. Leslie Lesia, 54, who was released from detention in Zimbabwe a few months ago, after serving a three-year jail term, claims he was recruited by South African military intelligence to eliminate activists. He says he was approached by two men posing as United States consulate officials, who trapped him into becoming an agent by promising to finance his ailing arts school in Bloemfontein. One of the men, known as "Brown," spoke with an American accent.

After allegedly committing a string of atrocities such as supplying activists in Mozambique and Russian embassy officials in Botswana with poisoned liquor and booby-trapped television sets, he was apprehended in Mozambique. He was traced as the supplier of a television set he gave to someone in Maputo, which Zimbabwean authorities claimed was the same set which killed the wife of an ANC official in Zimbabwe.

A gun, silencer, and poisons were confiscated from a secret compartment in his car by the Zimbabwean authorities, according to the defense, which produced photographs of the secret compartment. Lesia, who has several criminal convictions, claims he visited Neethling's laboratory to fetch poisoned liquor once and that the general had been pointed out to him by his handlers, who described him as the "big boss who helped with the stuff."

Lesia's story was "blatant fabrication," said a hot-tempered Neethling from the witness box.

Aspects of his account have been discredited under cross-examination. However, that he was a paid military intelligence agent arrested with a gun in a secret compartment is not under dispute. And he has scores of travel documents to corroborate his story. Whether Neethling was in fact implicated is less clear and is unlikely to sway the case in either direction.

Lesia, who was tortured in Zim-

babwean prisons and never brought to trial, is planning to sue the South African Defense Force for abandoning him after his cover was blown.

Meanwhile, the *Vrye Weekblad* staff are waiting in anticipation for the judgment which could cripple them financially and possibly force closure of the newspaper. Their publishers are also footing the bill for the *Weekly Mail's* legal costs.

Vrye Weekblad has been repeatedly targeted by the authorities for its provocative approach and exposés of government and right-wing scandals. The Neethling case marks the nineteenth time the newspaper has been brought to court and legal expenses have now soared way above operating costs. Says *Weekblad's* editor, Max du Preez, on the Neethling case: "Any individual has the right to sue, it's a healthy practice. But we are extremely unhappy that he [Neethling] does it with state funds. That is wrong. In any democratic country, there should be a rule against it.

"We feel that the evidence we put before the court has convinced the South African public of the fact that police hit squads did indeed exist here and in neighboring countries. Whatever the outcome, we feel we have scored a moral victory."

Du Preez believes the civil case has proved itself to be a more vigorous test of the credibility of hit-squad allegations than the Harms Commission. There is undoubtedly a vendetta against his two-year-old newspaper, he adds, which despite its youth had had more charges laid against it than any other.

"While the strategy of the government in the mid-80s was to close down the newspapers, it now drags them to court. We feel we should not allow the state to get us down," he adds. "Even to a small number of people, we have become a symbol of resistance to Afrikaner hegemony, Afrikaner nationalism, and white domination. Also we have become a symbol of hope to elements in the black community. We have shown that Afrikaners are not all nasty, thick-crusted 'kaffir'-bashers." ○



LESOTHO

THE KING IS COUPED

By COLLEEN LOWE MORNA

The unceremonious sacking of King Moshoeshe II after years of rivalry with Lesotho's military ruler has put the focus on Major-General Justin Lekhanya's authoritarian government. Even as he quickly placed the king's son on the throne, voices were being raised against the mountain kingdom's undemocratic rule, questioning the sincerity of Lekhanya's pledge to hold multi-party elections in 1992.

King Moshoeshe II:
"The role of ceremonial
head state never satisfied
the urbane
monarch"

Mike Williams

Dusty winds swirled, but the rain refused to fall. It wasn't just fear of yet another drought that concerned the citizens of this tiny mountain kingdom that is completely surrounded by South Africa. The gods, elders said, were not happy with the way the political winds are blowing.

On the surface, things seemed to have resolved themselves rather well. Following a long history of conflict between ruler and monarch, Lesotho's military leader, Major-General Justin Lekhanya, had deposed King Moshoeshoe II, then in exile in London.

However, cognizant of the support the monarch still enjoys in rural Lesotho, Lekhanya replaced the king with the king's son, the well-built Letsie David Bereng Seeiso, who swore on a large black bible that he would "abstain from involving the monarchy in any way in politics."

At a press conference after the colorful affair, held beneath the statue of Moshoeshoe I—the illustrious founder of the Basotho nation—a self-assured Lekhanya outlined his plans for restoring the country to constitutional rule by 1992. Political parties, he said, would be unbanned by mid-1991, with elections following a year after. The army, he pledged, would go back to the barracks. "We miss that place," he laughed.

Yet even as Lekhanya talked, the high court was hearing allegations of army involvement in the murder of two former ministers, which evoked bitter memories of the major-general's own shooting of a student at the agricultural college on grounds that he was trying to prevent a rape from taking place.

Concurrently, a government commission of inquiry into "indiscipline" at the country's only university—one of the oldest and most respected in southern Africa—recommended that the National University of Lesotho's Academic Staff Association (Nulasa) be banned (*see sidebar*).

Colleen Lowe Morna is a Zimbabwean freelance journalist based in Harare.

A few days earlier, Nulasa had issued a statement saying that no matter what the justification, Lekhanya and his six-member military council did not have the right to sack the king without so much as a referendum.

Many Basotho, especially in the urban areas, did not especially like the former king, whom they saw as opportunistic and hypocritical, a respected local analyst explained. On the other hand, he maintained, the deposition of the king was just "a continuation of the undemocratic traditions here that do not augur well for 1992."

Lesotho, he predicted, is destined to move "from one crisis to the next," as the tiny country—the only one in the world completely surrounded by another—grope for an appropriate political system in the context of mounting calls for democratization in neighboring South Africa and the world at large.

The institution of the monarchy, created by the British on the logic that if it can work in London, it can work in Maseru, has undoubtedly added to the confusion in this strife-ridden country, which also ranks as one of the poorest in the world.

Unlike Swaziland, which has a monarchical tradition, and where the king enjoys executive powers, Lesotho had only a paramount chief, whom the British elevated to the status of titular monarch before Lesotho became independent in 1966. The role of ceremonial head of state never satisfied the urbane Moshoeshoe II, an Oxford-trained lawyer with a sharp mind and relentless pen.

Trouble between the ex-king and the government first surfaced in 1970, when he opposed the bloody coup that reinstated Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan after he had lost an election to the opposition Basutoland Congress Party. After refusing to endorse the state of emergency which Chief Jonathan introduced (and is still in force in Lesotho), Moshoeshoe had to take temporary refuge in the Netherlands.

In 1986, Chief Jonathan found himself in trouble with South Africa,

on which Lesotho is reliant for half its jobs and 95 percent of its imports, as a result of his support for the African National Congress and the opening of Eastern bloc embassies in Maseru.

Following a 12-day blockade—one of the most blatant cases of South African destabilization against a neighbor—Lesotho fell to Lekhanya, who was known to have close ties with Pretoria, and who immediately deported a batch of ANC refugees in return for a lifting of the blockade.

While the 1970 coup restored a civilian to power—albeit undemocratically—the 1986 coup put a military man at the helm, making Lesotho the only military government in southern Africa. To legitimize his rule, as well as to appease Moshoeshoe, Lekhanya conferred

The 1986 coup made Lesotho the only military government in southern Africa.

on him legislative and executive powers, though decisions were to be taken on the basis of advice from the military council.

Tensions soon began to surface. A major source of misunderstanding, according to Moshoeshoe's writings from London, were the close ties between Lekhanya and Pretoria. The two rivals publicly disagreed, for example, over the decision by Lekhanya to call in South African troops to curb opposition guerrillas intending to disrupt a papal tour in 1988.

Later that year, conflict between the two again surfaced when Lekhanya refused to obey the king's order to step down pending the outcome of a court case in which

Lekhanya was charged with murdering George Ramone, a student at the Lesotho Agriculture College.

Initially, Lekhanya's bodyguard agreed to take the rap. But under pressure in court, Lekhanya pleaded guilty to the murder, saying that he had shot the student while on a visit to the university one night when he heard a female student, about to be raped by Ramone, shouting out for help. Lekhanya was acquitted on the grounds of "justifiable homicide."

New wounds were opened when court proceedings began into the murder of two ministers, Vincent Makhele and Desmond Sixishe, soon after the 1986 coup.

Sources close to the government say Lekhanya initiated the case in order to get back at two of the king's relatives, Thaabe Letsie and Sekhobe Letsie, who are said to have spilled the beans about the Ramone affair, and are alleged to have been involved in the murders. In their court testimony, however, the Letsie brothers have implicated Lekhanya, whom they say had initially wanted a cover-up of the affair.

In the meantime, Moshoeshoe's refusal to endorse a removal of the Letsie brothers from the military council, and support for a fired minister who challenged Lekhanya in

court, angered Lesotho's military ruler, who stripped the king of his executive and legislative powers, forcing him to go on a trip officially described as a "sabbatical" to London in February.

That ended in November when Lekhanya issued another military order deposing the king, who said in a message from London that he would only return to Lesotho if the present government, and the largely government-appointed National Constituent Assembly, formed to review the constitution in preparation for multi-party elections in 1992, are disbanded.

Sensitive to a possible outcry by rural Basotho who were shocked by the deposition, Lekhanya moved with record speed to name Moshoeshoe's son as successor.

It was a cunning move. According to church leaders who were with the king in London—trying to negotiate his return—at the time of the deposition, a shattered Moshoeshoe found himself with little choice but to accept the decision as his best chance of keeping the title within the family. Moshoeshoe's son, now known as King Letsie III, reluctantly accepted to become what one Mosotho analyst describes as a "toy king."

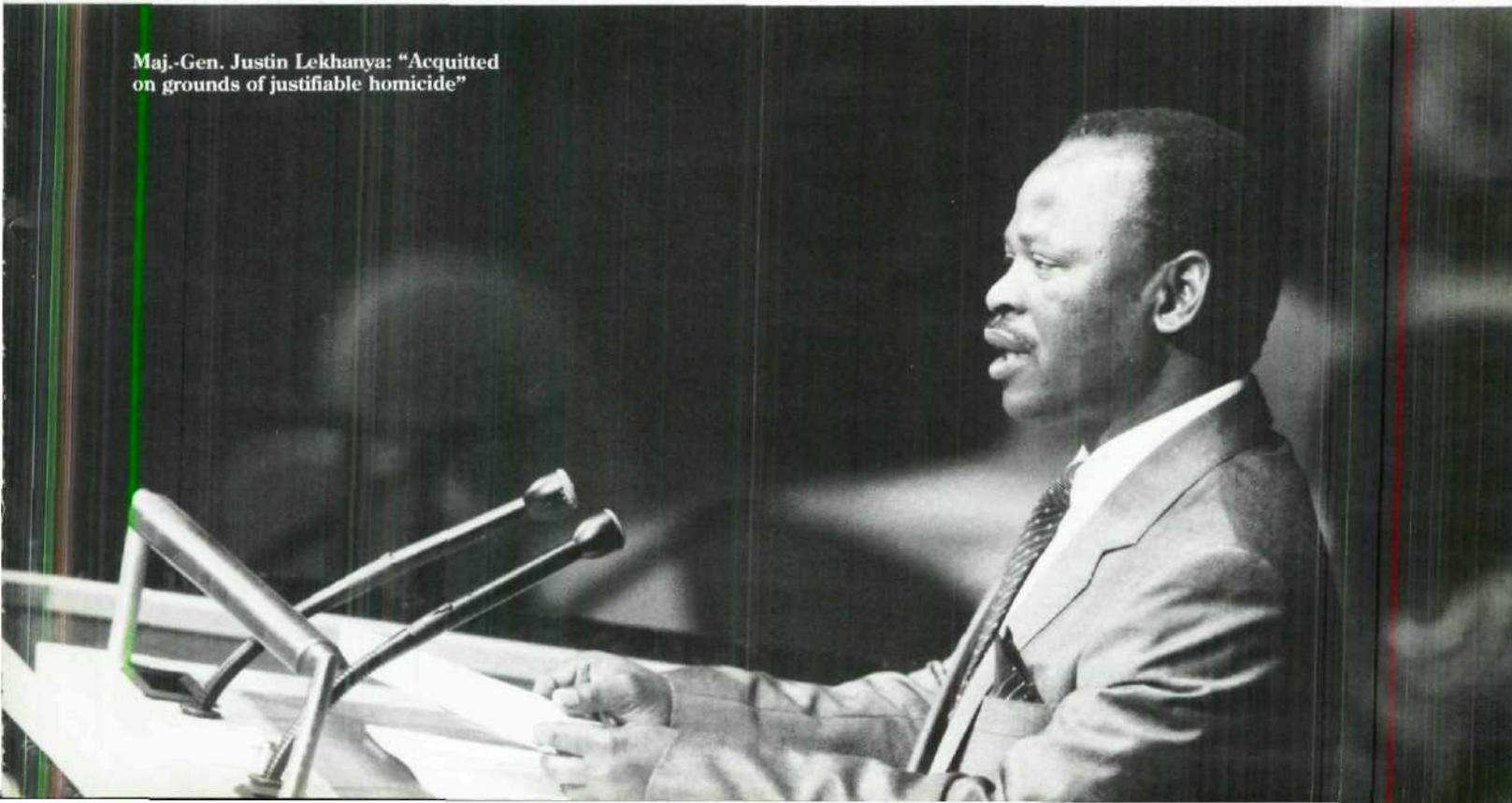
At his press conference, Lekhanya told reporters that Moshoeshoe, now known simply as Bereng Seeiso, is free to come home and participate in politics as an ordinary citizen.

In an interview with the BBC in London, the former king has hinted that he may return, and some speculate that he will try to form his own political party. "For as long as the people of Lesotho continue to be denied their civil liberties, it behooves everyone to stand up and be counted," Moshoeshoe said.

But many Basotho are distrustful of the king's sudden preoccupation with restoring Lesotho to multi-party democracy. "Why didn't he talk about this when he was here?" one Mosotho asked. "I think he is just jumping onto the multi-party bandwagon."

Lekhanya is obviously under pressure to do the same. The advent of the F.W. de Klerk government in South Africa has "marginalized the securocrats that Lekhanya used to rely on," the Lesotho analyst noted. Political changes in South Africa, where half of Lesotho's men work, are having ripple effects in the country, where *ex-mineworkers* are increasingly seen as the nucleus of a "third force" that does not derive its legitimacy from either the king or

Maj.-Gen. Justin Lekhanya: "Acquitted on grounds of justifiable homicide"



dormant opposition parties from before.

The growing insistence of Western donors on political reform as a prerequisite for aid is also having an impact on Lesotho, which is heavily reliant on external support. "There is a general feeling in the air that aid should be given to countries which have good government," says a Western diplomat in Maseru. "We are not saying what that should be, but we in the West would obviously be most comfortable with a multi-party democracy."

Such sentiments, analysts say, account for Lekhanya's decision to set up a National Constituent Assembly, which is reviewing the 1966 independence constitution for implementation in 1992. In an apparent softening of his previous stance that the ban on opposition parties would only be lifted just before the elections, Lekhanya

told reporters that this will now happen in the middle of 1991.

But many Basotho are deeply distrustful of the process. The church, for one, has refused to back the National Constituent Assembly, which is 80 percent appointed and so far has not got beyond trivia. Critics say that the impunity with which the military deposed the king—however unpopular he might have been—illustrates the vast powers that the military still has in the transition process.

Despite Lekhanya's glib remark about returning to the barracks, the military is also seeking to introduce a clause into the constitution which would secure a special role for the military in a civilian government. Analysts at the University of Lesotho who have followed this issue say that Lekhanya favors a Pinochet-style government in which civilians run

the government under the watchful eye of the military.

When asked what he personally has in mind for the future, Lekhanya was quick to respond that "should people wish me to serve, I will be prepared to serve."

Many wonder if they will have any choice. Earlier this year, when students tried to demonstrate in support of teachers striking for better pay, they were met with teargas and rubber bullets. At least two youths were shot.

The Ramone affair, apart from tarnishing the major-general's image, has instilled a deep fear among ordinary Basotho as well as destroyed much of the confidence in the legal system. "We don't say anything because we are afraid of the gun," says a teacher in rural Lesotho. She hastened to add: "That doesn't mean we don't feel anything." ○

ACADEME VS. THE ARMY

Conflict has been mounting between university and government authorities in the tiny southern African mountain kingdom of Lesotho. In late November, the National University of Lesotho Academic Staff Association (Nulasa) strongly condemned the findings of a government-appointed commission of inquiry into the university which recommends a banning of the association and suspension of two members of the faculty.

According to Nulasa chairman Mafa Senjanamane—one of the two faculty named in the report—the association "rejects the report in total." It was a disappointment, he said in an interview, "that anyone should be willing to append their signature to such a report."

Trouble started late last year when faculty boycotted the annual graduation ceremony to protest the hiring of a staff member in the politics department by the university's vice chancellor before the post had been advertised, and without the consent of the dean of faculty.

In a public address, the minister of education, Dr. L.B. Machobane, charged that owing to the activities of a few faculty "committed to the destabilization of the university," the institution had become "ungovernable."

He further announced that the government had amended the University Act of 1976 to make it possible for the three top university officials to unilaterally suspend faculty, and set up a commis-

sion of inquiry into "instability" at the university.

The commission, which comprised a judge, businessman, and retired professor appointed by the government, identified Nulasa as a destabilizing agent, and singled out its president and publicity secretary as the main culprits.

Saying that public opinion is now the only weapon left in the union's hands, Senjanamane vowed that Nulasa would "resist any attempts by the government to tamper with the union and any of its officials."

The move, he maintains, is aimed at silencing academics and students in the run-up to multi-party elections which the military government, under pressure because of changes in South Africa and Eastern Europe, has said it will permit in 1992.

Many academics are distrustful of this move and have said so openly. For example, in early November, when the military council deposed the country's King Moshoeshoe II, who has been calling for a multi-party democracy from London where he has been in exile since February, Nulasa condemned the move as unconstitutional and undemocratic.

Several members of the faculty have been involved in community groups which are likely to evolve into political parties when the ban on party politics is lifted.

—C.L.M.



ALIENATED FROM AFRICA

By ANDREW MELDRUM



What have the whites bequeathed independent Zimbabwe after 100 years of settlerdom? Most of the 90,000 whites still left in the country are alienated from black aspirations and culture. What is needed for true reconciliation, analysts say, is a sustained program to educate whites to abandon racism—an example that South Africa could learn from.

Sarah-Jane Poccie



Carneradio

On September 13, 1890, the Union Jack was first raised at Fort Salisbury to mark the British settlement of the Mashonaland territory by Cecil Rhodes' Pioneer Column. The heavily armed column consisted of 212 mercenaries paid by Rhodes, 350 British South Africa Company

mounted police, and 16 civilians, mainly prospectors. Rhodes funded the expedition to take control of the territory for gold-mining.

The spot where the flag was hoisted became Cecil Square, named after Robert Cecil, Lord Salisbury, who was British prime minister in 1890 and for whom the city was also named. Laid out like a Union Jack with sidewalks forming the cross and diagonals, the square was the center of colonial Salisbury, surrounded by

Polo grounds in Harare: "The white population has retreated to its exclusive sports clubs"

Inset: "The war was a tragedy that cut across the whole spectrum of Zimbabwean experience"

Parliament House, the Anglican cathedral, and the city's granddame hotel, the Meikles.

One hundred years later, the square is still the hub of Harare, with

Andrew Meldrum, a contributing editor to Africa Report, is an American journalist who is frontline editor of the Johannesburg Weekly Mail. Based in Harare, he also writes for The Guardian of London.

the new name African Unity Square. In September, the park floats on a cloud of cool purple, as it is ringed by lushly flowering jacaranda trees, imported by the colonialists.

Businessmen with briefcases, shoppers, and tourists stride along the sidewalks. White, and a growing number of black, "madames" haggle with the flower sellers over the chrysanthemums, roses, and other blossoms for sale. There are always scores of young black men reading newspapers and discussing the issues of the day in the square, evidence of Zimbabwe's alarming unemployment problem.

Not surprisingly, pickpockets and beggars also frequent the square. Recently, a grizzled white man was seen requesting money from a well-dressed, high-heeled black woman, who wryly smiled as she carefully dipped into her black patent-leather handbag for a few coins.

The square has adapted to its new circumstances in independent Zimbabwe, but 100 years after the first settlers raised the British flag, how have the whites themselves adapted? What is the legacy of 100 years of whites in Zimbabwe?

The centenary of the settlers' arrival was not celebrated or even noted in Harare, except for three bunches of roses—left anonymously at the square's flagpole—which withered quickly in the heat.

The country's white population, most of them immigrants from Britain and South Africa, reached its peak at 250,000 in the mid-1960s. The war for majority rule prompted many whites to leave Rhodesia, so there were about 200,000 whites living in the country in 1980. The steady stream of emigrants continued so that 10 years after majority rule, about 90,000 whites live among a total population of nearly 10 million. Even in their dwindling numbers, the whites wield considerable influence as they virtually control the country's economy and commercial farming sector.

For years, Zimbabwe has been renowned for the lack of overt antagonism by blacks against whites,

despite 90 years of oppression, including a bitter and bloody 15-year war. But in fact, the reconciliation begun by Robert Mugabe in 1980 has never gone very deep, particularly as far as the whites are concerned. Although the most offensive public displays of racism are nearly gone, the white population has simply retreated to its exclusive sports clubs, BMWs and *braais* (barbecues). They do not like mixing and their racist attitudes persist, if only in private.

"In some ways, the losers were the winners," said a Danish journalist here. "The whites have retained their economic privilege and luxurious lifestyle, and 1980 liberated them from any responsibility."

Zimbabwean novelist Chenjerai Hove says the whites have "marginalized themselves culturally." Like many others, Hove refers to most whites as Rhodesian, with only those who have accepted and become a part of change qualifying to be called Zimbabwean. Hove said the reason that whites have contributed so little to independent Zimbabwe's cultural development, particularly literature, is because "most Rhodesians don't have an emotional attachment to this place. They are alienated, outside the real dynamics, the tragedies and dramas of life here."

Hove recently wrote an essay about how Zimbabwe's whites have always distanced themselves from the country. He aptly titled the piece "100 Years of Colonial Solitude."

"They are here physically, but not spiritually," commented Hove. "Just as the Pioneer Column came to prospect for gold, most whites are here only to extract something for themselves. Their lives here are economic ventures, not spiritual ones."

That materialism is the whites' bequest to black Zimbabweans, according to Hove. "If you go into a black middle-class home, you will find the same furniture that Rhodesians have, the same type of curtains, the same pictures and copper plaques on the walls. We aspire to the same things the whites have, and

it has made us greedy," said the writer ruefully. "Too many Zimbabweans think independence simply means chasing money."

But Zimbabwe's blacks do have a firm moral guideline which the whites do not have, said Hove. Many blacks measure recent political, social, and economic events against the long war for majority rule. They question if current trends are worthy of the sacrifices made by so many for independence.

"The Willowgate scandal was our watershed," said Hove of the 1988 uproar when top government officials were found involved in an illegal car-selling racket. "When the corruption in cabinet was exposed, it was clear to all that the ministers were just chasing money. People asked, 'Is that why we fought the war?'"

Hove, a former school-teacher, won the prestigious Noma award for African literature in 1989 for his novel *Bones*, which is about the war and its effect on the lives of everyday Zimbabweans. Ten years after the war, Hove finds that whites still do not grasp the hardships and tragedies that blacks endured to win their independence.

"When I judged a national theater competition, I stayed out in a white farming district at the home of a white farmer. He told me that perhaps there would be some rude remarks from other people when I was speaking, because many white families had lost children during the war. He said they are bitter and they might not like the idea of a black man standing up in front of them and making remarks about their play," said Hove.

"I told him that a lot of families, black and white, lost children in the war, so what makes them think only their children died? So you can see, even up to now, the whites do not realize that the war was a tragedy that cut across the whole spectrum of Zimbabwean experience. They still believe it was their own personal experience."

Another critic of the continued narrow, racist view of most of Zimbabwe's whites is Reg Austin, the

only white member of the 160-person central committee of Robert Mugabe's ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF). Austin said that racial reconciliation has been successful in one way, but expensive in another way, because "the myth of white supremacy has not been destroyed. It's still strong among the whites, they still believe in it."

An unfortunate aspect about reconciliation was that it was never firmly spelled out to the whites what their part of the bargain should be, said Austin, a law professor at the University of Zimbabwe.

"The whites should have been told that while the government would ensure peace by meeting the black population's aspirations in education, health and land, it would be the job of the white economy to actually invest in jobs," said Austin. "There should have been a much more specific quid pro quo proclaimed at the time of independence."

Unlike Hove, Austin feels that many Rhodesians do love the country and believes that more might have been done since independence to build up that patriotism among whites. The Rhodesian government had a psychological secretariat and the army a psychological operatives unit which, through several intensive public relations campaigns, instilled a tenacious sense of racial superiority to which many whites still cling today.

An intriguing possibility, suggested in 1980 but not implemented, was to appoint Sir Robert Burley to oversee a program to effect full reconciliation and to steer the white community away from their closed, racist attitudes. Burley was the head of Britain's prestigious Eton College and had headed the de-Nazification program in post-war West Germany. He also had a Rhodesian connection, as he had been part of the commission which in the 1950s proposed the foundation of the University of Rhodesia.

"No doubt he would have come up with many sophisticated, far-reach-

ing campaigns to wean whites away from their negative attitudes, like the British and American programs to encourage democracy in Germany and Japan," said Austin. "The need for a comprehensive, long-range program like that to break down the whites' 'laager' mentality is an important lesson for South Africa. Our experience shows that a change in attitude will not simply come with time, whites need to be educated and encouraged to abandon racism."

Raised in colonial Rhodesia's pervasive racism, Austin credits his growth away from racist beliefs to his education at the University of Cape Town, particularly courses taught by Jack Simons, a well-known member of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party.

As a young lawyer working in the attorney-general's office in 1958, Austin came in contact with Joshua Nkomo and other African nationalists in detention for demonstrating against racial injustices.

"I spent many afternoons talking with these guys in the corridors and the cells. That started opening my eyes," said Austin. "I learned a lot from them and they began to trust me."

From that point, Austin became a supporter of the nationalist movement and a member of Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu). He was one of a handful of the country's whites who allied themselves with the African nationalist cause, in contrast to the more significant numbers of white South Africans who are active in the anti-apartheid movement.

Zimbabwe's whites often point to the technological development they brought to the country in 100 years as a contribution which benefitted the whole population and as a justification for their minority rule. Austin agrees that the whites did a good job of transplanting technology to serve what was then 5 percent of the population.

"It was a very impressive achievement for that limited purpose," he said. "But immediately when the

infrastructure was expected to serve 100 percent of the population, it failed miserably. Only if the development were to help democratize the population can it be judged as meritorious. So their boast of bringing development is a bit hollow."

Zambia's infrastructural decline could happen in Zimbabwe, according to Austin. "The only way to prevent Zambia's slide from happening here is to bring blacks in to keep things up. Black Zimbabweans have always been very impressed with how the Rhodesians developed the infrastructure here. They admired it and now they are trying to maintain it and extend it. A great entrepreneurial spirit developed among the blacks, but the Rhodesians prevented them from using it by keeping them out of all commerce. As a result, it is touch and go whether we will go the Zambian route."

Austin feels it is too early to determine the legacy of whites in Zimbabwe. "I suspect the outcome of 100 years of whites interchanging with Zimbabweans won't be known for another 100 years. Certainly we can't see what has happened in 10 years," said Austin. "In very important respects, things are immensely different and better, but somehow there is a continuity with the Rhodesian past that is worrying."

Ultimately the whites' contribution to the country will be judged on how successfully the economic infrastructure can be adapted to serve the majority, said Austin.

"As long as the whites can live like kings, then they'll stay," said Austin. "But to justify their continued privilege, they must transfer technology to the majority to allow the economy to expand. The business community is beginning to realize that must be done. For the first five years of independence, the white businesses did nothing, apart from appointing black personnel managers and non-executive directors. Now they are beginning to realize that they must really bring blacks to positions of responsibility. That is the test of what kind of legacy the whites will leave." ○

Waaw!... WOW!

Move over, Paris—African bands are trying to make New York the cynosure for their music. The first such

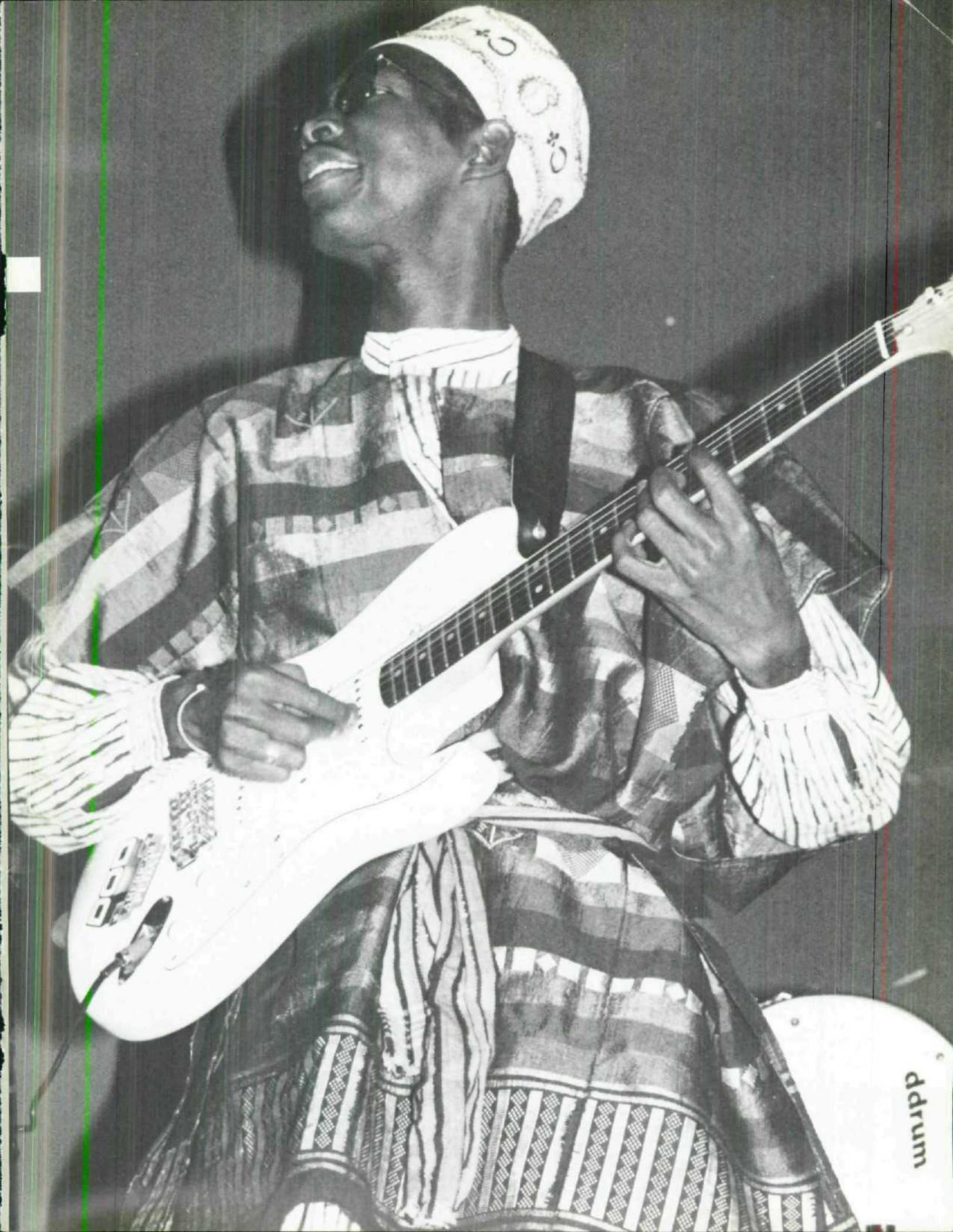


Margaret A. Novicki

Mor Dior Seck and Magette Fall: "A tight and infectious concoction of Afro-pop"

combo based in the Big Apple, Waaw!, is winning over New Yorkers with its own mix of Senegalese *m'balax*, mandingo music, and Afro-pop.

By **DAPHNE TOPOUZIS**



ddrum

O

ver the past 20 years, Paris has been a musical mecca for West African artists, from Touré Kunda to Salif Keita—so much

so that every aspiring West African musician at some stage in his career makes the French capital his home. New York, on the other hand, has mostly served as refuge for a handful of exiled South African musicians, such as Hugh Masekela and Dollar Brand. Yet, as the African community in New York grows, it is beginning

Previous page: "Flowing boubous and dazzling acrobatic dance routines by guitarist Amadou Ndiaye made the show a rare event"

Below, Joshua Roseman, Abdu M'Backé, and Wesley Wirth: "A band of a kind not seen before in North America"

to attract a small nucleus of accomplished musicians who are eager to establish a base in the U.S., make African music palatable to American tastes, and win over the U.S. market.

New York's first African band calls itself Waaw!, (which is Wolof for "yes") and boasts of top talent from West Africa's most celebrated bands: ex-Baaba Maal musicians Amadou Boly Ndiaye on guitar and M'Baye Niassa on drums; former Super Diamono keyboard player Abdou M'Backé; Mar Gueye on the *sabar* drums from Doudou N'Diaye Rose; and Mor Dior, former lead singer of the Senegalese National Orchestra. Add to this impressive list Senegalese *tama* (talking drum) master Magette Fall, Joshua Roseman, an American of Jamaican origin on horns, and Wesley Wirth on bass and you have a band of a kind not seen before in North America.

Waaw!'s music is vibrantly con-

temporary, unabashedly mixing Senegalese *m'balax* with Afro-beat and Mandingo music. *M'balax* is a complex amalgam of distinct layers of interlocking rhythms developed by Youssou N'Dour and the Super Etoile de Dakar. Mandingo music, on the other hand, which goes back hundreds of years and is played across West Africa, features the kora, the balafon and the *djembe* drums. In an interview with *Africa Report*, Abdou M'Backé explained that what Waaw! is trying to do is to take traditional *djembe* rhythms and translate them into modern rhythms, while also recreating the sounds of the kora and the balafon through the synthesizer, "always keeping a balance between the traditional and the modern, the African and the Western."

The result is a tight and infectious concoction of Afro-pop, which, judging from the number of hips swaying

Margaret A. Novicki



on the Kilimanjaro dance floor at their New York premiere, instantly won over the Senegalese and American audience. "Even we, the band, were surprised at our success that night," said Amadou Boly Ndiaye. "We knew we had worked hard and had something new to offer both the African and the American audience, but the enthusiasm of the crowd took us all by surprise."

The band effortlessly moved in and out of a variety of musical styles, from the traditional *m'balax*, to more funky tunes, a jazzy instrumental song, and rhythms which fused elements of Super Diamono, Baaba Maal, and Doudou N'Diaye Rose all in one glorious *mélange*. Flowing boubous and dazzling acrobatic dance routines by Amadou Ndiaye made the show a rare event. Even more importantly, the fact that the band was clearly enjoying itself added to the ambience.

However, what seemed like a spontaneous and effortless merging of talent on stage was in effect the result of hard work over the past year, as the band came together only gradually. Ndiaye and Niassé came to the U.S. to pursue a musical adventure of sorts—"to develop contacts with the music world in North America and help us develop an original, international style," said Ndiaye. Mar Gueye joined next, Magette Fall (who plays the *tama* or talking drum) followed. When Abdou M'Backé came to New York for a recording session, he met with Amadou Ndiaye at the Kilimanjaro where Ouzin Ndiaye, Youssou N'Dour's *chef d'orchestre*, was playing, and it was then that the idea of the band solidified.

The only thing left was to find a singer, and Mor Dior was flown in from Senegal.

The lyrics of the songs relate the

"The challenge is to fuse a variety of beats and styles, so as to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, without ever forgetting one's own cultural heritage and roots."

experiences of Africans in New York, especially why they leave Africa to come to the U.S. A favorite theme is adventure. "Adventure encompasses everything," said Ndiaye. "In the beginning you do not know where exactly you are going and what you are going to find in a new world, but if one is optimistic and has faith in what one does, things work out."

The band is convinced that New York can one day become like Paris, a center for African music. "Music does not have frontiers anymore," said Ndiaye, "and there is a certain decentralization taking place at the moment. African musicians are looking for new horizons to develop their talent and New York might well become one of them. It can spread like wildfire by word of mouth, because people today listen to all kinds of music. If one band succeeds here, more will follow." M'Backé pointed out that being based in a New York is a real challenge because the U.S. is what he called "virgin territory" for African musicians, while Paris is cluttered with dozens of

bands. "New York is the center of popular music that has audiences worldwide and being here, we can learn from rock, jazz, and soul musicians," he said.

Waaw! has already written enough songs to fill up two records and wants to set up its own production company. But there is still more work to be done, said Ndiaye, to make the beat of *m'balax* more accessible to an audience that is not used to multiple layers of beat and interlocking rhythms. The main thing, the band believes, is to develop a beat that can be delivered with a message that will strike a chord in a generation of Americans who are ready to listen closely to African music. Waaw! recognizes that language plays an important role in the accessibility of the songs and Ndiaye mentioned that the band would soon start to sing in English, maybe even Spanish.

The band is also considering getting an American singer on a permanent basis, in an effort to move toward a total fusion of African and American music. "The challenge is to fuse a variety of beats and styles, so as to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, without ever forgetting one's own cultural heritage and roots," said Ndiaye. M'Backé explains: "If we wanted to do African music for Africans, we would have stayed in Africa. The whole point about being in the U.S. is to make music for an international audience." Wesley Wirth put it even more succinctly: "Right now we sound more or less like an African band. I would like to see us fusing sounds existing here in North America, more particularly the funky beat of pop music, with the intensity and complexity of African sounds," he said, admitting that the objective was very ambitious but more than that, very tempting.

While New York's nascent African band has a long way to go, it has certainly had a dynamic and promising start. A U.S. tour is in the works and more concerts in New York are forthcoming. Will this original experiment work? The answer might well be Waaw! ○



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