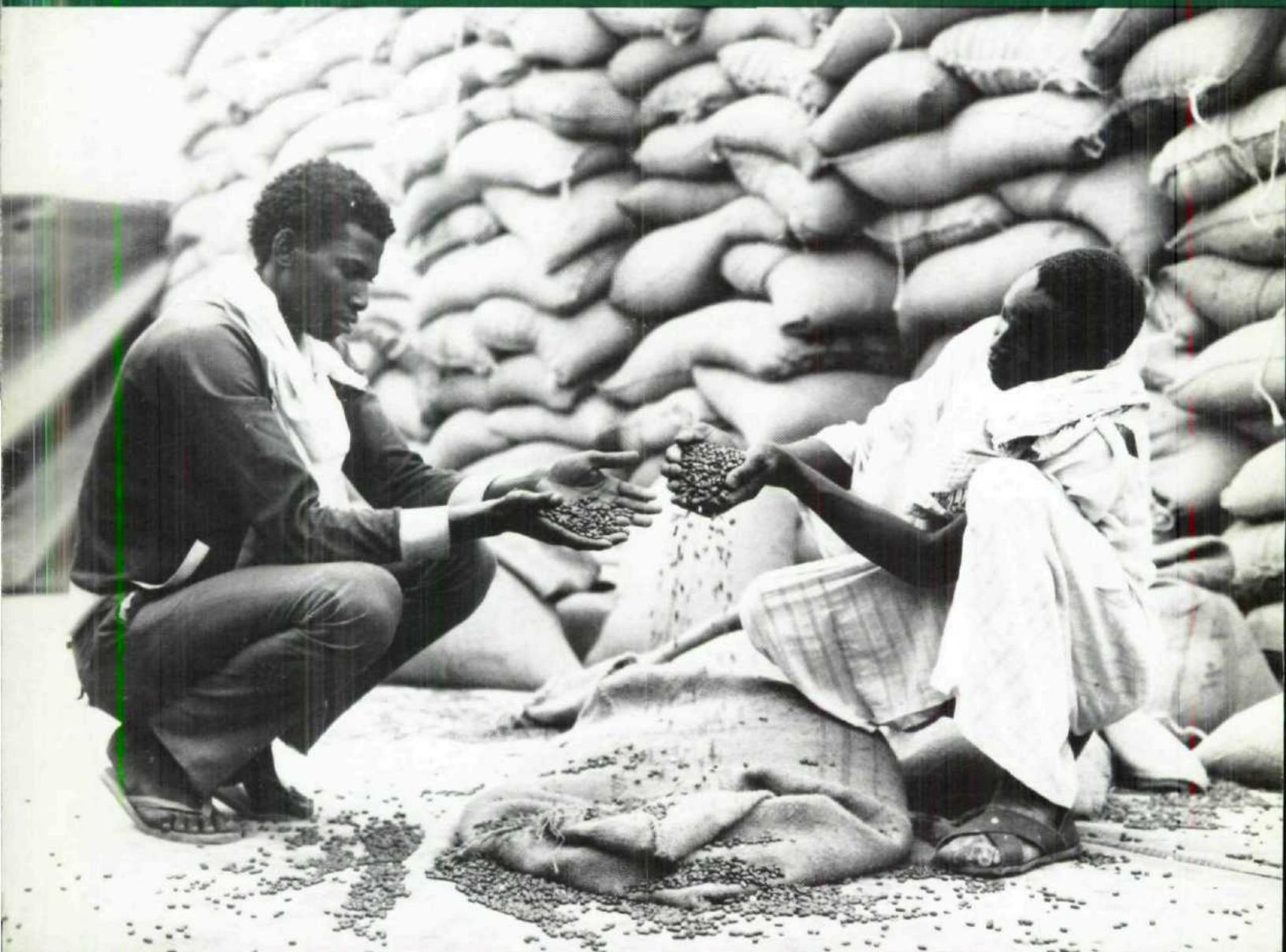


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# AFRICA REPORT

JULY-AUGUST 1989

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## SUDAN

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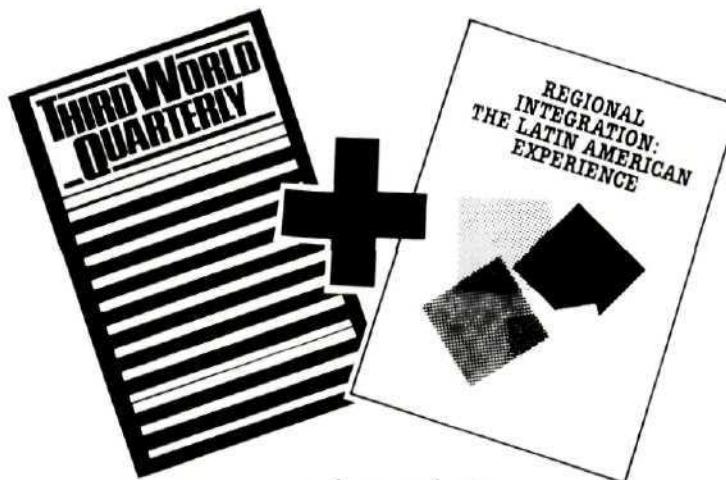
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# AFRICA REPORT

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ON AFRICA

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## Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Michael Maren's article on the oil embargo against South Africa (Mar-Apr 1989) was timely and informative and I basically accept the accuracy of the Shipping Research Bureau's (SRB) statistics which he cites. Nor do I have any quarrel with Maren's analysis or conclusions. However, he includes numerous factual errors which must be corrected:

- Sasol was not created in the late 1960s, but in 1947. Its decision to convert coal to oil was made in 1950, and its first conversion plant began operating in 1955.

- South Africa's stockpiling of oil did not begin in 1969. Funding for this program was initiated in 1964, and oil was stored in abandoned mines as early as 1966.

- The UN did not first vote for an oil embargo against South Africa in 1973. The first call for an embargo appeared in a General Assembly resolution on Namibia in 1963. The first resolution specifically aimed at South Africa was passed by the General Assembly in December 1977.

- Maren estimates South African oil imports at 220,000 barrels per day. I would claim that the rate is about 100,000 b/d higher than that. Although imports are supplemented by oil from the SASOL process, the amount cited by Maren would be insufficient to cover domestic consumption considering that oil is also stockpiled, sold to Namibia and neighboring states, lost in the refining process, and provided as bunkers to passing vehicles.

- Maren maintains that Kuwait is "an oil producer whose oil never shows up in South Africa." This is surely an exaggeration. The most famous delivery to South Africa of all time, aboard the Salem in December

1979, originated in Kuwait. According to the September 1988 report of the SRB, which Maren cites, there were at least five deliveries from Kuwait during the period January 1979 to August 1987, including two cargoes in 1985-86.

Maren has rendered a service in publicizing an important issue, but his careless research has marred an otherwise useful account.

—Arthur Jay Klinghoffer  
Professor of Political Science  
Rutgers University

To the Editor:

For the past 20 years, the Somali dictator, Siad Barre, and his thugs have been murdering our people and committing human rights violations that defy comprehension, yet most of the world has remained indifferent. We must commend Richard Greenfield's efforts and commitment in documenting and detailing to us the atrocities committed by this bloodthirsty dictator against his own people ("Barre's Unholy Alliances," Mar-Apr 1989).

The Somali people have been denied their basic rights to have a representative democratic government, to speak against corruption and oppression, and voice their desire to live freely as they choose in their own country. Since 1969, those few courageous ones who dared to challenge the legitimacy of this regime have been brutally murdered or imprisoned under torture. The consensus was and still is that speaking out against the regime is punishable by death.

It is very disturbing to know that governments such as Libya, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, and others have come to the rescue of this very unpopular and ruthless

regime, while others choose to be silent. It might be politically savvy to be silent, but let these governments know that the Somali people will survive. It is important that the record show at least this Somali citizen's outrage and hurt.

The Somali people have been subjected to the worst kind of oppression and humiliation for so long and now is the time for all of us to intensify our struggle for a free and just system. We will know and remember those who came to our rescue and stood by us in our day of need, and we will remember who barred the gate against our hopes and dreams and watched us suffer.

Abdirahman Dirie Mohamed  
Houston, Texas

To the Editor:

In May 1988, Gen. Mohamed Siad Barre waged unholy war against the Somali people to suppress a popular uprising against his brutal regime. He flattened major cities in northern Somalia, including Hargeisa and Burao. His security forces killed thousands of unarmed civilians, including women and children, and forced over 400,000 civilians into exile in Ethiopia.

Presently, the General and his security forces are engaging in war against the people which is not limited to northern Somalia because the popular revolt against the regime has spread throughout the country. We are requesting the United States once again to withhold aid until the General stops this war against the people of Somalia, restores human rights, and gives power back to the people.

Ali Hashi Sahal  
United Somali Congress  
Voorhees, New Jersey

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

**The editor retains the right to abridge or otherwise alter letters for space or other editorial requirements. It is editorial policy to maintain a balance of views on controversial issues. All letters should bear the name and address of the sender. Requests for anonymity and non-divulgance will be requested, but such a requirement may render the letter less likely to be published.**

# UPDATE

## IN THE NEWS

### Lekhanya Fights for His Political Life

Maj.-Gen. **Justin Metsing Lekhanya**, head of Lesotho's military government, is facing demands to resign from King **Moshoeshoe II** and senior officials following a published report in *The Observer*, the reputable London-based weekly, implicating him in a corruption scandal and the fatal shooting of a college student in Maseru. But so far, Lekhanya has managed to cling to power by appealing over the heads of the ruling Military Council to junior officers—a tactic which has left the government in a state of paralysis and produced fears that a split in the army could lead to possible bloodshed.

According to the report, the 51-year-old leader shot a student, **George Ramone**, at Maseru's Agriculture College in December 1988, and then ordered a bodyguard to make a false statement to police claiming responsibility. The incident was then hushed up by senior police and other officials until a highly placed government source revealed that Lekhanya had privately admitted at a staff meeting of 16 key members of the administration that he had shot the victim.

Lekhanya is said to have gunned down Ramone when he found him trying to rape a woman named **Puleng Makara** just off the college campus on the night of December 23. He reportedly told the staff meeting that he was "on patrol" in the college grounds when he spotted Ramone sexually assaulting Makara. Lekhanya challenged him, and when the student ran away, he fired a shot which killed him. Lesotho's head of state, however, offered no explanation as to why he was patrolling the college at night, but rumors have spread in Maseru that he was having a relationship with the woman.

Details of Lekhanya's role in this murky affair have only added to his woes, given that allegations of corruption have also surfaced against him. In

particular, a Taiwanese businessman, **Vincent Lai**, gave Lekhanya a 20 percent share in his company for about \$75 in February 1988 even though the firm had a listed value of \$87,000.

Shortly thereafter, the Military Council informed an Italian businessman, **Giuseppe Florio**, that he was violating the law for operating a stone quarry at a site called Ha Foso without a mining license. Lai's company was then awarded the license, boosting its value to an estimated \$545,000 and Lekhanya's share to about \$109,000.



Lekhanya: Hanging on by a thread

When Florio challenged the decision, the government withdrew his residency permit and gave him three weeks to leave the country, despite the fact that he is married to a Lesotho national and has been living in the country for 14 years.

Should Lekhanya be forced to quit as pressure mounts within the Military Council for his resignation, such a development could have far-reaching regional implications because of Lesotho's strategically key position

within white-ruled South Africa. Lekhanya has worked closely with South Africa since coming to power in January 1986 in a coup widely believed to have been engineered by Pretoria, meaning that his fall would likely be a setback for the apartheid regime. ■

### South African Agents Grounded in ANC Hijack Fiasco

One of the most audacious covert operations ever undertaken by alleged members of the South African security forces against the African National Congress (ANC) ended in dismal failure recently when two white undercover agents were foiled as they tried to hijack a Soviet airliner flying from Angola to Tanzania with 174 Umkhonto we Sizwe guerrillas aboard. Armed with hand grenades, explosives, and detonators, the two South Africans had hoped to score what would have been a tremendous propaganda coup by forcing the Aeroflot jet to fly to Johannesburg where the guerrillas would have been immediately arrested. But they were instead overpowered and disarmed by Soviet guards in a mid-air shoot-out.

One of the hijackers, **Bradley Richard Stacey**, was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in a Dar es Salaam court in early June after pleading guilty to charges of carrying weapons and explosives onto the airliner, while the second faces a similar fate upon release from a Tanzanian military hospital. Stacey, a former official of Nusas, the South African students' union which has long been the target of infiltration by the security forces, reportedly was a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe and went by the guerrilla name of **Douglas Hodges**.

Senior ANC officials revealed that Stacey had been under observation by the organization for some time, having aroused some suspicion among commanders in southern Angola after it was determined that he was not suited

for further military training. He had been working in the ANC's library near Luanda when he was told he would be transferred to Tanzania as part of the December 22 regional peace accord between South Africa, Angola, and Cuba requiring the organization to shut down its bases in Angola, but he was apparently not suspected of being an undercover agent.

Capt. R.A. Crewe, a spokesman in the South African police command in Pretoria, predictably denied any official involvement in the hijacking, blaming the incident on disillusioned ANC dissidents who were resisting attempts to ship them out to internment camps in Tanzania or Uganda, never to be heard of again. He pointed to anonymous letters sent to several South African journalists in May that were allegedly written by dissident ANC guerrillas, criticizing the organization's decision to move its bases to East Africa. "They correspond with our information that hundreds of ANC members are dissatisfied and don't want to go to those countries, but want to return home," said Crewe. The ANC dismissed the letters as forgeries mailed by the South African security police.

While it may well be that the ANC's departure from Angola has led to some dissatisfaction among Umkhonto we Sizwe guerrillas, it certainly would not be the first time that the organization's exile training bases have been penetrated by security police agents posing as anti-apartheid activists. Indeed, a number of "activists" have been sent for guerrilla training to the frontline states and abroad over the years only to later resurface in South Africa as senior officers in the security police. ■

## Morocco Forced to Bury Clandestine Toxic Waste Deal

The Moroccan government has denied making a secret deal with a British-backed consortium to build the world's largest toxic waste disposal plant in the world, after a report on the proposal was leaked to *The Guardian* of London due to fears that the controversial project could not be adequately controlled. The \$200 million hazardous waste disposal facility was to have been built in the Moroccan-occupied section of Western Sahara near the

town of Tarfaya, but once the plan became public, embarrassed authorities in Rabat said they had not been informed that the waste would be toxic and indicated that the plan would have to be shelved.

Midco, the consortium, intended to export 2,000 tons of toxic waste a day to Tarfaya from Europe and North America and burn it to produce electricity and a series of other useful byproducts. King Hassan II had been told the lucrative operation would help Morocco to industrialize by setting up a port and industrial estate to process the vast quantities of waste, but he apparently had not yet been made aware of its dangerous contents. The consortium had predicted a revenue of \$250 million a year after five years.

Pat Dolan, a director of Midco, said he had hoped to keep the plan secret until he had it "sewn up" in order to keep competitors out of the picture. He had conceptualized the project a year ago during the controversy over the Karin B, the vessel carrying a shipment of toxic waste that no port was willing to accept. "I realized that if you could offer a solution to these problems you would be doing the world a service and making some money. I am not the only man looking at this so I wanted to move quickly and in secret," he admitted.

However, Claude Cornet, a Canadian who was hired by Midco because of his connections to the Moroccan royal family, came to have increasing doubts about the project after taking part in a series of meetings designed to gain King Hassan's approval. Cornet noted that a document "selling" the scheme to the King was misleading as it referred only to oil wastes, described as hydrocarbons, but made no mention of toxic substances. The brief also characterized the waste as being non-explosive, even though some of it would be dangerous and volatile.

As a result, Cornet left the employment of the consortium and decided to expose the scheme, particularly after he became worried that Morocco lacked the proper know-how to operate the plant safely. "I did not think they had the necessary expertise," argued Cornet. "Certainly it is hard to see any native workforce with the education and knowledge to understand what they are dealing with and realize the dangers. The Sahara is a fragile environ-

ment with a large freshwater reservoir underneath. It would be a tragedy if that water supply were contaminated."

Dolan rejected accusations that Midco was trying to mislead King Hassan, arguing simply that the words toxic waste were "probably lost in translation." He also denied lack of expertise and claimed the support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the project, stressing that all the technology Midco would be using was proven. The scheme, said Dolan, is based on a rational approach to the problem of disposing toxic waste. "Any criticism is extremely irresponsible from the environmental standpoint."



King Hassan: Dumps toxic waste deal

Rational approach or not, any plan to export large quantities of toxic waste to a country like Morocco is certain to be highly controversial and would have been roundly condemned by the Organization of African Unity. In the past year, a series of documented cases involving toxic waste dumping in a host of African countries without its true contents being disclosed has provoked bitter resentment in Third World nations and prompted calls for stiffer export controls in Europe and the U.S. But with the prospects of enormous profits as an enticement, the danger always remains that some African governments in dire economic straits will find it difficult to resist mortgaging their country's future in return for a short-term financial windfall. ■

## SOUTH AFRICA

After 14 months in detention, Peter Mokaba, president of the South African Youth Congress (Sayco) and one-time "most wanted" activist, was finally released in late May when the state unexpectedly dropped its charges of terrorism. Mokaba, who was freed from Robben Island on appeal in 1985 after serving a year of his sentence for "membership in the African National Congress' military wing," has been the target of 17 assassination attempts and fears he may have to pay for his newfound freedom with his life.

The release of Mokaba and the recent escape from hospital of two Sayco national executive members, Simon Ntombela and Ephraim Nkoe, leaves General Secretary Rapu Molekane as the organization's only leader still in detention. Mokaba masterminded the successful clandestine launch of Sayco in 1987 at the height of the emergency clamp-down, but was subsequently forced completely underground by restrictions prohibiting the organization from "performing any acts or activities whatsoever."

## SOMALIA

President Siad Barre's regime received \$1.4 million of U.S. military aid only one month after the outbreak of civil war in northern Somalia, much of which "was used by the government at a critical point in the conflict," according to a recent report released by the General Accounting Office. The findings, which are certain to embarrass the U.S. administration, reveal that in June 1988, Barre's government deployed the aid to bomb and destroy residential communities and execute hundreds of fleeing civilians accused of links with the opposition Somali National Movement.

To appease growing criticism of human rights abuses, Barre released 300 of an estimated 1,000 political prisoners, but the report concludes that the steps taken so far are "limited," with 350,000 Isaaq refugees in Ethiopia still afraid to return to the military-controlled north. As a result, \$21 million of much needed U.S. economic aid has been put on hold until there is a marked improvement in the government's human rights record.

## KENYA

In the face of mounting international criticism of its human rights record, President Daniel arap Moi's government released the last seven "remaining" detainees imprisoned without trial or charge in early June, and declared a general amnesty and pardon to all dissidents in exile. The decree, which came only days after Moi spoke of a "new era of tolerance and forgiveness" at a political rally, marks his second mass release of untried political prisoners since coming to power in 1978.

Following their release, former Nairobi University professor Mukuru Nganga and lawyer Wanyiri Kihoro provoked controversy by suing the state for illegal confinement, while ex-detainee Mirugi Kariuki angered authorities for graphically describing the torture he suffered as a prisoner. In response, Mark Too, Nandi District chairman of the ruling party, has urged Parliament to adopt a bill providing for harsh penalties for defiant ex-detainees, including corporal punishment and hard labor after re-arrest.

## POLITICAL POINTERS

### THE GAMBIA

*Torch* editor Sana "Ticks" Manneh, who has gained fame in Banjul as the "accuser of corruption," was acquitted of two of the three libel charges brought against him by three government ministers after he had published details of their alleged wrongdoings. Justice Wallace Grant then dismissed the third charge that Manneh had tried to defame Finance Minister Saihou Sabally, and to make matters worse for the government, the magistrate seemed to agree with the journalist's corruption claims.

Sabally, Information Minister Lamin Saho, and Lands and Natural Resources Minister Landing Jallow Sonko, said they would appeal the verdict, but now all eyes are on President Dawda Jawara, who last year challenged anyone who knew of corruption to report it. So far, Jawara has not taken any decisive action, but if he fails to dismiss the ministers, he could lose face with the U.S. and other foreign aid donors who have been pushing for a clean-up.

## ZIMBABWE

Two leading members of Edgar Tekere's new Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), who had been campaigning for a key parliamentary by-election in Harare's Dzivarasekwa constituency, were arrested in early June. Davison Gomo, the opposition leader's chief aide, Lazarus Mutungwazi, a senior spokesman, and 11 others were held for questioning in what Tekere claimed was a "smear campaign" by the government to discredit the ZUM before the by-election—won in early July by the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union.

ZUM, which has been fiercely attacked by ministers and the government-controlled press since its formation in April, claimed the arrests were linked to those of four army officers and a former brigadier who had allegedly plotted to steal weapons from an armory in the eastern city of Mutare, Tekere's political stronghold. A party statement said these detentions were thought to be "part of a purge of suspected ZUM sympathizers within the army."

## NIGERIA

Alhaji Balarabe Musa, former governor of Kaduna State who launched the People's Liberation Party (PLP) in May, is one of several leading radical intellectuals to have been arrested since President Ibrahim Babangida lifted the ban on party politics. The government's backlash against perceived "radical elements" includes the compulsory retirement of Yusufu Bala Usman, a lecturer at Ahmadu Bello University, and the arrest of Chief Gani Fawehinmi, the prominent Lagos-based human rights lawyer.

As a past political leader who is banned from politics until 1992, Musa is being held under Decree No. 2, which empowers the authorities to detain any person considered a security risk. He also faces a three-count charge of organizing a political party in a manner prejudicial to the transition to civil rule program, but PLP stalwart Richard Umaru vowed not to back down. "Whether this regime likes it or not, whether we are registered or not registered, the cause for which we are fighting is going to be attained."

## AFRICAN OUTLOOK

*New military junta in Sudan vows to end civil war*

When Lt.-Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmed el-Bashir led a successful military coup to overthrow Sadiq al-Mahdi's increasingly ineffective civilian government in late June, it likely took few in Sudan by surprise. The only surprise was that the army did not intervene earlier—the country's massive political and economic problems probably having acted as a substantial deterrent.

Mahdi had been elected prime minister three years earlier to deal with a ruinous civil war between the north and south, a bankrupt economy, and a bitter dispute over the harsh implementation of Islamic Sharia law. But by the time the army moved in to topple his coalition government, the very same problems remained, only now they were even worse.

In particular, the protracted civil war which has ravaged the country since 1983 when Col. John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) started fighting against the government of then-President Gaafar al-Nimeiry for imposing Sharia law, has brought Sudan to the brink of collapse. The conflict has produced millions of refugees and a war-exacerbated famine which took the lives of at least 250,000 southerners last year alone.

The Mahdi government's inability to bring the war to a quick and decisive end led Sudan's commander-in-chief, Gen. Fahti Ahmed Ali, and 150 senior officers, including Bashir, to issue an ultimatum to the prime minister in February: Negotiate with the SPLA or see the military withdraw its support. Mahdi survived by forming a new government and initiating peace talks with the rebel movement, but the army's patience with Khartoum finally wore out. Despite the SPLA's announcement of a unilateral cease-fire in May and a second round of negotiations scheduled for July, the army stepped in, frustrated by Mahdi's foot-dragging and the constant squabbling of the country's politicians.

Only two weeks earlier, Mahdi had put down another coup attempt, arresting 14 army officers and 48 civilians

who had allegedly sought to bring Nimeiry back to power. Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Khartoum to protest over food shortages, shouting slogans: "Bread, bread, or the army." Nimeiry promptly announced he would be ending his four-year exile in Egypt and "do all my best to save Sudan and to relieve Sudan from the chains of sectarianism," but it was Bashir and his supporters in the army who acted more swiftly to topple the government in a carefully planned coup.

Ridiculing Mahdi's peace initiatives as "political machinations and not serious," Bashir pledged to conclude "an honorable peace" with the SPLA. "Our primary goal is peace and we are the people most suffering from war," he

said. Within days, the country's new military leader launched a double initiative: declaring a one-month cease-fire and offering a general amnesty to anyone fighting the government for political reasons. Bashir subsequently invited Garang to Khartoum to negotiate directly with the military government as "an initiative to demonstrate good intent," and also requested Ethiopian mediation, which the government promptly accepted.

The 43-year-old Bashir, who elevated his own rank from brigadier to lieutenant-general, rapidly consolidated his position after the bloodless coup by naming a 15-member Revolutionary Council of mainly mid-level officers and dismissing 28 generals and virtual-

*Continued on next page*

*Dos Santos and Savimbi shake hands but doubts still cloud Angolan peace deal*

A symbolic handshake between Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos and Unita rebel leader Jonas Savimbi in late June has set the seal on a peace deal which could break a 14-year-long impasse in the country's civil war. The bitter rivals agreed to a formal cease-fire and promised to open peace talks on a government of national reconciliation at a summit in Gbadolite, Zaire, hosted by President Mobutu Sese Seko and attended by 17 other African heads of state, but as dos Santos was quick to point out, the accord is only "a first step," with key details still to be ironed out.

Upon his return from the summit, dos Santos told the politburo of the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) that his government had accepted four main points in the peace plan: an immediate cease-fire; the creation of a commission to be set up under Mobutu's chairmanship to integrate Unita members into Angolan institutions; an end to outside interference in Angola's affairs—regarded as a reference to U.S. support for the rebel movement; and a decision on the "spe-

cial case" of Savimbi which he could not disclose in public. While there was no mention in the Gbadolite Declaration of what will become of Savimbi, Angolan officials said privately that the rebel leader had agreed verbally to step aside from the political arena and leave the country temporarily to help the peace process along.

That was also the position taken by Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda who claimed that Savimbi, having agreed to go into exile, would be allowed to live in Lusaka as long as Angolan authorities did not object. But Mobutu flatly contradicted Kaunda's interpretation of the accord. "The report on which the agreement is based was drawn by me," said Mobutu. "There is nothing about exile."

Savimbi later quashed speculation that he had agreed to go into exile, even though he did pledge full support for the peace plan. As he put it, "If you don't defeat a man, you can't send him into exile." Unita's representative in Washington, Jardo Muekalia, added that the cease-fire was "just a starting

*Continued on page 10*

## SUDAN...continued

ly the entire senior command of the armed forces loyal to the former government. He also imposed a state of emergency, suspended the constitution, and dissolved Parliament, political parties, and trade unions.

The security forces immediately arrested several cabinet ministers in Khartoum and later captured Mahdi after a week on the run. Mohammed Osman al-Mirghani, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, and Hassan al-Tourabi, head of the fundamentalist National Islamic Front, were among the leading politicians to have been detained. Bashir announced that Mahdi



Mahdi: Failed to deliver the goods

and other politicians associated with his three-year rule would be tried before emergency tribunals and could face the death penalty if convicted.

He went on to blame Sudan's 36 political parties for allowing the country to drift into ruin and vowed no return to the multi-party political system. "We are racing against time to solve the chronic problems of the country," he argued, "and we do not have time to waste in marginal differences and disputes."

Bashir said the new military government would offer a referendum on the future of Islamic law and any other contentious issue which has become an obstacle to bringing the civil war to an

## Economic recovery: Africa's alternative

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has launched a controversial new plan to tackle the continent's economic crisis in a recently released 60-page report, entitled, "African alternative framework to structural adjustment programmes for socio-economic recovery and transformation," which it hopes will be capable of challenging the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The architect of the document, ECA Executive Secretary Adebayo Adedeji, said at a London press conference in early July that the last decade has been one of disaster and economic bankruptcy which in future must be avoided at all cost, "otherwise we will not have lost just a decade. We will have lost a generation." He went on to paint a bleak picture of a region in continuing decline, noting that Africa is the only continent where per capita output has dropped consistently throughout the decade, falling from \$752 in 1980 to \$641 (in constant dollars) in 1987.

Adedeji then pointed to what the ECA sees as a failure on the part of the world's major lending and development institutions to adopt policies that solve the structural distortions plaguing Africa's political economy. "It has now become apparent that the orthodox structural adjustment programs that Africa has been pursuing have failed to overcome economic crisis and in many cases, have made recovery even more difficult," said Adedeji candidly.

Indeed, the ECA's blueprint, endorsed by the continent's finance and planning ministers, highlights the long-running dispute over economic policy between Africa and the Washington-based agencies, although it marks the first time the UN unit is officially arguing that structural adjustment programs (SAP) are not working. The report also reflects the anger and frustration of many African governments, a large number of which have been implementing IMF and World Bank-inspired policy reforms to no avail. Particularly worrying is mounting evidence that SAPs "are rending the fabric of society. Worse still, their severest impact is on the vulnerable groups in the society—children, women, and aged—who constitute two-thirds of the population."

The brewing debate over how best to attack the continent's massive economic problems became markedly more heated in March when a World Bank-United Nations Development Program report concluded that the 30 or so African countries which had adopted SAPs were performing better than those which had not. This prompted the ECA to accuse the World Bank of selective use of data in an effort to push through "doctrinaire privatization" and promote "excessive dependence on market forces."

Instead, the ECA calls on African governments to look beyond a narrow preoccupation with short-term adjustment and to adopt a series of wide-reaching policy reforms which will direct the continent back on course toward balanced development and the fulfillment of human needs—an approach dubbed "adjustment with transformation." Among the measures the ECA recommends are greater limits on debt service payments, multiple exchange rates, selective subsidies and price controls, and cuts in defense spending. The report also advocates differential export subsidies and limited use of deficit financing for productive and infrastructural investments.

But for such measures to be successful, argues the ECA, African governments must draw on the support and democratic participation of their people and assume prime responsibility for determining their own economic programs. "This is a fundamental departure from the current practice in which external development agencies play a principal role in the formulation, design, implementation, and monitoring of adjustment programs in member-states," declares the blueprint.

Above all, however, the ECA emphasizes the urgency for more consultation between African governments and lending institutions, based on the acknowledgement that there cannot be a single solution to the problems of the continent's diverse economies. Recognition of this fact alone is an essential first step if the consensus the ECA says it strives for is to be achieved.

## SUDAN...continued

end. "These should be referred to the people who should decide them through a referendum if they cannot be solved by peaceful negotiations," explained Bashir. It remains to be seen, however, whether proposing a referendum in a country which is 70 percent Muslim will be acceptable to the SPLA.

Sharia law, which demands amputations for petty crimes and requires stoning to death for adultery, has long been a key stumbling bloc in negotiations with representatives from the mainly non-Muslim south. Mahdi had vowed to scrap the harshest provision of Sharia when he came to power, but under pressure from Islamic militants, proved unwilling to make the necessary compromises with the SPLA as a prelude to meaningful talks. It is once again up to the army to find a lasting solution. ■

## ANGOLA...continued

point in a long and hard journey," emphasizing that the rebel group rejected amnesty, clemency, or exile for their leader. "President Savimbi remains the leader of Unita, and his future can be decided only by the Angolan people through fair elections," he said. "The rumors that Dr. Savimbi will remove himself from Angolan politics are unfounded and laughable."

In effect, the meeting between dos Santos and Savimbi represented a total *volte-face* by the Angolan government which, for the past 14 years, had stood firm by its vow never to talk to Savimbi. A smaller gathering of eight southern and central African leaders in Luanda on May 16 had also supported dos Santos' demand that any peace plan would have to exclude Savimbi for being a war criminal, but the Gbadolite summit reversed their apparent consensus, following a month of hectic, behind-the-scenes diplomatic maneuvers.

Most significantly, Savimbi's first face-to-face meeting with dos Santos, culminating in the dramatic handshake, helped transform overnight his status in African politics from a CIA stooge and South African-backed "armed bandit" to a nationalist leader worthy of being included in the Angolan peace equation. As one Western envoy noted,

"Savimbi gave up very little and he has potentially gained a lot more breathing space. He was dead in the water before the summit."

The meeting also served to improve Mobutu's tarnished image abroad. Taking place just prior to his long-planned visit to Washington, Mobutu clearly intended to make as much political capital from the accord as possible before conferring with President Bush and other members of the administration. It was a golden opportunity for Mobutu—a staunch ally of Savimbi's throughout the civil war who allowed Zairean territory to be used as a vital transit point for much of the covert U.S. arms shipments to the rebels—to play the role of Africa's elder statesman at a time when he has become the target of growing congressional criti-

cism for widespread human rights abuses and corruption.

The summit similarly enabled the Bush administration to achieve a key goal—forcing the Angolan government into talks with Unita—but whether there is real substance to the accord is still an open question. Mobutu's destructive interference in Angola's internal politics, first as the main sponsor of Holden Roberto's CIA-sponsored FNLA in the 1960s and 1970s, and more recently as Unita's primary black African backer, raises more than a few questions about his role as "mediator" in the conflict. And judging from Savimbi's treacherous past, during which he has broken every agreement he has signed, the possibility of a lasting cease-fire in Angola is likely to be severely tested. ■

## Austerity triggers riots in Nigeria

In late May, President Ibrahim Babangida's government was once again rocked by student-led riots which spread to cities in nine of Nigeria's 21 states in what some local newspapers graphically described as an orgy of violence against the administration's structural adjustment program (SAP). The harsh austerity measures, which were introduced in 1986 by the government as an entirely Nigerian solution to the country's economic problems but are, in reality, in line with International Monetary Fund recommendations, have caused a sharp decline in living standards, particularly among the poor, and have led to recurring outbreaks of unrest.

The student protests were especially violent in Benin City, the Bendel State capital, where demonstrators took to the streets chanting war songs, destroying official vehicles, and setting fire to government buildings. Students from the University of Benin attacked the State House and the High Court building, burned down the town museum, and set free 600 inmates after breaking through the gates of the local prison.

Rioting soon spread to Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, and across the southern part of the country where demonstrators chanted anti-government slogans and carried placards declaring "SAP is Death" and "Enough is Enough." In several cities, the distur-

bances were spurred by the distribution of leaflets spreading false rumors about Babangida's "secret wealth," implying that he had been siphoning funds abroad while ordinary Nigerians were going hungry.

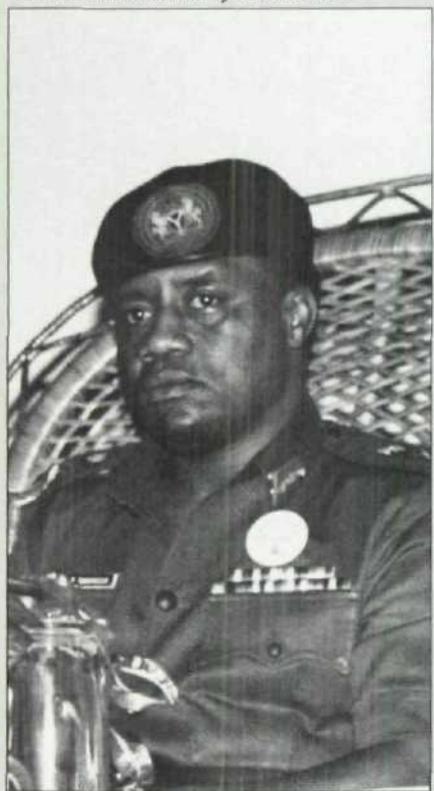
With the capital city in chaos and the level of anti-government violence overshadowing all other protests in recent memory, Babangida was forced to postpone his official three-day visit to France in the first week of June. Instead, Babangida called on the security forces to act decisively, and imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew. Universities and colleges were closed down across the nation, and armed soldiers were deployed in strategic areas.

As the battle for control of the streets intensified, bloody clashes between protesters and the security forces led to the arrest of 1,500 people and an official death toll of 22, although other sources reported at least 100 victims in various parts of the country. Hospital workers said that most of the victims appeared to have been suffocated by teargas.

At the height of the protests, Babangida made a firm speech declaring that the government would not surrender to blackmail because "there is no alternative" to structural adjustment, reiterating his position that "we cannot return to the pre-SAP ways of an overvalued naira and unbridled spending of

more than we earn." Lagos State Police Commissioner Ahmedu Sheidu warned that his men would deal "in military fashion and without any sentiment whatsoever with any persons who threaten the peace," and announced a temporary ban on all political activity "to allow the return of sanity."

Babangida's five-year ban on political activities had just been lifted in early May as a first step toward the country's anticipated return to civilian rule in 1992, confirming government fears that unrest could break out once the clampdown was relaxed. Of particular concern to the authorities was that unlike past campus protests, this time students were actively joined by market women, unemployed youths, and the urban poor who have borne the brunt of the austerity measures.



Babangida: No surrender to blackmail

Babangida accused banned politicians, religious fanatics, and critics among the business community of manipulating the rioters as part of a war against the government, but authorities are only too aware that the SAP has caused soaring food prices and chronic unemployment, which bodes ill for social peace. It is now up to the government to consider whether to ease its austerity policies and risk throwing the SAP into disarray or face the prospect of growing discontent. ■

## Pretoria double-speak over a cup of tea

Now that South African President P.W. Botha has gotten together with Nelson Mandela, the long-jailed leader of the African National Congress (ANC), for a spot of tea at his official Cape Town residence, it seems to be only a matter of time before the country's most famous prisoner is actually released. But the unprecedented 45-minute meeting has also fueled speculation as to whether Botha's ruling National Party (NP) is finally prepared to allow the ANC and other representatives of the black majority to have a real say in shaping the country's future.

For his part, Mandela confirmed his desire "to contribute to the creation of a climate which would promote peace in South Africa," stressing that dialogue with the ANC "is the only way of ending violence and bringing peace to our country." For years, Pretoria has demanded that Mandela and other prisoners renounce violence as a precondition for even considering their release, but in recent weeks, the government has intimated for the first time that a commitment to work for peace could be sufficient. Nonetheless, many other hurdles remain—including the lifting of the three-year-old state of emergency and the withdrawal of troops from the townships—before legitimate black organizations can contemplate negotiating with the government.

Just how far apart the two sides still are was brought home when NP President F.W. de Klerk, who is Botha's likely successor after the September elections, unveiled his so-called "Plan of Action" at a federal congress in late June. The much ballyhooed five-year plan, an electoral manifesto in all but name, exposed the extent to which de Klerk is prepared to go in terms of the "drastic change" he has promised since his appointment as party leader in February.

Greeted with tumultuous applause by the 1,500 NP delegates, de Klerk presented his vision for the future by outlining the key elements of a policy that will allow South Africa to re-enter the international community "proudly and with our heads held high."

When stripped of all rhetoric, it is hardly surprising that the plan to create a South Africa which "must be a democracy in which no group dominates, or is dominated" generated such enthusiasm among the NP faithful. Indeed, de Klerk's central message was that he is prepared, over as long a period as possible, to drop virtually all manifestations of apartheid as long as he can retain the only one that really counts: white political control. The five-year plan, which relies heavily on the Afrikaner double-think concept of "group rights"—a euphemism for the maintenance of racial divisions—boils down to a single demand for a white political veto while attempting to meet internationally accepted appearances of a free society.

A "key objective" to be pursued over the next five years is "to engage recognized leaders of all groups committed to the pursuit of peaceful solutions in talks and negotiations about the political, social, and economic systems for a new South Africa." In effect, de Klerk's thinking appears to be that once Mandela is released, the way will be open for negotiations with KwaZulu "homeland" leader Gatsha Buthelezi and other "moderate" black politicians, which will force the ANC to participate on NP terms or risk political isolation.

As might be expected, the "Plan of Action" has been met with widespread ridicule by white and black opposition leaders alike. Jaap Marais, leader of the extreme right-wing Herstigte Nasionale Party, described the manifesto as "nothing less than treason," while Democratic Party co-leader Zach de Beer said it was so fuzzy as to be quite incomprehensible. The Congress of South African Trade Unions called it "nothing more than a plan for disaster and yet another slap in the face of the oppressed." In fact, Buthelezi seems to be the only one outside the NP to have been impressed. "There is now at least a small ray of hope," said Buthelezi, "that the National Party can move towards one or other form of democracy which the Western industrial world will recognize as a democracy and which Africa will endorse as moving in the right direction."

## UGANDA

Edred Baumann, managing director of Barclays Bank and chairman of the Uganda Bankers Association, has called on President Yoweri Museveni's government to urgently revamp Kampala's banking sector before liquidity problems lead to the collapse of several financial institutions. The poor performance of this sector, he said, has been fueled by the lack of an internal clearing system between the banks, leaving many of those which have sprung up in recent years with insufficient reserves.

Of particular concern, noted Baumann, is that out of \$98.5 million deposited in cash last year, \$81.7 million was placed in current accounts. "These amounts, which could be withdrawn without prior notice, could leave the system in total collapse," he warned. Unless a concerted effort is made to resolve this potential crisis, customers will likely close their accounts and revert to keeping their savings under mattresses, thereby boosting the flourishing black market and further crippling the country's battered economy.

## ANGOLA

Despite opposition from the U.S., Angola is set to become the 152nd member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) following a recommendation from the Fund's 22-strong executive board in mid-June. Once its application is formally approved by member states, President José Eduardo dos Santos' government will likely be admitted to the World Bank, thereby paving the way for additional Western funds. Angola has already been allocated an IMF quota of SDR 145 million (\$181 million).

Ending nearly a two-year membership wait, the government overcame U.S. objections by gaining the support of more than the required 70 percent majority on the executive board after introducing a series of wide-ranging reforms last year to rebuild the country's war-shattered economy. As an IMF member, Angola should now be in a position to reschedule its \$4 billion external debt, widely considered one of the main obstacles to its economic recovery.

## MAURITIUS

Five months after opening for business as a tax haven, the Indian Ocean island finally received its first offshore banking license application from Barclays Bank in May, fueling hopes within government circles that other lesser-known concerns will soon follow suit. Authorities in Port Louis expect that offshore banking, which allows financial institutions to lend money and take deposits in foreign currencies without the taxes or regulations imposed by their home government, will help transform Mauritius into a regional financial center with "an overview on Africa."

Some critics point out, however, that offshore banking could make the island a sanctuary for laundering drug and mafia money, while others fear that it could provide shelter for South African investments worldwide. With ties to Pretoria having improved in recent years, government opponents claim that once it gets off the ground, offshore banking could serve as an ideal cover for sanctions-busting operations.

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### EGYPT

Following an official visit to Cairo in May by Soviet Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Konstantin Katushhev, trade links between the one-time loyal allies have been revitalized with the signing of a five-year economic and technical cooperation agreement. The accord, which is to replace annually negotiated trade protocols, calls for commercial deals to be conducted through a special sterling clearing account, providing an ideal business conduit for countries suffering from a shortage of hard currency. Trade this year now will be worth \$1 billion.

Several projects are in the works, including a \$200 million "soft loan" for the construction of a 640-megawatt power station in the Sinai Desert and a \$160 million expansion of the Helwan Iron and Steel Works near the capital. But Soviet officials have made clear that they do not intend to compete with large-scale U.S.-sponsored projects as they did in the 1960s. "Our idea," said one adviser pragmatically, "is to increase the volume of our business."

## LESOTHO

A serious epidemic of cutworm—dark brown and grey caterpillars—has drastically affected the output of the country's main grain crops, maize and sorghum, forcing authorities in Maseru to launch an urgent appeal to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization for food aid. The level of staple food self-sufficiency is projected to fall from 65 percent to between 38 and 21 percent, and in the worst-affected areas, domestic grain production may only be enough to meet 17 percent of basic food requirements.

The government warns that maize output for the current season will be only in the range of 44,900 to 89,700 tons, compared to last year's harvest of 159,726 tons, while sorghum output is estimated at between 14,800 and 29,500 tons, falling far short of the 53,447 tons produced in 1988. As a result, Lesotho, which already buys large quantities of grain from South Africa, forecasts an increase in maize imports from 120,000 to 184,000 tons for 1989-90, making it even more dependent on Pretoria in years to come.

## NIGERIA

The government has sold 20 percent of the nation's southern oilfields to three international companies, marking a successful effort to increase foreign participation in the oil sector, and bringing in \$2 billion of much-needed revenue. The sale is part of a plan to free substantial sums of money for a \$2.5 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) project and to "improve efficiency in the sector," according to Oil Minister Rilwanu Lukman.

Royal Dutch/Shell increased its 20 percent share in the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to 30 percent, while Agip of Italy bought 5 percent, and the French state-owned oil company, Elf, paid \$500 million for a 5 percent share. The companies hold shares in the LNG project in the same proportion as their newly acquired equity in the oilfields and expect the plant to export 4.5 million tons a year from 1995. The government now owns 60 percent of the joint venture, accounting for about half of Nigeria's output of 1.5 million barrels of oil per day.



WEST AFRICA

# BLOOD BROTHERS

By MARK DOYLE

P. Tolonen/Sygma



"The army was put in prominent positions on the streets for the first time in 20 years"

**R**elations between Senegal and Mauritania remain strained in the wake of rioting and violence in April which left many dead and countless more uprooted. Despite the crucial role played by each nation's citizens in the economy of their neighbor, the explosion of long-simmering racial tensions may have caused irreparable damage at both the interstate and domestic levels.

**A**t least 200 people were killed and tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands of people made homeless by an outbreak of ethnic violence in Senegal and Mauritania in April. The unrest was only

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brought under control when the armies of both countries intervened and curfews were imposed.

On the corner of the street where I live in central Dakar, there was once a flourishing little shop. Nothing fancy, in fact it was rather grubby. But as corner shops go, it per-

formed its function. As in so many Mauritanian establishments in Senegal, a wizened old man, or sometimes his wife, would sell all manner of household items—rice, candles, cooking oil, matches.

On the beaches outside Nouakchott, capital of the Islamic Republic

of Mauritania, Senegalese fishermen once gathered with their catches from the rich Atlantic seas. In a boisterous, noisy atmosphere, the Senegalese would sell their fish to grateful Mauritanians—like the Mauritanians in Senegal, the fishermen were performing a crucial role in the economy of their neighboring country.

But now the shopkeepers and the fishermen are gone. The shops in Senegal are looted and boarded up, and the beaches outside Nouakchott are stained with blood. Gone too are the Senegalese carpenters, taxi drivers, and civil servants who greased the cogs of Mauritania's economy. And gone are the rich Mauritanian visitors to Dakar's nightspots, grateful for a little relaxation after their austere life in the Islamic republic.

What has also disappeared is what now seems to have been the illusion of good neighborliness between two states that were tied geographically, historically, and ethnically. The worst inter-community violence between Moors and Africans in Senegalese and Mauritanian post-independence history has taken a heavy toll.

The spark for the violence came on April 9, on a tiny island upstream on the Senegal River, which forms the border between the two countries, a dispute begun between Senegalese farmers and Mauritanian herdsmen. The argument was a familiar one: Mauritanian-owned camels were grazing on land that the Senegalese believed to be theirs.

But unlike previous incidents on the border, which were numerous but rarely reported in detail, it quickly emerged that two Senegalese had been killed in an ensuing clash. Exactly how they were killed is not clear: Senegal says they were shot by Mauritanian forestry protection officials, but Mauritania denies that its officials were responsible.

But if the objective truth of the matter may never be known, the incident unleashed a cycle of ethnic violence which surprised even seasoned observers in the region. If race has always been a potent factor

in Mauritanian politics, Senegal had always been known as a tolerant country, with its tradition of "*teranga*" ("welcome" in the Wolof language) accepting all sort of foreigners on its soil.

Tensions between Arabic-speaking Moors from Mauritania—who are both light and dark-skinned—and black Africans who traditionally live south of the Sahara desert date from centuries back. The enslavement of black Africans by the Moors is only part of the explanation for the enmity, even if slavery was—incredibly in the modern world—only officially abolished in Mauritania in 1980, barely a decade ago. And despite this theoretical abolition, the African slaves, or *harantines*, are still an underclass, effectively bonded labor to Moorish masters.

Tensions between Moors and Africans were also exacerbated by colonialism. The French occupiers drew a border line between Senegal and Mauritania along the Senegal River which had little in common with realities on the ground. On both sides of the river, black Africans had settled. Their trading and family relationships were to the south, whereas the nomadic Moors looked if anywhere to the north. The state of Mauritania—which takes its name from the French word *Maure*—was thus something of a hybrid along the lines of Sudan or Chad, straddling the divide between black and Arabic-speaking Africa.

To these historical factors can be added a political one. The Senegalese—from any of the African ethnic groups—perceive the Moors as racist. After "racist," the most common adjectives they use to describe their northern neighbors are "barbaric" and "cruel." In the other direction, Moors in Mauritania regard the Africans who live to their south in a condescending manner as "uncivilized" or "only good for working our land."

What is incontestable is that white Moors dominate politics and the economy in Mauritania. It is also widely accepted that race plays a significant role in everyday life in Mau-

ritania. Blacks are generally, at the very least, looked down upon by their lighter skinned co-citizens.

Almost as soon as the news was out that two Senegalese had been killed at a remote spot on the border—shot, according to the Senegalese media, by Mauritanians—the looting of Mauritanian-owned shops began in the nearest town, Bakel. Senegalese police had to take Mauritanians under their protection to stop angry villagers from attacking them. This scenario was to be repeated throughout Senegal as rumors spread like a bush fire that not only had the Mauritaniens allegedly shot two Senegalese, but that the bodies of the dead had been dragged behind camels in an act that could have been designed to outrage Senegalese public opinion.

It was as if generations of pent-up anger toward the "racist" Moors were suddenly and violently released. In Dakar, my little corner shop was saved for a few days, being situated close to the Ministry of the Interior and thus well-patrolled by gendarmes and riot police. But in the outskirts of the city, the systematic pillaging of Mauritanian-owned shops seemed to have become a national sport.

The same was happening in regional capitals of Kaolack, Tambacounda, and Ziguinchor. The accessible and highly visible community of Moors—between 300,000-500,000 of them ran corner shops—became the target of poor Senegalese who saw a chance to stock up on groceries in an ethnic backlash which soon degenerated in some cases into organized gangsterism.

Throughout Senegal, Mauritaniens who feared for their lives and their property began fleeing to the sanctuary of mosques or went into hiding with Senegalese friends—not all Senegalese, it should be noted, had turned to crime. In Dakar, where about a third of the Mauritaniens resident in Senegal lived, they ran to their embassy on Boulevard General de Gaulle in the center of town.

The scene at the embassy on

Monday, April 22, revealed the extent of the unrest—which was to spread to Mauritania and become much more serious in the coming days. In the embassy grounds were 2,000, maybe more, Mauritanian men, women, and children, camped on the ground surrounded by a few snatched belongings. Haunted, frightened eyes looked out from their faces. Their shops abandoned, the 2,000 wanted out of Senegal, and as quickly as possible.

Again, the news of the pillaging spread quickly in Senegal and across the porous border, propelled by the national and international media and by the equally speedy *"Radio Trottoir."* In Mauritania, a murderous reaction was unleashed. Moorish outrage at the plight of their compatriots in Senegal was complete. First came reports from Nouakchott of two dead, then 17...then 25...and the numbers kept going up.

According to independent eyewitnesses in Nouakchott, the killing was relatively well-organized. Bands of Moors with murderous intent roamed the streets of the capital and the industrial second city of Maurit-

nia, Nouadhibou, searching out Senegalese and other Africans.

But it was not only Moors who did the killing: Observers reported that the Moors' erstwhile slaves, the *harantines*, were sent out by their masters in search of Africans. The killings were brutal—clubbing people to death was the most popular method—and hundreds were hospitalized with serious head wounds. Doctors reported that many of the Senegalese who were attacked went into a deep coma from which they were never to awaken.

Senegal subsequently accused the Mauritanian security forces of complicity in the killings—an accusation virtually mirrored by President Ould Taya when he later addressed his nation. But while the public insults flew in both directions, it was now the turn of Senegalese living in Mauritania to begin fleeing for their lives. They too took refuge in mosques and began making their way to the border areas of southern Mauritania along the banks of the

Senegal River where most of the Mauritanian African population is settled.

The final death toll in Mauritania was vague, partly because the military government in Nouakchott keeps a tight control over information compared with the relatively free, democratic atmosphere in Senegal. However, diplomats and other independent sources agreed that between 150 and 200 dead was the rough total.

A representative of the clandestine black Mauritanian opposition group, the African Liberation Army of Mauritania (known by its French acronym, FLAM), said in Dakar that over 2,000 Africans had been killed, but this could not be confirmed and FLAM obviously had a political interest in inflating the figure. However, a higher death toll than the 140-200 was not excluded.

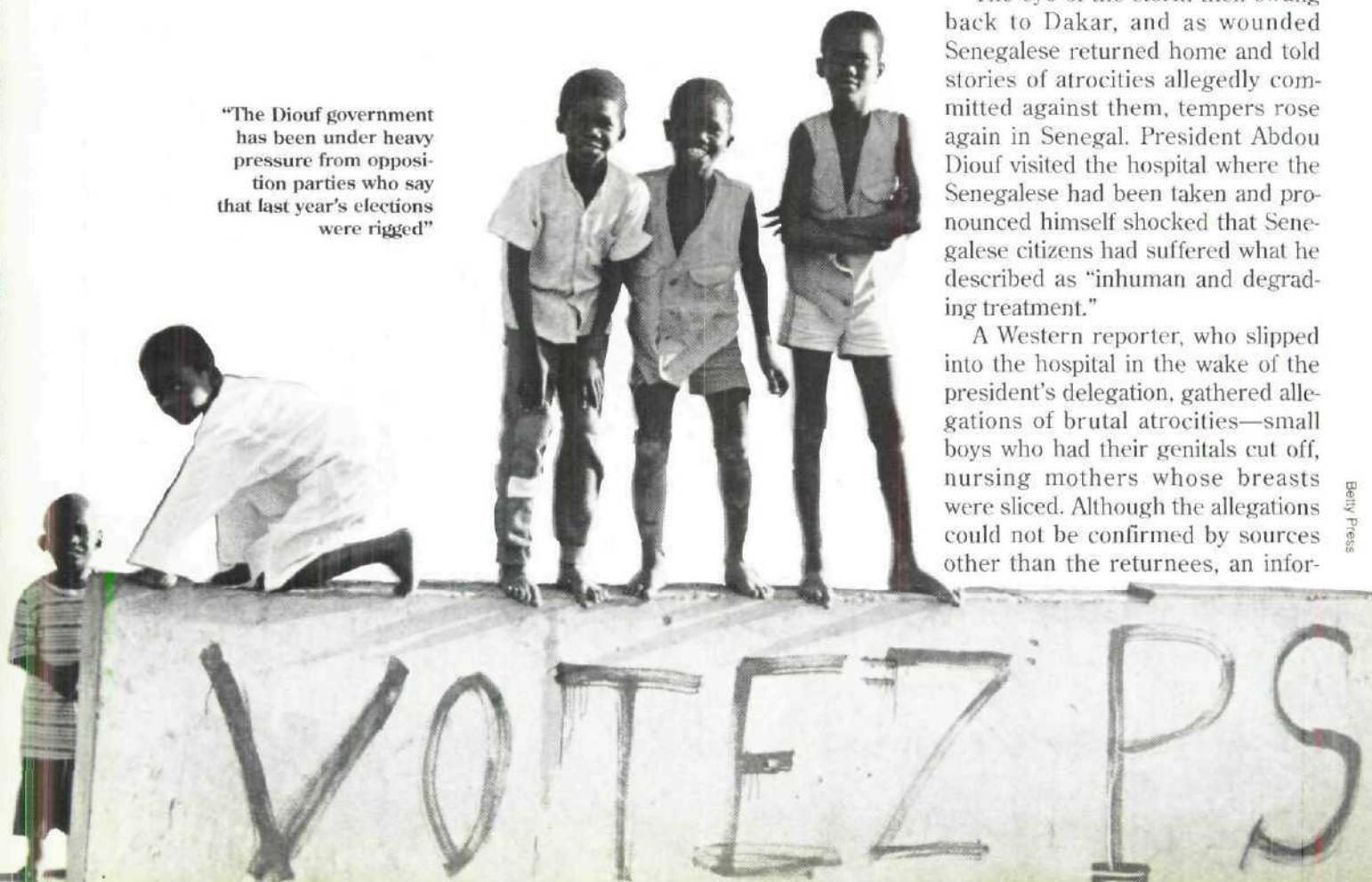
On April 25, the Mauritanian army was called out to restore order. A strictly enforced curfew was imposed in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. But if an uneasy calm was imposed in these two towns, the violence was far from over.

The eye of the storm then swung back to Dakar, and as wounded Senegalese returned home and told stories of atrocities allegedly committed against them, tempers rose again in Senegal. President Abdou Diouf visited the hospital where the Senegalese had been taken and pronounced himself shocked that Senegalese citizens had suffered what he described as "inhuman and degrading treatment."

A Western reporter, who slipped into the hospital in the wake of the president's delegation, gathered allegations of brutal atrocities—small boys who had their genitals cut off, nursing mothers whose breasts were sliced. Although the allegations could not be confirmed by sources other than the returnees, an infor-

"The Diouf government has been under heavy pressure from opposition parties who say that last year's elections were rigged"

Betty Press



ment did report the arrival in Senegal of women whose breasts had been mutilated. "Massacre" would not seem too strong a word to describe what took place in Mauritania.

These atrocities were later denied by Mauritanian President Ould Taya. But reports of the returnees' accounts ensured that the damage had already been done. A large crowd of angry Senegalese gathered outside the hospital where the returnees were taken and began baying for Mauritanian blood in revenge for the exactions against their compatriots. Late in the morning of April 28, the crowd moved into the sandy streets of Dakar and the "Moor hunt" was on. Angry Senegalese crowds also began gathering around the nearby international trade fair site where by now over 20,000 Mauritians had taken refuge.

In revenge for the killings in Mauritania, the mob cornered mostly white Moors who had not yet taken refuge and brutally murdered them. Most of the killing was in Dakar. I personally counted 38 bodies of Mauritians in the central mortuary, including the bodies of two tiny infants whose heads had been smashed in. While at least 38 Moors were killed in Dakar, police sources said 12 had been killed in the central Senegalese town of Touba and four were killed in nearby Djiorbel. When other incidents were added, the final tally appeared to be between 50 and 60, but again the figure could not be definitive.

During these days of violence, pillaging also took on a bolder face, reaching right to the center of Dakar. The Senegalese police did not intervene in every incident, as indeed the Mauritanian security forces reportedly turned a blind eye on attacks against Senegalese.

When the turn of my corner shop came, it was after the curfew hour imposed by President Diouf had passed. At around 11 p.m., the metal shutters of the neighborhood "Maar" (as Mauritians are called in Senegal) were ripped off, and

local people who had a few days earlier made their daily purchases in the shop began stealing the stock with gay abandon and setting fire to the rest in the street.

When the pillaging began, a couple of Senegalese policemen stood by idly, perhaps afraid of being outnumbered. Mercifully, the shopkeeper had already taken refuge and was not inside when the horde arrived. When the crowd got out of hand, a gendarmerie unit arrived to back up the police and the people were dispersed, but not before a young girl launched a verbal attack on the officers. "You should be on the border fighting the Moors, not stopping us from taking our just revenge."

The next day in the central market and commercial districts, Senegalese police seemed to be conducting a policy of containment rather than attempting to stop all of the pillaging. The army was put in prominent positions on the streets for the first time in 20 years, but it did not mount patrols or open fire. It was left mainly to riot police and gendarmes to break up groups that became too large or which seemed to be going for targets other than Mauritanian shops. The sound of tear gas grenades exploding throughout the day became almost banal.

The extent to which groups of mostly young men were prepared to take to the streets in acts of vandalism and criminality was an ironic result of Senegal's status as a democratic country. For the last 18 months, the Diouf government has been under heavy pressure from opposition parties who say that their candidate, Abdoulaye Wade, was cheated of victory at last year's elections by government vote rigging. On numerous occasions, the opposition has not hesitated to encourage violent demonstrations by groups not dissimilar to the vandals who took to the streets against the Mauritians.

Whatever the truth—and there is some—of the Senegalese opposition's claim to have been cheated at the elections, the demonstrators and the vandals now have the bit

between their teeth and are unafraid of the tear gas grenades. For their part, the security forces act with restraint partly because they are well-trained and disciplined, but also because the opposition is waiting for any slip on their part in order to accuse the government of acting repressively.

In the case of the attacks against Mauritanian shops, there were suspicions that a decision had been taken somewhere in the Senegalese politico-military hierarchy to allow the people to let off steam. A similar suspicion was permitted with regard to the Mauritanian security forces.

The Senegalese army mounted a successful protective cordon around the trade fair site on the outskirts of Dakar, where the 20,000 or more Mauritians had taken refuge. On at least two occasions, angry crowds of several thousand Senegalese had to be pushed back by elite troops backed up by heavily armed gendarmes.

A semblance of sanity was restored when the two governments agreed after a Moroccan diplomatic initiative to organize an airlift of their respective people out of the main towns of both countries. In Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, up to 40,000 Senegalese had taken flight from the massacre, and in Dakar and other regional Senegalese towns, a similar number of Mauritians wanted to escape the violence. Planes were sent from Morocco, France, Algeria, and Spain to form the air bridge, which took about a week to evacuate the people out of their nightmare. Tens of thousands of others fled by road.

But the end of the air bridge and the repatriation of people by other routes did not signal the end of the bloody affair. Relations between the two countries seem to have been irreparably damaged, and particularly in Mauritania, where the military regime is fragile, the political impact of the ethnic unrest could have further repercussions. The political fallout had already started with a serious downturn in inter-community relations inside the country. ○



GHANA

CHECK THE  
VOTERS  
REGISTER



DISTRICT  
LEVEL ELECTIONS

## A GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY

Voter turnout was high for Ghana's innovative district assembly elections, intended as the first step in building grassroots political participation. Unlike past elections organized on party lines, the contests revolved around candidates' probity and competence, providing a hopeful sign for the growth of democratic practice.

By COLLEEN LOWE MORNA

**N**ot far from the center of Accra is a neighborhood called New Fadama, which in many respects looks more like a village than a suburb of a modern capital city. Paved roads give way to dirt tracks, and at the peak of the harmattan winds, dust sweeps into the sparsely

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furnished classrooms of the local school.

But on a recent afternoon, the atmosphere hummed with excitement. On the porch of one classroom bloc, reggae and highlife tunes beckoned the local inhabitants to a

lights, and paved roads. Each would be asked how they intended to go about it. And each would humbly submit that most of all, they would need the support of their colleagues.

By the end of February, Ghana's district assembly elections—the first



**Flt.-Lt. Jerry Rawlings:** The district assemblies are "the first step in formalizing democratic structures which involve grassroots participation"

meeting. The occasion was the "mounting of platform"—or launching of campaign—by the two contenders in the district assembly elections, Shika Prince Adjei, a farmer, and Osman Zaree, a clerk.

Each would promise to transform New Fadama into a respectable suburb with running water, drains,

elections of any sort in the country for a decade—had finally drawn to a close. Colorful inauguration ceremonies took place across the country, as the 110 assemblies prepared to take on their new tasks, which span a broad spectrum of day-to-day life, excluding only defense and foreign affairs.

Two questions are now pertinent: First, were the elections a worthwhile exercise; and second, what do they portend for Ghana's future?

Many of the country's critics wrote off the elections before they even started. At its third quadriennial congress in March 1988, the Ghana Trades Union Congress rejected the district level elections on grounds that they had not been conceived in the context of a national constitution drawn up by different interest groups in the country.

Exile opposition groups, such as the London-based Ghana Democratic Movement, said a government which had come to power via a coup could not hope to itself restore democracy.

Western observers found much to quibble about in the execution of the elections, which were held on non-partisan lines, sponsored by the government, over a period of three months.

Intellectuals, meanwhile, compared the elections to those staged by Lt.-Col. Ignatius Acheampong in March 1978 in a concerted effort to legitimize his rule.

But unlike the 1978 referendum, which took place in a heated atmosphere and attracted a trickle of voters, a good 60 to 70 percent of all registered voters turned out for the district assembly elections. "We think that something positive is going to come out of these elections," explained a New Fadama voter enthusiastically.

According to Ghana's secretary for local government, Kwamina Ahwoi, whose office oversaw the complex elections, the process had been carefully thought out.

"From the beginning of the revolution, [the government of Flt.-Lt. Jerry Rawlings] was committed to the participation of people in decision-making," he said in a recent interview. "Even in [those] heady days, we came up with the concept of People's Defense Committees and Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs)."

"As the economy improved and the political situation stabilized, the

base of the revolution had to be broadened to include not only members of the CDRs, but the Ghanaians generally. It was felt that the best way of doing so was through the electoral process."

At the same time, according to Ahwoi—a lawyer by training—"our political history will tell you that on average, governments formed after others have been toppled don't last for more than two years. We felt that there was something to account for this. One reason we came up with is that we have always paid attention to the structures at the center and ignored the structures at the periphery which are supposed to support them.

"Secondly, we realized that for the vast majority of our people, the things that happen at the local level are the things that matter most. Foreign policy is important to people like me, who have time to engage in political polemics. For the vast majority of rural people, such things as education, good drinking water, etc. are far more important. These fall under local government, which in the past has been ignored."

In formulating an election strategy, Ahwoi argued, Ghana had to take into account its own particular circumstances as much as possible.

For example, it would be anathema in the West to stagger elections of any sort over a three-month period as was the case in Ghana. But as Ahwoi points out, "with one vehicle to every district, and several electoral areas per district," Ghana had to hold the elections in three different zones, at three different times, for logistical reasons.

Fears that results in one zone would be used to influence results in another appeared unfounded, given the highly individualized and localized nature of the elections.

The fact that all public campaigns (except house-to-house calls) were organized by the National Commission for Democracy, a government agency, using literature printed by the government body, also raised eyebrows in some quarters. However, according to Ahwoi, the govern-

ment deliberately forbade the use of private funds to "ensure that everyone had a fair opportunity."

In that respect, argued one Accra voter, the elections were more fair than in the West, where money, rather than policies, can be the

one-third of all council members. "As a Westerner," said a diplomat, "it is my contention that everyone in public office should stand the test of elections."

The government argued, on the other hand, that there may be talent-

## A NEW CHAPTER

At age 32, Ghana is one of the oldest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. As such, according to Secretary for Local Government Kwamina Ahwoi, "we seem to be unique in having lived through almost all forms of government."

Under its first leader, Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana inherited a multi-party system from the British, the local government chief noted. In 1960, following a referendum, the country adopted an American-style republican constitution, with Nkrumah as executive president. By 1964, this had been refined to a one-party system, and two years later, Ghana experienced its first coup under Gen. Joseph Ankrah.

In May 1969, the official ban on party politics was lifted, and by October the country had reverted to a Westminster system of government under Dr. Kofi Busia, who was overthrown by Lt.-Col. (later Gen.) Ignatius Kuti Acheampong a short two years later.

In September 1976, Acheampong mooted the idea of a "union government," or UNIGOV, which sought to replace party politics with an ill-defined alliance between the armed forces, police, and civilians. The idea was strongly resisted by church groups, Ghanaian professionals, and students, who made a poor showing at a referendum held in March 1978. Acheampong's term as a "civilianized" ruler was short-lived—in July 1978, he was quietly deposed by his chief of defense, Frederick Akuffo.

From January 1, 1979, parties were again legalized and elections scheduled for June. But on June 4, amid public applause, the charismatic Flt.-Lt. Jerry Rawlings seized power, saying he had come to cleanse the country of its political rot before elections, which went ahead as scheduled on June 18.

The elections were won by the People's National Party of Hilla Limann, which established a U.S.-style liberal democratic system. But amid continued corruption and economic decline, Rawlings seized power again on December 31, 1981.

Although the military has remained at the helm ever since, Rawlings has assembled some of Ghana's top intellectuals in the government and undertaken a rigorous, IMF-sponsored economic reform program. Now Ghana's second longest ruler, Rawlings is also experimenting with political liberalization—but none of it along the lines already tried in Ghana. ■

—C.L.M.

deciding factor. "In the past," he said, "candidates used to spend all their time after elections trying to recoup the money they spent campaigning. We hope these ones will concentrate instead on fulfilling their promises."

Another point of debate was the government's decision to appoint

individuals in the community who could contribute valuable skills to the running of a district assembly, but did not want to go through with an election.

In a situation of high illiteracy and low-level skills, professionals might have to be asked to help out, the Rawlings government argued.

Although those chosen will inevitably owe their patronage to the ruling elite, they did—by and large—include accountants, doctors, teachers, and other influential members of the community.

Finally, the elections were unique in being held along non-partisan lines, with candidates required to subscribe to broad government principles. While this clearly goes against the grain of democracy as

elections, no one intimidated us."

Individuals were also thoroughly cross-examined on their record and intentions. In New Fadama, for example, Adjei faced a storm of tough questions over alleged misuse of community funds in the past. In another electoral area, a candidate is said to have stood down after a schoolboy told a public rally that the man had hired him to do a job, and then refused to pay. "No one who

community initiative.

The assemblies will draw up budgets to be submitted to the central government, but given current economic hardships, much of the revenue will have to be raised through self-help projects.

To the extent that the district assemblies can arouse some of the latent enthusiasm at the local level, even Ghana's critics agree that they have an enormous contribution to make. The colonial legacy of government from the center, analysts note, is encapsulated in the Akan word for government—"aban" or "fortified seat of power."

More immediately, as the Rawlings government embarks on its sixth year of IMF-sponsored structural adjustment—which has so far tended to stress macro, rather than microeconomic reform—analysts say that maximum participation from the grassroots is becoming more imperative.

The longer term question, however, is whither Ghanaian politics now? According to Rawlings, the district assemblies are "the first step in formalizing democratic structures which involve grassroots participation." Shortly after the completion of the district assembly elections, he added that it would now be up to them to decide whether regional and national assemblies should be established.

Whether and how the no-party district elections will be translated into broader structures remains to be seen. For his part, Rawlings has no immediate plans of stepping down. While the aim of the ruling Provisional National Defence Council is to eventually "make itself redundant," his past experience of handing over to a civilian government had convinced him that there is no point in leaving prematurely, Rawlings said in a recent interview.

"This time around," he noted, "instead of trying to clean up existing structures, we must oversee a political structural adjustment, and ensure that all its components are functional before we can leave the scene." □

Margaret A. Novicki



Volta Region: "For the vast majority of rural people, such things as education, good drinking water, etc. are far more important"

defined in the West, "the party system in Ghana in the past polarized the country to an extent where it was difficult to build any kind of consensus," according to Ahwoi.

A remarkable feature of the elections, he noted, was the absence of political violence. In previous elections held on partisan lines, observed one voter, "parties paid thugs to beat people up. In these

had genuinely done something wrong stood a chance of winning," one Accra voter noted.

Each district assembly will now be required to elect an executive committee within itself, which will carry out policy decisions. Although this will be chaired by the government-appointed district secretary, ensuring strict adherence to government policy, much will depend on



GHANA

# ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

By ERNEST HARSCH

With considerable controversy swirling around the benefits and draw-backs of structural adjustment programs in Africa, there is little disagreement that Ghana's economic reform efforts have achieved positive results. Our correspondent examines what has made the Ghanaian program a success and whether it can be emulated elsewhere in the continent.

In a continent beset by food shortages, industrial decline, empty government coffers, and widespread poverty and decay, Ghana stands out as one of Africa's few relative bright spots. "Success story" and "showcase" are two terms often used abroad to describe its economic performance.

While many Ghanaians are quick to acknowledge the economic recovery of recent years, they tend to express less satisfaction with current conditions.

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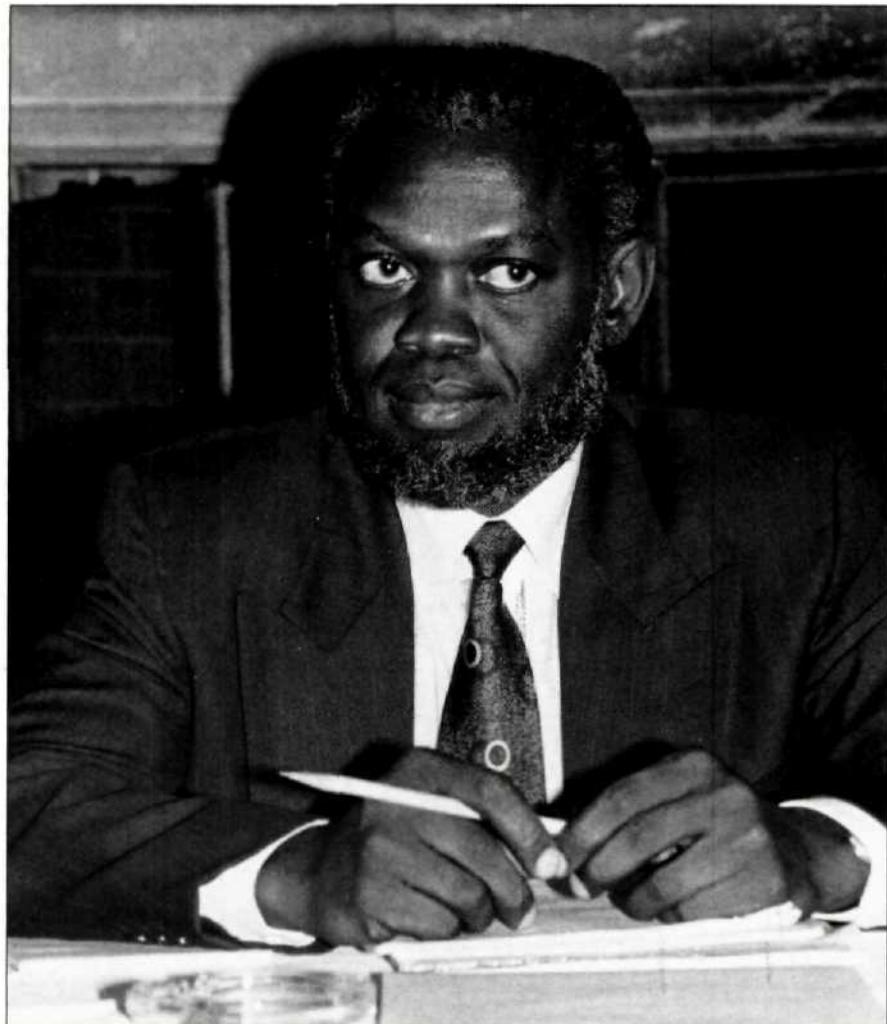
or complacency about the future. From residents of Accra's impoverished neighborhoods of Mamobi or Nima, to women cooperative farmers in Agomeda who lack basic farming tools, and all the way up to the country's top political leadership, the difficulties and pitfalls appear greater than they do from a distance.

Flt. Lt. Jerry Rawlings, Ghana's head of state, often dwells more on the economic constraints than on the improvements. Ghana's progress, he declared this June 4, is being held back by the "plague of underdevelopment." On another

recent occasion, the Ghanaian leader drew attention to the \$100 million that Ghana lost last year on its cocoa exports, due to plummeting world prices. Ghana could lose twice as much this year, he warned.

Rawlings also often emphasizes that the human costs of these economic difficulties, combined with the adverse impact of certain austerity measures, are "making life unbearable for the people."

Many Ghanaians agree, citing their low incomes. The new national minimum daily wage of 170 cedis is barely enough to



**Finance and Planning Minister Kwesi Botchwey insists that the ERP's essential elements were determined by Ghanaians, based on a sober assessment of the options facing their country"**

buy a can of milk, and nearly twice that much would be needed for a bar of laundry soap.

Adu, a transport worker in the industrial town of Tema, notes that his regular salary cannot support **his** family. He sometimes picks up occasional, part-time jobs, while his wife and eldest son work as street vendors. Nevertheless, Adu is thankful, especially when he looks back at the early 1980s. "That was the worst," he recalls, "One did not know where to get the next meal. Now things are better."

Throughout the country, economic activity has picked up markedly. Accra's main markets are choked with sellers and buyers. Street vendors stake out even the most obscure corners and out-of-the-way lanes. Rush-hour delays are beginning to rival those of some major

Western metropolises, as trucks and cars compete for scarce road space. The port of Tema has freighters lined up to unload cargo or pick up cocoa or other Ghanaian exports.

Economic life is bustling in the smaller towns and villages as well. Rural markets are well-stocked with foodstuffs. Local cottage industries are springing up.

Such general impressions are confirmed by the statistics. Ghana's real gross domestic product has grown an annual average of more than 5 percent for the past five years—the best sustained growth in sub-Saharan Africa. Last year, agricultural production rose 6 percent, in part due to good weather but also to the cumulative impact of agricultural policy reforms and increased budgetary allocations.

Despite poor world prices for

cocoa and coffee, Ghana earned more than \$868 million from its exports in 1988, a 5 percent increase over the previous year and nearly twice as much as in 1983, at the beginning of the Economic Recovery Program (ERP). Thanks to efforts toward diversification, earnings from non-traditional exports, while still a small portion of the total, rose 45 percent last year. Inflation has dropped from triple-digit levels to around 20 percent.

It is numbers such as these that impress the economists and statisticians of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, two key funders of Ghana's recovery program. They have been fulsome in their praise of Ghana's performance and in their negotiations with other African countries, frequently point to Ghana as an example of what IMF and World Bank funding and advice can bring. "Ghana is now a World Bank showcase for free-market policies" was how one London *Times* headline captured the prevalent image.

Ghanaian officials seem uncomfortable with such a portrayal. Ascribing a straight "free-market" orientation to Ghana's ERP is simply inaccurate, they believe. Some take issue with the excessive emphasis on Ghana's positive growth rates, which they think obscures the more complex question of how to achieve balanced development, where progress is measured less by economic statistics than by the level of social well-being.

Perhaps most often, Ghanaian leaders chafe at the suggestion that the progress of recent years is due mainly to IMF and World Bank intervention. While the ERP was a product of negotiation and compromise, officials such as Finance and Planning Minister Kwesi Botchwey insist that its essential elements were determined by Ghanaians, based on a sober assessment of the options facing their country.

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When Rawlings' Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)

took power on the last day of 1981, those options were exceptionally narrow. Ghana's economy had deteriorated so drastically that many felt the country's national survival itself was at stake. Ghana, most agreed, had faded to just a pale ghost of the hopeful and proud nation that was once among the most industrialized and literate on the continent.

During the 1970s in particular, a combination of serious mismanagement and unfavorable international economic trends had set Ghana's economy on a long downward spiral.

An overvalued exchange rate for the Ghanaian cedi eroded real returns to producers of cocoa and other exports. Cocoa production consequently declined by half between 1970 and 1982. This fall in output and the weakening of cocoa's world price cut into government revenues, bringing a drop in public investments and serious decay of social services. Imports likewise plummeted, crippling many of the import-dependent manufacturing enterprises.

Between 1970 and 1982, Ghana's gross domestic product declined an average of 0.5 percent a year. Over the same period, real per capita income fell by nearly a third. Inflation peaked at 123 percent in 1983, the year that Unicef calculated the infant mortality rate at 107 per thousand, up from 80 in the mid-1970s.

Official reactions to this crisis, especially by the regime of Gen. Ignatius Acheampong, only made things worse. In a short-sighted attempt to buy labor peace with patronage, the public sector employment rolls were padded with tens of thousands of non-productive jobs. Price controls were imposed, but only ended up spawning a rampant black market. From top generals on downward, corruption became the norm. Economic activity shifted further away from production toward racketeering and speculation.

According to Tsatsu Tsikata, a member of the Rawlings government's National Economic Commission, the problem in this period was not excessive state controls, as some

argue. "The reality surely has been that 'controls' have been precisely what were lacking in the kind of runaway decline that Ghana has gone through," he says. The absence of real checks against corruption and speculative commercial activities weakened productive initiatives in general, whether by the public or private sectors. Basically, says Tsikata, the problem was a failure of political leadership to confront economic reality.

The advent of the PNDC changed this equation. Its extensive public support, in contrast to the unpopular and unstable regimes that preceded it, gave the new government the political strength to tackle the crisis in a decisive manner.

The PNDC projected ambitious goals: rehabilitation of the country's decayed roads, railways, and factories, increased agricultural production, and at least a modest improvement in living conditions.

While the will to act was there, the resources were not. To make matters worse, 1983 brought a string of catastrophes. The most serious drought in living memory and widespread brush fires destroyed much of that year's harvest. Then Nigeria expelled an estimated 1 million Ghanaian migrant workers, bringing a sudden influx of returnees at a time when they could not be absorbed easily.

Ghana desperately needed outside funding. An initial approach to the Soviet Union, Libya, and other non-Western powers brought some pledges of assistance, but far less than was hoped. Western governments and banks, for their part, refused to provide any loans unless Ghana came to an accommodation with the IMF.

Whether or not to deal with the IMF proved to be a difficult decision. There were suspicions that Western-dominated institutions such as the IMF would seek to impose policies harmful to people's living standards and to Ghana's efforts to lessen its external dependence. Rifts developed within the PNDC and among the left-wing organizations supporting it. According to Tsikata, the dispute "threatened the very stability of the government."

In the end, Ghana's leaders concluded that they had no real choice but to seek IMF funding. Rawlings stated that while it was vital to eventually "wrestle the economy from the domination of international finance capital," that was impossible while the country was in a state of virtual collapse. The task at hand was survival and recovery.

But unlike many other governments that have gone to the IMF empty-handed and then simply had to accept whatever economic program the Fund proposed, Ghana prepared its own program beforehand, the ERP. It had something to bargain with.

A number of the ERP's provisions were similar to what the IMF often recommends: tighter financial accountability, promotion of exports, reduced deficit financing, currency devaluation. Given the severe imbalances in Ghana's economy, such steps were seen as necessary under any circumstances, with or without the IMF's blessing.

Nevertheless, the ERP, tailored as it was to Ghana's specific circumstances, was not what the IMF had expected. Some hard bargaining ensued. "There were trade-offs in the negotiations," Botchwey explained to a group of visiting journalists last

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**S**trenuous efforts against corruption and profiteering, for greater accountability in public life, and to increase tax collections from the wealthier layers of society have served to engender public confidence.

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Margaret A. Novick  
Nursing cocoa seedlings, Eastern Region: "Ghana can boast impressive growth in virtually every sector, from cocoa, gold, and timber exports to manufacturing and food production"

December. "We gave up certain things, or we moderated certain positions."

So did the IMF. The Fund had demanded the lifting of all price controls, including on essential consumer goods. It wanted a wage freeze. It argued for a single, massive devaluation of cedi. These measures would have immediately hit the already low living standards of the Ghanaian people, so the PNDC's negotiators said no. Finally the IMF gave in; it agreed to the maintenance of selective price controls, to increases in real wages, and to a complex system of phased devaluations and multiple exchange rates that softened the impact on the people and gave the government some control over how the foreign exchange was used.

Ghana's talks with the World Bank involved a similar give-and-take. The Bank pushed hard for privatization of state-owned enterprises, including for outright dissolution of the Ghana Cocoa Board. Although Ghanaian officials favor streamlining the public sector and giving greater incentives to private producers, they could not accept the scrapping of such a key institution. In the end, the two sides agreed to trimming the Cocoa Board's employment rolls and divesting certain nonessential opera-

tions. (The PNDC has since slated several dozen state-owned enterprises for privatization, while the bulk of the public sector is being overhauled to improve efficiency and functioning.)

The agreements signed with the IMF and World Bank not only brought major funding from those institutions, but cleared the way for significant credits and grants from a string of commercial banks, donor agencies, and governments. Ghana's immediate financial crunch was eased.

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The fact that Ghana had fought hard for its positions accounts for the major difference between the Ghanaian program and most of the structural adjustment programs adopted elsewhere in Africa, often as virtual carbon copies of standard IMF and World Bank prescriptions. On a continent where orthodox structural adjustment is showing few signs of success, some are asking whether these differences may be a factor in Ghana's relatively better performance.

One of the basic differences in the ERP's strategy is its explicitly expansionary approach. This is in contrast to most standard adjustment programs, which are mainly exercises in demand management;

they seek to balance the books by reducing imports and slashing government spending. Achieving short-term fiscal equilibrium becomes the overriding concern, while long-term development goals are put on hold. The result has often been continued declines in production, per capita income, and the level of social services.

Ghana's approach has been to boost imports and investments. This has stimulated production by lessening supply shortages and infusing new capital into agriculture and industry. The consequent rise in export earnings and state revenues has in turn made it possible to increase government expenditures for social development and other purposes.

As a result, Ghana can boast of impressive growth in virtually every sector, from cocoa, gold, and timber exports to manufacturing and food production. Real per capita consumption has risen and real wages have recovered to some extent from the very low levels to which they had fallen.

A key factor in the rise in cocoa production has been the trebling, in real terms, of the prices paid to cocoa farmers. This was made possible by the devaluation of the cedi (which increased export receipts in local currency terms) and by a major overhaul of the Cocoa Board. Under previous regimes, the Board's employment rolls had mushroomed out of all proportion to its actual work, including 25,000 fictitious "ghost workers." By eliminating this category and letting go another 30,000 employees, it was possible to redirect more of the Board's budget toward the farmers themselves.

The Cocoa Board is just one example of how the ERP approaches questions of economic austerity and discipline. The cutbacks in the civil service and state-owned enterprises are not just to make the account ledgers look good, but to free up scarce funds for directly productive activities. Similarly, the austerity measures in the towns have made it possible to allocate more resources

toward the previously neglected countryside, at least partially correcting the old urban bias.

Such motivations have not made austerity any easier for those most directly affected. The cutting of many government jobs has worsened an already serious unemployment situation. Inflation, which improved for a time, remains a problem. Health care services and education have not yet recovered significantly.

From the beginning, official policy has included provisions aimed at ameliorating the worst impact on the population. Workers received bonuses, special tax breaks, and periodic wages increases. Those whose jobs were cut got separation payment and in some cases, retraining or financial assistance to go into agriculture or open a trade.

Last year, the government began implementing a special \$100 million program to ease the plight of the most vulnerable. Somewhat awkwardly named the Program of Action to Mitigate the Social Consequences of Adjustment (Pamscad), it includes a wide range of measures: placement for laid-off workers, credit schemes for small-scale farmers, public works, improvement of health and sanitation, and nutrition projects.

Ghana was the first African country to have an official program designed to ease the social costs of adjustment, and it remains one of the few today. After some initial reluctance, the IMF and World Bank eventually agreed to back Pamscad.

Pamscad was one reflection of the concern among Ghanaian leaders that "adjustment fatigue" might be setting in among the people, with potentially serious consequences. Last year, the universities were disrupted by a series of student protests prompted by moves to cut meal subsidies and introduce other cost-saving measures. Ghana's Trades Union Congress has often been critical of employment cutbacks and certain other policies. "Ghana's economic recovery," stated one top TUC official who asked not

to be named, "has yet to reflect on the incomes of workers."

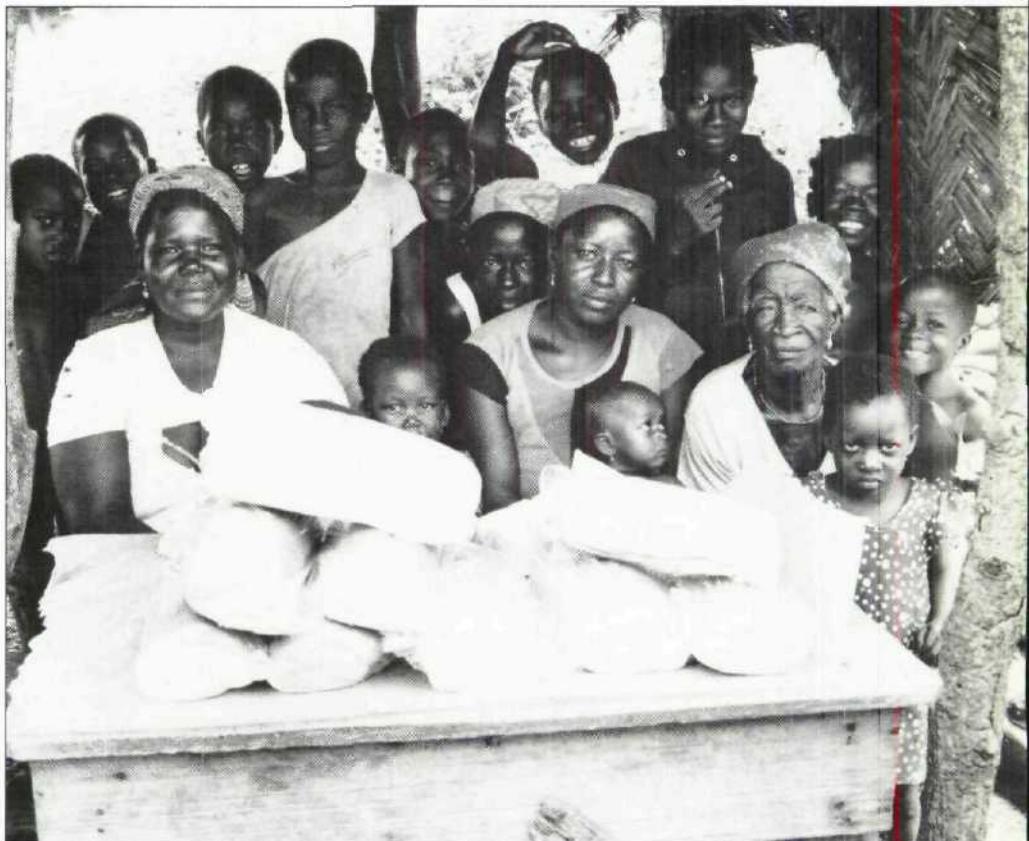
Still, compared to some other African countries where strikes, demonstrations, street rioting, and even coup attempts have followed less drastic austerity moves, Ghana has thus far escaped with relatively little social unrest.

Huudu Yahaya, the Secretary for Mobilization and Social Welfare, thinks one reason may be how the PNDC has gone about implementing the ERP. Instead of simply decreeing

the top man is sacrificing to a point. Frugality is the watchword. A lot of privileges had to go."

Perhaps most crucially, the PNDC has made serious efforts to draw the Ghanaian people into the country's process of economic recovery. In many other African countries, observes Yahaya, economic programs are implemented "basically just at the bureaucratic level." But in Ghana, "we supplement it with the mobilization of the people."

Margaret A. Novicki



Selling bread on market day, Zonaayili, Northern Ghana: "Rural markets are well-stocked with foodstuffs"

measures and telling people to follow them, government officials frequently engage in detailed explanations of why such measures are necessary. "We lay our cards on the table," says Yahaya.

The strenuous efforts against corruption and profiteering, for greater accountability in public life, and to increase tax collections from the wealthier layers of society have likewise served to engender public confidence. "When you are telling the ordinary man to sacrifice," Yahaya says, "then he appreciates that even

Through Pamscad, for example, nearly \$20 million is to be allocated to assist community action in some 1,000 locations, basically to help villagers complete projects they have already initiated on their own. But this is only part of a growing trend toward local development activities, in which farmers' associations, women's groups, cooperatives, youth organizations, and other community-based groups have played a key role in stimulating local production.

The National Mobilization Program has been especially effective in

promoting such efforts. First launched in 1983 as an emergency exercise to channel many of the Ghanaians expelled from Nigeria back into productive activities in their home areas, the NMP has since developed into an on-going operation. It has organized several hundred thousand young Ghanaian men and women into volunteer groups known as "Mobisquads" to build public facilities, develop professional skills, and engage in farming. Many squads are now being transformed into agricultural cooperatives.

Through these Mobisquads, states the NMP's director, Kofi Portuphy, "we are trying to rekindle the patriotism of our people, to motivate them."

With some success, it seems. Visits to several Mobisquad projects in different regions of the country found young squad members involved in a broad variety of projects, some of a voluntary public-service nature, others as quite profitable income-generating enterprises. In Agona Mankrong, for example, the earnings from a Mobisquad-managed cocoa farm were reinvested in food cultivation, construction materials for a village health clinic, and a small boat to ferry villagers across a river to their fields.

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For a country once considered one of Africa's economic basket cases, the six years of the Economic Recovery Program have marked an impressive turnaround. The crisis atmosphere has largely dissipated. Simple survival is no longer the central preoccupation. Yet the remaining difficulties are severe enough for the Ghanaian authorities to speak of the future in less than optimistic terms.

Corruption, though kept in check by severe sanctions, persists. It is not unusual for a merchant, bank official, top civil servant, or even police official to be hauled before a tribunal on charges of embezzling funds, accepting bribes, or smuggling goods.

The resurgence of private sector activity has also brought its ugly side: the National Investigations Committee is currently investigating 30 separate cases in the timber trade, where it is believed that foreign and Ghanaian businessmen have illegally siphoned off some \$38 million since 1986.

For the more honest and productive sectors of Ghana's business class, however, the rewards have been much scantier.

The exceptionally tight credit policies pushed by the IMF and World Bank are preventing industrial companies in particular from gaining access to foreign exchange. "So many enterprises seem to be distressed," acknowledges Seung Choi, the World Bank's resident representative until the end of 1988. "We see many examples of companies that are reasonably vital, under good management, and with sufficient assets, but they can't turn over their assets simply because they don't have adequate access to working capital financing."

Industrialists have expressed concern that full import liberalization, as advocated by the World Bank, could lead to the dumping of cheap goods from abroad. Garment, leather-processing, and plastics manufacturers are already feeling the squeeze, and some are going out of business. John Richardson, president of the Association of Ghana Industries, has called on the government to provide some "meaningful protection" to domestic manufacturers.

Some Ghanaian commentators, pointing to such trends, warn of a danger of "deindustrialization." This is not the way to build an integrated national economy, they say. If the economy continues to revolve around the export of just a few raw materials, then it will remain forever dependent.

Two aspects in particular of Ghana's external vulnerability have aroused increasing official concern over the past year or so: the decline in cocoa prices and the mounting debt burden.

Cocoa, on which so much of

Ghana's foreign earnings depends, is now selling abroad for less, in real terms, than at any other time in the past half-century. Although the country has focused intensively on boosting output, much of its effort has been wiped out by market forces beyond its control.

This loss in export earnings has made it difficult for Ghana to pay back the large loans it has contracted—while at the same time making new loans that much more indispensable. Ghana's total foreign debt has doubled over the course of the ERP, from \$1.5 billion in 1983 to \$3.3 billion last year. Around two-thirds of annual export earnings are required to keep up repayments of principal and interest (although reschedulings may ease these debt-servicing requirements somewhat). Finance Minister Botchwey, speaking at a June conference on African debt in Washington, said that Ghana has now found itself in a "debt trap."

Without a satisfactory resolution of these external problems, Ghanaian officials have said, much of their economic progress over the past six years may become meaningless.

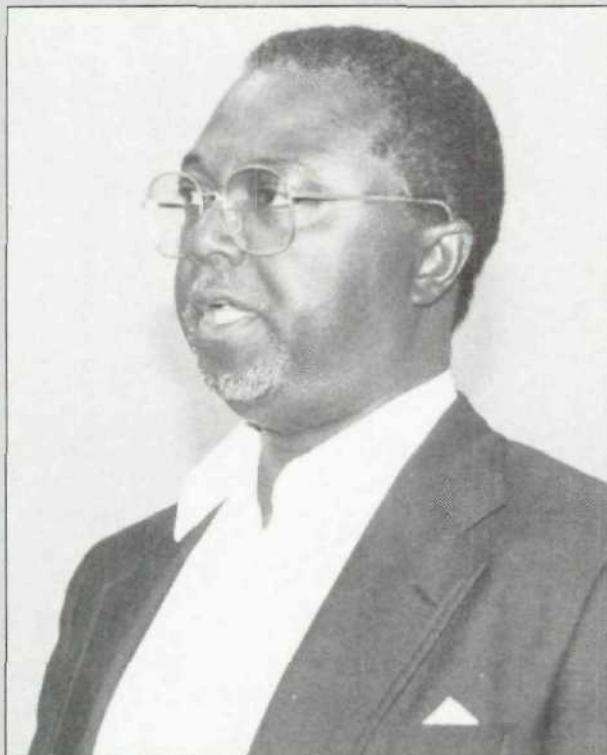
But Ghana, on its own, has little hope of making real headway against such major international economic constraints. Recognizing that these problems affect not just Ghana, but all of Africa, Rawlings and other leaders have said that what is needed is for African states to seek collective solutions.

While visiting Tanzania this January, Rawlings pointed to the common economic problems confronting all Africans: declining net financial inflows and export revenues, as well as rising debt service obligations. These, he said, have restricted the capacity of African economies to achieve desperately needed growth.

For the continent to have a chance, African unity "must be given substance in both political and economic terms," Rawlings said. "The need for Africa to take her destiny in her own hands is more evident now. Africa must of necessity pool her immense human and natural resources." ◎

## Amos Sawyer: FIGHTING FOR RIGHTS

By ERNEST HARSCH



Ernest Harsch

The October 1985 elections in Liberia, marked by widespread irregularities, were followed by a wave of severe political repression. As a result, many Liberian opposition political figures and activists were forced into exile. Last year, a number of them came together to form the Association for Constitutional Democracy in Liberia (ACDL).

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the ACDL seeks to provide a focus for efforts to improve human rights conditions in Liberia and to press for democratic change. It has organized public meetings and publishes a newsletter called *Liberia Update*. Its leaders have testified before a variety of congressional committees.

One of the ACDL's most prominent spokesmen is Amos Sawyer. Then a central leader of the Movement for Justice in Africa, Sawyer's 1979 independent mayoral campaign in Monrovia won such enthusiastic support that the ruling True Whig Party of William Tolbert cancelled the election. After Tolbert's overthrow and the coming to power of Samuel Doe, Sawyer chaired the broad-based National Constitutional Commission, which provided the basic draft for Liberia's current constitution.

Sawyer was arrested in 1984 for publicly criticizing Doe's policies, leading to serious student unrest at the University of Liberia, where he taught. In 1985, Sawyer's Liberian People's Party was outlawed. He was kept under virtual house arrest until early 1986, when he left the country.

Sawyer spoke to *Africa Report* about the aims and activities of the ACDL.

**Africa Report:** What is your assessment of the impact of U.S. policy on Liberia? How has it affected constitutional liberties and human rights?

**Sawyer:** Unfortunately, the Reagan administration sent the wrong signals to Liberians. The American position has been perceived as supportive of the very precepts and principles that the American government seems to suggest it finds unacceptable.

Quite recently, we have seen more clearly the true objectives of American policy explained. The deputy assistant secretary for human rights and humanitarian affairs told the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations that there were three objectives driving American foreign policy in Liberia. One was American security interests. The second was American private investment and the sizeable American community in Liberia, and the third was to always maintain access to the Liberian government. He put them in that order.

Nowhere in this scheme of things did the Liberian people fit in. Well, that's the hard reality. Liberians have always had this bias in favor of the United States, and sometimes expected much more of the United States than perhaps they should. Liberians should realize that they're on their own, and I think that's a good thing. Nobody else is going to solve our problems for us.

At the same time, we wish there wouldn't be any support for Mr. Doe. I must say that the American government seems to suggest that it has done as much as it can do in reducing the

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*Ernest Harsch is a freelance journalist based in New York who has written extensively on African political and economic developments for over a decade.*

aid level. There have been substantial cutbacks in aid.

**Africa Report:** Aside from the question of American aid to Liberia, are there any particular proposals or suggestions you are making for further shifts in U.S. policy, especially with the arrival of a new administration here?

**Sawyer:** In the last year or more, we have not had any relationship with the U.S. State Department. We reached an impasse. The views were so diametrically opposed, there was very little to discuss. Perhaps with the failure of the Opex team [of U.S. economic advisers]—which was supposed to have been the final effort, in a hands-on manner, to turn around the economy—this might lead to some rethinking in the State Department.

Having said that, if there were anything we would be interested in, it would be a change in the perception of the problem. Officials in the United States, and I'm talking largely of policy-makers at the State Department, seem to see the Liberian situation as one in which there is a government that is doing wrong because it doesn't know how to do right. It is incompetent, it is inept, it is corrupt. It is an "authentic" African government, the moral equivalent of the noble savage, untrained. So for many years, there's been this effort to provide the training, the capacity building, bringing in technicians and all of that. It is being passed over as if it were a well-intended regime doing wrong out of ignorance.

We would like a shift from that kind of thinking, so as to portray exactly what we do have: a gangster regime, a plundering regime. It is not, in spite of Doe's own rhetoric, a pro-capitalist or a pro-free enterprise regime. It plunders both the labor unions and the companies. We do not have a constitu-

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# AFRICA

tional civilian government. We have a continuation of military rule, with some modifications here and there.

The fact that there isn't a constant flow of blood down the streets is no credit to the humanity of the regime. It is a realization on the part of the Liberian people that the regime's threats are credible. So if we can change that Washington image of the Liberian situation, then I think the kinds of things that Liberians in the opposition are talking about could really be aided along.

**Africa Report:** How do you try to reach the American public?

**Sawyer:** We work on several levels. We provide a considerable amount of information to the Congress, not only through staff and congressional committees, but also going to the constituencies. This way we not only influence the mind-set of the legislators, but begin to build an awareness and a constituency in this country for the Liberian problem.

We are working with church groups, and we are beginning to make some inroads in some local and community press. We are trying to appear on at least one radio call-in program in a city somewhere in this country per month. We co-sponsor a telephone line which carries regular news summaries about Liberia.

**Africa Report:** What was the initial impetus for the formation of ACDL?

**Sawyer:** During the political process leading up to the 1985 elections, it was clear that what was necessary was some sort of coalescing of efforts. Doe announced that he was going to run and he had not only all the resources of the government behind him, but was making up the rules as he went along to suit his own convenience. Other political parties had to fight

against all the odds even to get on the books.

I think we did a very poor job, under those circumstances. Not that if we had all coalesced there would have been a different result, but I think cheating would have been a little more difficult. The lessons we learned from that experience suggested an imperative in forming some broad democratic alliance, to try to provide the atmosphere within which competitive party politics could act itself out.

When efforts to contest the election results failed and Doe was inaugurated as president [in January 1986], the three officially recognized opposition parties at that point formed what they called the Grand Coalition of Liberia. It operated for probably five months or so. Once it began to undertake some major collaborative effort, the leadership of those parties was imprisoned, sent to Belle Yallah prison without trial, without due process. The government was sensitive to any effort on the part of opposition parties to coalesce. This meant they were hitting on something.

Since it became difficult to operate at home under those conditions, those of us who had been forced out because of the political situation thought that this might well be the path that we want to take so as to strengthen the democratic forces at home.

So we continued this idea of coalescing the democratic forces. But we also expanded so that the alliance represents not only the three officially recognized political parties, but all democratic forces, including political organizations that were not registered for the elections, student organizations, certain elements in the Council of Churches, the teachers' union, labor unions. And we decided to work in concert with human rights

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groups in the United States and Europe. We wanted to see if a new momentum could be built for democracy in Liberia.

We call ourselves the Association for Constitutional Democracy, to define what we are. An association, a conglomerate of groups and individuals, whose singular purpose is democracy, but democracy in accordance with the prescriptions of the Liberian constitution. That narrows down what we are talking about.

There are three major things we want to do. First, build linkages and keep those ties very strong between Liberians outside Liberia and Liberians back home, so that we can pursue discussions and actions about alternatives. Second, we want to be able to provide information about Liberia, the other side of the story, to keep Mr. Doe and his regime perceived in the perspective that they should be perceived. A final, very useful objective is that we get used to working together, and this is one of the beautiful things that is coming out of this: Liberians across party lines involved in consensus building.

**Africa Report:** How successful have you been so far in drawing into a common framework people who used to have allegiances to different parties?

**Sawyer:** Take the ACDL board, for example. There are seven names on the board. Two, Harry Greaves and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, are members of the Liberian Action Party. Momo Rogers is a member of the Unity Party. My own affiliation was with the Liberian People's Party (LPP), even though it was never officially registered for the elections. J. Mamadee Woaatee has been closely affiliated with Gabriel Kpolleh, and while he does not officially represent the [now outlawed] Liberian Unification Party—nobody officially represents a party—he has access to the thinking among those people. Ezekiel Pajibo has been a member of the LPP, but I think more importantly than that, he has very important linkages with the Liberian National Students Union (LINSU), and at one point was its secretary-general. Then there's Patrick Seyon. Patrick has no party affiliation, but he is widely known for his single-minded concern for constitutionalism.

This is our "public view" board, the people whom we have up front. This is not to say that there's some clandestine activity going on, but there are people who for a variety of reasons, including fear of recrimination at home or immigration difficulties here, cannot come forward publicly. They make this nucleus even more representative, people who have direct ties to labor unions, the Liberian Council of Churches, the teachers' organization. They come to our board meetings, and for all practical purposes they are members of our board.

**Africa Report:** How does the ACDL relate to the opposition movement inside Liberia?

**Sawyer:** We're guided by some pointers that we get from home. But we are very careful to operate in a way that is mindful that Liberians who are active in the political process at home are protected. So while we maintain strong linkages, if you were to look on the surface alone, it would seem that there is very little contact.

We are very happy that more and more, the bridge is being built across party identification in Liberia. We stimulate each other. As we collaborate together across party lines abroad and do things together, they at home are invigorated to step up their collaborative activities.

Recently, we have had several symposia and a mass demonstration before the Liberian Embassy in Washington, D.C. Quite recently, at home, the combined opposition held a series of consultative meetings and announced a joint position

regarding the possibility of free and fair elections in 1991.

At this time, all the political opposition forces are part of the on-going discussion at home. I should mention that the United People's Party was the last to join the discussion because it had taken the posture of a "loyal opposition." The UPP has now redefined its position vis-à-vis the Liberian government and has joined forces with other opposition parties and groups.

We have to operate in ways that our people have an opportunity for deniability on certain issues. We don't pretend that we are out here with a carte blanche to represent internal democratic forces on every issue. So in the course of our activities, there are issues on which they at home would be constrained to deny any knowledge, or to say no, we don't agree with that. That's all healthy and that's all part of the process of building for a democratic order.

**Africa Report:** If the Doe government were to suddenly go, would the outcome today be any better than it was in 1980? Have democratic ideas gained enough ground, can democratic institutions be strengthened sufficiently?

**Sawyer:** That's a very important question. I think there are a few differences between the situation now and the situation then. One is that in 1979 you had atomistic groups and tendencies playing vital roles in the process of change side by side with systematically organized progressive groups. The only real linkage among them all was their common opposition to Tolbert. But their objectives, I think, were very, very different.

A more important difference is that there had not been a structure within which they were acting out their opposition in a systematic way in pursuit of common objectives.

We hope the ACDL is contributing to the creation of a structure. First, you have political parties that have somehow made themselves a presence in the society. Stimulated by the ACDL and other incentives, they are beginning to talk to each other. It is possible to minimize the divisions, to emphasize the commonalities, to work within a framework conducive to carrying the democratic process onward, looking at the Liberian constitution as the guide.

We need to do this without developing a system that will stifle competition or one that would see us return to a new political hegemony. It's a delicate thing. We'd like to strengthen the commitment to the democratic process—and hope we don't get back home and start fighting about jobs and forget about the larger issues. We need to retain the practice of fighting about ideas and directions but doing so within a framework.

So even if there's no ACDL when we return home, there'll be a need for some equivalent, which will keep its eye always on the process, and blow the whistle when people go outside what is permissible within the democratic framework.

These are questions to ponder. We have examples before us, of people who were out here in exile, rode the tide, went back after Tolbert's fall, and formed a niche in the new order, to become collaborators with a regime going wrong. We found the same with others who were at home at the time, associated with political parties or former protest groups, who got themselves very comfortably situated.

Perhaps these things will always happen. But if you have in existence a structure where the objective of constitutional rule or maintaining respect for human rights and due process is always put before you, probably one can minimize the degree of strain and the degree to which the process can be derailed. ◇



OAU

# A CHARTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

By DAPHNE TOPOUZIS

Early in the history of the OAU, the question of protecting human rights was secondary to Africa's struggle for self-determination. With the recent opening of the headquarters of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights in Banjul, however, a new focus on the rights of the continent's citizens is a step forward in the promotion of democratic practice.

Betty Preiss



**A**n important new chapter in Africa's political history was recently opened by the inauguration of the headquarters of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) in Banjul, capital of The Gambia, on June 12. It is a chapter of modest beginnings,

Daphne Topouzis, a contributing editor of *Africa Report*, is currently based in Dakar.

but with potentially far-reaching consequences—"a new beacon of hope for Africa," in the words of Isaac Nguema, the commission's chairman, and a first step toward the emergence of democratic practice across the continent.

ACHPR is an inter-governmental organization, under the umbrella of the Organization of

African Unity (OAU), whose objective is to promote and protect human rights in Africa and to "struggle for genuine independence and preserve the dignity of the people," according to Nguema. Formally established in 1981, the commission is composed of 11 members from Senegal, The Gambia, Congo, Gabon, Egypt, Libya, Mali,

*Africa Hall, OAU, Addis Ababa: "The question of human rights has always been inextricably linked with the right of peoples to self-determination"*

Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia, who serve in their personal capacity and are independent of their governments and the OAU.

The commission will serve as a documentation center on human rights across the continent. It will collect, classify, and store information, conduct surveys and studies on human rights-related issues, as well as organize conferences and seminars to increase awareness of people's rights. In addition, it will encourage organizations that are concerned with human rights.

The most significant contribution of the commission to date is the African Charter of Human Rights which came into force in October 1986. In an interview with *Africa Report*, Nguema described the charter as "the key to African development and a critical factor to the continent's future. We cannot have economic development without human rights."

Another African jurist, Taslim Olawale Elias, judge and former president of the International Court of Justice, maintained at a 1985 Nairobi conference on human and people's rights: "The charter is fundamental to the emergence of true democracy in the newly emergent nations of Africa. Our continent is in very short supply of democracy and anything that we can do to overcome this serious deficiency must be done for ourselves and for posterity."

The African Charter is based on the principles of equality before the law; non-discrimination; freedom of conscience; and the right to peace, development, the environment, and information. Divided in three parts, the first deals with "basic principles" that reflect "the virtues of their historical tradition and the values of African civilization which should inspire and characterize their reflection on the concept of human and people's rights."

The second section is a treatise on the concept of human and people's rights pertaining to the African concept of law and the specificity of the relationship between rights and duties of the individual and the state,

society, and international community. It is indicated that in the African context, rights and duties are inextricably linked on the grounds that the community is a privileged subject of law and reconciliation, though discourse is the norm rather than contentious procedures such as trials. The last section of the charter deals with the system of promotion and protection of human rights.

The symbiotic relationship between economic, political, civil, and social rights was the leitmotif of a recent meeting of ACHPR in Banjul. Jean Martenson, UN under-secretary for human rights and director-general of the UN Human Rights

ing with human rights in Africa for many years. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, African governments were almost exclusively preoccupied with socio-economic development and internal security and consequently paid little attention to human rights.

This was clearly reflected in the charter of the OAU, whose preamble includes a clause stipulating that "liberty, equality, justice, and dignity are essential objectives in the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of Africa." The liberation of the continent and the eradication of discrimination rather than human rights were at the center of the OAU's concerns. Thus, as then-OAU Secretary-General Idé Oumarou observed at the Banjul ACHPR meeting, the question of human rights in Africa has always been inextricably linked with the right of peoples to self-determination.

The Lagos initiative crystallized in the formation of the African Commission of Jurists in 1963, which undertook the drafting of the African charter under the aegis of the OAU. However, it took several conferences, colloquia, and study workshops to mobilize governments and public opinion. Conferences in Dakar (1966), Cairo (1969), and Dar es Salaam (1973) failed to produce concrete results. It was not until 1978 that a significant breakthrough was reached in Dakar. The efforts of the follow-up committee of this colloquium succeeded in gaining the support of then-President Leopold Senghor of Senegal, who pressed the issue of the adoption of an African Human Rights Commission with the OAU.

Following several conferences in Monrovia, Liberia in 1979, Addis Ababa in 1980, and Banjul in 1981, the African Charter of Human and People's Rights was unanimously adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the OAU in June 1981 in Nairobi. Next, ACHPR mobilized its efforts so as to secure the ratification of over half the member-states of the OAU, after which it could come into effect.

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**D**uring the 1960s and 1970s, African governments were preoccupied with development and internal security and paid little attention to human rights.

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Center in Geneva, pointed out in his address to the commission that the right to development "is a far-reaching and penetrating human right," and that "human rights and development are regarded as being linked, mutually supportive, interdependent, and interwoven." Other participants in the three-day meeting cited human rights as an important factor in fostering African unity.

The origins of the African Charter of Human and People's Rights can be traced to 1961 when over 200 judges, lawyers, and teachers of law from 23 African countries gathered at an all-African conference of jurists in Lagos and proposed that African governments adopt a convention on human rights. African jurists and intellectuals, along with the International Commission of Jurists and the United Nations, had been actively trying to set up an organization deal-

Countries that have still not ratified the charter include Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Angola, Kenya, Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, and Djibouti. According to Nguema, Ghana has recently ratified the charter, while Cameroon is also reported to have joined the signatories.

The first objective of the commission, observed Nguema, "is to promote the rights of man by teaching these rights to the people and sensitizing public opinion to the fact that they exist. This will necessitate, among other things, a literacy campaign. But it does not mean that because people cannot read or write they cannot learn about the African charter. We can and intend to use the radio and television to inform people. We would like to introduce human rights in the school curriculum, in university classrooms and in police and army training centers, as well as organize competitions in schools."

The next stage is to encourage people to exercise their rights. "There are financial constraints," Nguema continued. "We have to provide the financial resources so that money will not be an obstacle in the exercise of human rights. We have to set up local organizations where people can come to us with their complaints. Our most important role, however, will be to change the mentality of the people."

The same theme was taken up by the UN's Martenson, who argued that "the major task before us is the implementation of existing human rights standards, that is, to make the rights and freedoms enumerated a reality for all. It is vital that all peoples must, first of all, know of their rights to stand a chance of realizing them."

The second objective of the commission is the protection of human rights. "Once seized of a violation, the commission comes into contact with the state and if no response is obtained, a meeting of heads of state and governments of the OAU will ensue. If they decide that a violation has taken place, then they will put

pressure on the government in question," said Nguema.

The violations brought to the attention of the commission must have been committed by a state party. Once seized with a complaint, a preliminary investigation is undertaken to assess the case. If the complaint is found to be legitimate, a letter is addressed to the state. The commission has to wait three months for a response. Once the investigation is completed, a report is produced, containing a detailed account of the facts as well as the conclusions reached by ACHPR. The report is subsequently submitted to the OAU Assembly of Heads of State

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**T**he liberation of the continent and the eradication of discrimination rather than human rights were at the center of the OAU's concerns.

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and Government, following which it is the responsibility of the Assembly to take whatever action is necessary.

The commission has adopted methods to expedite the registration, processing, and examination of complaints. At present, approximately 40 cases have been submitted to ACHPR and are under review.

When asked whether ACHPR could play a role in incidents such as the recent Senegal-Mauritania dispute, Nguema replied that the commission does not have the right to intervene of its own will—it can only begin an investigation after being seized by an individual. "As far as the Senegal-Mauritania case is concerned, we are still waiting to be seized by an individual; for instance, the president of either country could ask the OAU or the commission for an investigation."

The commission's long-term

goals, as outlined at the Banjul meeting in June, include the elimination of colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, Zionism, and all forms of discrimination, particularly that based on race, ethnic group, color, sex, language, religion, or political opposition. ACHPR has also proposed the publication of an African review of human and people's rights; the integration of the Banjul Charter into the legislation of African states and its publication in vernacular languages; the establishment of local, national, and sub-regional committees for the dissemination of information on human rights; the introduction of human and people's rights into the curricula of educational systems; the dissemination of human and people's rights by radio and television programs; and the designation of October 21 as an African Day of Human and People's Rights.

Nguema indicates that the road ahead is going to be a difficult one for the commission. The African charter is not satisfactory, he says, for several reasons: The violation procedures will take too long to process, and the scheduled bi-annual meetings of the commission are not nearly enough to meet the demands of ACHPR's agenda.

Under these circumstances, Nguema concludes, the number of cases handled by the commission are bound to remain quite limited. In addition, the commission faces financial problems, as its resources currently emanate exclusively from the OAU budget. The absence of a human rights court has also been cited as an obstacle, even though it was decided at the 1985 Nairobi conference that it would be premature to set up such a court.

In spite of diverse problems, ACHPR is optimistic that it will be able to play an important role in encouraging democratic procedures and providing much-needed services to Africans across the continent. But the cooperation of African governments will no doubt be the single most important element in the effectiveness of the commission's performance. ○



ANGOLA



Carnevaleix

Mobutu Sese Seko: "Frequently criticized by frontline leaders, now praised as a 'peace broker' for Angola"

# A GOLDEN HANDSHAKE?

By ANDREW MELDRUM

**Much to the surprise of Angola watchers around the world, President dos Santos and Jonas Savimbi met in Gbadolite, Zaire, agreeing to a cease-fire in the long and costly war. But the real task lies ahead in negotiating the terms of peace, including the future role of Unita and its rebel leader.**

Margaret A. Novicki

**I**t all happened so quickly that the group of Angolan cabinet ministers waiting at Luanda airport couldn't believe their ears when they heard that President José Eduardo dos Santos shook hands with rebel leader Jonas Savimbi to seal the new Angolan cease-fire agreement.

They shook their heads in disbelief when told by journalists that dos Santos had a friendly discussion with his long-time arch-enemy and the two agreed upon a cease-fire plan which called for the integration of the rebel Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita) forces

*Andrew Meldrum, contributing editor to Africa Report, is an American journalist who has been based in Zimbabwe for eight years.*

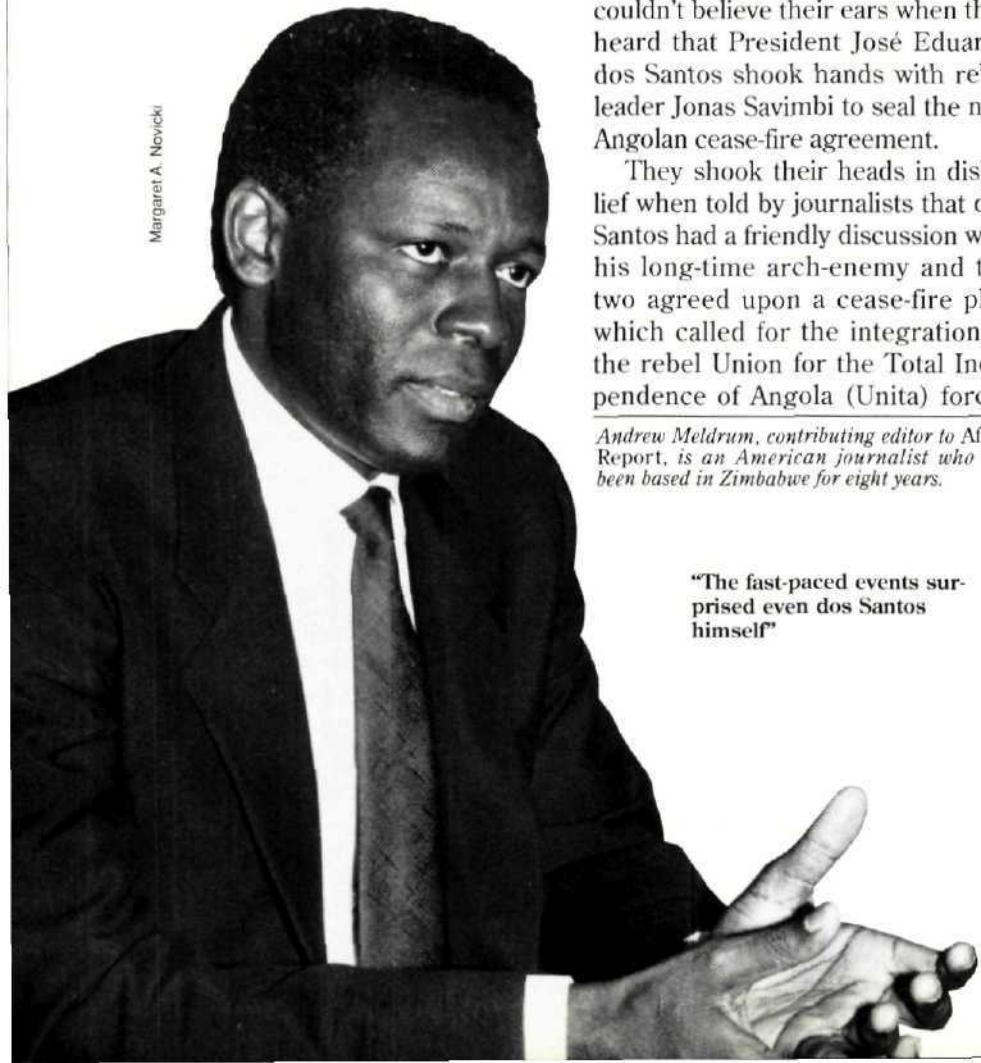
"The fast-paced events surprised even dos Santos himself"

into Angolan political life, currently under a one-party state. Such an immediate about-face that could entirely alter the situation in Angola was difficult for the government officials to grasp.

The Angolan officials were awaiting the return of President dos Santos from the summit of 18 African leaders held in Gbadolite, Zaire, on June 21. They had known that dos Santos would be considering plans for a cease-fire offer to the Unita rebels, but they did not anticipate such a far-reaching accommodation with Unita—and particularly with Savimbi himself, who had been vilified for his acceptance of South African military aid and the suffering caused to hundreds of thousands of Angolans by the drawn-out rebel war.

"It is not pleasant to swallow a toad," said one senior Angolan cabinet minister at the airport at the thought of receiving Savimbi into the ranks of the ruling MPLA party. "But sometimes one must do things that are not pleasant."

It appears that the fast-paced events surprised even dos Santos



himself. He did not expect Savimbi to be present at the Gbadolite summit, according to reports, and threatened to pull out of the meeting when he heard Savimbi would attend. Apparently, the crafty Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko had assembled many more heads of state than the eight expected, throwing African weight behind the meeting in order to get the cease-fire accord agreed between the two Angolans and to get a serious negotiating process in motion.

"It was a formidable group in search of peace," said Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe upon his return from the Gbadolite summit. "The allies and axis groupings of the conflict were all represented....We are all glad that tremendous moves were made in the direction of a peaceful settlement in Angola."

Speaking to the press, Mugabe gave details of the agreement. He said the two Angolan leaders agreed to a settlement package including a cease-fire in the 14-year conflict, effective midnight June 24, an amnesty to all rebels of Savimbi's Unita, and the integration of Unita members into Angolan society, "particularly the government and party," said Mugabe.

Mugabe added that President Mobutu had received assurances from the United States and South Africa that they would end all military assistance to Unita.

"We all hope that this package will bring peace to that country," said Mugabe, who tentatively suggested that a similar diplomatic effort could bring the prospect of peace to war-torn Mozambique.

"One would hope that the model being set up in Angola will offer some hope to the people of Mozambique," said Mugabe. "The principles deserve the attention of the Mozambican people. I am sure something will unfold in Mozambique after this move in Angola has succeeded."

Mugabe's statement suggesting that Mozambique's bitter civil war could be resolved by a similar reconciliation is seen here as significant

because Zimbabwe is the chief military supporter of Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano's government against the South African-backed Renamo rebels.

Indeed, the news of the Angolan cease-fire swept through Mozambique's capital of Maputo almost as urgently as it did in Luanda. President Chissano's war-weary government has been discreetly seeking some form of contact with Renamo rebels, elucidated in a 12-point position paper that has been circulated to diplomatic missions in Maputo.

Certainly a resolution in Mozambique could be no more surprising than the sudden agreement reached between the Angolan government and the Unita rebels. Jonas Savimbi has been long-reviled as a South African stooge by the Luanda government and other frontline states. Yet Mugabe described how when Savimbi agreed to the cease-fire package at Gbadolite, dos Santos greeted him as a "patriot."

"To demonstrate his sincerity and new spirit, Mr. dos Santos got up to shake hands with Mr. Savimbi," said Mugabe. "Mr. Savimbi also rose and this time the two did not go into the boxing ring, but shook hands for amity, friendship, and brotherhood. And we all stood up in support and shook hands with Mr. Savimbi."

While there have been many reports that Savimbi will go into exile, Mugabe dismissed that as a rumor and said that the two sides—dos Santos' MPLA and Savimbi's Unita—would form a joint commission to determine how the two groups would integrate, and what role Savimbi would play.

Mugabe and other frontline leaders have frequently criticized President Mobutu as a puppet of the United States, but Mugabe praised the Zairean lead-

er's effective efforts as a "peace broker" for Angola.

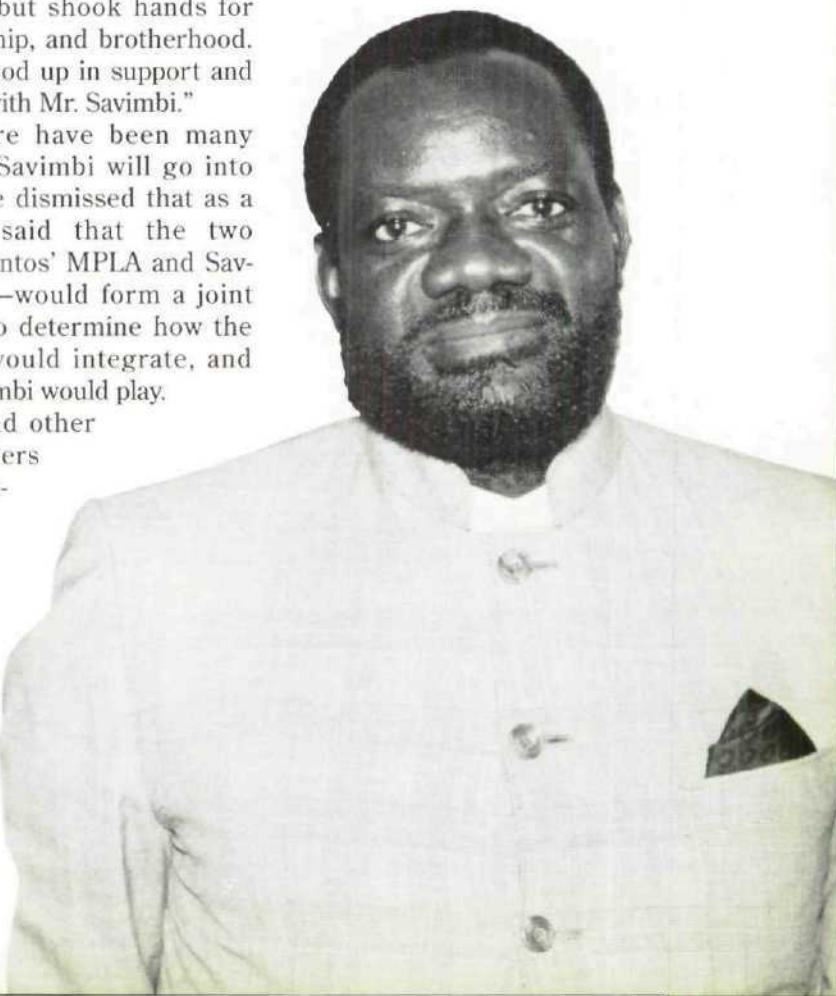
A committee of three countries—Zaire, Congo, and Gabon—was assigned to oversee the progress in Angola, said Mugabe. He said the next meeting of all the frontline states and other African countries involved in the Angolan peace process would take place in Harare in August.

But the dramatic events at Gbadolite do not mean that everything is settled for Angola. Upon his return to Jamba, his rebel headquarters in southern Angola, Savimbi said he would never accept exile and that his movement would refuse to be integrated into Angola's only legal party, the MPLA. Savimbi stated that he seeks a multi-party state in Angola and open elections. From his controversial remarks, Savimbi made it clear that the Gbadolite accord is not a final solution to Angola's war, but the beginning of a long negotiating process.

O

Jonas Savimbi: "Made it clear that the accord is not a final solution to Angola's war"

Dagome Prikorske



## *Willem de Klerk:* A VIEW OF THE FUTURE

By MARGARET A. NOVICKI

**Willem de Klerk, a liberal Afrikaner who advocates the adoption of a one-man, one-vote system of government for South Africa, is a journalist and professor of communications who has been involved in the formation of the Democratic Party.**

**He is also the brother of F.W. de Klerk, likely to be the next state president of South Africa after the elections this fall. *Africa Report* talks to Willem de Klerk about the thinking of the National Party leader, as well as the influence his views may have on the future course of government policies.**

**Africa Report:** What changes can we expect from a F.W. de Klerk presidency?

**de Klerk:** I believe there will be not formidable change, but there will be changes. His style is pragmatic, he's open-minded, he's very much inclined to find solutions for South Africa. He knows that the whole international world is expecting a lot of him and that there is a pressure group within his own party, a very strong pressure group. Against this background, there will be a release of Nelson Mandela, number one. I think that he will take some steps regarding talks with the ANC [African National Congress]. That's number two. I think there will be negotiations to lift the state of emergency. That's step number three. And step number four is that he will try his best to create negotiations favorable for South Africa's future.

**Africa Report:** Do you expect his negotiating platform to be different from that of P.W. Botha's, for example, will he not demand a renunciation of violence on the part of ANC?

**de Klerk:** I think initially he will do that. But he will get himself involved in pre-negotiation talks with the ANC, with certain factions in the South African political sphere. And in these pre-negotiation talks, he will try to lift the hindrances regarding negotiations. I think his style will be a little bit more open-minded. Initially, he will take off with the invitation to negotiation—to renounce violence. But the difference in style will be—I am sure about that—that he will say: Let's get engaged in pre-talks regarding all your problems not to negotiate with us.

**Africa Report:** Do you mean he'll actually meet with the ANC?

**de Klerk:** Not perhaps he himself, but people of government, yes. I think that will happen during this year, during October or November. I don't think he will be involved directly in these talks, but he may ask people like Neil Van Heerden or even Pik Botha to be engaged in pre-talks with the ANC and to report back to him.

**Africa Report:** Do you think his policies will be different vis-

à-vis South Africa's involvements in the frontline states, for example?

**de Klerk:** I think here he will also be more open-minded. I think he will try his best to get a southern African conference going. To do that, he must be willing to meet with the heads of state in the region. I think that will also be one of his procedures, yes.

**Africa Report:** P.W. Botha was fairly reliant upon the military and the State Security Council in determining policy toward the frontline states. Do you think that will change?

**de Klerk:** Yes, definitely. I don't think that he can exclude the military presence from the South African scene, but I think he will be more dependent on national intelligence, not on military intelligence. He's a parliamentarian. He will use the military inputs, definitely, but I don't think that he will rely solely on the military inputs.

**Africa Report:** Can we expect to see a lessening or an abatement of the war in Mozambique, given that it is believed that South Africa is still supporting Renamo?

**de Klerk:** I'm very sure about this—that there's no participation of South Africa in the Mozambique/Renamo situation at this moment of time.

**Africa Report:** Officially it is denied, but...

**de Klerk:** No, but also unofficially. Maybe there's communities within South Africa that are kind of sponsoring Renamo, but I'm very sure that the government isn't aware of this, it can't trace it down, and it is definitely not involved in Renamo anymore.

**Africa Report:** Do you expect that the process will proceed on schedule toward Namibia's independence?

**de Klerk:** Yes, I think so. Namibia's independence will be very helpful for South Africa. Of course, there will be growing pains and it won't be plain sailing all the way, but within a year's time, I think things will settle down in Namibia even if it's Swapo majority rule. I'm not expecting a straight-forward majority for Swapo. I think that the Democratic Turnhalle

Alliance will also get a formidable part of the votes and that it will be a power-sharing scenario in Namibia. But I believe that the dust will settle in a year's time and Namibia will be a success story.

**Africa Report:** It's said that your brother is very solidly within the National Party establishment, even perhaps to the right within the National Party spectrum. Given that, will he be able to come to concrete terms with the ultimate option of one-person, one-vote?

**de Klerk:** Yes, I think that will be a process. Again, I don't think that he will kick off with that kind of policy. He is very much rooted in National Party philosophy, namely that the solution lies in power-sharing between the four national groups—equal power-sharing of the four components of the whole state structure. And that there must be equal power-sharing on the basis of consensus between the racial groups, that the four racial groupings are the building blocks for the future constitution based on own affairs for the four communities on the local, regional, and national level, and then on general affairs, there is integration of consensus on political decision-making.

That's basically the National Party policy—the policy of racial federation. I think he's very much rooted in this policy. He's not to the right of the National Party factions, I would say he's in the middle of the road. But given the opportunities to find solutions, given the pressure groups within his own party, given the international pressure, I'm very sure that he will grow into the conviction that they [the National Party] must drop their racial base as a solution. But I don't expect that soon. I expect that within the next two years or so.

**Africa Report:** So you think that he will ultimately come to terms with one-person, one-vote?

**de Klerk:** I think that there will be no option in South Africa but to come to terms with a one-person, one-vote situation. On the other hand, I firmly believe that the integrity of cultural groups formed by free association must also be maintained in South Africa. Group rights must be entrenched within the constitution, within the structures of the state, within the voting system, etc. You can't ignore the group factor in South Africa—that must play a part in the solution.

**Africa Report:** But why couldn't one? If you take U.S. for example, certainly we have a lot of different ethnic groups and nationalities, but the system of government remains "equal rights for all" as defined by the constitution.

**de Klerk:** I don't say that it mustn't be equal rights for groups—that's part and parcel of democracy. There is in the American constitution definite articles that maintain the freedom of association, of speech, etc. and if that applies to an individual, it also applies to the group. So group rights are essential in democracy.

But we have another history than the United States. The U.S. from the beginning had a kind of history of the melting pot idea. As from Jan van Riebeeck in 1652, there was a kind of separation tradition in South Africa. Especially in the transitional phase—and I see the transitional phase as a period of 10-12 years—group rights must be entrenched. During the transitional phase, there will always be a kind of dualism of white politics, black politics, brown politics, and Indian politics. We must come to solutions via the consensus principle.

**Africa Report:** But by going to a group approach, aren't you still dividing society along racial lines?

**de Klerk:** No. A non-racial democracy will be a democracy of political parties, as in every democracy, and not of specific

groups. The population must organize itself in different political parties and political groupings and they fight it out. But I don't think the typical Westminster system of Britain, for instance, that winner takes all, will be the answer for South Africa.

I firmly believe that minority groups, never mind race or culture now, must also be represented on different levels of government. That's typical of certain democracies, for example, all the democracies in Europe, the democracy now in Namibia, and certain democracies in Africa. I'm not a guru on this, but you have the Westminster kind of democracy and then the democracy that is definitely taking into account that minority groups must also have a say in certain levels of government.

That's number one: It will be a democracy. That's my ideal—a non-racial democracy, a one-man, one-vote representative government of the people, for the people, by the people. But minority groupings formed by free association must also be represented in government. It has nothing to do with race.



Eric Miller/Impact/Venues

F.W. de Klerk and his wife arrive for the opening of the 1989 session of Parliament: "His style is pragmatic, he's open-minded, he's very much inclined to find solutions for South Africa"

There are different language groups and different cultural groups in South Africa. The history of Africa upholds the principle that there's always strife among certain groups in Africa. That's part of Africa's problem and Africa's situation. So you must entrench in the constitution and in your state structures and in your charter of human rights the right of a cultural group to organize itself and to maintain its identity—its own schools, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association. That's democracy. We don't want to exchange apartheid for another kind of system where minorities will be bullied by majorities. That's not the ideal form of democracy in a multi-cultural land with its specific historical background.

**Africa Report:** Can you talk about your involvement with the newly formed Democratic Party and what you think the Democratic Party represents now within the South African political spectrum?

**de Klerk:** The Democratic Party is a merger between three groupings to the left of the National Party—the Independent Movement of Worrall, the National Democratic Movement of Wynand Malan, and the old Progressive Federal Party. But there is a fourth force involved in the Democratic Party's formation and that's the disillusioned Nats, and especially the Afrikaner vote. Potentially, the market for the Democratic Party within the Afrikaner constituency is more or less 22 percent of

the National Party vote. But unfortunately for the Democratic Party, the change of leadership within the National Party replaced the accent to expectations that F.W. de Klerk is a new man and give him a chance. So I don't think the Democratic Party will have a wonderful and successful election campaign. I give them 24 constituencies, I think they will become the official opposition. I give the Conservative Party about 21, 22 constituencies, and the rest for the National Party.

**Africa Report:** How many are there all together?

**de Klerk:** I'm not sure. It's 160 or something like that. So the vast majority will be Nationalists represented in Parliament. But I see that the Democratic Party's future is in the medium-term, if—and I want to stress this point—if the National Party under the leadership of F.W. de Klerk turns the corner and takes the leap. That's the best thing that can happen to South Africa, because it's the powerful party, it's rooted within the Afrikaner establishment. If it can turn the corner, then the Democratic Party will be happy to follow.

But, if the National Party will land in a cul-de-sac again, as

under the regime of P.W. Botha, and if there are no real meaningful changes and no new political vision regarding race groupings in the political play, then the days for success for the Democratic Party will be in the medium term—in two to three years' time. It will be a success story then, because the 22 percent of disillusioned Nats will impact the Democratic Party, and it may have success in the negotiating process with the struggle politics and within the system politics. And they can demonstrate for South Africa and for the world that negotiation is possible between the different factions. That's definitely also the inclination and intent of the Democratic Party—to start this negotiation process within the next few months.

**Africa Report:** You're considered to be opposite from your brother in political outlook. What has molded your political perspectives as compared to those of your brother's?

**de Klerk:** It's perhaps a continuum on one line. I don't think I'm that opposite from him. We have the same upbringing, the same kind of culture and education. I was always more progressive in my outlook from the beginning; I'm not newly con-

Launching the Democratic Party, from left to right, Wynand Malan, Denis Worrall, Jan Momberg, and Colin Eglin: "Potentially, the market for the Democratic Party within the Afrikaner constituency is more or less 22 percent of the National Party vote"



verted to the non-racial idea. Years and years ago, I was already advocating the principle that the solution will not be found within the race concept for the South African constitution. So it just happened that we parted in our political philosophy, but I'm sure that we're on the same line, more or less, because we are both very much part of the Afrikaner establishment and very much rooted in Calvinistic philosophy. So there can be an accommodation for liberal Calvinists and conservative Calvinists within the system.

**Africa Report:** What is your personal history?

**de Klerk:** For about 10 years, I was a minister of religion, but that was a long, long time ago. Then I switched to the University of Potchefstroom, where I lectured in psychology and philosophy. Then I switched during 1973 to the journalistic world. I was an editor of an Afrikaans morning daily called *Die Transvaaler* for about 11 years; and then the editor of the largest Afrikaans paper in South Africa, a weekly, *Rapport*. I switched about two years ago back to the university to lecture in political communication and journalism.

**Africa Report:** Were you sacked from the newspaper because your views were too liberal?

**de Klerk:** No, I was definitely not sacked. It was a kind of protest from my point of view. There was a lot of pressure on me because I didn't toe the line of National Party policy in my comments and in the prominence of my news items. There was a lot of pressure via my board of directors, the cabinet, and especially via President P.W. Botha. And I just got fed up and walked out one morning. No, I wasn't sacked. On the contrary, it was quite a shock for my board of directors that I just took my hat and left.

**Africa Report:** What sort of relationship do you have now with your brother and what impact do you think you'll have on his policies?

**de Klerk:** Well, I don't know. He's level-headed. He's very open-minded. We have frequent conversations on political matters. I'm still delivering a lot of articles in papers and magazines in South Africa. I send him memoranda on current issues. So it's a very natural kind of relationship. What the influence of my philosophy will be on him, I can't say. That's up to him. But the relationship is basically sound. ☐





## MOZAMBIQUE

**F**or each year that the Mozambican conflict has escalated that much more, the number of refugees spilling into the six countries that border this vast southeast African nation has increased proportionately. Less heard of is the small but significant number of Mozambicans going back home.

Naturally—with the South African-backed Mozambique National Resistance Movement (Renamo) still far from through with its murderous

dent Joaquim Chissano. Yet eating, he argues, is not the only thing in life. "We feel that Mozambicans should feel at home, and to feel at home is not just being treated well, it is being able to participate in a creative manner in all social, economic, and political activities."

For the Frelimo government, which marched triumphantly to victory 14 years ago, only to find itself begging for food aid today, there is also an element of pride involved. As the governor of Manica province, Rafael Maguni, told Zimbabwean-based non-governmental organizations at a briefing when the repatriation exercise began two years ago: "We don't want to be beggars. We

Mozambique, repatriation from the country's western neighbor, which hosts over 70,000 Mozambican refugees, has also been fraught with difficulties.

According to UNHCR's Harare representative, Godfrey Sabiti, out of the 10,000 Mozambicans who have officially returned to their country from Zimbabwe, only 1,000 have been with the UN agency's involvement.

The rest have been rounded up and sent back by Zimbabwean security forces—mostly from white commercial farms where they have been working—on grounds that they pose a security threat. Although Zimbabwe has suffered severe Renamo

# GOING HOME

By COLLEEN LOWE MORNA

**The war in Mozambique has spawned an unprecedented number of refugees and displaced people, both internally and in the neighboring states. Despite difficult circumstances at home, a significant number of Mozambicans are making efforts to return, straining limited repatriation facilities.**

campaign—the outflow continues to far exceed the inflow. Over the last two years, relief agencies estimate that the number of Mozambican refugees has increased from 1 to 1.5 million. In contrast, about 134,000 Mozambicans are estimated to have returned during the same period.

But several thousand more are expected to repatriate this year, and each is of considerable political importance to the government, which is encouraging Mozambicans to come home—wherever security can be ensured.

"Okay, you may be in a camp, and you may be fed properly," says Francisco Madeira, formerly Mozambique's ambassador to Zimbabwe and currently a senior aide to Presi-

have had the outstretched hand for too long. Now, we want to help ourselves."

In some cases, the Mozambican government has had no choice in the matter. Included in the number of returnees are 20,000 Mozambicans who were forcibly sent back from South Africa, which is not a signatory to the UNHCR convention on refugees. This year, according to the Office for Support to Refugees and Liberation Movements (NARML) which oversees the repatriation exercise, some 50,000 Mozambicans currently living in camps in the so-called South African "homelands" of Gazankulu and KaNgwane are expected to be resettled in Maputo and Gaza provinces.

Despite excellent political relations between Zimbabwe and

attacks along the eastern border, relief agencies argue that Mozambique would hardly resettle the refugees concerned in camps, if indeed they were Renamo elements.

In one bizarre incident, Zimbabwean security forces, apparently in collaboration with Mozambique's Frelimo army, removed 200 young men from inside refugee camps in Zimbabwe and took them to Mozambique, purportedly to be enlisted as army recruits. NARML, together with UNHCR, had to quickly intervene and fetch the families of the men who had been left behind. They have now mostly been settled in Chinyambudzi, in Manica province, along the strategic road, rail, and oil pipeline leading to the port of Beira.

Repatriation from Malawi, which—with over 660,000 Mozambi-

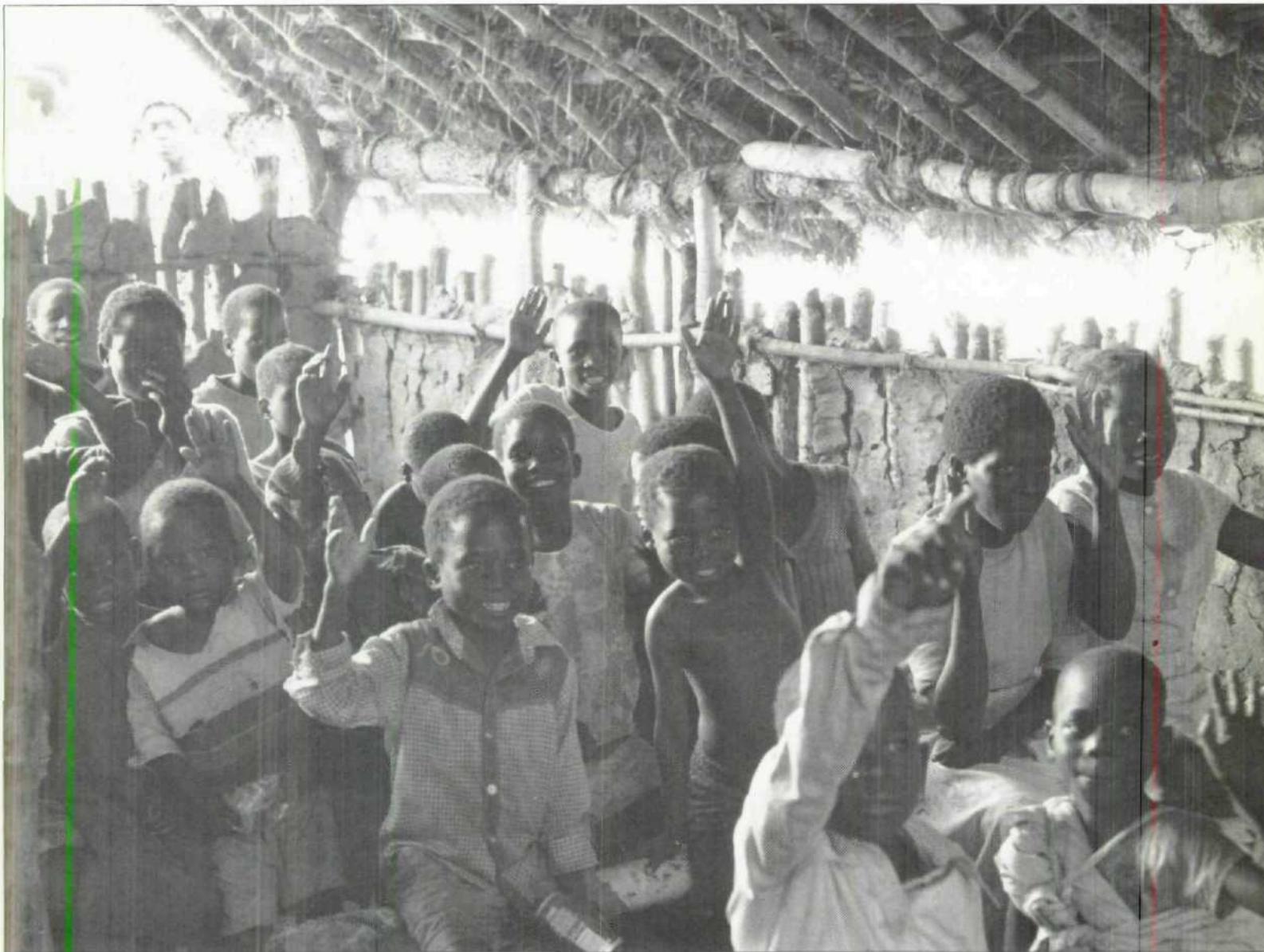
*Colleen Lowe Morna is a Zimbabwean freelance journalist based in Harare.*

can refugees is the main numerical focus—has probably been least controversial. The main complaint by relief workers has been the rather haphazard manner in which the exercise has been carried out.

triatriation exercise with the elaborate procedures currently being put in place for Namibians to go home, the church official says the program "has not been well-planned and coordinated."

sion in Lilongwe, roughly 50 to 100 refugees from the northern areas of Dedza and Lilongwe, and 500 from the southern districts, are being repatriated monthly. Most are returning to centers in Tete

©Colleen Lowe Morna



Tandara: "Returnees have cooperated with the government in building a school and health center"

According to a regional church official who travels to Malawi regularly, there has been a long habit of backward and forward movement across the western border between Malawi and Mozambique, which is demarcated by a main highway. Those wishing to return more permanently, he charges, have not been given adequate back-up on their return.

Comparing the Mozambican repa-

Several measures are being taken to rectify this problem. In December, Malawi, Mozambique, and UNHCR formed a much-publicized tripartite repatriation commission which aims to systematize the exercise. Those wishing to return are interviewed, registered, and delivered by UNHCR to Mozambique where they are met by NARML.

According to Collins Asare, UNHCR's assistant chargé de mis-

province, including Ulongwe, Changa, and the Shitima valley, close to the mighty Cahora Bassa dam.

NARML's Manica, Sofala, and Gaza provincial coordinator, Jose Paulino, says that eventually the Mozambican government intends to sign tripartite agreements with Zimbabwe and with Swaziland, the latter which is keen that some of the 17,000 Mozambicans that it is hosting start to go home.

Meanwhile, involuntary repatriation from Zimbabwe is reported to have been drastically reduced, and a group of 150 refugees returned to camps in the Beira corridor under UNHCR supervision in May. Once the Limpopo corridor linking southern Zimbabwe with Maputo is operational—probably by the end of this year—camps will be set up in this sheltered haven as well, according to Paulino.

In its 1989 emergency appeal to donors in New York this April, the Mozambican government stated that “the establishment of an emergency stockpile of food and other relief items constitutes a priority,” if the repatriation exercise is to be successful. It added that every effort had to be made to ensure that returnees “receive on time adequate supplies of agricultural inputs.”

Although most donors are sympathetic to the basic concept of repatriation, some remain skeptical about the idea of sending refugees home before the war in Mozambique is over. As one aid worker puts it: There is something ironic about transporting refugees in military convoys on their way home.

A relief worker with long experience in Mozambique says that creating centers of progress and economic activity is like “waving a red cloth in front of a bull” in Mozambique. Several Mozambicans who have left Malawi to resettle in their home areas have come back again, following Renamo attacks. As if to make a point, on December 23, Renamo attacked the Manica transit center of Nyaconza, killing four returnees and kidnapping 11 others.

NARML representative Joe Paulino concedes that “accidents do sometimes occur,” but says that the government “makes every effort to provide adequate security. We would never turn any one of our nationals into a human shield.”

Although UNHCR is insistent that repatriation should only take place where the circumstances which gave rise to the refugee movement have changed fundamentally, it is also one of the cardinal principles of

the UN agency that refugees have the right to return voluntarily to their country of origin.

Mozambique, according to UNHCR’s Harare representative Sabiti, “is unique because the majority of these people do not consider the government as the agents of persecution. Their government welcomes them back and in some instances has said, you wait, we have no facilities for receiving you.”

While UNHCR does not “go promoting repatriation to Mozambique,” when faced with people who “want to go back, who know what is involved, what reason would we have for saying that we are not making the arrangements?” Sabiti asks rhetorically.

For virtually every UNHCR officer who has worked closely with Mozambican refugees, a lasting impression is their love for and desire to go home. One such officer who has worked in Swaziland recounts how refugees frequently sing revolutionary, pro-government songs—a highly unusual habit in refugee camps.

Although the repatriation camps are not always as decked out as the camps from which the returnees came from, they exude an unusual sense of community and purpose.

For one thing, with the exception of Zambia, refugees are either not allowed to cultivate the land (in the case of Zimbabwe), or are severely constrained because of land pressure (in the case of Malawi).

At the village of Tandara, near Villa de Manica, where 140 families returning from Zimbabwe have been settled, village chairman Claus Canaan explained that although each family had only one acre, it is a joy to be able to grow their own food again, after either living in camps or working on white commercial farms.

“We are growing our own food here,” says Canaan. “It is not enough to subsist on, but it is better than being fed in a camp.”

The villagers have cooperated with the government in building a school and health center. With the help of a fishing boat provided by

NARML, they are also fishing along the adjoining Chicamba dam, and plan to set up a cooperative.

Although Renamo has visited another camp in Tandara for displaced persons, destroying 50 huts, the villagers say they have so far been safe. Slogans such as “*Fambrai Chimwe*” (Shona for “have one aim”) and “*Pindai ne rufaro*” (“enter with happiness”), etched on the brightly decorated mud hut walls, sum up the basic mood of the returnees.

Similar reports emanate from the northern province of Tete, where Mozambicans coming from Malawi are being resettled. And with vast numbers of refugees now stretching Malawi’s resources to the breaking point, some NGOs feel that repatriation may soon become a matter of necessity.

Over the last few months, the Harare-based Ecumenical Coordination Office for Emergency Rehabilitation in Southern Africa (ECOERSA) has been floating the novel idea of demarcating an area in the rich Tete province of Angonia, where refugees would be resettled under protection by an international peace-keeping force.

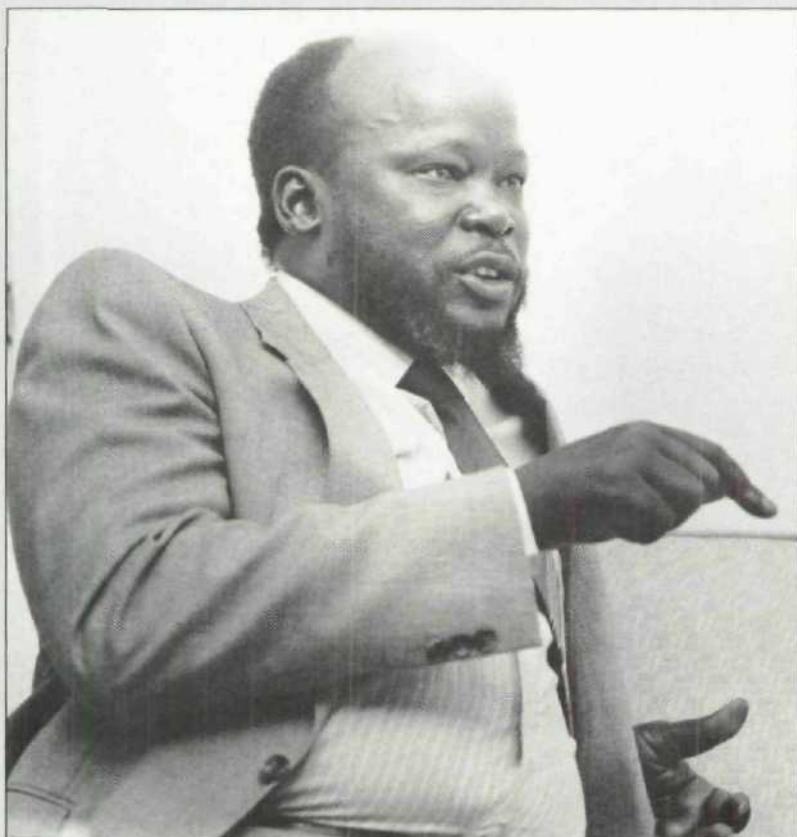
ECOERSA coordinator Valentine Ziswa says the idea—dubbed the “Angonia Corridor Project”—has so far been favorably received by the Mozambican government and leaders of the frontline states, but is still being considered by the UN.

The idea is being pursued, according to Ziswa, because “Malawi will soon not be able to cope with the refugee problem” and with the view that “resettlement must be planned more systematically, more resources should be put into it, and there must be protection for the returnees.”

But ultimately, he says, the group—which covers all the national Christian Councils of East and South Africa—is staking its hopes on a more deep-seated solution to the Mozambican conflict. “In the long run,” according to Ziswa, “the best solution to the problems confronting the repatriation program is for peace to return to Mozambique.”

## John Garang: A NEW SUDAN

By MARGARET A. NOVICKI



Margaret A. Novicki

On June 30, the government of Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi was overthrown in a military coup led by Lt.-Gen. Omar Hassan al-Bashir. In the weeks preceding the coup, the Sudanese government, faced with an army ultimatum to negotiate an end to the war in the south, initiated discussions with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Addis Ababa.

While those meetings were taking place, Col. John Garang, leader of the SPLM, was in the United States, meeting with government, church, foundation, and UN officials to explain the objectives for which his movement is fighting.

Garang also talked with *Africa Report* during his U.S. visit, and although our meeting took place a few short weeks before the coup, his comments appear all the more relevant—providing insight into the challenges the new Sudanese government will face in attempting to find a solution to the war.

**Africa Report:** The SPLA has been fighting a war against the Sudanese government for six years. What are your goals in fighting this war? What do you hope to achieve as an end outcome?

**Garang:** We hope to achieve what in our literature we call a new Sudan. The Sudan has been characterized by injustices ever since 1956. The government that took power after independence failed to evolve a new Sudanese identity and a new Sudanese commonality to which we all pledge our allegiance and our patriotism and on which future generations will build. The Sudan has been characterized by sectarianism based on religion or on race and these differences have been used not to evolve a new, enriched particularity, but to maintain political power in Khartoum.

I envisage a Sudan which transcends these localisms. Our vision contrasts with the first movement, the Anyanya movement, whose primary objective was the separation of southern Sudan. With a separatist objective, you either achieve separation or you don't. If you don't, then you must compromise. And if you compromise, then you have essentially failed in your primary objective. The Anyanya movement could not achieve its objective, and it reached a compromise in 1972 in the form of the Addis Ababa agreement. It was clear that that agreement could not last because it was based on opportunism on both sides. So in 1983, Nimeiry could openly say that the Addis Ababa agreement was neither the Bible nor the Koran and he tore it up.

We see a Sudan where such questions—what does the SPLM want, or what would satisfy the guerrillas, or the guerrillas are fighting for greater autonomy—do not become relevant, because we don't see a situation where Khartoum gives and the south receives. We see a Sudan where the power of the central government in Khartoum is restructured so as to reflect this new particularity.

**Africa Report:** How do you want to see it restructured?

**Garang:** We are talking here of a socio-political mutation—a new entity coming out of what we have now. As a socio-political mutation, you cannot really delineate it by saying one, two, three. But we are talking about a new reality in which the localisms and parochialisms—Sudan is composed of more than 150 different nationalities speaking different languages with various religions—are transcended by a commonality to which we all pay our allegiance and our patriotism. That commonality has never been achieved in our situation.

For example, the United States, peopled by various nationalities from Europe, had to fight against England to achieve independence and that unity had to be maintained through a civil war. In our situation, our fellow citizens of Arab origin have not transcended where they came from. When you want to dig your roots in America, you say you are a German-American, an Italian-American, an African-American. The challenge facing our fellow citizens of Arab origin is whether they are Sudanese Arabs or Arab Sudanese. We want a transformation where they become Arab Sudanese, not the other way around, and the same with the other nationalities.

This is the vision of Sudan and the conceptual framework in which peace can be discussed. I do not see peace being outside justice. The correlation between peace and justice is very high, probably 100 percent. I cannot conceive of peace outside the parameters of justice that I am talking about, outside the new Sudan. I don't see myself integrated into an Islamic or an Arab republic, but into a new commonality.

**Africa Report:** How close are you to achieving that? Were

the meetings held in June in Addis Ababa between the SPLA and the government the beginning of negotiations?

**Garang:** We are quite confident. It is not the beginning, but the continuation of dialogue. I have often refrained from the use of the word negotiations because in negotiations, you have two sides—one giving, the other taking, until you reach a middle ground, which was the case in the earlier context of the Anyanya, for example. The Anyanya had a firm position—it wanted separation. The Sudan government had a firm position—it wanted unity. The two sides then negotiated in terms of what powers the central government would relinquish to the south so that the south abandons its position of separation.

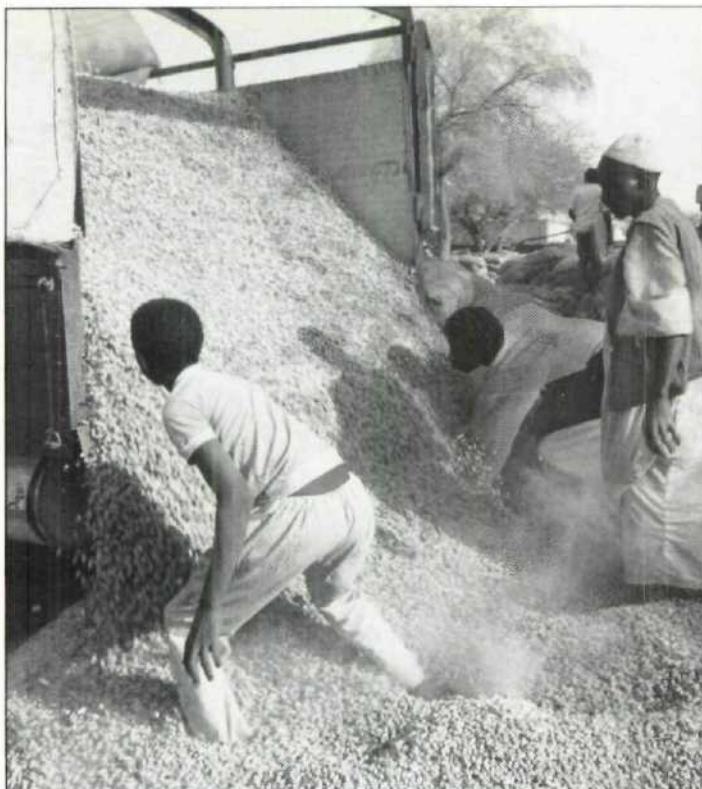
In our situation, we share the same objective of Sudanese unity. The cornerstone of the movement at the very beginning in 1983, as enunciated in our manifesto, is Sudanese unity. So here I go back again. We are talking about the restructuring of power in Khartoum, so it is really a process. In the meetings in June, we agreed to meet again in mid-July, and agreed to set a date for the national constitutional conference for September 19.

Again, this is a process. The dialogue started with Koka Dam in 1986. Koka Dam was then lost in the dust of elections and coalition government formation, and it was not until last November 16 that a major breakthrough was made again in that dialogue. Then what happened? We agreed to freeze the September laws, the sharia, and to abrogate the defense treaty between Egypt and Sudan, and Sudan and Libya, to lift the state of emergency, and to work out a ceasefire and then go for a national constitutional conference to agree on the fundamentals for a new united Sudan. That agreement was very badly received by the National Islamic Front, but was popularly received by the Sudanese people.

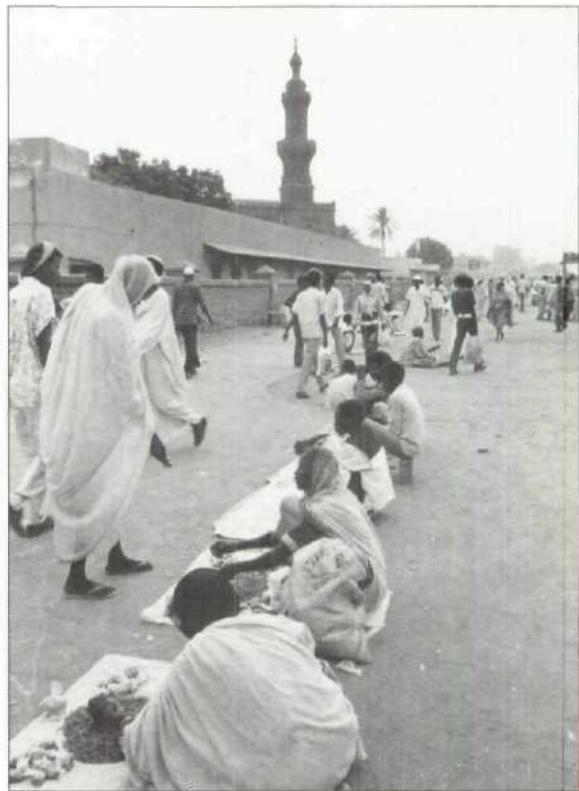
The prime minister [Sadiq al-Mahdi] was ambiguous. The peace had wide support. His party even endorsed it, but somehow the prime minister worked against the peace process until Parliament voted against it on December 28, using the votes of the Umma and the National Islamic Front [NIF]. That caused a major crisis in government. The Democratic Unionist Party [DUP] walked out and a new government was formed between the Umma and the NIF. That government was very weak and war intensified. Within six months, the SPLA overran 16 garrisons. We captured lots of ground.

You cannot lose 16 military garrisons and have no impact on your army. So the army gave Sadiq an ultimatum that he either accept the November peace agreement or give them enough armaments to win the war. Of course, the real demand of the army is peace, because it is not normal for the army to give ultimatums to prime ministers. That clause, "or else give us armaments to win the war," is sugar-coating to a demand for peace. So the prime minister had to make an about-face and say that he had accepted the November 16 peace agreement between the DUP and the SPLM.

You can see the dynamic of change. The prime minister accepted this peace initiative not because he wanted it, but was forced by the political situation, the pressure from the army, from the SPLM, and from the DUP and other political parties. So the kind of Sudan I was talking about, born out of a socio-political mutation, comes out of this process. The Anyanya, by defining its objective as separation, defined itself out of the mainstream of Sudanese politics. The SPLM, by defining its objective as unity, defined itself into the Sudanese political process. So this interaction is an indication of how



Operation Lifeline Sudan: "The accusation of food for political purposes has been made, but we are against it and we condemn it"



Mosque in central Khartoum: "The challenge facing our fellow citizens of Arab origin is whether they are Sudanese Arabs or Arab Sudanese"



SPLA forces: "Within six months, the SPLA overran 16 garrisons. We captured lots of ground"

near we are to achieving our objective.

Militarily, we have gone to the north. We are fighting now in southern Kordofan, in southern Blue Nile, so on the ground, our objectives are being realized. Politically, with the interaction with the other Sudanese political forces, we are not isolated, and we are influencing events as part and parcel of the Sudanese political process. So I am quite confident that our objectives are being realized, that enough political pressures will be brought to bear on people who make decisions in Khartoum and they will be forced to see the necessity of living in a multi-nationality Sudan. This is the only way we can keep the country together. It will not be a situation where the question is asked: What will Khartoum give to the SPLM? We will not be given, we will be part and parcel of the decision-making process in Khartoum.

**Africa Report:** When do you think that will happen? Will it be this year?

**Garang:** As soon as we all become educated to the necessity of having a multi-nationality country, separating religion—mosque and church—from the state, and giving religious freedom to all without favor or discrimination. That process is not far off and the indications are clear. If the army can give ultimatums to the prime minister, this is an indication of the fragility of the political situation, and therefore the dynamics of change and the closeness of the mutation we are talking about.

**Africa Report:** You declared a truce in May and extended it to June. What were the reasons for it?

**Garang:** Why did we declare it? After the army's ultimatum, the prime minister was forced to accept the peace initiative, and a new government was formed, committed to its implementation. We declared this peace initiative to enable the new government to implement the four requirements we talk about and also to facilitate relief. The emergency relief that is going on is facilitated by the ceasefire. It will continue even if there is no ceasefire, but we thought it would help.

When the agreement was reached in November, we were accused by the prime minister that this is because the dry season is beginning. Government troops have more mobility during the dry season. They can move tanks, artillery, and so on. So they thought that it was because of our fear of the dry season offensive—that it was opportunism on our side, in other words. But it wasn't, because when he rejected the peace agreement, the military operations were intensified and we ended up capturing 16 military garrisons. There is no way that Khartoum can reverse the military balance of forces until the dry season, until October or November when they can move cross-country again.

So on the military front, we did not have anything to fear. Since the ceasefire can help in the implementation of relief, we thought it was the best thing to do for the Sudanese people. This is the reason we declared the ceasefire. We are prepared to extend it if there is movement in the direction of peace.

**Africa Report:** What is your view of the UN's role in Operation Lifeline Sudan? Both you and the government had to cooperate to enable the corridors of tranquillity to operate.

**Garang:** I feel it was an historic agreement, because it has not happened that the UN or any other organization has been accepted by both sides before to get relief to civilians who are caught up in the war. So it is a precedent that can be emulated in similar situations. As to the operation itself, it has succeeded. So far, in the past two to three months, they have

been able to move about 60,000 metric tons of relief items to the affected areas and James Grant of Unicef has done an excellent job. He has gone to meet me in southern Sudan and actually spent a night at our place. So my assessment is that it has been very successful and they should continue to do this. I have assured Mr. Grant that the movement will continue to cooperate with him and the Unicef operation and with the other relief organizations to get the food through.

**Africa Report:** Will the famine that occurred last year be averted?

**Garang:** Definitely. The situation has been ameliorated. It will not be repeated.

**Africa Report:** How do you answer critics who say that both the SPLA and the government in Khartoum, by using food as a weapon, have inflicted a terrible amount of suffering on the people of southern Sudan?

**Garang:** I can only talk for the SPLA. We have sought international relief assistance ever since 1985-86. The famine really started in 1984. There was a general drought in Africa from the Sahel up to Ethiopia. At that time, the movement had just started. Nimeiry had suddenly been converted to religious fundamentalism. He imposed sharia on the country. He wanted to be Imam, and he found it embarrassing to appeal to the infidel West for relief. So at that time, the southern Sudanese were really forsaken. They had a movement that had just started and whom nobody would believe or take its word seriously, and a government that had literally abdicated its responsibility toward the people. In 1986, a BBC reporter came to me in Kapoeta and asked me the same question, and I said we are not refusing relief. It is that relief is not coming. We appeal to the international community that people are dying, and there is very little we can do. We want relief to reach both sides of the conflict.

The reality of the situation was that you have two administrations in the country—that of the Khartoum government and that of the SPLA. You cannot have food go to the government-controlled areas without the cooperation of the movement and vice versa. The sensible thing to do is to have an agreement among the SPLA, the government, and the international relief organizations.

And this same formula was brought to us in 1986 by Mr. Bradley of the World Food Programme who was the UN secretary-general's special envoy to the Sudan. He came to us with a plan of action to allow relief food to go to the government side as well as to our side. Immediately, we approved his plan, even though we had reservations, but we wanted a breakthrough. Now he had the permission to come and contact us from the government of Sawar-Dahab, and it was the same time Sadiq was taking over. When he returned to the Sudan, he was thrown out of the country.

Sadiq felt that the sovereignty of the Sudan was challenged, which of course had already been challenged by our existence. Mr. Bradley paid the price for it and he was declared persona non grata in the country and nobody protected him, not even the UN or the relief organizations in Khartoum, and they knew there was lots of suffering and death. It was reported by journalists that there were skeletons that littered the railway lines in an area not under SPLA control—these were government areas. So at no time had we refused relief assistance to reach the populations on both sides. It is just that the formula had not been accepted whereby relief reaches both sides to the conflict.

It was not until toward the end of last year when Julia Taft

of U.S. AID International Disaster Relief unilaterally flew food in without contacting either side that the ice was broken and it is now accepted that this model is working. As soon as this mechanism was worked out, food was flown and we are cooperating to all extents to see that food convoys are protected, that the trains are moving from the north to Aweil, dropping off relief to the population under the SPLM.

It has been three months now since we gave our OK for the barges to move from Kosti to Malakal, but they are not moving, and only one train has moved. There are lots of factors involved—there are military commanders who are making money from scarcity, there are merchants who hoard commodities in the south, and the bringing of relief food drops the prices. So you have merchants in the south literally bribing the railway workers and the Nile steamer barge workers, giving security as the reason, but it is really not security. These are administrative, bureaucratic problems and problems with the merchants.

It was not until Unicef literally bribed the railway workers that the train moved. Bribe may not be the correct word—incitement! The merchants would come at night to bribe the railway workers not to move on security grounds, Unicef would come with incentives during the day, and the workers were getting the best of all possible worlds! The accusation of food for political purposes has been made, but we are against it, we condemn it, and we would not condone it. The problem of the mechanism of how to get food has been devised and we are cooperating.

**Africa Report:** The regional dynamics are very complex now. The SPLA is supported by the Ethiopian government, the Sudanese government supports the Eritreans and Tigreans, Libya and Egypt are supporting Khartoum. Is a regional approach warranted?

**Garang:** Some people might not believe it, but the reality is that we really don't get external support. The only country that has ever given us military assistance is oddly enough Libya, when we were fighting against Nimeiry. It was a straightforward situation.

**Africa Report:** Where do your arms come from?

**Garang:** Most of the arms we have now are captured, but originally in 1984-85, we got a substantial supply of armaments from Libya, including SAM missiles, artillery pieces, and lots of ammunition. We knew that the marriage with Libya would not last. Qaddafi did not like Nimeiry and we did not like Nimeiry. That armament came through Ethiopia and the confusion has been made that it is Ethiopia that is supporting the SPLM. But we stockpiled what we got then and in the last seven, eight months, we captured 16 garrisons. One of them, Torit, was a garrison of over 3,000 troops, and we took most of the arms, especially the big support weapons, the tanks. No country ever gave us tanks, but now we have a good supply. Khartoum gets them from Arab countries, we'll come and get from Khartoum. It snowballs.

It is true that there is talk of resolution of regional conflicts, we are not opposed to this. We want peace. How it works itself out depends on who supports who and the specificities of the situation. Neither superpower supports us. Neither the U.S. nor the Soviet Union. This is the fact. Ethiopia does not support us in the way it is construed in terms of military support—it is true we have facilities. For me to come here, I had to get visas, so getting them from the American embassy in Addis Ababa is a form of support, but I could equally do it from Kenya or Uganda. It is also not true that Kenya is supporting

us. But it has been said that we get support from Ethiopia, Kenya, Israel, East Germany, the Soviet Union. The truth is what I just told you.

This resolution of regional conflicts, in addition to the internal situation, involves some arm-twisting. And to twist arms, you must have leverage. With the SPLM, nobody has leverage over us. Khartoum has preached so much that John Garang is a prisoner of Mengistu and that he can never leave Ethiopia. Then when I leave Ethiopia and come to Washington, they ask why he has gone there. When I go to Kenya, they say he has gone there again. The truth is that we are under nobody's control, and it is difficult to have that leverage over us. At the same time, we are fighting for justice and we will not continue a day longer if justice is brought about peacefully. So, the dynamics of regional conflict resolution are there, but it should not be over-emphasized.

**Africa Report:** What was the purpose of your visit to the U.S.? Given that the U.S. government has consistently been a very strong supporter of the Khartoum government, do you detect any shifts in American policy? Have you been encouraged or discouraged by your discussions with American officials?

**Garang:** I have certainly been encouraged. I have met a broad spectrum of the American people and government, from meetings with President Carter, to Washington where I met lots of congressmen and senators, the State Department, where I met the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, non-governmental organizations, church groups, relief organizations, presentations at the Brookings Institute, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Ford Foundation, the meeting with Grant of Unicef.

At all these meetings, I put across our side of the case, that the SPLM fights for justice. What we are talking about is creating a commonality to which we all pledge our allegiance and patriotism. This has not been formed before. We are talking about the granting of freedom and liberties to all religions without favor and without discrimination, and the restructuring of power in Khartoum so that it reflects this new reality. These are really common concerns. And aside this, it is difficult to see how peace can come. I've explained this message to the American people and government. I believe it has been very well taken.

As to shifts in American foreign policy, it remains to be seen. It is true that Washington has been a strong supporter of the Khartoum government. There is no reason why it should not be a strong supporter of the new Sudan which we envisage, because that new Sudan will not be against American interests abroad. I have met the U.S. business community and we have discussed the prospects for business. My message is that we are not against American interests. We will do business with the international community on terms advantageous to us in the new Sudan, and to the businesses. So my visit has been satisfactory.

**Africa Report:** Do you see any role for the American government in facilitating a solution to the war?

**Garang:** The U.S. government has been a good friend to Sudan. And if it can apply the necessary pressure since it has the leverage, then it can have a role to play. We have been talking so far without external mediation, and should it be necessary, we can request external mediation. So far it isn't. But the pressures that can be applied by the U.S., the European Community, and other countries that are concerned about the situation in the country can help in bringing about peace. So, yes, there can be a role in that context.



SUDAN



"The first time in history in the midst of a major conflict that both warring factions agreed to a common plan to reach the people"

Unicef

# AVERTING DISASTER

By JAMES P. GRANT

The director of the UN's Operation Lifeline Sudan discusses the background to the historic agreement between the government and SPLM to allow safe transit of food supplies to the war-torn south. Also looking at the recent military coup in Sudan, James Grant outlines prospects for an end to the conflict, as well as the role of the international community in resolving the nation's ongoing economic crisis.

Since 1945, there have been 150 armed conflicts in 70 countries, a great many in Africa. In 1986, Unicef was functioning in 40 countries with armed conflicts underway. Over 80 percent of the casualties in conflicts in the 1980s were civilians, more than two-thirds women and children. If there is going to be conflict, how do you avoid those who are least capable of protecting themselves and who are least involved in the fighting?

Two years ago, there were roughly 6 million people in southern Sudan. And in the last two years of civil conflict, 1.5 million of them have fled to the north, nearly

500,000 to Ethiopia, Uganda, and other places, and 300,000 or 400,000 to beleaguered garrison towns like Juba and Wau. Well over 300,000 have died in those two years. This is the tremendous impact of this kind of conflict on the civilian population.

And the repercussions go far beyond that. Sudan has \$14 billion worth of debts; \$10.5 billion of which are owed to public sources and \$3.5 billion to private. It is virtually in default. So the whole country is in a very, very deep problem. When wars start in countries, the consequences are many.

Sudan is about the size of the United States east of the Mississippi. Out of the 25 million population, about 5 million today live in the

south. The area where the conflict has been taking place in the south is one of the most remote areas in the world, and far more underdeveloped than the north. It is also the dividing line between the Islamic-Arab world and the African, Christian, and animist world to the south.

Sudan became independent early for Africa, in 1955. Civil war between the southerners and northerners broke out in 1955 and ran until 1972. It ended with a peace settlement by President Nimeiry, under which limited autonomy was given to the south. This lasted for 11 years until Nimeiry changed his policies, the south was divided into three parts, and Islamic law was introduced for the whole country. It was at that

*James P. Grant is executive director of Unicef and head of Operation Lifeline Sudan.*

time, in 1983, that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its army, the SPLA, was formed, with Col. John Garang, a graduate of Cornell College, as its leader.

The one encouraging aspect of this civil war is that the SPLM is not seeking secession, but a more pluralistic, decentralized country. Col. Garang seems to be very convinced of the fact that the future of the south lies within the whole of Sudan. He has said rather eloquently that none of the problems of the south can be solved by the south becoming independent.

After Nimeiry was overthrown in a military coup in 1985, there was a transitional military council for a year and then Sudan returned to what has been historically a rather democratic past. It's been among the most pluralistic, open societies, even when there's been a military regime. Sadiq al-Mahdi emerged as prime minister out of those elections and he remained prime minister until the coup that took place on June 30.

By June last year, the situation had gotten so bad that the prime minister requested the UN secretary-general to make an appeal on behalf of the government of Sudan for emergency assistance. The secretary-general was asked to help make a comprehensive review of what would be required to deal with relief and rehabilitation. He sent a high-level mission out and they produced their report on October 11. In October, a General Assembly resolution called on all states to respond to

Sudan's emergency needs and requested the secretary-general to take the lead in organizing an effort.

The secretary-general then made an appeal in late October for \$73 million, appointed a special coordinator for emergency relief operations, the UNDP resident representative in Khartoum, and issued a very comprehensive document on what was required. But nothing much happened. And by late January this year, it became very clear that the crisis in Sudan had been far worse in late 1988 than people had expected. It became clear by then that 250,000 people died last summer and fall—roughly 10 times the size of the Armenian disaster—and that unless a really massive effort was undertaken to pre-position supplies before the heavy rains began in late June and July, a comparable disaster would be faced this year.

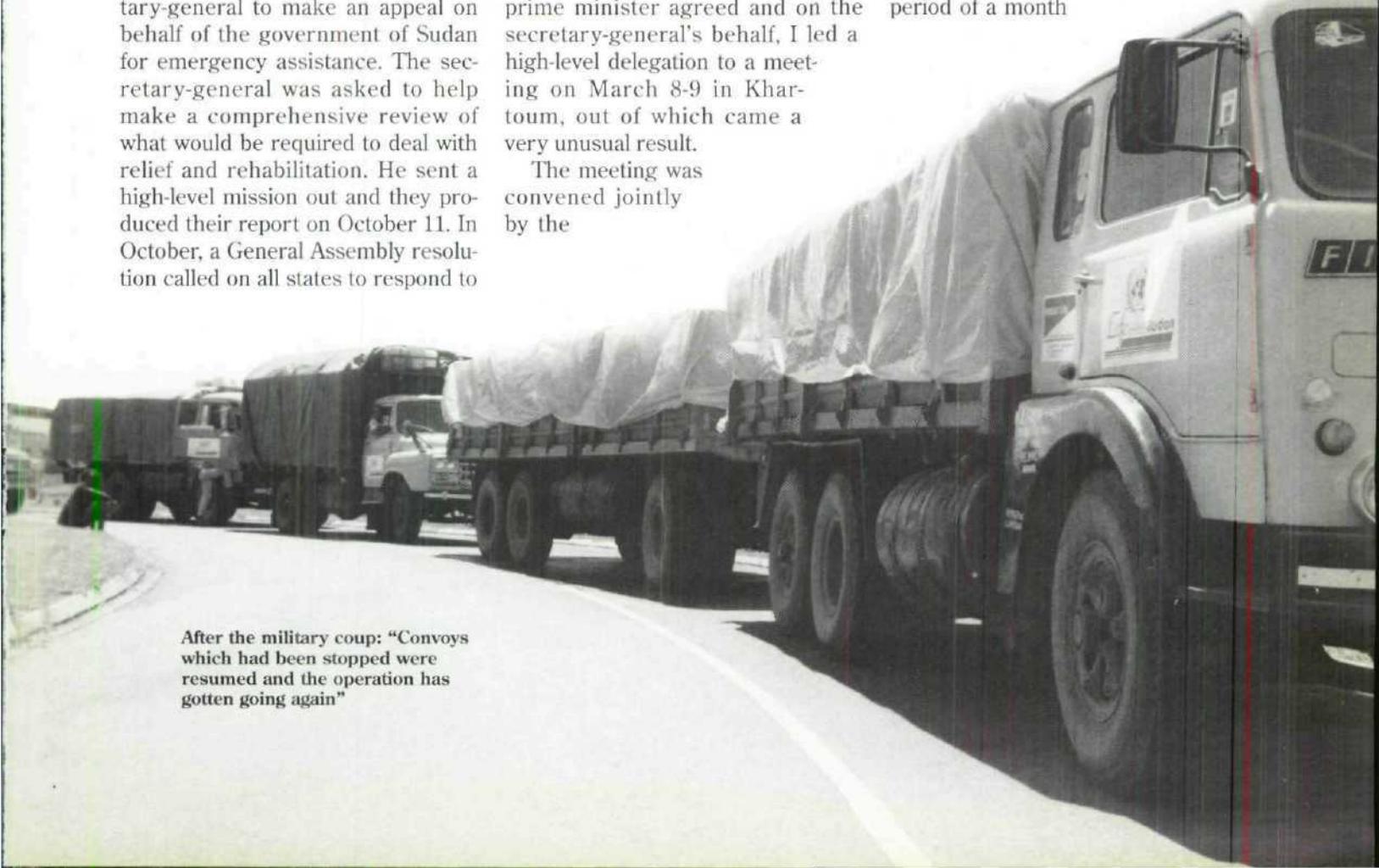
World public opinion was beginning to react to the terrible pictures that were coming out of Sudan. It was against that background that the secretary-general wrote to the prime minister of Sudan proposing that a special conference be convened. The prime minister agreed and on the secretary-general's behalf, I led a high-level delegation to a meeting on March 8-9 in Khartoum, out of which came a very unusual result.

The meeting was convened jointly by the

government of Sudan and the UN secretary-general, but with joint participation of the major donor countries, the U.S., the EEC, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and non-governmental organizations. After two and a half days of hard work, they came up with a plan of action. They identified over 2 million people that needed to be helped, roughly half in SPLA areas, half in the government areas. They estimated it would cost about \$133 million to avoid a repetition of last year's disaster, and they identified the major corridors through which the assistance ought to go. The government of Sudan agreed to it and also agreed that we could take the lead in bringing the SPLA into the agreement.

This plan of action was unique in three aspects. This was the first time in history in the midst of a major conflict that both warring factions agreed to a common plan of action to reach the people. Second, they made it feasible by agreeing that there ought to be some form of tranquillity that would allow this to function. Their proposal was that the tranquillity could either be a period of a month

UNOIL



After the military coup: "Convoys which had been stopped were resumed and the operation has gotten going again"



Courtesy Humanitarian

**John Garang, head of SPLM, meeting with James Grant in southern Sudan: "Col. Garang seems to be very convinced that the future of the south lies within the whole of Sudan"**

or two months, or more limited options such as corridors of tranquillity through which the supplies could be sent. A third element was the agreement of the Khartoum government that the UN, in this case working through Unicef and the ICRC, could deal with the SPLA virtually as if it were a separate entity.

I had the privilege of negotiating the SPLA's adherence to the agreement. They agreed to it, except that rather than accepting a month of tranquillity, corridors of tranquillity were proposed. There are eight corridors through which supplies will be delivered: by rail from central Sudan down to the south, by the Nile, by road from Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, to 12 cities, half on each side. So while the fighting went on, whenever a relief convoy went through, there would be a bubble of tranquillity that would protect that unarmed, non-militarily escorted convoy.

Since that time, the agreement has as a whole been honored by both sides. At the upper levels, they have been 95 percent plus in their support. Of the 120,000 tons we hoped to deliver by the end of June, we delivered about 85,000 tons. Despite the shortfall, we are optimistic for two reasons that we will be able to avoid a major disaster this year. The first is that the principal shortfall has been in deliveries down

the Nile. The coming of the rains has not blocked that, in fact it has made that corridor more functional. We expect that in mid-July, that corridor will begin functioning in a major way and will deliver about 12,000 tons to both the SPLA and government areas. Secondly, we have been able to keep open many of the corridors that we thought would

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**P**ace is in the times and there ought to be this expectation expressed through every means possible that the time for peace has come for Sudan.

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become nonoperational with the heavy rains, by using smaller trucks and by strategically placing bulldozers along the way.

While the higher authorities have been supportive, there have been many problems at the lower levels. The railway had one train on it in the last two and half years. When the train started down, fighting had taken place less than 24 hours

before and one of the defeated groups came upon the train going into the area where they had just been defeated.

The track was in sufficiently bad condition that in certain places, there would be 300-400 yards with no track. The train would stop, they would take up 300 yards of track from behind them and lay it out in front. When they came back, they had to do this in reverse. The train was half a mile long and at some points, the government garrison was protecting the locomotive in the front cars and the SPLA was protecting the rear cars.

At Torit, a Federal Republic of Germany air force plane was on the ground and a bomber came over and dropped six bombs twice. To date, no one has identified who the bomber belonged to. It has been disavowed by everybody. Neither the SPLA nor the government wanted to make an incident of it. From Kapoeta to Torit in the SPLA areas, convoys have been attacked twice by the local tribal people who are well-known for their rustling activities.

The convoys coming up toward Juba have had an endless series of mining incidents and minor shooting attacks. The best conclusion we can come to is that the merchants in Yei are doing very well with the high price of grain and don't want to see the arrival of the convoys which will bring the price of grain down by three-quarters. In Malakal, the government has issued instructions to the barges to be released to go north so we can bring grain down, but for many reasons we never got them out.

But basically the operation is working and the prospects of a truly major disaster have been averted. Both parties have agreed that it has contributed to the peace process. As of June 29, I was very hopeful that the peace process would make a major step forward in July and August. The government had reached the conclusion that major concessions had to be made to the SPLA, and specific concessions had been decided upon.

On June 30 came the military coup. Control of the whole country was taken within 12 hours. All political parties were banned, all cabinet officers and party leaders were placed under arrest, and the new government took a posture against the militias and political parties. The coup was clearly started several weeks before hand, done basically by the combat commanders. Almost every general in the army was dismissed. The new revolutionary council is composed almost entirely of brigadiers and lower ranks, most from the frontline units.

There has been much speculation as to the reasons for the coup, some of which are fairly obvious. The frontline units felt they were getting poor support from the system. The peace process seemed to be going very, very slowly, there was a feeling by the military that they were left out of the process, and if there were negotiations between the rebels and the politicians, the military commanders ought to have a say in it.

There was generally a favorable public reaction to the coup, and the new president, Lt.-Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir, moved quickly to consolidate his position and establish a government run by the technocrats. Lt.-Gen. Bashir has published a very strong statement in support of Operation Lifeline Sudan. Flights which had stopped were resumed and the operation has gotten going again.

The new government has been talking peace. At the March 8 meeting, the former Mahdi government had offered a month of tranquillity and the rebels said no, let's just have the corridors. Then on April 1, the SPLA offered a month of cease-fire, but the government wouldn't accept it. Then the SPLA extended it another month and it expired. Now the new government has offered a cease-fire and the question is whether the SPLA will accept it.

The SPLA reaction to the coup has been very guarded. They had a meeting of their military council in southern Sudan in mid-July to gauge how to respond. The peace process

has probably been slowed a month or two by this change. The last government had finally reached the decision a week or ten days before the coup that it would move decisively on this. The new authorities are convinced that they need a peace process, but the only question is what is the balance? Before they can negotiate out their balance, they have to see what kind of international support they can get.

What role for the international community at this stage? Operation Lifeline Sudan should continue to be supported by committing more funds. About \$40 million is still required. Equally important is to put pressure on both parties to implement Operation Lifeline Sudan. This was a Sudanese-crafted initiative in the first place and one that has generated international support. If it now falls apart, the world community will hold responsible those people who bring it down.

There should also be pressure, from the media to governments, to press for the continuation of the peace process. Today, there is a tide for peace. Peace is in the times and there ought to be this expectation expressed through every means possible that the time for peace has come for Sudan.

The third thing is to talk about what happens after peace. If after all this conflict, the Sudanese can operate Operation Lifeline Sudan—the first time in history that we have a major model that would be applicable to future Ethiopias, Afghanistans, Somalias, Angolas for how to buffer the civilian population—this ought to be recognized as a major Sudanese contribution. If they can get a peace process this summer and fall, the combination of these two ought to be viewed internationally as one plus one equals five.

Then there ought to be a reaction on a rehabilitation and development approach to make sure that it works and there are many things that can be done quickly and relatively easily. There ought to be debt relief for peace. Sudan owes \$14 billion worth of debt and more than \$10 billion to

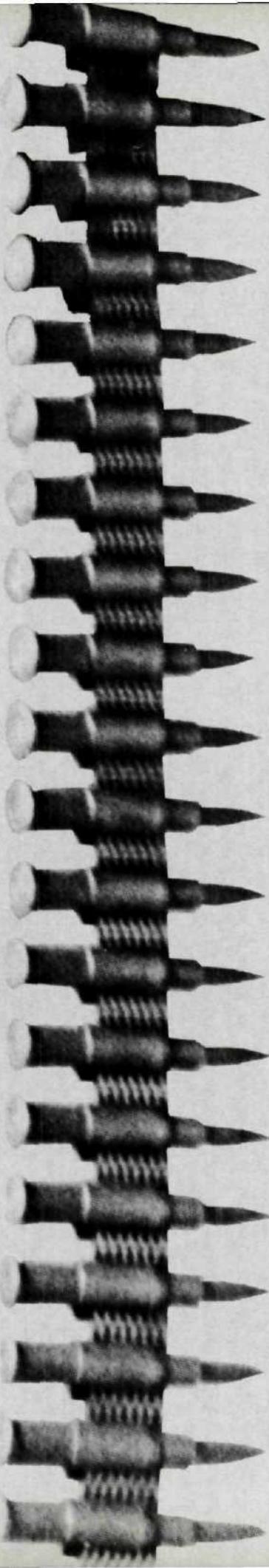
governments. Those governments can act quickly and within 90 days after peace wipe the public debt off the books. The \$3 billion of private debt could be bought out for \$200-300 million. Currently we have had three banks work out special debt relief for development. They have given us the debt and the local powers pay us in local currency, which is used for development purposes.

A whole variety of steps could be taken within 12 months which could have Sudan on an entirely different economic footing. It is a rich country of skillful people and if it can move quickly from Lifeline Sudan to peace to development, this would be a very powerful impetus to Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, and other divided countries. The world trend is hopeful for bringing peace and the next two years ought to see the end of all the major conflicts in Africa. ○

Unicef



"Unless a really massive effort was undertaken to pre-position supplies before the heavy rains, a comparable disaster would be faced this year"



## ETHIOPIA



Mengistu Haile Mariam: "It remains to be seen whether Mengistu's bloodily executed revenge will erode his shaky power base even further"

Bettie Press

# REBELLION AND RETALIATION

By MARY ANNE FITZGERALD

**A failed attempt to overthrow Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam in May led to the elimination of scores of military officers and other suspected sympathizers. The crackdown, however, has failed to quash deep-rooted discontent with the Ethiopian government and its inability to end the war in Eritrea and Tigray.**

The real surprise in May's military-led coup attempt in Ethiopia was not that it happened, but that it had not happened sooner. Mengistu Haile Mariam, the ruthlessly autocratic president of this Marxist regime, is one of the most hated leaders in Africa. Abroad, his impatience with *perestroika* has lost him the friendship of the Soviets—the allies who have provided \$6 billion in military equipment. On the home front, he has sapped his country's resources by conducting a relentless war against secessionist rebels in the north.

His political ambition has cost the

*Mary Anne Fitzgerald has reported on Africa for the last 10 years. She is currently based in London.*

lives of hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians. In addition, his determination to quash a long-standing guerrilla insurgency has eroded military morale, turning a large part of the armed forces against him.

Some statistics make it clear why a coup is well overdue. Ethiopia ranks first in the world for human rights violations, according to the London-based human rights organization, Amnesty International. An estimated 2,000-3,000 political prisoners are being held without trial. Up to 100,000 peasant farmers died as a result of being forcibly removed from their homes during mass resettlement programs.

The roots of the May rebellion lay in the dispirited army, tired of wag-

ing a desultory war against fellow Ethiopians that holds no promise of victory for either side. It was the military's resentment of their treatment at Mengistu's hands—rather than ideological objections to the campaign against the Eritreans and Tigrayans—that triggered the abortive coup. It remains to be seen whether Mengistu's bloodily executed revenge will erode his shaky power base even further.

The attempt to topple Mengistu was the result of months of careful planning by senior military officers. But it was sabotaged by top-ranking security officials who were already aware of the plot's existence.

On May 16, as Mengistu left on a state visit to East Berlin, top generals met with colleagues at the Defense Ministry to finalize plans for the coup. It was at this point that the 2,000-strong Special Security Force, Mengistu's praetorian guard, and other loyal units swung into action and quickly pre-empted the rebellion, which had been scheduled for some days ahead.

The swift reaction was led from the very heart of Mengistu's power base: Lt. Gen. Tesfaye Gebre Kedan, party boss for military affairs in the politburo, and Col. Tesfaye Wolde Selassie, Minister for Public Security. Aware of the plot, they urged Mengistu to leave the country while they extinguished it.

It was not the first time that Tesfaye had been involved in such an exercise. In 1982, as minister for defense, he personally put down a rebellion at the Eritrean front line.

Several battalions around Naefca, the rebel Eritrean stronghold, refused to fight. One battalion even arrested its commanding officer. Tesfaye responded ruthlessly: He brought in troops to discipline the mutinous units and ordered the execution of several officers.

The rebellion in the Eritrean capital of Asmara fizzled out two days after it had been put down in Addis Ababa. A faction within the mutinous 2nd Brigade, led by Brig.-Gen. Hussein Ahmed, disagreed over joining forces with the rebel Eritrean Peo-

ple's Liberation Front (EPLF) and turned on fellow soldiers and officers.

Maj.-Gen. Demessie Bulto, the coup leader, was killed in the fighting. Later, his head was paraded through the streets of Asmara, stuck onto a pike—a graphic warning to anyone else who dared to challenge the government.

Mengistu's awesome retaliation against his opponents lives up to his reputation as the most brutal leader in Africa. Reports smuggled out of Ethiopia by witnesses speak of a military Calvary, where officers bearing aloft Mengistu's portrait were beaten to death as they walked through the streets of Asmara. Many soldiers were burnt alive, while others were dragged to their deaths behind vehicles.

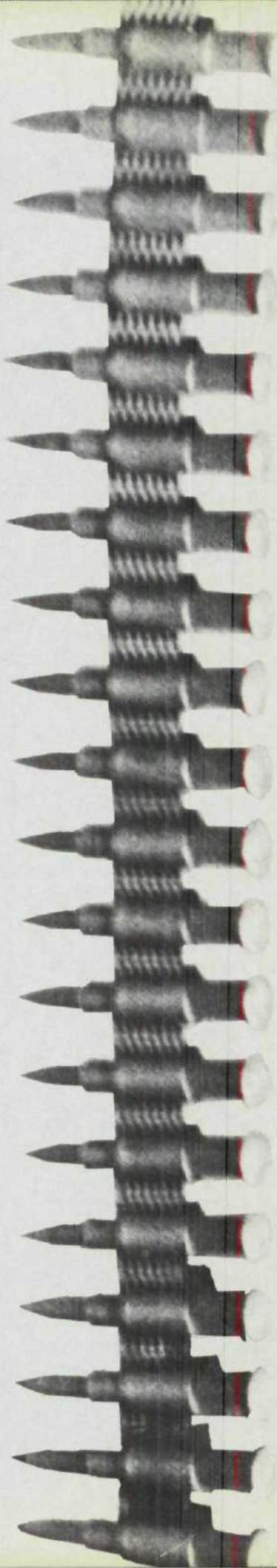
Many of the coup leaders were Sandhurst graduates, ranking officers of some 20 years' standing whose commissions were won during the reign of the deposed Emperor Haile Selassie. They included Maj.-Gen. Amha Desta, the air force head, Maj.-Gen. Merid Negussie, chief of staff of the armed forces, and Maj.-Gen. Fanta Lelay, who became a national hero after leading the air force to victory during the Ogaden war.

According to opposition sources in exile, the coup leaders intended to establish a transitional military council, to have been led by Maj.-Gen. Seyoun Mekonnen, once head of military intelligence.

The purge has wiped out the cream of the army and the air force. At least 38 senior officers have been executed. Among them were 11 majors-general. Another 400 officers are under arrest.

Mengistu moved quickly to promote his protégés to fill the ranks, but the convulsion of the coup attempt may have formed a deep rift between loyalist troops and coup supporters. Ironically, this internecine conflict within the military is likely to sabotage any further campaigns in the north.

The civil war in Eritrea has been sapping military strength for 28 years. In the neighboring province of





Soviet personnel carriers, Addis Ababa: "Moscow is reportedly pressing for repayment of Ethiopia's huge arms debt"

Camerapix

Tigray to the south, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has been fighting the government for over a decade. Losses among government troops run into the hundreds of thousands.

It is this, more than anything else, that has stirred deep resentment within the army and air force. Conscripts have little hope of leaving the front line alive unless they are either wounded or defect. There are thousands of amputees throughout the country who have lost their limbs needlessly on landmines.

There are no doctors at the front, according to conscripts who have returned. Troops are forced to march over mined defenses onto rebel positions, copying the military tactics used during the Iran-Iraq war.

Regular troops are never relieved from their foxholes. Some officers have only seen their families once in the 14 years they have been stationed in Eritrea.

Dissatisfaction boiled over last year when the soldiers sent a petition to Mengistu asking for leave. He was so angry that he flew to Asmara and personally saw to the execution of their commander, Gen. Tariku Ayne.

This provoked a mass defection of several thousand troops, who simply walked away from the military headquarters at Afabet. They left behind valuable artillery and tanks

that were seized by Eritrean forces when they took the town. Now the Eritrean front line is the farthest south it has ever been.

Last February, the TPLF captured the Tigrayan capital of Makelle and drove the Ethiopian army out of the province, after a series of bloody battles with extremely high casualties. In desperation, to replenish the ranks, Mengistu this year lowered the conscription age to 13. Last year, 150,000 boys were flown to Asmara on Ethiopian Airways under the pretext of being sent abroad for further education.

This strategy has ignited public anger, but the reprisals have been unexpectedly harsh. When students from Addis Ababa University demonstrated three days after the coup attempt, troops retaliated by beating some 20 to death. Other suspected sympathizers have been garrotted with piano wires, their bodies thrown into the gutters.

Even more crucial than this domestic disaffection is Moscow's decision to withdraw military support after its current contract expires in 1991. Soviet diplomats have made it very clear that they would like to see a negotiated settlement to end the war.

Moscow is also reportedly pressing for repayment of Ethiopia's huge arms debt. Mengistu's hardline Stalinism is at loggerheads with Gor-

bachev's call for peace and free market reform. The two leaders do not see eye-to-eye.

Gen. Legesse Asfaw, a founding member of the Dergue and the politburo's top-ranking military man, has been urging less Soviet dependence and closer ties with the West for some months. There is discussion of upgrading the U.S. diplomatic mission in Addis Ababa to ambassadorial status.

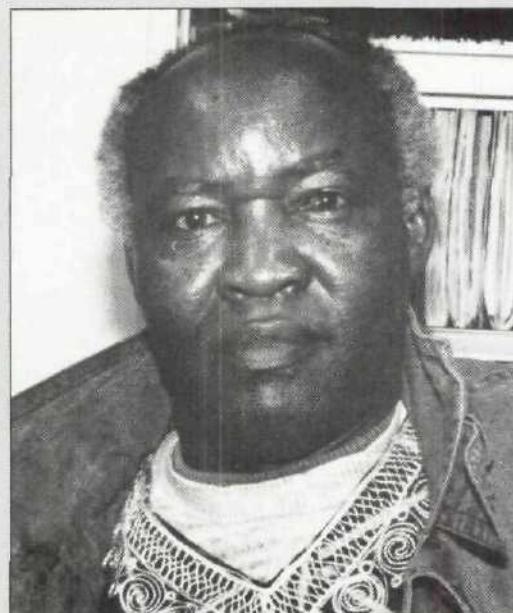
As the regime's chief arms buyer, he has been seeking alternative sources for military equipment from Saudi Arabia (whose arming of the EPLF met with U.S. approval), Iran, Iraq, and Syria. But it is East Germany that has supplanted the USSR as the major arms supplier.

With all these problems, it is hardly surprising that in early June, Mengistu called for talks with secessionist rebels in Tigray and Eritrea. However, he ruled out the possibility of an independent Eritrea, which may have dampened EPLF enthusiasm for a meeting. Even so, it is the first time Mengistu has not set any other conditions for peace talks.

By mid-June, no date or venue had been set. But opposition sources in exile believe that the regime may have attempted to contact the EPLF and TPLF in London when Foreign Minister Berhane Baye met with his British counterpart, Sir Geoffrey Howe, earlier in the month. ○

## Maina wa Kinyatti: A HISTORY OF RESISTANCE

By ANDRE ASTROW



André Astrow

Maina wa Kinyatti, a former senior lecturer in history at Kenyatta University, recently fled from Kenya only a few months after having been released from a six-year prison term for allegedly possessing a "seditious" document. One of the country's leading political prisoners, Kinyatti had been repeatedly tortured by police in an effort to make him confess to membership in Mwakenya, the clandestine opposition organization.

Upon his release from jail, he was threatened with re-arrest for refusing to ask President Daniel arap Moi for an official pardon as a condition for reinstatement to his previous job, forcing him to leave Kenya in secret and seek refuge in the U.S. In this exclusive interview with *Africa Report*, Kinyatti provides an insider's account of what it means to be a critic of the government in Kenya today.

**Africa Report:** What made you decide to flee Kenya and seek asylum in the U.S. just five months after having been released from prison? Did you fear that you would be re-arrested if you remained in the country?

**Kinyatti:** Yes. Immediately after I was released, the police came to my house and told me that I should write to President Moi and apologize for my crime, renouncing my political beliefs and ideas, and agree to support the regime. I refused to do that. This was the condition I was given if I wanted a job. I was told that Moi had to clear my name.

Firstly, I felt that as a Kenyan, I did not need a permit to look for a job in my country. Secondly, I was qualified for my job, and thirdly, Moi had no right to decide whether I can have a job or not. So I refused to write to him.

From that time onwards, the Kenyan government put policemen outside my house 24 hours a day. I was followed at all times, even when I went to see my father in a rural village. They did not hide themselves at all. When I asked them why

they were following me, they simply replied that they were doing their job.

So my wife and I knew that they would eventually come to arrest me. On March 10, they came to my house and asked for me, but I was not there. This was reported to me at the place where I was staying. I decided not to go back to the house to give them another chance to arrest me. As you know, in Kenya you can be detained in prison without trial, so I decided to go underground for several days while preparing to leave the country. Finally, on March 13, I left Kenya for a neighboring country.

**Africa Report:** Can you say anything more about your escape? It was reported that you crossed the border into Tanzania.

**Kinyatti:** Yes, this is what was reported. I don't want to say which country I fled to but, of course, the papers in Kenya said it was Tanzania. What I can tell you is that it took me two days to reach the border.

**Africa Report:** What crime did the Kenyan government accuse you of having committed?

**Kinyatti:** When they arrested me in 1982, I was accused of having in my possession what they call a seditious publication, but that was not the real reason they were looking for me. First of all, I was very much involved in the academic union. Secondly, I was doing research on the Mau Mau movement. In our country, you need to have permission to do any kind of academic research. You cannot do research without a permit from the government. When I went to ask for a permit, it was refused, but I decided to go on anyway since I felt it was an important chapter of our history that needed to be written. So I went ahead.

This is when the government came to look for seditious documents. But this was just an excuse. They took 29 files of my research. I was then questioned a lot about why I was focusing on that period of our history. They said that the Mau Mau issue was very political and that I was trying to divide the country.

If you look at the period after independence, the people who had fought for our independence were betrayed, not by Jomo Kenyatta specifically, but by the entire Kanu regime. The people who now run the government were actually on the other side, or at best did not take part at all. So they have been doing their best to cover up this chapter of our history. Of course, they argue that they themselves fought for independence, but those are lies.

**Africa Report:** So this seditious document never existed?

**Kinyatti:** No. The police told my wife that they were coming for a seditious publication. According to the law, when they find a seditious document, they are supposed to sign a paper indicating when and where it was found. But there was nothing. They simply took my files and 23 books.

**Africa Report:** Were you not also accused by the government of being a communist and a member of Mwakenya?

**Kinyatti:** When I was first taken into police custody, I was accused of being a communist, a Marxist. I was accused of

plotting with students the overthrow of the government. I was also accused of having been paid a lot of money by the Soviet Union to spread communism in my country.

The fact is I didn't even know any Russians at home. I was living on my salary. I was accused of all these things because of my progressive ideas and because I criticized the government. I don't believe in corruption, I don't believe in the wealth that Moi has accumulated. So I opposed that.

The accusation of being a member of Mwakenya came later, in 1986. The police came several times while I was in prison, saying that I was in Mwakenya and that I knew the members of the central committee. You see, they were able to extract a lot of information from people they tortured. Much of it, of course, was false.

I was in prison as of 1982 and Mwakenya came to be known in 1986. So I denied these accusations of membership. It was an excuse for them because Mwakenya is really the product of economic problems and political corruption in our country, of the betrayal of the people—particularly of those who fought for independence.

More specifically, the government changed the constitution with an amendment making Kenya a one-party state. So after that, there was no longer any room for democracy or justice under the one-party system because the party belonged to the rich and powerful. So the people of Kenya felt it necessary to go underground to join Mwakenya since Kenya was no longer a democratic society.

**Africa Report:** Were you able to meet any of the political prisoners and speak to members of Mwakenya?

**Kinyatti:** Yes, in fact political prisoners are kept in one security block. All those accused of political crimes are brought there, so I was able to talk to many of them. I was kept in solitary confinement, but we found ways to talk to each other.

**Africa Report:** Were they prisoners who openly admitted to being members of Mwakenya, or had they done so under torture?

**Kinyatti:** Many were Mwakenya members. Half of the political prisoners were in Mwakenya, initially about 100 in all,



before more were brought in. The other half had nothing to do with Mwakenya. All were political prisoners, all were beaten and admitted to being members of Mwakenya even though they really were not.

**Africa Report:** When Amnesty International published its 1987 report detailing widespread human rights abuses in Kenya, Moi told the group to "go to hell." Do you feel that there has been a real change in attitude since then?

**Kinyatti:** There has been a change, but not much. Moi is a very shrewd man and he lies a lot. The government has tightened censorship in the country and now controls the three local papers: the *Daily Nation* [banned in June], *The Standard*, and the *Kenya Times*, which is the party paper. Now nothing can be published without the government's approval. So people are still being arrested, people still disappear, and people are still being tortured, but that cannot be published.

The constitution has also been changed so that you can hold prisoners without charge for up to 14 days. Before, it used to be only 24 hours. It's like South Africa. So you can see how the government manipulates the situation. In the past, these things were exposed and people were able to see and know what was going on. The international community was able to read the newspapers. But now Moi has really clamped down on the press while giving wider power to the police.

**Africa Report:** Yet in February of this year, Moi publicly expressed concern about several incidents of police brutality and torture. Do you see this as a sign that Moi is trying to clean up his government's image?

**Kinyatti:** By now, a lot of people have been killed in prison and those things have been exposed, particularly in the international papers. I think there was pressure on Moi from the U.S. and the British government to accept that there have been killings and torture in Kenyan cells. But that is not stopping the government from going ahead with torture. People are still being put in water while in detention. And people are still being shot in the street. The government has this policy, which is not in the constitution, called shoot to kill. From 1984 to 1988, the government killed more than 100 people under this policy. The suspect can be anybody.

**Africa Report:** Do you think the government is sensitive to international pressure? It seems that the government often tends to dig in its heels when there is pressure from abroad.

**Kinyatti:** The government has been very sensitive to such criticism. For example, at the time when Congressman Howard Wolpe came to Kenya [in 1987] there was a lot of demand internationally that I be released. After Wolpe publicly mentioned my name, the police came straight to see me in prison. I was put in solitary confinement for six weeks.

But what I found quite interesting was that at the same time, the police acknowledged that the government was under a lot of pressure from the international community and humanitarian organizations. So they said that things had gone too far and that if I agreed to write a letter of apology to Moi, I would be released.

**Africa Report:** They were looking for a way out.

**Kinyatti:** Yes, but of course, I refused to write the letter since I could not accept these conditions. Still the pressure by the international community was very important and limited what Moi could do. People say that if you push too much, Moi will react and not give in. That is not true. It is the other way around.

**Africa Report:** Nevertheless, last year marked one of the



**President Daniel arap Moi:**  
"Either you sing to the tune of Nyayo  
or you keep quiet"

most severe crackdowns against anti-government dissidents after a period of relative calm. Why was there this renewed offensive against Moi's opponents?

**Kinyatti:** The government is paranoid. Moi sees enemies everywhere. You see, there are two options in our country. Either you sing to the tune of Nyayo or you keep quiet. And even that silence can be a problem. You can't say anything against the president, he cannot be criticized because he tells the truth at all times. So what you find is that even those liberal MPs who are members of the party but who are very critical of some things like the queueing policy become an enemy. Then the police follow you all over the place.

In addition, there are many Kenyans abroad who have been doing a lot of propaganda work. The government feels that they are connected with people who are still underground inside the country. This then extends to family and relatives, like my wife. She was arrested even though she is not political, but simply because she is connected to me.

**Africa Report:** Relatively little has been heard from Mwakenya over the past year. Has the government succeeded in crushing it or do you think it is reorganizing underground?

**Kinyatti:** The government has not managed to defeat Mwakenya. What has happened is that it probably has taken another form.

**Africa Report:** The government has for years tried to link political opponents to Mwakenya. Hasn't this tactic given Mwakenya more credit and more publicity than it might otherwise receive?

**Kinyatti:** That is what I was alluding to earlier. Mwakenya emerged because of what was happening once the Moi regime closed all democratic channels. It was a relatively small thing, but Moi began talking of it as though it was a big animal that was going to swallow the country. As a result, he gave the organization a lot of publicity and it became popular. The Moi regime is not popular, so when it tried to crush Mwakenya, the people began to support the movement.

**Africa Report:** It was a spontaneous reaction by the people.

**Kinyatti:** Exactly. When you are not popular, the people will feel that an opposition movement is positive. So all along, the

government has been popularizing the movement. And it has done it very well! People look forward to joining such an organization.

**Africa Report:** What do you make of former vice-president Oginga Odinga's recent pledge of support for the government after being one of Moi's most outspoken critics for so many years? Is it a sign that Moi is successfully winning over some of his opponents?

**Kinyatti:** I don't really want to comment on this without talking to Odinga himself. In general, he has been very popular with the people of Kenya. He has been speaking for them, he's been the voice of the people. So when that kind of statement is issued by a person in whom people have a lot of faith, then you start to wonder. It makes you want to ask him what this is all about, why he has made this about-face.

**Africa Report:** Members of the legal community have also been some of Moi's harshest critics. Do you think Parliament's recent amendments to the constitution giving Moi unrestricted powers to dismiss judges and giving the police wider powers of detention effectively undermine Kenya's judiciary?

**Kinyatti:** They already have. Kenyan courts have become kangaroo courts where the president has all the power to appoint and dismiss the judges, and of course, to dictate what the judges are going to do. Now the courts are being used as a tool to suppress democracy and justice. There is no longer such a thing as a just court. Judges are no longer independent, so the judiciary has been really killed.

You find the same thing with Parliament. Whatever Moi says goes because he has put all his people in Parliament who will not question him. Now they are all 'yes men.' So he has killed Parliament as well. We no longer have an independent Parliament. It has become a rubber stamp for the president. Moi has transferred power from Parliament to the party. And the party is a tool to be used by Moi to fight those people who are critical. He is killing democracy, he is killing the national constitution, and he is killing Parliament.

**Africa Report:** But the government is also suppressing non-violent critics, which will only encourage more and more Kenyans to seek a violent solution.

**Kinyatti:** Exactly. For a long time, Kenyans did not have to go underground. They felt that there was democracy in our country, that anyone who wanted to form an opposition party could do so. But now the government has become so repressive in fighting what it sees as its enemy that it is creating the basis for a revolution in our country. Our people have a history of resistance. They are known for organizing resistance against the government. That is what is going to happen. Moi is creating a revolution.

**Africa Report:** The systematic suppression of criticism has gone hand in hand with Moi's steady accumulation of power through the elimination of the secret ballot and the introduction of the controversial queueing policy.

**Kinyatti:** That is what I meant when I referred earlier to the constitutional amendments which have clearly given Moi a great deal of power. They have destroyed democracy in our country and created a one-man dictatorship. In Kenya there is no one else now. There is only the president who runs the country. Of course, the aid that the U.S. is giving Moi is helping him to build this dictatorship.

What Moi has been trying to do with his men is to financially control almost everybody, using all the powers that he has accumulated. He owns a lot of businesses in Nairobi. He is the richest man in our country. In 10 years, he has become

so rich, it makes you wonder where he gets the money.

**Africa Report:** Do you advocate legislation making future U.S. aid conditional on respect for human rights?

**Kinyatti:** Certainly. I feel the U.S. has a decision to make. I know the U.S. has a great deal of interests in Kenya, and in fact has been a major supporter of the Moi government. Kenya is one of the highest recipients of U.S. aid, and it seems to me that Congress has a responsibility not to fuel a dictatorship in our country.

I see the aid which is given to Moi as a weapon to fight the people of Kenya. So the aid should be tied to the human rights situation in the country since Congress has the power to push Moi in this direction as well as to ensure that he respects our national constitution which gives our people freedom of speech and freedom of movement.

**Africa Report:** You feel that the U.S. should therefore play a more active role in Kenya.

**Kinyatti:** I feel that way, but the U.S. government is always late in reacting. It plays games and ends up having to support its men. Still, I have a lot of faith in the American people. Generally, American people are decent and can help us by putting pressure on the U.S. government. I try to make a distinction between the two. It is the American people, for example, that forced the U.S. government to leave Vietnam.

**Africa Report:** Despite Kenya's negative press exposure in the U.S., it is still portrayed as a relatively tolerant democracy.

**Kinyatti:** There is a lot of propaganda that Moi is better than most. In particular, there is the role of congressmen who go to Kenya, like [the late] Rep. Claude Pepper of Florida. When he came back, he circulated a letter saying that he did not see anything wrong in Kenya, that there is democracy in our country. These congressmen are received by the Kenyan government, taken around Nairobi, taken to see the animals and so on. But they have not been able to meet people who are critical of the government. I think what is needed is for congressmen to come independently to Kenya to talk to people—not the government, but the people.

They will find that there have been several cases of killings which have gone unreported. For example, in northern Kenya in February 1984, about 500 people were killed by the security forces. This was never reported. In the same year, near the Ugandan border, more than 800 women and children were shot. Again, this was never reported.

**Africa Report:** Why were these people killed?

**Kinyatti:** If a policeman is shot, the security forces don't look for the person who has killed. They just gather the villagers together and shoot them. No report of such incidents have been filed. Generally, the government does not allow the press to go to such areas.

So for people to argue that Kenya is not as bad as other countries is wrong when you see some of the nightmares that people have gone through. Lecturers and intellectuals are arrested because of their ideas. You cannot comfortably teach because the police is planted in the classrooms. Whatever you teach is taped, and if you eventually say something critical against the president, you are detained. Censorship is so tight that even Kanu people are scared of what to write because they know that the police can come to their house and take them away.

What people want to prevent is what happened in Uganda during Idi Amin. It seems it is only when the government begins the widespread killing of Kenyans that the international community will wake up.



# THE NEWS HOLE: REPORTING AFRICA

By MARY ANNE FITZGERALD

**While the Western press is often guilty of sensationalizing events in Africa, leading to a distorted picture of the continent, African leaders too share some of the blame, censoring the domestic press and imprisoning journalists who are deemed critical of their governments.**

**U**nenlightened attitudes toward the role of the media in Africa have condemned it to remain the dark continent. Journalists assigned there find themselves caught between their editors' definition of what is "news" and African criticism of the Western press for sensationalizing. As a result, it is one of the most underreported regions in the world.

"Many African governments seem to have succeeded in making it almost impossible for foreign journalists to operate with any degree of independence. As a consequence, the media have lost interest," the London *Sunday Times* foreign editor told me.

In news terms, Africa is viewed as a vast black hole fringed by Libya and South Africa. With the exception of these two countries, it is not a player in the great global power game. And so, political obscurity combines with press intimidation to make it the first to bite the dust when editorial budgets are tightened.

This may also be the reason why censorship, manipulation of public information, and the persecution of journalists receive indignant editorial attention when they happen in South Africa, but are for the most part ignored when they take place in black Africa.

Journalists have been arrested in

20 different countries in the past year because of what they have written, according to Amnesty International, the London-based human rights organization. Of 28 journalists whose arrests were recorded in 1988 by "Attacks on the Press," a world survey published by the U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists, 26 were held without charges ever being brought against them.

As a result, Africans rely on the foreign media for reliable reports of what is happening on their doorstep. Because international newspapers are hard to come by, the BBC has assumed the role of continental watchdog, along with Radio France International for the francophone countries. The "Lillibullero," a few bars of which precede the "Beeb's" World Service news broadcasts, is the best known march in Africa.

Many editors reinforce the notion that Africa is engulfed in chaos, veering between apocalypse and inertia, by encouraging us to write stories on atrocities and hunger. The Western media presents a repetitive litany of coups, corruption, and famine that most readers neither understand nor care about.

Uganda, for instance, has always yielded up a wealth of lineage. Although no one has run a poll on it, it is likely that the percentage of people who know that Idi Amin is reputed to have kept human livers in his fridge is far higher than those who are aware that Uganda has em-

barked on a national reconstruction program with the help of U.S. AID, the World Bank, and other Western donors.

This is not fair to Africa. It deserves more than the stereotyped images that are all too easy to portray. Its efforts at development should be noted, but so should the repression that flourishes in one-party states where leaders are buffered from reality by a coterie of sycophants. And its routine abuse of power in the form of censorship, the state-controlled manipulation of information, and the persecution and imprisonment of journalists should also be cast into focus.

Attacks on the press in South Africa are a matter of international concern, as they should be. Last year, 48 incidents curbing press freedom occurred in South Africa, by far the greatest number documented in any African country. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 38 incidents were recorded, according to "Attacks on the Press." South Africa's atrocious record outpaces Turkey (41) and the Soviet Union (21), but is beaten by Chile (71).

The hue and cry raised when journalists in South Africa are harassed has its effect. Zwelakhe Sisulu has said that he would not have been released from detention if his imprisonment had not been surrounded by publicity.

Sisulu is the founding editor of *The New Nation*, a weekly newspa-

Mary Anne Fitzgerald has reported on Africa for the last 10 years. She is currently based in London.

per critical of the government. He was detained for two years until December 1988 and is now under an indefinite restriction order.

He was allowed to travel to the United States in May 1989 to deliver a speech to a conference of Nieman Fellows, of which he is one, as a result of intense pressure from the Bush administration.

However, the tribulations of sub-Saharan African journalists go largely unrecorded and unredressed. When Saleh Gaba died in detention in a Chadian prison last year, the incident went unremarked. Gaba had been held without trial since June 1987. He had worked as a stringer for the Associated Press and Agence France-Presse.

Several circumstances conspire to push sub-Saharan African censorship into the background while human rights abuses in South Africa take the spotlight in front of a packed house.

In contrast to South Africa, which still manages to be what we call "a sexy story," many black African countries are not considered worth the expense of dispatching a reporter there. Nor is it worth sending businessmen, consultants, aid workers, or any of the other potential sources of information.

Thus, underfinanced human rights organizations, who do not have the money to send their own representatives, find that their Africa network, like the curate's egg, is only good in parts. Chad, Central African Republic, Cameroon, and Mauritania are some of the countries where information on state oppression is scarce.

When researching this story, it was impossible to ascertain how many journalists are being held in prisons in sub-Saharan Africa. No one knew.

A general rule of thumb is that the press is as fossilized as its leadership. Malawi, which has been under the dictatorial rule of Life-President Kamuzu Banda for a quarter of a century, is considered one of the worst victims of press censorship by human rights organizations.

Malawi's security regulations allow Banda to detain anyone he considers a threat to public security, which in presidential terms refers to critics of his policies. Reporters who send information abroad that may not be in the country's best interests can face life imprisonment under another regulation. It is an effective deterrent against stringing for foreign publications.

Osborne Mkandawire, an employee of the Department of Information, which reports directly to Banda, died last November having been severely and regularly tortured with electric shocks over a seven-month period.

Three other journalists arrested at the same time have since been released. They were never charged, but their apparent crime was to report to Africa-interest magazines in London that the Malawian economy had suffered a major setback.

Robert Kalemba, one of the released journalists, said that he had been given electric shock treatment on his forehead, chest, and genitals. He was kept in a flooded cell so he could not sit or lie down to sleep. He was deprived of food and given salted tea. Political detainees are placed in irons or chains, he said. Some carry chains weighing up to 26 pounds.

The policy to shoot the bearer of bad tidings works. Newspapers in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Togo, Ghana, and other countries have become considerably muted against a background of selective proscription and jailings. But the press in Uganda and Nigeria is remarkably lively despite persecution.

Dele Giwa, editor of Nigeria's *Newswatch*, was killed by an anonymous parcel bomb in November 1988. His weekly magazine was modelled on *Time*. Several other magazines that deal with investigative reporting have since sprung up in Nigeria.

The majority of publications that survive are controlled by ownership through the government or the ruling party. Only 15 of the 50 black African states allow independent newspapers.

Last March, Ghana introduced legislation that requires all newspapers to be licensed, including the country's popular football sheets. Licensing is a favored method of controlling professional sectors of the public considered to be troublesome.

Africa backed the failed Unesco initiative to license journalists, a move that would have effectively muzzled the press in many countries. The Pan African News Agency (PANA) was sanctioned in the 1970s by the Organization of African Unity as a home-grown alternative to the major international news agencies, but its efforts to differentiate between objective news and state propaganda have not always been successful.

Five papers closed down in Sierra Leone last April because they refused to register as legally required. The same month, the Kenyan government banned *The Financial Review*, a weekly magazine that undertook bold investigative reporting in the business sector.

The growing trend toward censorship has been linked by human rights organizations to political instability and the influence of the IMF. Governments become more authoritarian when faced with dubious political decisions and tough economic reforms.

"The present Nigerian government has harassed more journalists than the previous one. It's directly related to the structural adjustment program," said Adewale Maja-Pearce, Africa editor for *Index on Censorship*.

It is not only the Africans' concern for survival that places the role of adversary squarely on the shoulders of the foreign press. African journalists, it must be remembered, come from the same background as their leaders. Their cultural legacy has values that distance them from the Western mind-set. The African tradition of chiefs receiving *hongo* (tribute in the African lexicon, bribes in the Western one) makes dictatorship and corruption seem less offensive.

Some incidents are examples of culturally inspired intimidation. A

year ago, a disabled BBC stringer in Zanzibar, Ali Saleh, was detained for allegedly taking part in a demonstration in which the police shot two people dead.

The demonstration had been instigated by Muslim religious leaders to protest a call by the head of a local women's organization to end polygamy. Zanzibar has since introduced penalties of up to five years'

imprisonment for writing articles critical of the government.

Meanwhile, the foreign press, with our mixture of cynicism, dedication, idealism, and disillusionment, bear the brunt of the Fourth Estate's responsibility to focus on distortions and coax change. Because of African self-censorship, it falls on us to forestall the demise of justice and reason by exposing its abuses.

If we adhere to the maxim that today's news wraps tomorrow's fish, then the pain involved in being a purveyor of the truth is worthless. But if, as I believe, the exposure of corruption, tyranny, and abuse brings hope to those who have been tortured and victimized and to those who stand in danger of receiving the same treatment, then it is worthwhile. ◻

## NAMIBIA: WHAT THEY DIDN'T TELL US

By ALUN R. ROBERTS

To the people of Namibia, Koevoet, an Afrikaans word meaning crowbar, has become symbolic of the worst of South Africa's brutal occupation of their country. Throughout Namibia's transition to independence, beginning on April 1, it has been the South African-trained and led Koevoet paramilitary units that have brought repeated aggression and on occasion death to the people of northern Namibia.

The most stunning act of violence allegedly committed by members of Koevoet, and one little reported, was the execution of 18 members of Swapo's military arm, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), on April 5.

While much of the media were asking why—as they claimed—Swapo had violated the UN independence plan by sending over 1,000 of its fighters into Namibia from Angola just hours before the April 1 cease-fire with South Africa, two diverse voices in the media—the London-based, conservative *Sunday Telegraph* newspaper and the New York-based weekly television newsmagazine, *South Africa Now*, produced by Globalvision—were raising questions of a different kind.

The questions they investigated were: Why were the casualty figures given for Swapo dead so high, particularly for the first six days of fighting—218 killed by Friday, April 6—as opposed to 25 South African forces killed? Why did the South Africans take so few Swapo prisoners—only eight—in those same bloody six days?

From press reports covering that first week in April, most Western journalists appeared to have simply re-written South African-produced media information, claiming that a substantial "incursion" by Swapo forces from across the border in Angola had almost thwarted eight months of peace negotiations and denying that there had been any Swapo military presence in Namibia as of April 1. Only by the release of its forces, hours after they had been confined to base under the terms of the UN plan, was the Swapo threat overcome, stated South African officials.

Two of the few Western journalists in northern Namibia not re-writing South African-produced information were the London *Sunday Telegraph* defense correspondent, Simon O'Dwyer Russel, and photographer Judah Passow. Unlike the multitude of correspondents along the northern border region, neither were typical straight news reporters, both having had first-hand experience in war situations in various parts of the world.

If South Africa's claim of over 200 Swapo fighters

killed in just six days was correct, O'Dwyer Russel became curious as to where so many dead bodies were being deposited. That and South Africa's own admission of so few Swapo prisoners pointed to a shoot-to-kill operation. But exactly by which elements of South Africa's military and paramilitary forces in Namibia?

O'Dwyer Russel's investigation took him to Oshakati, a South African garrison town about 20 miles from the Namibia-Angola border, and to the local police mortuary. At lunchtime on April 6, with a depleted police presence, he and Judah Passow decided to look around the rear of the mortuary compound. At the back, a 10-foot high brick wall surrounding what appeared to be a large courtyard seemed insignificant. What greeted Passow as he climbed the wall and looked over, however, was in his own words "unbelievable."

Instead of the expected Swapo bodies left lying in the bush immediately following the first few days of fighting, all with large flesh wounds or dismembered limbs blown apart by heavy cannon or machine gun fire from South African armored vehicles, the corpses he saw were starkly different. Climbing down into the courtyard followed by O'Dwyer Russel, Passow quickly photographed the site—18 dead Swapo fighters with no wounds to any part of the bodies, except one: a single-shot bullet hole through the head. From his previous war-time experience, O'Dwyer Russel surmised that while the 18 had only been dead for 24 to 48 hours, whoever had committed the almost certain execution-type killings had done a professional job.

After leaving the mortuary compound, the answer to the *Sunday Telegraph* correspondent's question as to who was responsible was soon made clear. On meeting one of the South African-led Koevoet members aboard a heavily armored Casspir vehicle a short distance from the Oshakati mortuary, O'Dwyer Russel carefully inquired whether the Swapo fighters had been killed after surrendering. The reply was quick and blunt: "What does it matter? They are Swapo, and they are dead. That is all that matters."

Said O'Dwyer Russel, "I could not quite believe what he said. He in no way tried to hide the fact that Koevoet had conducted the killings." What the Koevoet police tracker made clear was that it was basically a "turkey shoot." O'Dwyer Russel felt that description just about summed up Koevoet's approach to its operation.

Enter Globalvision's *South Africa Now* (SAN) program in New York, whose immediate follow-up television investigation established evidence that virtually left no doubt as to Koevoet's responsibility for the exe-

cution of the 18 Swapo fighters. A three-week television investigation by SAN's researchers underlined the brutality of Koevoet's activities.

This commenced with film of the never-before-seen photographs taken by Passow, and made available by the Sunday Telegraph. The photographs graphically revealed the single-shot bullet holes through the head and the lack of any other type of wound. Interviews with both O'Dwyer Russel and Passow on how they had discovered the bodies, their encounter with the Koevoet units that claimed responsibility, and their account that it was impossible for the Swapo fighters to have been killed in any battle situation, were included to enforce the grim reality of what had occurred.

As Passow explained: "The 20-millimeter cannon or heavy machine gun fire used by South African forces in Namibia from Casspir armored vehicles [such as those used by Koevoet] would have taken an arm or a limb clean off." But the Swapo bodies "were all intact, except for the bullet hole through the head at close range, effectively executed." And if it was not an execution-type killing, why were the 18 Swapo bodies not stacked inside the Oshakati police mortuary, instead of lying out in the rear courtyard, protected by a high security wall? As O'Dwyer Russel stated, "It was clear to me that in no way were we supposed to see what we saw."

Any doubt that the 18 bodies were not Swapo fighters or that the photographs could have been faked can also be discounted by an all-important fact—namely that a "kill" identity number tag attached to each of the 18 bodies can be clearly seen in the photographs. The official wording on the tags in English and Afrikaans is known to be that used by the South African police and military in Namibia.

Significantly, these kill numbers concurred exactly with South Africa's stated casualties for Swapo between April 4 and 5, when the 18 fighters were almost certainly executed. In subsequent reports by SAN, an on-camera opinion by a former New York City Police forensic ballistics specialist added further information. Examining enlarged blow-ups of the photographs, Joseph Quirk, with 35 years of ballistics experience behind him, concluded that the 18 dead must have been "sitting or kneeling" when they were killed.

In his opinion, the bullet wounds to the head, visible in the photographs, are all exit holes. In other words, the 18 bodies were shot through the back of the head, virtually at point-blank range. On this, Quirk was very sure, stating that the type of weapon used would be around a 5.6 millimeter rifle or pistol.

A third investigative report by SAN revealed that in recent years, Koevoet units in Namibia have been armed with Israeli-modeled Galil rifles—the bore size: 5.56 millimeters. This information was obtained through inquiries to the authoritative *Jane's Defence Weekly* journal in London, concerning the type and size of rifles and pistols carried by all military and paramilitary forces in Namibia and Angola.

With all the information exposing the aggression of Koevoet in northern Namibia, what action has been taken? Immediately following transmission of the first TV report in New York, which notably received front-page coverage in the Johannesburg *Star* on April 19, the South African administrator-general in Namibia, Louis Pienaar, announced the establishment of a commission of inquiry. Its terms of reference, however,

were merely to investigate "acts of intimidation" by security forces and intimidation by "political activists."

Although headed by a senior Namibian lawyer, Bryan O'Linn, it is not clear how much information has been given to the commission, particularly from the population in northern Namibia where most of the violence has taken place. It is also unclear as to how the administrator-general will respond to the findings of the inquiry. As yet, neither the London *Sunday Telegraph* nor the New York-based *South Africa Now* have been invited to present information to the inquiry, even though their respective reports have been well-documented.

At the same time as the administrator-general's announcement of an inquiry, the UN special representative in Namibia stated that the UN's police commissioner, Stephen Fanning, had already commenced inquiries into a number of complaints of attacks by South African security forces on the population in northern Namibia. The complaints he received underlined the exposure by South Africa *Now* and the *Sunday Telegraph* of Koevoet's alleged execution of the 18 Swapo fighters.

It soon became clear that the acts of aggression against the northern population were being committed by Koevoet units not operating as part of the regular South West African police force. Although under the UN plan, all South African military or paramilitary units were to be confined to bases and eventually demobilized or disbanded following commencement of the plan on April 1, Koevoet was not.

Established as a paramilitary force under the South West Africa Territorial Force, Koevoet units were redeployed into the South West African police shortly before the UN independence plan commenced. Numbering some 3,000 black Namibians, trained and always accompanied by white SADF officers, the redeployment of Koevoet had the effect of doubling the local police force to approximately 6,300.

Not confined to bases, the South West African police force was always going to be a problem for the 4,650 UN military personnel in Namibia and its 500 police monitors. Even though an additional 500 UN police monitors have been sent to Namibia by the UN secretary-general, church and human rights centers in northern Namibia monitoring the independence process have stated that Koevoet's attacks, particularly during night patrols, have not decreased. These include shootings, beatings, destruction of property, and other acts of aggression, particularly against Namibians openly supporting Swapo.

Without doubt, the immediate removal and confinement of Koevoet from the South West African police force for the remainder of the independence transition process presents a challenge for the UN special representative in Namibia. The call by the secretary-general in late June to the South African authorities to ensure their removal may add the pressure necessary for it to occur.

The South African decision to redeploy Koevoet into the local South West African police was, in the words of one observer, "a calculated move by a player prepared to call the UN's 435 card, but not prepared to see a Swapo government in Namibia." Resolving the Koevoet question and ensuring an environment for free and fair elections long awaited by the Namibian people will therefore be a major test for the UNTAG team in Namibia. ■

Alun R. Roberts is a writer and researcher on Namibia and southern Africa who has followed the question of Namibia since 1972. He has worked with a number of non-governmental organizations and with the UN on issues concerning Namibia.

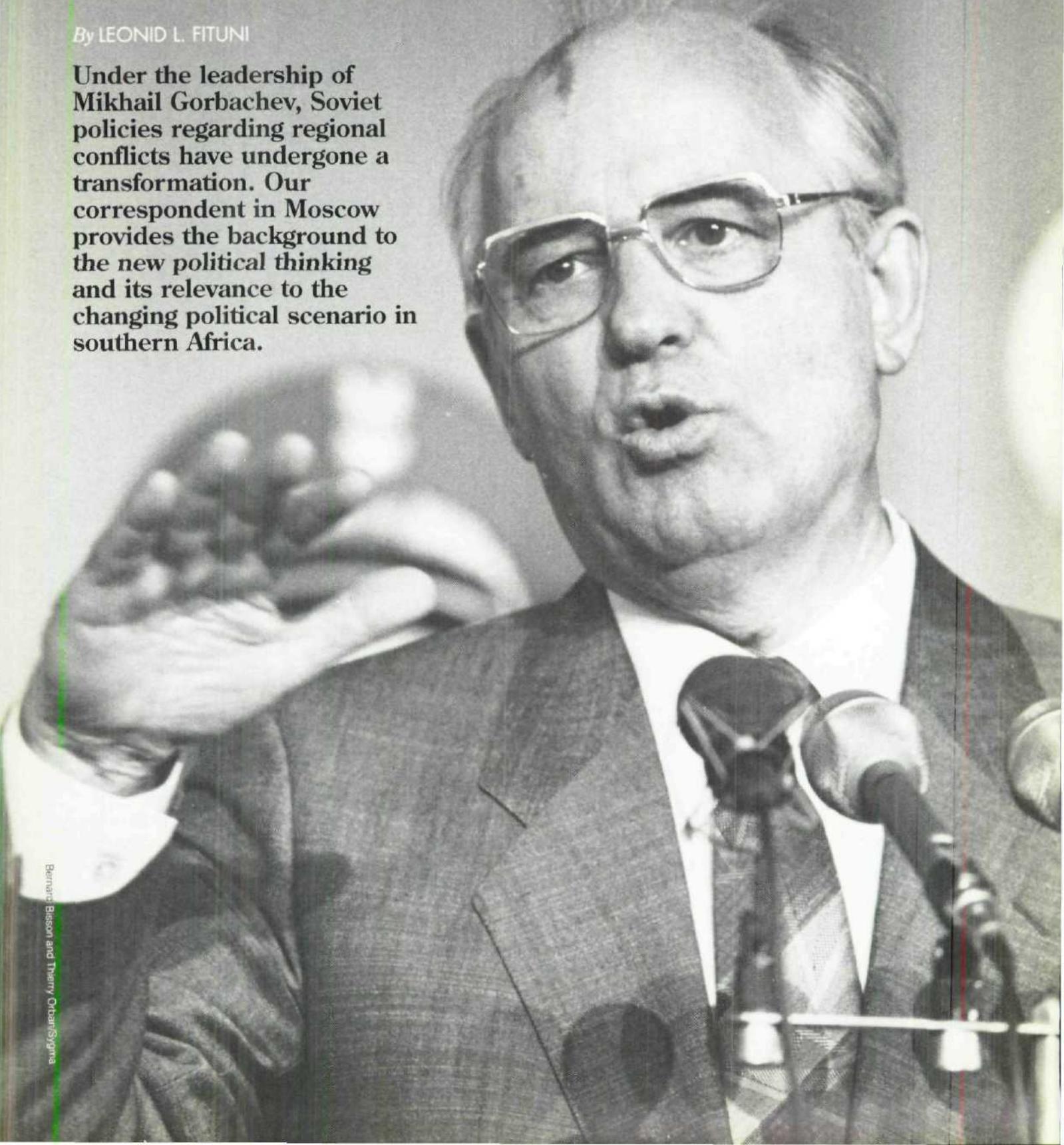
# A NEW ERA: SOVIET POLICY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOVIET UNION



By LEONID L. FITUNI

Under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, Soviet policies regarding regional conflicts have undergone a transformation. Our correspondent in Moscow provides the background to the new political thinking and its relevance to the changing political scenario in southern Africa.



**F**or three decades, the South African problem has been in the international spotlight. But it was only in the late 1980s that politicians in both the East and the West came to realize that apart from the moral and ethical repercussions of social injustice in the region, apartheid poses a real threat to international peace and security.

At certain moments in recent history, the explosive situation in southern Africa brought the two world socio-political systems to the brink of direct confrontation. In our nuclear world, this means to the brink of a global catastrophe. Thus, it is critical to change the threatening course of events in this part of the planet.

Today, mankind is at a turning point in its development. It has approached the point where it cannot be saved if the thinking and actions, built up over the centuries, regarding the acceptability of war and armed conflict are not shed once and for all.

That is why the principles of the Soviet new political thinking are extremely important for the region today. The concept of the new political thinking was advanced at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as the basis of Soviet foreign policy.

The understanding that in the present world situation, competition between the two socio-political systems should now develop exclusively in the form of peaceful coexistence allowed the Soviet Union to put forward a new concept of the world, the essence of which is the search for ways of living together in the nuclear era, in recognition of mutual interests.

The new political thinking requires consideration of mankind's common interests and values. The USSR calls upon other countries and upon political scientists to work to eliminate the deep-seated mistrust, tension, and enmity in the modern world, as well as the traditional con-

frontational approaches in international relations.

The realities of the modern age dictate the need for the elaboration of an all-encompassing system of international security that would include military, political, and humanitarian aspects and safeguards. Great importance is attached to the necessity of solving regional conflicts.

Among regional conflicts, a special place belongs to the conflicts in southern Africa, which, through their international repercussions, influence East-West relations. The positions of both the USSR and the United States concerning the principal question—apartheid—are basically very close. Both governments unambiguously condemn apartheid as a system. They have worked together to bring about the implementation of UN resolution 435 on Namibia's independence. They consider South Africa's acts of aggression against the frontline states as a serious violation of international law.

The similarity of the positions creates conditions to enable a common search for a solution of the conflicts, in which mutual interests would be duly attended to. On the other hand, however, the West often sees any Soviet moves in confrontational terms. For example, one often hears that Western economic interests are threatened by Soviet activities in the area.

The main problem is that Western politicians tend to analyze the conflict in terms of a "zero-sum game." Any strengthening of the position by one side (quite often imaginary) is considered a loss for the other. In this context, every victory of a national liberation movement is seen as a success for "world communism" and a defeat for the West. The preservation of this confrontational approach has become one of the major obstacles to establishing peace in southern Africa and to creating a more favorable environment for the elimination of apartheid.

The Soviet new political thinking envisages solutions to southern Africa's conflicts by political means,

with the interests of all parties concerned taken into consideration. The inalienable right of peoples to be masters of their own destinies should be guaranteed. The Soviet position presumes that differences in political systems result from the peoples' choice, one which should in no case be a cause for conflict or military confrontation. This principle applies to resolving the southern African conflict and to the future democratic development of South Africa.

The Soviet Union has no special interests in southern Africa, but rather stands for allowing the peoples and countries of the region to decide for themselves their own paths to development and their domestic and foreign affairs in an atmosphere of peace and stability. Nor does the Soviet Union foster any aspirations hostile to the interests of the West. Aware of Western economic involvement in southern Africa and of its reliance on the region's raw materials, the USSR has no intention of undermining industrialized countries' historic trade links with this part of the world.

At the same time, the Soviet Union consistently supports the national liberation struggle of the peoples of southern Africa against apartheid, for the creation of a democratic state, for allowing all people of the region, irrespective of their racial and ethnic origins, to enjoy individual equality and human rights.

Since 1986, when the Soviet concept of new political thinking was adopted, important changes have occurred in southern Africa. The USSR undertook some very important diplomatic steps and other political measures to reduce the acuteness of the conflict. The Soviet leadership made a number of political statements which created the basis for a new, more profound, and promising review of the situation in southern Africa, thus opening a real way for reducing confrontation and bettering international confidence.

In August 1987, when he addressed a reception in honor of

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Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano, Mikhail Gorbachev emphasized the inevitability of the collapse of the apartheid system and said that the elimination of the racist order by political means was in the interests of all South Africans, black and white.

This necessitated new ideas and fresh approaches. Shortly afterwards, steps were taken toward finding a new settlement model. The latter was discussed during summit meetings with then-President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher and during discussions between Gorbachev and African leaders, including Robert Mugabe, Kenneth Kaunda, José Eduardo dos Santos, Joaquim Chissano, and UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar.

Efforts were made to explain the Soviet position on the imposition of comprehensive economic sanctions on South Africa. Thus, during the visit of Geoffrey Howe, the British foreign minister, Gorbachev called for realpolitik, that would not provoke an explosion or chaos, but at the same time would not indulge the apartheid regime's policies. The question of sanctions was discussed during talks with different Commonwealth delegations and during visits to the Soviet Union of high-level representatives from Australia, India, and Canada.

At the same time, having proclaimed its preference for political settlements of regional issues, the Soviet Union supports the steps toward dialogue with different political organizations. In this context, the meetings of African National Congress delegations with representatives of the South African white community in Senegal (1987), West Germany (1988), and the Bahamas (1989) were considered a positive development.

The principles of the new political thinking necessitate the rejection of dogmatic, sectarian approaches to the problem of allies and fellow-travellers in the struggle for a democratic South Africa and put on the agenda the question of establishing a broad anti-racist front in South

Africa. The visits to the Soviet Union of South African political figures such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Alex Boraine, a prominent representative of the white community, Chief Minister of KaNgwane bantustan Enos Mabuza, and others show that the Soviet Union is ready for contacts with different segments of South African society. The exchange of opinions that took place during those meetings helped to illuminate more clearly the views of different strata of South African society on developments in southern Africa and prospects for a political settlement.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly expressed its solidarity and sympathy with black and multiracial demo-

of South Africa and Namibia, and their political organizations, the ANC and Swapo, respectively. These broad contacts in no way signify rejection of support for the just struggle being waged by the ANC and Swapo.

A significant feature of the time is the acute interest of Soviet researchers in theoretical and practical aspects of political, social, and economic reforms in South Africa. This is certainly a direct result of the spread of the principles of the new political thinking and *glasnost* in the USSR. Now, pluralism of opinion and free discussion are no longer an exception and are encouraged in every sphere of studies. For Soviet foreign policy, they are expected to become safeguards against mistakes and stagnating dogmatism that can result in unfounded decisions and wrong political steps.

That is why recently published works of Soviet scholars on southern Africa often contain a greater number of alternative scenarios and non-standard approaches, while reassessing the prospects of a military solution, the future political development and state system for South Africa, its economic development, and relations with frontline states.

The question of security and territorial integrity is an important part of the South African problem. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries consider the receding level of tension in southern Africa today as one of the most important tasks. Both the USSR and Cuba played a significant constructive role in making the trilateral agreements on Namibia possible.

There is room for further super-power cooperation in reducing tension in the region. Based on the realities of the nuclear age, the Soviet Union sees Africa not as an area for East-West confrontation, but as a field for international cooperation. The Soviet Union is optimistic about establishing such cooperation that may come about following the creation of a universal system of international security in the context of a nuclear-free and non-violent world.○

## T he Soviet Union consistently supports the national liberation struggle of the peoples of southern Africa against apartheid.

cruistic organizations that operate in South Africa. In March 1988, the Soviet Foreign Ministry produced a statement condemning Pretoria's decision to ban several mass democratic organizations, including the United Democratic Front and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

The active Soviet role in a constructive dialogue of anti-racist forces in South Africa was used by some in the West to smear Soviet relations with the ANC and Swapo. Articles appeared stating that Moscow "drifts away from the support of these organizations" or looks for alternative ways to infiltrate South Africa.

These allegations are far from reality. They belong to old-thinkers who deny a flexible approach, taking into account a broad variety of opinions and interests. This kind of dialogue corresponds to the long-standing interests of the black population



Colin Neilson

**B**rightly striped marquees and umbrellas surround the well-tended pitch as hundreds of spectators enjoy a cricket match at one of Harare's sports clubs.

In the shady depths of the sports club bar, groups of grizzled former cricket and rugby players guzzle chilled beers and laugh at worn jokes, none of which bear repeating but most of which feature frequent mentions of "Afs," "natives," "houts," and "flat noses"—all derogatory references to the country's black majority.

As the jokes get louder and more offensive, an impatient drinker whistles to the busy black barman and shouts for another round. Complaining of slow service as the beers are put before him, the ex-sportsman says, "You are all slow. We made this country what it is today and you will never be able to run it. You are just too slow."

The bartender looks down and moves on. The scene is not Rhodesia 1979, it is Zimbabwe 1989. The only indication that the country has reached majority rule is that one white patron urges his colleagues to tone it down.

Andrew Meldrum, contributing editor to Africa Report, is an American journalist who has been based in Zimbabwe for eight years.



## REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

# "WHITE MAN, BLACK WAR"

By ANDREW MELDRUM

**O**nce a Rhodesian army sergeant actively involved in fighting the war against Zimbabwean nationalists, Bruce Moore-King began reassessing white attitudes in the post-independence era. Coming to terms with his own brutal wartime experiences, Moore-King has written a gripping novel, not without controversy among Zimbabwe's white population.

"We better knock it off. This is Chickers talk," he says, referring to Chikurubi Prison, where some whites have been held on short sentences for publicly insulting President Robert Mugabe and other top Zimbabwean officials.

This scene of white Rhodesia thriving in black-ruled Zimbabwe is not what Margaret Thatcher saw during her visit here earlier this year. She saw Zimbabwe's now-legendary racial reconciliation, where cooperative and wealthy whites participate with the Mugabe government in the economic and agricultural spheres. Both views are accurate, but generally whites only mingle with blacks at work, while socially the races largely remain segregated.

The dwindling number of whites—down from some 250,000 in the late 1960s to the current 100,000 of the country's 9 million population—cluster together at the many private sports clubs where there are superb facilities and where loutish racism is often in evidence in one corner or another.

A sure way to provoke an angry outburst at virtually any sports club is to mention the name of Bruce Moore-King and his recently published book, *White Man, Black War*.

The book combines harrowing accounts of the Rhodesians' bloody and doomed war against majority rule with one participant's reflections that the war and Rhodesia's minority rule were wrong.

The book has created a stir here because no other white active in the war has so publicly denounced Rhodesian values. Most Zimbabwean whites stubbornly avoid any soul-searching about their participation in the war.

"He's just a honky [white] apologizing for having a white skin. He never fought in the war, he just made up that stuff to sell books," growled one ex-Rhodesian soldier, who nonetheless admitted that the war scenes were accurate depictions of the brutal violence inflicted by white soldiers upon black civilians.

Ten years ago, Bruce Moore-King was a recently discharged Rhodesian sergeant who brawled in London pubs over his support for the Rhodesian cause. He vowed never to live under black majority rule. After living in Britain and South Africa, he visited Zimbabwe in 1985 and saw that life in this country was good, not at all what Rhodesian propaganda and calamitous news stories had led him to believe.

He returned to settle in Zimbabwe and slowly came to the painful realization that virtually all of the values instilled in him—what made him fight in the Rhodesian army—were false. Even worse, he found that whites in Zimbabwe continue to cling to their racist attitudes and refuse to question the purpose of the war.

Compelled to communicate to fellow whites, Moore-King started writing a letter to the editor calling for whites to reassess their post-independence ways. It became a 40-page tract and then evolved into the 133-page book, *White Man, Black War*, published in Harare by Baobab Books, in which Moore-King's war experiences are interspersed with his argument that whites must come to terms with majority rule.

"The underlying emotion prompting me to write the book was fear," said Moore-King. "I wanted to waken people up before it is too late. A strong proportion of whites are actually forcing confrontation with blacks in this country. I've written about incidents by whites since independence which are morally disgusting but which are also, practically, very stupid because they are fanning a lot of latent anger that blacks have against whites."

Moore-King is worried that a violent outburst against whites could be the result of the negative actions of a few whites. "I fear that possibly the catalyst that will produce the flash-point is going to be the whites' behavior in the country," he said.

It is clear from the book that Moore-King was actively involved in the violence perpetrated in the war which took 40,000 lives, the majority of them blacks. In the Rhodesian army for six years, he was in a six-man unit of the Grey Scouts cavalry which roamed the countryside using any method necessary to track down nationalist guerrillas.

Some of the violence perpetrated, such as burning villages and submerging children in buckets of water until their parents talked, is wrenchingly described in Moore-King's book.

In fact, Moore-King had to leave the country in 1978, when the brutal interrogation methods of his unit were exposed by an American photo-journalist.

"To avoid the embarrassment of having to investigate us for contravening the Geneva Convention, the Rhodesian government asked four or five of us to leave the country," said Moore-King. The American photographer was later discredited when it became evident that he had actively taken part in the unit's activities in order to set up his shots.

Many critics of the book here have suggested that Moore-King is simply trying to make amends for his own misdeeds during the war. "He's kind of like a drinker and sinner who then is a born-again Christian and he's holier-than-thou," said one white here.

But Moore-King disagrees. "No, it's not an apology. I look back on the war and my participation with a form of horror, but I believe that given the kind of society we were brought up in, most young males 18 to 25 went quite willingly and quite unthinkingly into the war. We were in a state of ignorance during the war about our black fellow countrymen."

"The idea [of the book] is to set the record straight," continued Moore-King. "The anger that I feel and any accusations that I make are about actions taken since independence. The situation now, nine years after independence, is such that it is quite clear in my mind that we were wrong in our beliefs and our fears about the blacks and I think it's about time that the white community acknowledged that fact."

Moore-King is most scathing regarding former Rhodesian leader Ian Smith. He charges that Smith and other Rhodesian "elders," as he calls them, "valued the comfort of their lifestyles beyond the lives of their own children, beyond the lives of any children," writes Moore-King. "It was greed that sent us to war."

Following independence, Moore-King accuses Smith of working in tandem with South Africa to discredit Zimbabwe.

"It seems to me that certain actions are being orchestrated, that South Africa would hate to see harmonious relations develop between black and white here because it would be one of the most powerful arguments against apartheid," he said. "Ian Smith is still seen as the representative of whites in Zimbabwe and so every time he stands up and says this place is going to the dogs, he weakens the position of whites in Zimbabwe and strengthens the position of the South African government. And he does it regularly."

Moore-King said that while he despairs that his book will not be able to change the attitudes of Zimbabwean whites, he believes that it can affect the small but significant group of South African whites who are questioning their system.

The outspoken stand that he has taken has not made life in Zimbabwe easy for Moore-King, 37, who retains the rugged bearing of a Rhodesian soldier that makes him appear an unlikely non-conformist author of such a searing indictment of his fellow whites.

Most friends and acquaintances pretend that they have never heard of the book, which has received widespread publicity here, while a few provoke bitter arguments. But the experience has been a profound one for Moore-King, who recently left his job as a manager at an insurance firm to take up writing full-time. He is working on a novel.

While *White Man, Black War* is an incisive denunciation of Zimbabwe's whites for their refusal to accept the hand of reconciliation offered by Robert Mugabe, it is too simplistic to accept that that is the case across the board.

At the same Harare sports club, teams of black and white youths regularly practice football, running, shouting, and laughing. At break time, they huddle around the drinking bucket together for a thirst-quenching gulp. As often as one encounters an ugly racial slur in Zimbabwe, one also glimpses such signals of hope for a non-racial society. ○



CULTURE

# MAURITANIA'S ARCHEOLOGICAL MYSTERIES

By HOWARD SCHISSEL

**Excavations of the ruins of West Africa's great empires—providing insights into the region's rich precolonial history—may come to a halt if donor funding is not secured, leaving the past a vague memory in legend and oral tradition.**

**A**lack of funds is hampering efforts to explore archeological sites in Mauritania which could hold vital clues for a better understanding of West and North African history over the last 1,000 years. Likewise, Mauritania's financial impecuniousness is playing havoc with attempts to safeguard the country's precious Saharan and architectural heritage.

The most famous archeological site in Mauritania is undoubtedly Koumbi Saleh, the legendary capital of West Africa's first medieval empire, Ghana. Situated in the extreme southeastern corner of Mauritania, just a stone's throw from the Malian border, the traces of the town were first uncovered in 1913 by a team of French archeologists. It was immediately recognized as one of the most important archeological discoveries in West Africa.

Several digging campaigns have been carried out at the Koumbi Saleh

site, uncovering ruins dating from the 7th to 14th centuries. An imposing mosque has been partially excavated, attesting to the large number of people that once inhabited the town. Ghana exercised control over a wide swath of territory in West Africa. Its reputation for wealth and splendor was known throughout North Africa as early as the mid-9th century, mainly as a result of the flourishing trans-Saharan trade routes.

Koumbi Saleh's position as a wealthy regional power was probably brought to an end by invading Almoravide Berbers in the 11th century. As the focus of power in West Africa shifted further east and southwards, the Ghanaian capital was gradually covered over by blowing sand and became just a vague memory in legend and oral tradition.

Lack of funds and a dearth of skilled Mauritanian archeologists have brought excavation work at Koumbi Saleh to a halt since the early 1980s. Plans were formalized to complete work on the mosque and start digging in the area surrounding the impressive religious edi-

fice. However, unless funds can be procured abroad, it is unlikely that any new campaigns can be organized at Koumbi Saleh. This has frustrated archeologists and historians who hope that some of the secrets of modern West Africa's first empire can be unlocked by new finds.

Other archeological mysteries remain to be cleared up in northwestern Mauritania, notably the origin of the ruins at Azougui, a site situated some 15 miles south of the town of Atar. It was only in 1960 that an English archeologist began the first serious excavation of the site. It was believed that Azougui could be the original citadel from where the Almoravides set out to conquer Ghana and spread their domination throughout Morocco, where they founded Marrakesh, and into Spain.

Again insufficient funding has stymied research work at the Azougui site. Bernard Saison, a French historian who worked at both Azougui and Koumbi Saleh, reckons that the oldest vestiges uncovered at the former site are relatively recent, dating from the 14th

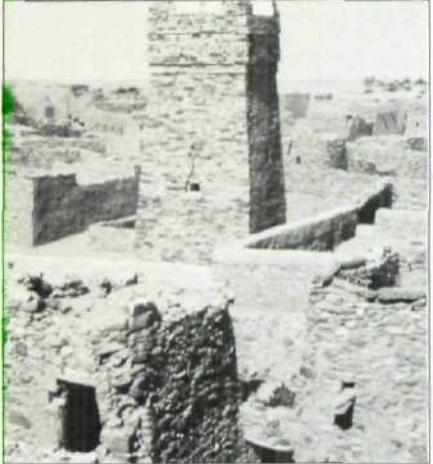
Howard Schissel

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century. If Azougui is not apparently the legendary fortress of the Almoravides, Saison firmly believes that it is likely to be uncovered one day in the immediate vicinity.



Chinguetti mosque: "A silent witness of past glory"

In spite of a Unesco plan to safeguard Mauritania's four oasis-towns of historical interest—Chinguetti, Oudane, Tichitt, and Oualata—the corrosive effects of wind-blown sand and years of neglect have taken a serious toll. These towns played a key role in trans-Saharan trade and were also important cultural centers, some of which were even renowned as far away as the Middle East.

"From the historical viewpoint, Mauritanian territory has traditionally served as a point of passage between North and West Africa as well as being the focal point from which Islam spread to sub-Saharan Africa," said Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh, director of the Mauritanian Institute of Scientific Research (IMRS). "Along with trade routes from Sijilmasa, in southern Morocco, to Timbuktu, a string of powerful cities sprung up and prospered from trans-Saharan commerce. Vital oasis stopovers for the caravans plying the Sahara, the four Mauritanian desert towns were also centers of Islamic erudi-

tion and learning."

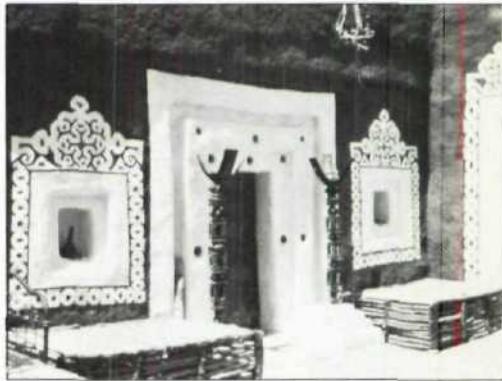
Chinguetti, probably Mauritania's most ancient and prestigious Saharan oasis, was known to intrepid Portuguese navigators in the 15th century. Its fame reached the Arabian peninsula too. Even today in parts of the Middle East, Mauritania is referred to by its traditional name: the country of Chinguetti.

In addition to its commercial functions, Chinguetti was the rallying point for pilgrims from the Western Sahara area and the Senegal river valley about to undertake the overland trek to Mecca. Returning voyagers brought back numerous manuscripts and holy works in Arabic, making Chinguetti a repository of learning and tradition. Poets, theologians, scholars, and marabouts flocked to Chinguetti during the halcyon days in the 17th and 18th centuries. Since then, it has gone into eclipse as overland trade routes declined. With colonial rule, the French outpost at Atar attracted much of the population and became the main regional trading post.

Despite the depredations of time and desert raiders, Chinguetti's oldest quarter, dominated by its mosque, remains remarkably well-preserved as a silent witness of past glory. More than half the houses in the outlying residential district are in ruin and many more are in a poor state. Families remaining in the town are facing increasing hardship. Nonetheless, they proudly show visitors precious medieval manuscripts.

Oudane, on the edge of the Adrar plateau 100 miles to the east of Chinguetti, was the last stopover point for caravans undertaking the perilous crossing toward Tichitt and Oualata. Even more isolated than Chinguetti, Oudane has suffered irreparable damage. Its mosque is in disrepair and the vast majority of the houses are crumbling. The palm grove is in a sorry state and game has virtually disappeared from the outlying region.

For caravans moving south, Tichitt was always a welcome site. Set on the edge of a sandstone promontory overlooking a desolate Saharan landscape, it furnished water and other precious supplies to desert travelers. At its zenith, Tichitt boasted a population of over 5,000 and 1,500 houses. Only 286 exist today, of which less than 100 are habitable. Tichitt has suffered from the drying up of water sources and its extreme isolation.



Oualata: "An unusual synthesis of Arabic and black African traditions"

Oualata was the last resting point for caravans on the route to Timbuktu. The town's architecture is an unusual synthesis of Arabic and black African traditions. Houses are painted with red dye and windows and doors decorated with delicate white arabesque designs. Nobody really knows the origin of these decorative traditions. It is being lost as older women, who master the art of arabesque designs, find it difficult to find young candidates to carry on the tradition.

Oualata has suffered more than the northern oases from the region's political upheavals during the pre-colonial days. It was ransacked on several occasions by marauding desert warriors. The mosque is in lamentable shape, the minaret practically in ruin. The narrow, winding streets in the old town resemble the traditional medinas found in North Africa.



# THE BACK PAGE

NEWS COMMENTARY  
AND OPINION

By MARGARET A. NOVICKI

When it comes to Africa, it seems the glass is always half-empty, at least judging by the daily diet of news stories we are fed in the Western world. The day-to-day achievements of a continent and its leaders, struggling to achieve the most basic of human rights—peace and a modicum of economic and social advancement—are obscured if not ignored by the bad news that makes good copy in our newspapers and on our television screens.

"African Dictators, American Silence" is the shrill headline of a recent op-ed piece in *The New York Times*. "These days," it reads, "Africa has the longest line-up of strong men—Angola, Zaire, Liberia, Malawi, Ghana, Somalia—and that just begins the list. Indeed, 'African democratic leader' is an oxymoron."

While I could argue for hours on the merits and demerits of the author's rather eclectic choice of leaders to lump together as examples of the continent's bad guys, what bothers me even more is it's not what's wrong with Africa that we're so silent about, but rather what's right with it.

Africa gets a bum rap any way you look at it. Whether it's "African Dictators," the overwhelming economic crises that the continent reels under the weight of, or the foreign-fueled wars that bleed on like festering sores—these are the images that color our views of a region out of which nothing good ever comes.

I guess it's not easy being an optimist when discouragement is so easy a commodity to come by in the Africa business. But why not try it once in a while? What about looking at the glass as half-full? A few short decades after most nations have attained independence—a period in which the rest of the world has hardly been conflict- or economic crisis-free—the continent is going through some major sea-changes on the political and economic fronts, changes which have required a lot of *mea culpas* on the part of its leadership. At the heart of this dynamic scenario is one strength that Africa is rarely credited with—and even more criticized for lacking—and that's statesmanship.

Sure, as *The New York Times* notes, the continent has its share of autocrats

and corrupt fossils of another age whose departures from the political stage are long overdue. But it also has its share of true leaders—bold enough to make hard choices, sometimes requiring an inordinate amount of losing face, and whose job descriptions include grappling with some of the most trying issues on earth, ones that our couch-potato politicians in the West would be loathe to go near.

On the half-empty side, yes, there are too many African governments whose intolerance for the mere appearance of critical thinking causes a few brave citizens, like Maina wa Kinyatti or Amos Sawyer, to face a life in exile, their outraged and eloquent voices reduced to a mere whisper across the Atlantic. There are others, like John Garang, who find it necessary to wage a war in order for his voice to be heard in his own land.

There are the Mengistus who slaughter their own people and whose military officers see no way out but to rise up in a coup attempt, only to meet a bloody and in the end pointless demise. There are conflicts, like that between Mauritania and Senegal, which start small but quickly spiral out of control, engulfing their impoverished nationals, who carry little if any political or economic clout, in violence, death, and displacement.

And then there are the wars in southern Africa, foisted on newly or soon-to-be independent governments by the chess games of the superpowers, the latter who end up winning the accolades—after years of patient diplomacy—for having brought about a solution to the conflicts they played no small role in igniting.

But on the half-full side, what about giving credit where credit is due? Surely it's not only the Western diplomats and UN officials who fly in and out of African capitals who should get the international pat on the back when another of the continent's political flashpoints is extinguished. What about "African Successes, American Silence?"

I submit that the unsung statesmanship and political wisdom of African leaders deserves a bit more approbation—and more encouragement. Maybe if we hadn't had a hand in the continent's political emasculation all along, it

wouldn't have taken as many years for its leadership to assume collective responsibility for devising its own solutions to its own problems.

Fortunately, it is starting to happen, but we haven't exactly been effusive in our support. Who would have thought a year ago that President dos Santos would shake hands with rebel leader Jonas Savimbi in Zaire of all places, sealing a cease-fire in the tortured Angola conflict? And that it was African leaders—granted, some for their own agendas—that pulled the meeting off? What about President Chissano inviting South African heir-apparent F.W. de Klerk to Maputo to talk about an end to Mozambique's war and initiating discussions with Renamo under the mediation of the Kenyan and Zimbabwean governments?

And then there's Nelson Mandela agreeing to take tea with P.W. Botha—an invitation issued for the latter's selfish end of scoring points before his retirement to the dustbin of history. Knowing full well the risks of Greeks bearing gifts, the ANC leader called not for divisiveness, but for the chance to play his part in a peaceful solution to the country's torment, coming away with his, not his jailer's, presidential stature enhanced.

To my mind, the qualities of these men deserve as much attention—if not more—as we give to the dirty tricks of the continent's villains. And there are others, too, who with quiet determination set goals for their nations and achieve them, yes, even expanding the scope for that oxymoronic concept, "democracy." Ghana recently completed district assembly elections in which 60-70 percent of registered voters participated—a turn-out unheard of in the U.S. To boot, it has achieved near food self-sufficiency and its economy has grown by 5 percent over the last several years.

I don't know about you, but I think things are getting better in Africa. Changes are coming fast and furious and African leaders deserve a larger dose of credit for this progress. Sure, there's still a lot of room for improvement, but why not look at the half-full side of the glass once in a while? You might be surprised by what you see. □



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