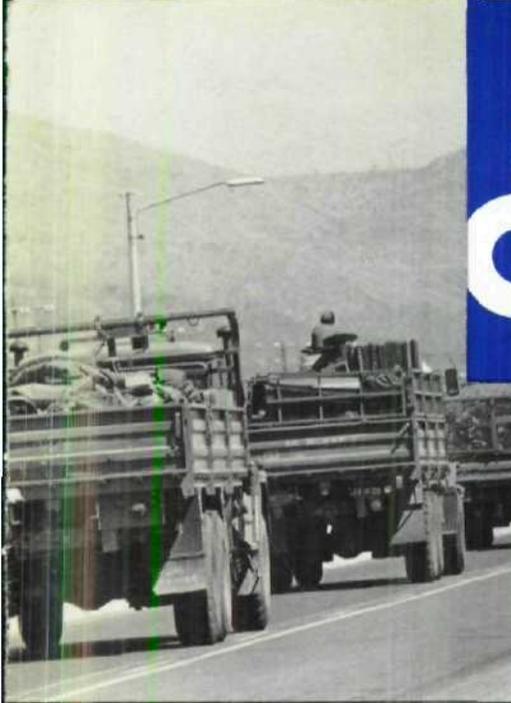


AMERICA'S LEADING MAGAZINE ON AFRICA

# AFRICA REPORT

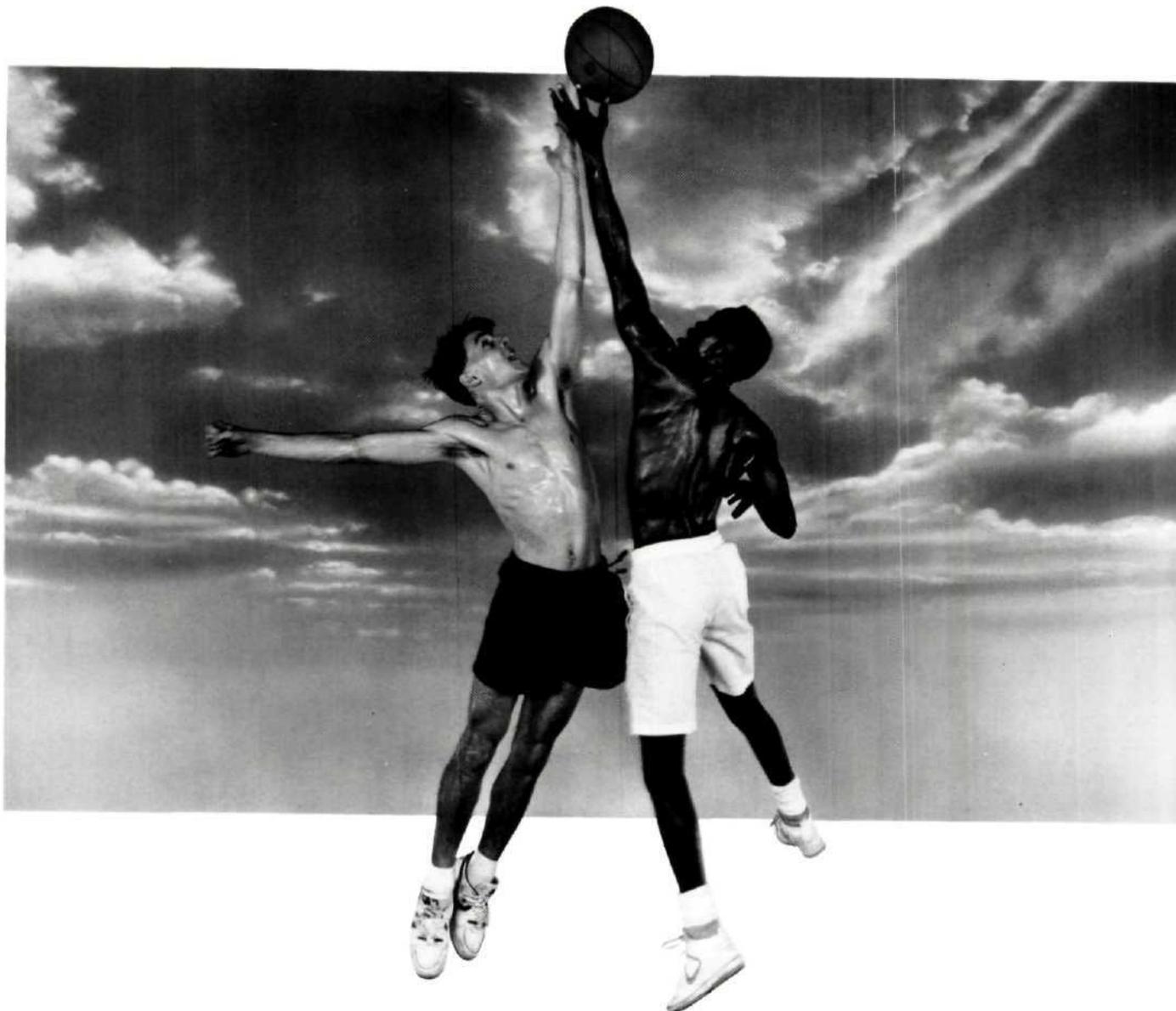
MAY-JUNE 1989

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**NAMIBIA:  
Peace On Whose Terms?**

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To the Editor:

It is necessary to correct several major inaccuracies about hemophilia in Dr. David Seftel's diatribe about AIDS and apartheid and to take issue with some of his statements ("AIDS and Apartheid: Double Trouble," Nov-Dec 1988).

Dr. Seftel feels there is good reason not to trust what he calls the "government figure" of 96 confirmed cases of AIDS reported by the AIDS Advisory Council. My organization, which represents the interests of all South African hemophiliacs, provides information about hemophiliacs to the Council. We have no reason to mistrust the published figures which are in no way censored by the state.

Dr. Seftel makes the unworthy implication that respected physicians, virologists, hematologists, and transfusion service directors who serve on the AIDS Advisory Council are party to a cover-up and prepared to issue lying information about AIDS.

Dr. Seftel states that 87% of South African hemophiliacs are AIDS-positive, presumably meaning HIV-positive. This is untrue. There are 78 HIV-positive hemophiliacs in the country, five of whom have AIDS. Of our HIV-positive bleeders, the great majority are white, hardly the picture of black victims of apartheid medicine with which Dr. Seftel tries to smear those of us who care for hemophiliacs.

Dr. Seftel states that the South African government has funded tracing and counselling of all white hemophiliacs who had tested HIV-positive. The SAHF knows nothing of such funding. That no attempts were made to trace or inform infected black hemophiliacs in South Africa and that their families and spouses were kept in the dark is a blatant lie.

I fear that much of Dr. Seftel's article must be regarded as political polemic, often based on outrageous lies and unjustified insinuations about the ethics of respected physicians, rather than a dispassionate scientific overview of the problem.

—C.D. Karabus  
South African Hemophilia  
Foundation  
Rondebosch, South Africa

To the Editor:

The article by Dr. David Seftel (Nov-Dec 1988) contains many undated and incorrect statistics, as well as selective reporting leading to a biased picture of the health situation in South Africa. South Africa certainly still has many problems in providing equal health ser-

vices to all its peoples, but to state that the health services are grossly unequal is an exaggeration.

Contrary to Dr. Seftel's statement that untrained South African army soldiers stitch the wounds of black patients, the medical orderlies of the South African Medical Services receive comprehensive theoretical training in the basic medical subjects and practical training in resuscitation and the treatment of minor injuries. During this period, they receive training on a rotational basis in the emergency departments of several black and white hospitals, under the strict supervision of a registered doctor.

They are allowed to stitch only skin lacerations. During this training period, the medical orderlies also assist in alleviating staff shortages at these hospitals. Incidentally, no member of the SADF, including Maj. H.H. Lawson, has ever instructed untrained soldiers to stitch patients as alleged.

South Africa does not in any way attempt to hide the figures relating to AIDS. One of the important non-governmental groups concerned is the AIDS Advisory Group, of which Prof. Jack Metz is a representative. This group works in close association with the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

Probably the most disturbing feature of the whole article is the portrayal of the black people of South Africa. AIDS is primarily a sexually transmitted disease and therefore, once informed, the individual must take the final responsibility for avoiding contracting and spreading the disease. Yet in the article, the black people of South Africa are portrayed as spineless communities whose moral norms and sexual behavior can be manipulated at a whim by the governing authorities. Surely the ultimate insult!

Finally, if the conditions of the black people in South Africa were truly as bad as Dr. Seftel implies, why then is it necessary for Dr. Seftel to resort to distortions, untruths, and misrepresentations of the facts?

—Peter Viljoen  
South African Consul General  
New York, New York

The author replies:

My article is a broad review of voluminous internationally published scientific literature and mainstream press articles. Specific repudiation of these belated, emotional, and tragically blinkered responses from apartheid physicians and the South African consulate can be found in the 330 scientific papers produced by scientists at 22 South African universities for the final report of the Carnegie Corporation Inquiry into Poverty and Under-

development in South Africa, as well as Prof. S. Benatar's statistics published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

South Africa's apartheid health care advocates should know that blanket denials carry little weight in the democratic world where adherence to international standards and independent peer review are absolute necessities.

The wholesale unreliability of South African government health statistics were clearly and carefully documented over a period of 10 years by Carnegie's researchers.

Civilized international medical standards preclude improperly trained persons from operating on humans. The differentiation of a minor laceration from a tendon injury is not a simple matter. It should be done only by a fully trained and accredited physician.

To claim that teenage soldier-orderlies are able to professionally manage wounded black civilians is a further indictment of the callous and neo-Nazi South African government health care service. Basic humanity should motivate them to stop defending this practice and cease it at once.

—Dr. David Seftel  
MB.Ch.B., BSE Witwatersrand

To the Editor:

It was interesting to read Catharine Watson's article on the Burundi tragedy (Jan-Feb 1989), although I disagree with her analysis of the Rwandan political situation. It is not difficult to realize that the so-called "equilibre" policy is merely propaganda. Tutsis are in fact systematically eliminated from any position of power simply because their ancestors have ruled the country in the past.

There is only one Tutsi in a government of about 20 ministers, there are two Tutsis in the Rwandan parliament, there is only one Tutsi among the army officers, and there are none among the ambassadors and other diplomats.

It is surprising to hear your reporter support the fact that Rwandan identity cards show ethnicity. Is there any difference between that practice and the Population Registration Act of South Africa?

Finally, according to the author, discrimination in Rwanda is justified because Tutsis ruled the country for centuries and Hutus still have an inferiority complex. My view is that if Hutus want to regain confidence and pride, they should understand that they are as able as the Tutsis and that they are the majority. Then they would remove ridiculous self-protecting and discriminatory policies like "equilibre."

—Kanyarwanda Ngenzi  
Montreal, Canada

# UPDATE

## IN THE NEWS

### Ghana Hit Hard by Shady deals of the Timber Trade

People often say that money doesn't grow on trees, but in Ghana it really does, if one is to believe the recent findings of a government committee investigating the corrupt practices of the country's timber companies.

Only last year, members of the ruling Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) considered timber as one of the great success stories of its Economic Recovery Program, with export revenue jumping from \$12 million in 1982 to nearly \$100 million last year. But following National Investigations Committee (NIC) disclosures of persistent corruption in the timber industry, a more sober view now prevails within government circles.

Despite the remarkable increase in timber export earnings, the NIC estimates that this is still less than two-thirds of what should be accruing to Ghana. Having completed work on a total of 35 separate cases of fraud involving more than \$35 million of diverted revenue, the NIC has accused timber merchants and companies of "a massive siphoning off of foreign exchange" into private foreign accounts, while Ghana suffers from the continued depletion of its forest reserves. Two West Germans, four Lebanese, and dozens of Ghanaians have been charged.

The NIC's report detailing gross irregularities, including smuggling, tax evasion, fraudulent invoicing, and violation of foreign currency regulations, also draws attention to the common practice by businessmen of obtaining huge timber concessions without having any intention of developing them. Instead, the concessions are sold to other timber companies at a profit, which frequently leads to logs being felled and then abandoned.

Of course, many of these fraudulent activities would have been impossible without the consent and collusion of

Ghanaian officials, together with some of the agents hired under World Bank auspices. Silviconsult, a consulting firm appointed by the World Bank, recommended that a timber export development board should be created to oversee a network of accredited agents to promote Ghanaian timber exports. But in reality, many of these agents consorted with timber merchants by accepting orders at low prices from sister front companies and overpricing machinery and equipment paid for by international loans—all the time pretending to be foreign manufacturers or suppliers.



Rawlings: Cracking down on timber fraud

In an effort to crack down on malpractices in the timber industry, Flt.-Lt. Jerry Rawlings' government has launched a clean-up campaign, ordering a review of all existing institutional and operational arrangements. With bilateral and multilateral donors having poured in more than \$140 million in loans for this key sector, the PNDC has made it clear it intends to do everything possible to recover some of the illegal profits owed the country, and to imple-

ment greater discipline and data collection in government agencies.

But much of the damage has already been done. Millions of dollars have found their way into private pockets abroad with little chance of repatriation, while deforestation continues to grow at an alarming rate. It is now up to the government to demonstrate that its clean-up campaign can bring the timber industry under control in hopes of resuscitating one of the most important sectors for Ghana's future. ■

### Judge blames "Strange Society" and Lets Mayekiso Off the Hook

In a landmark court ruling which is expected to broaden the perimeter of legal anti-apartheid activities in the black townships, Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), and four co-defendants were acquitted of charges of subversion and sedition in late April after an 18-month trial.

Mayekiso, who was arrested in June 1986 under security laws and emergency regulations, hailed the verdict as a "victory against apartheid" and a triumph for black South Africans fighting for a democratic society. "I wasted two-and-a-half years of my time in jail, but I think it is going to have lots of repercussions," noted Mayekiso. "It proved that the freedom movement, the people's expression of power, is not illegal. We can go on boycotts and on any peaceful protest without breaking the law."

At a victory rally following his acquittal, Mayekiso told a group of enthusiastic supporters that he intended to revive the kind of community organization that existed in Alexandra at the time of his arrest. Said Mayekiso, "We are back, and we must start where we left off. I want to hear that the street, yard, and block committees are meeting tomorrow. The court said they are not illegal."

Margaret A. Novicki

Mayekiso and his fellow activists—**Obed Bapela**, **Richard Mdakane**, **Paul Tshabalala**, and **Mzwanele Mayekiso**—had been accused of establishing the Alexandra Action Committee and of setting up “organs of people’s power” to overthrow the state structures in Johannesburg’s large black township. In particular, they were alleged to have formed unofficial tribunals called “people’s courts,” waged a campaign of violence against the police, and launched a rent strike and a boycott of white-owned businesses. The state charged that this challenge to white authority during the general insurrection which overtook the townships between 1984 and 1986 amounted to nothing less than treason and subversion.

But to the surprise and delight of anti-apartheid activists throughout the country, Justice **P.J. van der Walt** ruled that the state had failed to prove its case. South Africa’s advocate-general told the court that the defendants were not trying to replace the township’s council or to make the country ungovernable by fomenting revolution. On the contrary, said van der Walt, their actions had been a reasonable response to the intolerable living conditions in the townships.

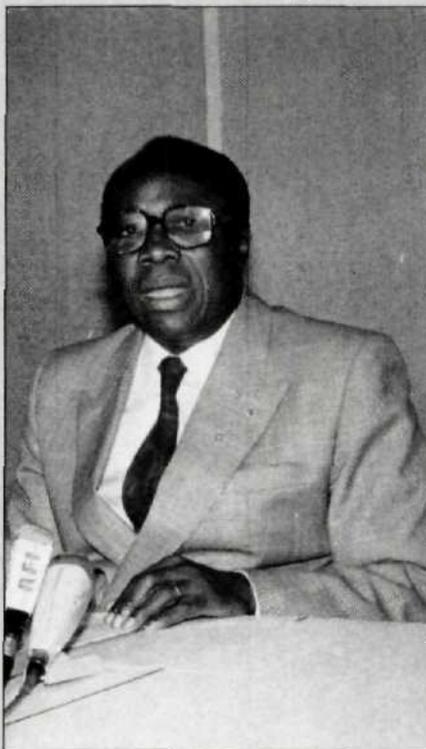
Calling South Africa “a very strange and complex society,” van der Walt told the court that the black community had become “dissatisfied and developed a lack of trust in authority” during the township unrest, and that the Alexandra Action Committee had merely sought to represent blacks “with grievances and aspirations which, in most cases, were legitimate.” He went on to criticize the government for attempting to convict the Alexandra Five of treason, arguing that “most of these citizens are just striving for a better South Africa.”

Considering his high rank in the South African judiciary, many black activists believe van der Walt’s candid comments will effectively undermine the government’s June 1986 emergency laws which decreed that the creation of alternative structures in the townships is by definition an act of treason. But it remains to be seen whether the government will take van der Walt’s viewpoint seriously or whether, in future, it will simply use the extra-legal provisions of the emergency decree to override the court’s decision. ■

## Laclé Shoots Himself in the Foot

As a one-time soccer referee, **Kpottivi Tèvi Dzidzoghé-Laclé** knows the rules of the game as well as anyone, but now that he has been unceremoniously booted out of government in the wake of an unusual gambling scandal, serious doubts exist whether he will ever be able to make it back from the sidelines in Lomé.

Laclé, one of President **Gnassingbé Eyadéma**’s closest and most trusted colleagues, was sacked in March as minister of justice and charged with attempted fraud for his alleged involve-



Laclé: No longer calling the shots

ment in a racket to swindle Togolese gamblers who bet on the results of British soccer games in the Lotosportif—known locally as the London Pools. Five other people have been charged in the \$50,000 scam, including the minister’s brother, **Kovi Tèvi Dzidzoghé-Laclé**, after suspicions arose that they had placed their wagers only once the results were already in. The principal defendant, **Akomatsré Agbéyéyé**, quite conveniently ran a betting shop in Lomé.

In an attempt to defuse public anger over this latest case of high-level corruption, Togolese authorities distributed petitions in the capital pledging their

support for President Eyadéma, and on March 28, hundreds of people were mobilized to take part in a rally called by the National Confederation of Togolese Workers (CNTT) to demonstrate their solidarity with the government. Only months earlier, Eyadéma was rocked by another scandal involving Minister of Commerce **N’Souwodji Kawo Ehe** and CNTT Secretary-General **Nangbod Barnabo**, both of whom had to be removed from office after it was discovered that they had continued to draw their salaries as managing directors of the Union of Togolese Banks.

As for Laclé, who was stripped of his official duties so that he could appear in court as an ordinary citizen, an indictment in the lottery fraud would represent a final humiliation. **Ahlonko Dovi**, a lawyer for the once all-powerful interior minister, has argued that his client should be granted immunity from prosecution, claiming, “Laclé cannot be tried unless certain conditions are met, such as an authorization by the head of state. There are, at present, no laws permitting him to be brought to justice.” However, the general prosecutor, **Polo Arégba**, has pointed out that Laclé did not act in his capacity as a government minister but as a private individual, and it appears that he will now be tried as such—unless Eyadéma intervenes on his behalf.

This is unlikely, according to opposition sources in exile, who claim that the president had been seeking to get rid of Laclé for some time, particularly because of his poor handling of the alleged coup attempt in Lomé by Togolese dissidents in September 1986 while he was minister of the interior. In March 1987, Laclé was demoted—reportedly for health reasons—to the less demanding post of justice minister, but to Eyadéma’s irritation, he continued to operate his old network of informers and to carry out his duties as though he were still in charge of the interior ministry.

As a result, when the opportunity presented itself and Laclé became implicated in the soccer scandal, Eyadéma did not hesitate to blow the whistle and to expel his long-time associate from the government. No date has yet been set for the trial, but if found guilty, Laclé faces a 6-month to 3-year prison term. ■

**TANZANIA**

An unprecedented number of anti-unionist opponents have been detained in Pemba and Zanzibar since the beginning of the year as part of a concerted government effort to put down what Julius Nyerere, chairman of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), has called a "smear campaign against the party in the isles." More than a dozen dissident islanders were arrested following a visit to Zanzibar in March by the former Tanzanian president, who urged government and party officials to use state powers, including detention, against "agitators and traitors" seeking to destroy national unity.

Nyerere, who publicly criticized those campaigning for a referendum on the issue of the union, condemned former Zanzibari Chief Minister Seif Shariff Hamad in particular for his reported mud-slinging campaign against the CCM since his expulsion with six other senior members early last year for alleged anti-government activities. Hamad is now said to be preparing a detailed reply to Nyerere's accusations.

**CHAD**

The Chadian government thwarted a coup attempt against President Hissène Habré and an apparent assassination plot against newly appointed External Affairs Minister Acheikh Ibn Oumar by arresting Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahamat Itno in early April. The other coup leaders, Hassan Djamous, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and Idris Déby, Habré's presidential security adviser, fled to Sudan with a group of rebel soldiers. Djamous was reportedly captured during heavy fighting with Chadian troops.

The plot, which appears to have been precipitated by Oumar's return to Ndjamena and his subsequent government appointment in March, indicates that Habré's current policy of settling differences with former opponents may be undermining his original power-base among sections of the Chadian National Armed Forces (FANT). Many FANT members fought fierce battles against Oumar's 2,000-strong Revolutionary Democratic Council (CDR) in 1986 and 1987 and now resent its integration into the army.

**ZAMBIA**

President Kenneth Kaunda has relieved Kebby Musokotwane of his portfolio as prime minister, replacing him with former Home Affairs Minister Gen. Malimba Masheke in a major cabinet reshuffle which promoted loyal party supporters to key posts. Musokotwane, who had served as prime minister for four years, was first demoted to minister of general education in mid-March before being transferred to the foreign service "to meet his obligations to the leadership code."

Officially, Kaunda said Musokotwane's demotion was in line with his policy to expose as many leaders as possible to the post of prime minister so that Zambians can better elect his successor. But it appears that Musokotwane fell out of favor following rumors that he had been questioned in connection with an alleged plot to overthrow Kaunda last October and will thus join a long list of former cabinet ministers to have been sent off as diplomats to far-away places.

**POLITICAL POINTERS**

**MOROCCO**

Despite growing controversy surrounding the construction of the world's biggest mosque, Casablanca's lavish new monument is still expected to be completed in time for King Hassan II's 60th birthday on July 9. Far and away the most ambitious building project ever undertaken in Morocco, the 215,000-square-foot mosque, with its towering 564-foot minaret, hydraulic sliding roof, and earthquake-proof foundations, will easily accommodate some 20,000 Islamic worshippers.

The Great Hassan II Mosque, which will have cost at least \$300 million to build, has been paid for in part by a "voluntary" national fund-raising drive in which all 26 million Moroccans were urged to contribute according to their ability. Many workers, however, have reportedly been forced to pay as much as the equivalent of a month's salary by overzealous local officials, while peasants have had to sell part of their livestock in order to make their "donations."

**MALAWI**

President-for-Life Hastings Kamuzu Banda, long known for maintaining a tight lid on discontent, has launched a fierce attack against northerners which threatens to undermine his 25-year campaign for national unity. During a countrywide crop inspection tour in February, Banda accused northern civil servants of regionalism and condemned teachers from the area for allegedly backing a secessionist plot by former Foreign Minister Kanyama Chiume. Several northerners were subsequently arrested and a decree was issued preventing teachers from working outside their own regions.

Banda's sudden clampdown on northerners was reportedly linked to protests at the University of Malawi where the entire student body boycotted classes for two days following the suspension of four pupils, all from the north. The four had written articles in a student newsletter criticizing the new selection system based on quotas for each district which will inevitably lead to the exclusion of many qualified northerners.

**TUNISIA**

In the country's first multi-party elections since the overthrow of Habib Bourguiba in 1987, President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali's ruling Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) swept all 141 National Assembly seats amid opposition party claims of widespread abuses and fraud. Ahmed Mestiri, leader of the Social Democratic Movement (MDS), alleged that more than 1.3 million eligible voters were purposefully left off the electoral roll and that his supporters were physically harassed by police, forcing the withdrawal of opposition party observers from all polling stations.

Despite such irregularities, the Muslim fundamentalist Movement for Rebirth won 13 percent of the vote, giving the RCD signals of a tougher challenge in the future. By contrast, none of the six secular opposition parties were able to muster more than 3 percent of the vote and they gave way to Ben Ali in the uncontested presidential election, arguing that he could best "guarantee a wide degree of democracy in the country."

## AFRICAN OUTLOOK

*Ethnic time bomb explodes in Dakar and Nouakchott*

Border disputes between Senegal and Mauritania are nothing new, as serious economic problems afflicting both countries in recent years have produced abundant fuel for social unrest. But the latent racial tensions which suddenly boiled over in late April, causing up to 200 deaths in Mauritania and at least 50 deaths in Senegal, have left both governments in a state of shock, searching for answers.

The latest outbursts of violence were sparked by a relatively common incident: an argument over grazing rights after cattle tended by Mauritanian herdsmen apparently trampled land cultivated by Senegalese farmers along the Senegal River. This time, however, two Senegalese villagers were reportedly killed by Mauritanian soldiers, and another 13 were said to have been taken hostage. Authorities in Nouakchott denied responsibility, claiming the two were killed with hunting rifles which are not used by Mauritanian border guards.

After conflicting reports of the incident filtered back to Dakar, Senegalese mobs began looting many of the Mauritanian-owned corner shops scattered around the capital. Ethnic violence quickly escalated out of control in Nouakchott, as Mauritians retaliated by systematically slaughtering Senegalese nationals, beating some 200 to death within a few days.

In turn, several dozen Mauritians were stoned to death in Dakar after Senegalese refugees reached the city with reports of widespread clubbings and mutilations in Nouakchott. Thousands of machete-wielding Senegalese rampaged through the capital, hunting down Mauritians with cries of "Death to the Moors," and looting and burning their property along the way. The country's security forces were then deployed on the streets of Dakar, where teargas was fired to disperse the rioters and a curfew enforced to contain the unrest as violence spread to other towns and cities.

Once the ethnic clashes were finally brought under control, each government turned its attention to the tens of

thousands of suddenly dispossessed or homeless citizens. Several nations, including France and Morocco, took part in an international airlift between Dakar and Nouakchott, moving citizens from the two countries back across their respective borders. Prior to the unrest, an estimated 300,000 Mauritians had lived in Senegal and at least 30,000 Senegalese had settled in Mauritania, but by the completion of the airlift in early May, more than 100,000

refugees with little more than the shirts on their backs had to be repatriated to a homeland that many had never seen.

With relations between the two countries at rock bottom, neither government has been willing to accept any blame for the violence. In late April, Senegalese President Abdou Diouf delivered a radio broadcast during which he said the anger of his people was quite understandable—thereby

*Continued on next page*

*Embattled Ratsiraka digs in against Madagascar's mounting opposition*

When President Didier Ratsiraka greeted Pope John Paul II in Antananarivo in late April, it seemed as though he was receiving holy sanction for his recent reelection to a third seven-year term as the country's head of state. But anti-government rallies just prior to the papal visit, in which thousands of demonstrators calling for the president's resignation clashed violently with police in the streets of the capital, saw to it that Ratsiraka's prestigious guest would also hear the message of Madagascar's growing opposition.

According to official figures, five people died, 70 were wounded, and 64 people were arrested during demonstrations organized by several opposition parties to coincide with Ratsiraka's inauguration in mid-April. Anti-government activists, alleging that the election results were fraudulent, demanded a fresh vote and vowed to continue their protests in an effort to force Ratsiraka's resignation.

The presidential elections were originally due to be held in December of this year, but in a calculated move to throw the mounting opposition into disarray, Ratsiraka's ruling Arema Party pushed through a constitutional amendment to bring the poll forward by nine months. And to a large extent, this strategy paid off.

Four of the seven parties within the legal opposition framework of the National Front for the Defense of the Revolution—a government-sponsored multi-party alliance headed by Ratsiraka—formed the Democratic Alliance in January so they could field a single candidate to battle Ratsiraka at the polls. The new grouping, however, failed to reach a common understanding in time for the election, leading to a split in votes among the main opposition parties.

Manandafy Rakotonirina, leader of the left-wing Movement for Proletarian Power, ran on a joint slate with VS-MONIMA and won 20 percent of the vote, while Jérôme Marojama Razanabahiny, head of the Vonjy/VITM party, received 15 percent of the ballots cast. Monja Jaona, chairman of the MONIMA-K party and veteran opposition leader, saw his support collapse to a mere 3 percent after having gained 20 percent in the country's last poll in 1982.

On election day, Ratsiraka amassed almost 63 percent of the total vote even though he failed to win a majority in Antananarivo or in any of the provincial capitals. Opposition parties alleged that massive irregularities took place in the rural areas since outdated voting lists were used which excluded many

*Continued on page 10*

DAKAR...continued

leaving the door open for further attacks on Mauritians—while his counterpart, President Maaouya Sid Ahmed Ould Taya, argued that “Mauritania does not bear the slightest responsibility in the tragic events.” Quite the contrary, said Taya, Senegal should be blamed for the harassment of Mauritanian herders, and he demanded compensation for his people’s property seized or destroyed in Dakar. Farah Ndiaye, one of Diouf’s personal advisers, characterized Taya’s accusations as “irresponsible and in effect a declaration of war.”



Diouf: Ties with Nouakchott at rock bottom

Nevertheless, despite the rift created by the ethnic violence and the inevitable economic fallout for both countries, renewed cooperation remains a key to the future of each government. Cohabitation has not always been peaceful and the growing number of border incidents suggest that the climate of political fragility in Dakar and Nouakchott will once again be tested. But as the Senegalese daily, *Le Soleil*, pointed out recently, real answers need to be found because, quite simply, the two countries are “condemned to live together.” ■

## Pragmatism brings Maghreb together

After years of conflicts and divisions, the North African nations of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia are expected to undergo major political and economic changes in the coming year following the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), a new economic bloc modeled along the lines of the European Community. Spurred largely by the prospect of a more unified European trading market in 1992, the five North African heads of state have agreed to put aside their long-standing differences in a pragmatic move to enhance the region’s political and economic future.

The union, signed on February 17 in the southern Moroccan city of Marrakesh, will bring together the 62 million inhabitants of the five member-states—stretching 3,000 miles from the eastern Mediterranean to the Atlantic Ocean—by abolishing the barriers to the free movement of people and products across national boundaries. The Maghreb nations, which currently send two-thirds of their exports to the 12 member-nations of the Economic Community, thereby hope to provide a sufficiently large and robust market for regionally based industries to survive prospects of tighter trade restrictions. Between them, AMU countries have vast supplies of oil, gas, phosphates, and iron ore that have yet to be fully developed.

The founding treaty of the AMU, which was initially discussed last June when the five heads of state met at the Zeralda summit in Algeria, comes into effect on August 17 and outlines each states’ obligation to the union. The AMU will consist of a policy-making presidential council composed of each head of state, with the chairmanship rotating every six months, beginning with King Hassan II of Morocco; a council of foreign ministers to prepare the groundwork for the summits; a general secretariat with one member from each country to deal with day-to-day administrative problems; a consultative 50-member Maghreb Chamber; and a judicial body composed of two judges from each state to settle regional disputes.

Although the idea of forming a Maghreb union is hardly a new idea and fits in with the wider goal of uniting all 22 Arab nations under one state, progress in this direction has long been hindered by decades of division. Apart from the difficulties of linking economies marked by heavy state intervention, like Algeria and Libya, with the more market-oriented systems of Morocco and Tunisia, political differences over issues like the Western Sahara have played a key role in the disunity that has prevailed since the 1950s.

Despite the renewed impetus behind the formation of a North African union, very real obstacles remain if the AMU is to get off the ground. While all heads of state are officially committed to the AMU, each leader has a very different idea as to what form such a union should take.

In fact, Libya’s Col. Muammar Qaddafi nearly refused to sign the treaty when his counterparts failed to endorse the creation of a single classless state within the AMU, which he envisages as a “stepping stone” toward an Arab union “from Marrakesh to Bahrain.” The other Maghreb leaders also rejected Qaddafi’s proposal that Chad, Mali, Niger, and Sudan be included in the union, invoking the need for greater economic pragmatism, although a compromise clause was added stating that AMU membership is open to other Arab and African nations providing that member-states unanimously approve.

Nonetheless, the North Africa union does appear to have a greater chance of success than previous unity endeavors, in large part because it relies on the concept of mutual economic benefit rather than on an abstract political ideal. The treaty is based upon the common language, culture, and religion of the five member-states, and includes among its goals the preservation of the teachings of Islam and the safeguarding of the “Arabic national identity,” but the driving force behind the union remains that of economic cooperation. As one North African specialist put it, “This time there is the will to make it work. The cement this time is not so much political visionary behavior...but good pragmatism and good business sense. That’s what will hold it together.”

MADAGASCAR...continued

youths. Ratsiraka's opponents also claimed there was inadequate supervision of voting procedures and ballot collection in the remote parts of the countryside where opposition groups had neither the time nor the resources to monitor the voting after the date of the election was pushed forward. As a result, they took their case to the Supreme Court in the hopes of nullifying the results.

Camerapix



Ratsiraka: Under fire from the opposition

But Ratsiraka's troubles do not end there. His long-time ally and former leader of the pro-Moscow AKFM-KDRSM Party, Richard Andriamanjato, announced the birth of the AKFM-Renewal Party in late March to oppose Ratsiraka's IMF-backed economic reforms and to steer Madagascar back onto the path of "scientific socialism." Andriamanjato, whose support comes mainly from the urban middle class, formed the AKFM-Renewal Party too late to contest the elections, but his absence accounts in part for the abnormally high abstention rate in the cities—particularly in Antananarivo where 24 percent of the voters boycotted the election. The new party is expected to run against Arema in the

country's legislative elections on May 28.

Ratsiraka's opponents all point to his decision to embrace the IMF's structural adjustment program of free-market reforms as the primary reason for their strong showing in the presidential elections. Despite an injection of \$700 million in foreign aid last year, Madagascar has suffered a drastic fall in living standards, while the economy has shown scant signs of improvement. Since 1980, per capita income has fallen by 25 percent, massive job losses have followed widespread government spending cuts, and currency devaluations to make cloves, coffee, and vanilla more attractive to overseas buyers have backfired because of a world-

wide slump in commodity prices.

Still, the World Bank is hopeful that Madagascar will eventually experience the same Indian Ocean phenomenon that brought a prosperous, made-for-export economy to neighboring Mauritius. José Bronfman, the World Bank's representative in Antananarivo, defends the reforms, arguing, "It takes time to reverse a declining economy. The government seems to have been able to put them through without any upheaval."

The protesters in the streets of the capital, however, may yet prove him wrong. Papal blessing or not, Ratsiraka can expect to face a growing challenge from opposition groups in the coming year. ■

## Chadli bids farewell to socialism

Only four months after the bloodiest riots to hit the country since independence, Algerian voters resolutely turned their backs on 26 years of doctrinaire socialist policies by overwhelmingly endorsing a new constitution in late February designed to end the ruling National Liberation Front's (FLN) monopoly on power. With the "Constitution of '89" in hand, the National Popular Assembly is now expected to consider significant new legislation that will enable President Chadli Benjedid to move more rapidly toward a fully fledged multi-party system.

According to official results, 73 percent of voters cast their ballots in favor of constitutional changes that allow for the establishment of independent political associations alongside the FLN. Said Interior Minister Aboubaker Belkaid, the new constitution "opens the way to a new era," given that it will enable Algeria "to know more democracy, to assure public and individual liberties, and to establish the sovereignty of the law."

An editorial published by the official news agency following the referendum results emphasized just how far the country's liberalization process has gone, arguing that "Algerians are being given back their true places as citizens and as decision-makers in society. The individual man, the fundamental base element of society, is restored." Indeed, whereas the outgoing 1976 National Charter chose to describe socialism as

Algeria's "irreversible choice," the term is not even mentioned in the Constitution of '89.

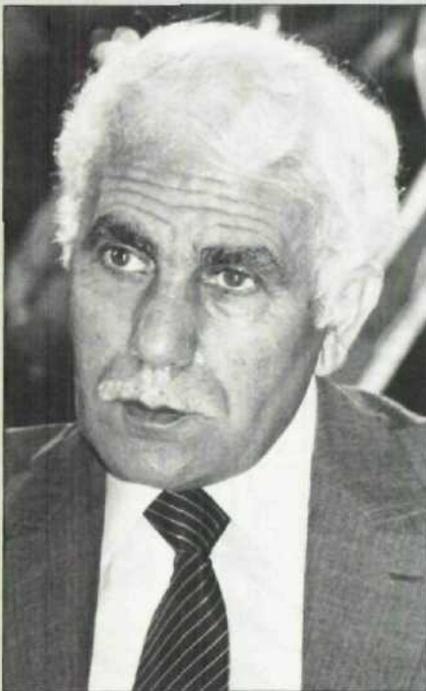
Furthermore, the new constitution calls for strict separation of powers between the executive, legislature, and judiciary. The FLN, which has dominated all political and economic life for the past quarter century, is now referred to only once by way of acknowledging its "historic role" in the development of the country. Likewise, the army has been stripped of its traditionally powerful function of "developing socialism," and instead has been assigned the more conventional role of "safeguarding national independence."

Although "associations of a political nature" allowed by Article 40 theoretically leave the door open for a multi-party system, the constitution does not explicitly say that Algerians are free to form their own parties. Such a decision has been left up to the National Popular Assembly, which could lead to the eventual break-up of the FLN into separate political groupings.

Although the fragmentation of the FLN appears somewhat premature, the results of the constitutional referendum did confirm that Chadli's liberalization program has its share of critics, both within the ruling party and among sections of the opposition. More than a quarter of those who took part in the referendum voted against the constitution, while a fifth of the electorate chose to abstain even though voting is mandatory under Algerian law.

In effect, many of the FLN's old guard opposed to Chadli's program of liberal reforms cast "no" ballots—the highest negative vote in any referendum since independence. The anti-reformist diehards, led by recently dismissed FLN second-in-command Mohamed Cherif Messaadia, argued for the continuation of a one-party centralized state and made clear their support for the country's traditional socialist policies.

Another 2 million Algerian voters boycotted the referendum, following calls by radical Islamic fundamentalist groups demanding a constitution based on Sharia law. In some cases, masked Islamic activists harassed people on their way to vote and threatened them if they refused to turn back.



Chadli: Leaving Algerian socialism behind

In the wake of a new constitution, an array of political groups—ranging from Trotskyite socialism to Islamic fundamentalism—have sprung up, hoping to take advantage of Chadli's anticipated parliamentary reforms. Among them are the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), a social democratic party established in Tizi-Ouzo after a two-day meeting of the Berber Cultural Movement. The main purpose of the new party is to defend the Berber language, culture, and identity as a national patrimony.

But it is the newly formed Islamic Salvation Front (FSI) led by Ali Bel Hadj which could pose the most seri-

## Mobutu teaches students a lesson

President Mobutu Sese Seko's well-orchestrated public relations campaign to improve his country's human rights image suffered a serious setback recently when a series of clashes between student demonstrators and state security forces left as many as 52 dead and opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba once again under house arrest.

The latest wave of unrest began in Kinshasa after students took to the streets in early February to protest an 80 percent increase in the cost of public transport. Kinshasa University students seized several buses in an attempt to get to classes because of the breakdown in the city's transport system, and battled with armed police when the government announced a doubling in the price of petrol at the behest of the IMF. "Mobutu thief" and "Mobutu go away" were some of the graffiti the students sprayed on the walls of the capital.

Authorities in Kinshasa, warning students that "no violent actions nor unruly assemblies will be tolerated," called on the security forces to silence a group of 200 demonstrators at the university, leading to 10 deaths and the arrests of 120 people, according to opposition spokesmen. The government then closed the country's five institutions of higher learning and established a de facto state of martial law with the deployment of paratroopers and the Civil Guard throughout the capital. Mobutu did concede the need for better transport facilities—as Kinshasa has only 100 buses in working order to serve a population of more than 4 million—and announced that he had put in a request to purchase 300 buses from Morocco and France, but it was too little too late.

The demonstrations spread to Lubumbashi in Shaba Province, where the mutilated body of a student leader was found outside a nearby military camp. Over 1,000 students protested with placards, paying tribute to Tshisekedi and the banned Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), before commandos arrived from Kinshasa and fired into the crowd. After two days of rioting, 52 people were killed and 300 protesters arrested, according to student spokesmen, although official sources claimed only one death and 37 wounded, including 12 soldiers. More than 200 of those arrested were reportedly flown to Lisala military camp, notorious for serving as a "re-education center" during periods of unrest in the late 1970s.

Following this latest round of state brutalities, the Mobutu regime ran a public relations campaign on Capitol Hill by placing advertisements in *The Washington Post* and *The Washington Times* to refute charges of ongoing human rights abuses in Zaire. Appearing just prior to the start of House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa hearings in March, the newspaper ads drew attention to the UN Commission on Human Rights' recent decision to remove Zaire from its list of offenders, having concluded that sufficient progress had been made in this direction. A spokesman for Amnesty International, however, challenged the Commission's findings, testifying before the House Subcommittee that gross human rights violations in Zaire continue to occur.

Indeed, the public relations offensive certainly did not prevent Mobutu from placing Tshisekedi under house arrest and arresting his wife and two other UDPS activists in an attempt to force the veteran opposition leader to take the blame for "instigating the riots." Whether Mobutu once again succeeds in neutralizing support for the UDPS remains to be seen, but judging from his resolve to use force against the opposition, it appears highly unlikely that Zaire's human rights record is about to improve any time soon.

ous long-term challenge to the ruling FLN. The FSI, established with the aim of creating an Islamic state that enforces Sharia law, has unequivocally opposed a multi-party system, demanding that all non-Islamic political associations be banned. So far, Chadli has

indicated he will tolerate an Islamic fundamentalist party as long as it refrains from using violence, but it remains to be seen how far the FLN leadership is willing to push through the government's political and economic reforms. ■

**ALGERIA**

President Chadli Benjedid and King Hassan II of Morocco have signed an unprecedented accord to build a massive 1,250-mile gas pipeline which could supply Spain with vast quantities of natural gas by 1995. The proposed pipeline will run from the Algerian gas field of Hassi R'Mel to the Moroccan border town of Oujda, and then on to Tangiers, before reaching the Spanish mainland under the Straits of Gibraltar.

The grandiose project is to be managed by a joint company in which the two governments will have an equal stake, with Morocco siphoning off some 2 billion cubic meters a year from a total output of 10 billion cubic meters. Gulf Interstate, a Houston-based engineering company, has already been approached to carry out a feasibility study. The accord, which underlines the improved relations between the two countries since the renewal of diplomatic ties in May 1988, is expected to play a key role in the development of a Maghreb economic union along the lines of the European Community.

**NIGER**

Drought in the Sahel has forced thousands of Tuareg nomads to seek a living mining uranium, but with the precipitous fall in the price of "yellow cake" on the world market, a growing number are being turned away. As a result, the northwest town of Arlit is becoming a center for refugees, leading to growing tensions and interracial violence between Tuaregs and the local Fulani majority who resent having to share their dwindling resources with a people whom they have traditionally feared and mistrusted.

Uranium—which accounts for 80 percent of the country's export earnings—is suffering from a glutted market, causing production to fall from 4,500 tons in 1980 to only 2,960 tons last year. France, the largest buyer of Nigerien uranium, has offered to purchase additional "yellow cake" on condition that one of the Arlit mines be closed, but Mining Minister Adamou Souna has so far rejected the proposal, fearing that it would only aggravate the country's economic and social malaise.

**SUDAN**

In a renewed effort to force Chevron back to work in war-torn southern Sudan, Energy and Mining Minister Habib Sarnub Adam warned executives of the U.S. oil company during recent talks that the government might be forced to "look for other alternatives." Chevron, which has invested \$1 billion in oil exploration since it began operations in 1974, resumed work in western Sudan late last year but has steadfastly refused to return to the rich southern oilfields of Bentiu because of the high security risks.

In the meantime, Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi's government has been desperately looking for ways to obtain foreign oil today in return for promises of future heavy crude when production in Bentiu resumes. So far there have been no takers, however, forcing the government to make a recent deal with Libya for the 1989 importation of crude oil worth \$150 million—a major expense the country can ill afford.

**BUSINESS BRIEFS**

**NIGERIA**

President Ibrahim Babangida's program to achieve national self-sufficiency in wheat production has come under fire following a harvest shortfall which has sent the price of grain soaring and forced the government to take emergency action to alleviate bread shortages. In mid-February, the Babangida administration imposed a total ban on the export of foodstuffs and ordered the release of stockpiles held by state governments at affordable prices, but these measures did little to ease the problem given that most storage depots were virtually empty.

The Agriculture Development Program, introduced in 1987 to bolster domestic production and to save foreign exchange, has thus drawn the criticism of agricultural experts who contend that this year's poor harvest demonstrates that it is unrealistic for Nigeria to grow crops for which the climate is unsuitable. Indeed, Nigeria still produces less than 2 percent of its wheat requirements—and at a cost higher than that of importing from abroad.

**UGANDA**

After a two-year delay, a \$73.4 million rehabilitation project for the Owen Falls Dam hydroelectric power plant is finally underway which will greatly improve energy services to millions of Ugandans who have been affected by frequent power breakdowns. The project, involving the repair of generation, transmission, and distribution equipment at the country's sole hydroelectric power station in Jinja, had been the subject of taxation policy conflicts between the government and the World Bank, the scheme's main financial backer, before Kampala reluctantly agreed to grant tax exemptions to the contractors.

While power generation at Owen Falls will rise from 150 to 180 megawatts, Uganda's energy production will surge should the government go ahead with its ambitious program to construct a \$400 million power plant at the world-famous Murchison Falls. With a generating capacity of 480 megawatts, this second power station will enable Uganda to meet its energy needs until the year 2020.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

West Germany has supplanted Japan as South Africa's top trading partner and appears set to maintain strong business links with the apartheid regime in years to come. Trade between Bonn and Pretoria jumped 33.2 percent to \$5.06 billion in 1988, while Japan's actually declined by 3.5 percent to \$3.95 billion in the wake of international criticism of its economic ties with South Africa. Tokyo's trade cut-back, however, ran counter to the dominant trend in other major industrialized countries.

In spite of renewed calls for sanctions and boycott pressures, virtually all Western nations reported a substantial growth in their business links with Pretoria last year, including Great Britain, whose trade shot up 26.2 percent to \$3.35 billion, and the U.S., which saw its trade flourish by 22 percent to \$3.28 billion. In rand terms, the figures were even more promising for Pretoria following the 20 percent devaluation of its currency against the dollar last year.



# PEACE ON PRETORIA'S TERMS?

By MARK VERBAAN



John Liebenberg/NOCT

**The April 1 movement of Swapo fighters from bases in Angola into northern Namibia has raised questions regarding the role of UNTAG, as well as providing Pretoria with justifications to delay the peace process. In this Africa Report exclusive, our correspondent provides an analysis of the mood inside the territory, where intimidation and violence continue to jeopardize prospects for Namibia's independence.**

**B**y May 15, observers of the Namibian peace process were expressing fears that South Africa was engaging in more delaying tactics to stall or disrupt the implementation of the decade-old United Nations independence plan for the territory.

These fears came in the wake of a marathon session of talks between representatives of Angola, Cuba, and South Africa at Ruacana on the Angola-Namibia border, which lasted for close to 18 hours. Journalists who had been kept waiting in a military base several miles from the site of the talks, which took place a few hundred yards inside Angolan territory, were told in the early hours of the morning by the chief of the South African Defence Force, Gen. Jannie Geldenhuys, that the parties had agreed to report back to their respective governments and meet again on Friday, May 19.

Setting a second unscheduled day of talks without doubt implied that not all was going well between Pretoria, Havana, and Luanda. Speculation was rife that South Africa remained adamant that guerrillas of the military wing of the South West Africa People's Organization (Swapo), which has fought an armed struggle against South African occupation of Namibia for 23 years, were still present in northern Namibia.

What the South African government described as an "incursion" by combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), "in breach of agreements" on April 1, the day the UN Security Council's resolution 435 was implemented, led to a demand by Pretoria that the fighters withdraw from Namibia and be confined to bases north of the 16th parallel in Angola if the independence process was to continue.

Under pressure from the South African government, UN Special Representative and head of the peace-keeping operations, the

Finnish Martti Ahtisaari, gave his approval for South African troops to be released from their bases to "combat" the presence of Swapo guerrillas. This action drew wide condemnation both locally and abroad, and especially from leaders of Swapo, which is widely tipped to win the elections scheduled for November.

For nearly two weeks, fierce battles were fought along a 60-mile stretch of border, and within days,



First four Swapo soldiers handing themselves over to UNTAG at Oshikango: "Less than a dozen combatants made use of the assembly points"

more than 300 PLAN combatants had been shot dead by the South African-led security forces. Pretoria claimed to have lost around 30 men.

The United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was attacked by progressive organizations inside the country for having failed to prevent the bloodshed. It emerged that Ahtisaari had been warned on March 31 by South African Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha of a large presence of Swapo fighters poised on the border ready to cross into northern Namibia. Many felt that if immediate action had been taken by Ahtisaari, the killing could have been avoided.

Another factor which caused Namibians to turn against the UN was the fact that the peace-keeping force was at less than a quarter

strength when resolution 435 was implemented. And although there were less than 1,000 out of 4,650 UN troops in Namibia when the fighting broke out, there were a mere handful deployed in northern Namibia at the time.

Eyewitness accounts indicated that Swapo fighters had entered Namibia hours after the peace plan and a ceasefire had come into effect, under the impression that UN personnel would be waiting to confine them to bases in Namibia, as the South African troops were. Reports revealed that South African soldiers hunted down the guerrillas who were waiting for UN troops to turn up, and opened fire on them first. Some combatants were eating their lunch when they were attacked, reported residents who witnessed the first clash.

The feeling among most Namibians at the time was that the Swapo fighters, being Namibians themselves, had more of a right to be confined to bases in their own country than the South African troops. However, Pretoria was not prepared to consider this point.

An emergency meeting between Angolan, Cuban, and South African representatives, with Soviet and American observers, was held on a farm near Windhoek. The resultant Mount Etjo Declaration provided for UN assembly points to be erected in northern Namibia and along the border, to which PLAN fighters could report and be disarmed before being escorted by UN officials across the border and to camps some 90 miles inside Angola. The South African forces were reconfinned to bases for a 60-hour period to allow Swapo guerrillas a chance to reach the assembly points.

However, this operation was a failure. Less than a dozen combatants made use of the points, with hundreds more believing the scheme to be a South African trap. The fighters' caution was entrenched when Pretoria's administrator-general of the territory, Louis Pienaar, announced that PLAN members handing themselves over at the assembly points would be

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interrogated, finger-printed, and photographed. He later retracted that statement.

Under instructions from the organization's leader, Sam Nujoma, the vast majority of Swapo guerrillas in Namibia chose to cross the border of their own accord and head north to the 16th parallel. And this was one of the main points on the agenda of the May 15 Joint Commission meeting at Ruacana—the verification of the withdrawal of all Swapo forces. UNTAG's Angolan team inspected a parade of more than 5,000 PLAN fighters on the weekend of May 13 at the southern Angolan town of Chibemba, some 11 miles north of the 16th parallel.

At the same time, Swapo Secretary for Information and Publicity Hidipo Hamutenya said from Luanda that all Swapo forces were now out of Namibia and that there was no reason for South Africa not to begin withdrawing its own troops from the territory. Swapo estimates that there are currently between 10,000 and 60,000 South African soldiers still in Namibia. The UN plan states that by this stage, there should only be 12,000 SADF troops remaining in the country. The further reduction of South African forces to 1,500 men is to be completed by June 30.

The fact that the South African troop withdrawal is so far behind schedule could possibly be another aspect relating to the near breakdown in the Joint Commission talks. It is also in Angola's interests to see Pretoria's troops—who have invaded Angolan territory so many times in the past—return to South Africa as soon as possible. If, for whatever motives, South Africa wants to keep its forces in Namibia for as long as it can, this would create a certain amount of tension at any negotiations involving representatives from Luanda and Havana.

While resolution 435's countdown from April 1 is theoretically still in effect, time is running short. An estimated 60,000 Namibian refugees and exiles are waiting to return home, and the repatriation process, due to have begun on May 15, had

already been delayed a week. Swapo leaders in Namibia have announced that up to 50 members of the organization's election committee, headed by central committee members who have been in exile for more than 20 years, will be returning to Namibia within two weeks. It has also been reported that President Sam Nujoma will arrive in Windhoek at the beginning of July.

Now that the actual fighting in the north seems to have come to an end, political leaders in Namibia are beginning to make serious preparations for the UN-supervised elections in less than seven months' time. Swapo's main opponent at the

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**T**he mountain of intimidation complaints received by the UN, rather than showing the effectiveness of the operation, demonstrates the scale of bullying going on in the country.

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polls will be the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), a group which participated in the South African-appointed interim government that "ruled" Namibia for nearly four years against the wishes of the vast majority of the population. Believed to be financed by South Africa to the tune of more than \$12 million, the DTA has already begun a desperate campaign to woo voters away from the Swapo camp.

Like every other pro-South African party in Namibia, the unspoken intention is to prevent Swapo from winning a two-thirds majority in the election. If Swapo does

achieve this, it will be able to write the constitution for an independent Namibia without interference. Less than a two-thirds majority will result in a constitution being negotiated, which means that actual independence could be delayed for months or even years after the elections.

South African troops and Namibian soldiers with the SADF's local army here, the South West Africa Territory Force (SWATF), have been attempting to promote the DTA particularly in the northern regions where most of Swapo's electorate live. However, in their attempts to swing popular support away from Swapo, brutal methods are often used.

The word "intimidation" is on everyone's lips these days. Intimidation and harassment of a political nature is nothing new in Africa's last colony, but with just a few weeks of the peace process having passed, it has reached an ugly peak. Chief UN spokesman in Namibia Cedric Thornberry finds "dismaying" the number and nature of intimidation cases which he concedes involve security force members. In the space of two weeks, he has received more than 50 allegations of intimidation—all of which UNTAG will have to investigate.

The intimidation campaign claimed a life on May 9, that of a 26-year-old Swapo supporter, David Indongo. Indongo was in a van-load of fellow Swapo supporters traveling home from a rally in Windhoek when they were shot at by two white men driving a luxury Mercedes Benz near the northern town of Tsumeb. Six people were injured in the shooting, Indongo dying of his wounds six weeks later.

A murder investigation has been launched, in which two policemen from the northern town of Oshakati are chief suspects. In the same week Indongo died, an attempt was made to assassinate two freelance journalists, John Liebenberg and Heidi von Egidi. Liebenberg, renowned for his photographs documenting the ravages of South Africa's occupation of Namibia, received an anonymous

phone call telling him there had been a bomb explosion in Windhoek's Katutura township. The photographer, together with his freelance colleague, were on the highway to the township when a speeding car drew up alongside and gunmen opened fire.

"We heard the shots and ducked without looking to see what happened," says von Egidi. "The car came from nowhere and the shooting was almost at point-blank range."

As it turned out, there had been no bomb explosion in the township and having examined Liebenberg's bullet-riddled car, the police had little choice but to open a docket of attempted murder.

A local headman at Ombalantu reported recently that Koevoet members driving in eight armored Casspir vehicles opened fire on two boys riding their bicycles. Joseph Nenghama, 16, was fatally wounded.

Intimidation, particularly of the progressive media, has been a feature of life here for many years. During the past three years, the offices of a pro-independence newspaper, *The Namibian*, were fire-bombed, shot at, and tear-gassed. The staff and its editor, Gwen Lister, have received numerous death threats, have been detained, had their cars sabotaged and shot at with rubber bullets fired by police.

Prior to the most recent shooting, freelancer Liebenberg had received death threats, including one from a policeman who showed the photographer five live bullets and said: "These are for your face." None of these cases have resulted in an arrest or conviction.

For those living in the northern Namibia war zone, who make up more than half of the territory's 1.4 million population, intimidation, particularly by members of the security forces, has been a part of everyday life for decades. This continues to be the case, in spite of the presence of UNTAG peace-keepers.

The offices of the Ovambo local authority in the northern town of Ongwediva received an average of 15 complaints a day of security force

atrocities committed against civilians in the war zone. These complaints ranged from thefts of property and livestock to murder and rape. Many human rights abuses were carried out in an attempt to gain information from civilians about the movement of Swapo fighters in the region. Now the Ovambo administration, along with the country's 10 other local authorities, is in the process of being dismantled under the provisions of resolution 435.

Within six days, the following cases of intimidation—typical of those happening throughout the country—were reported to have taken place in and around the north-eastern town of Rundu:

- Two civilians were beaten up by soldiers.

- A van-load of armed soldiers tried to disrupt a Swapo meeting, only to be stopped by UN monitors who were called to the scene.

- A soldier waded into the crowd at a May Day rally threatening to open fire with his rifle. He was restrained and disarmed by members of the crowd.

- The same day, three soldiers assaulted a young man for wearing a Swapo tee-shirt.

- Two policemen arrived at a church mission where they interrogated first a nun and then a priest, accusing the latter of supporting Swapo. The same policemen, actually claiming to be members of UNTAG, then carried out similar treatment to teachers at a nearby school.

The monitoring by UNTAG personnel particularly of trade union and Swapo rallies has acted as a brake on the security forces, which regularly turn out in force and heavily armed at such events. In terms of the UN plan, UNTAG has the power to insist that members of the security forces be dismissed for "improper conduct."

The findings of UNTAG investigations into misconduct are kept secret and offenders remain anonymous, but at least one senior South West African Police officer has been dismissed after UNTAG received com-

plaints of "killings in northern Namibia." Many Namibians are of the opinion that the results of UNTAG investigations should be made public, as it is the people themselves who are lodging the complaints.

The mountain of intimidation complaints received by the UN, rather than showing the effectiveness of the operation, demonstrates the scale of bullying going on in the country. Many civilians are reluctant to report incidents because UN missions are based in the very buildings and camps of the security forces against whom they wish to complain. The fear of retribution is too deeply ingrained to ignore.

Under the world body's plan, the local police force remains responsible for keeping "law and order" during the transition period. The administrator-general, who is responsible for the police, maintains that the force will conduct its duties in an "impartial" manner. However, as one observer commented: "How can you possibly expect policemen who have dedicated most of their careers to crushing Swapo's 'communist onslaught' to change their ways overnight?" The recent appointment of the founder of the notoriously brutal and anti-Swapo police Koevoet counter-insurgency unit, Brigadier Hans Dreyer, as police commissioner in northern Namibia is an ominous example.

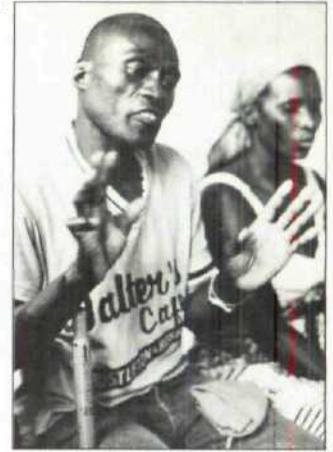
There are many vital things which must still be accomplished if Namibia is to witness free and fair elections. All political prisoners must be freed; the military's dusk-to-dawn curfew in the north must be lifted; South Africa must begin withdrawing its troops; all discriminatory and repressive legislation must be abolished; the UN force must be brought up to its full complement; the refugees must be allowed to return safely to participate in the electoral process.

There will undoubtedly be many more Namibian lives lost before the country is eventually able to take its rightful place among the nations of the world. ○



# AN ARMY OF ABDUCTORS

By WILLIAM MINTER



Little is known about the motives and methods of Renamo, which has been fighting a destructive and brutal war against Mozambique for over a decade. Recent interviews with ex-Renamo fighters, however, paint a picture of an army composed primarily of kidnapped Mozambicans, fighting not from commitment to an ideology but out of fear for their lives.

AM Captured Renamo weapons: "Arms, ammunition, and medicines came primarily from outside the country"



**J**orge Mabunda (a pseudonym), an unemployed auto mechanic in the small Mozambican border town of Namaacha, was out drinking late one night in February 1984. He was walking back to a friend's house on the edge of town with two of his drinking companions when they met a group of armed men. The gang ordered Mabunda and his friends to carry their knapsacks, then marched them five hours through the night to a base in the bush.

Suspecting him of being a member of the government's militia, they tortured and almost killed him with a bayonet. But then the commander decided to spare his life. A South African military doctor who came by helicopter treated his wounds, and after some months of military training, he became a soldier in the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo).

I interviewed Mabunda late last year in Maputo, several months after his escape from the Renamo base. He turned out to be typical of almost 30 others I talked to, in Mozambique's capital, Maputo, in Chimoio in central Mozambique, and in Quelimane in the north. Others told of

being kidnapped at work in their fields, on the way to an uncle's house, in their hut at home. Several said they were captured by Renamo in large attacks, such as Antonio (pseudonym), who was taken with 80 other plantation workers from the Sena Sugar Estates.

Such consistent testimony surprised me, although I had visited Mozambique before and followed the war closely over the years. I had heard credible second-hand stories of forced recruitment, but assumed that such cases were only a fraction of the guerrilla force. A guerrilla army of 20,000 or more must be motivated by some ideology or ethnic loyalty, one would think.

Or, as I hypothesized before my trip, a society as poor, famine-stricken, and disrupted as Mozambique would surely produce enough marginalized young men to be recruited voluntarily by offering a gun and the prospect of food and booty.

In convincing detail, the men I interviewed told a different story. In separate private interviews in different parts of the country, one ex-guerrilla after another told me of being kidnapped and that all those who trained with them—or almost all—had also been recruited to the rebel group at the point of a gun. They had fought, most said, not for ideology or loyalty, but because they

feared being killed if they refused.

These interviews were the first systematic effort to seek information from ex-Renamo fighters themselves on this notorious but shadowy organization, which, for over a decade, has been the principal agent of a destructive war against independent Mozambique. Its founding by the Rhodesian government in the mid-1970s is well-documented, as is the transfer of sponsorship to the South African military after white Rhodesia became independent Zimbabwe in 1980.

In recent years, the results of the war have attracted increasing attention from the international community. The report by consultant Robert Gersony for the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Refugee Affairs in April 1988 documented, on the basis of interviews with refugees and displaced persons, a systematic pattern of human rights abuses overwhelmingly attributed to Renamo, including the killings of over 100,000 civilians.

Renamo itself, however, has remained an enigma. Its president, Afonso Dhlakama, has rarely met journalists. The exiles and non-Mozambicans who represent Renamo in Lisbon, Washington, and other capitals seem to have little direct contact with the situation on the ground in Mozambique. The motives of the Renamo fighters and the extent of South African involvement in recent years have been shrouded in mystery and speculation.

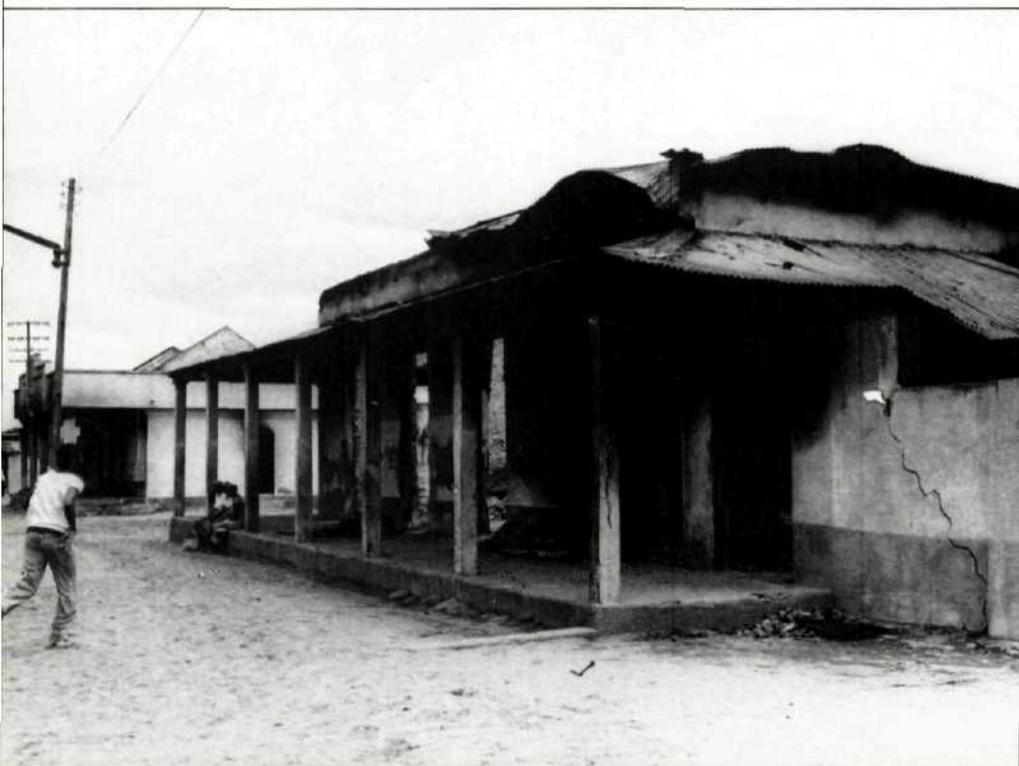
Some observers believe that Renamo has become a collection of dispersed bands of armed men, thriving in the chaotic and desperate conditions of the Mozambican countryside. Many acknowledge the likelihood of continuing South African involvement, but say nevertheless that the group now has a momentum making it largely self-sustaining.

The data from my informants does not support such speculation. Instead, it shows Renamo to be a hierarchically structured and profes-

**Burnt-out shop in Manjacaze after Renamo attack: "The principal agent of a destructive war against independent Mozambique"**

*William Minter, author of King Solomon's Mines Revisited and other works on southern Africa, interviewed ex-Renamo participants in Mozambique in November and December 1988. His results were described in detail in a March report to the Ford Foundation and the Swedish International Development Agency.*

Joel Chizane/AIM



sionally competent military organization. Both recruitment and internal discipline depend on brutally effective control mechanisms, including the threat of execution for attempted desertion. And the involvement of South African special forces, in training, supply, and communications, shows a consistent pattern from its beginning in 1980 through the time of my interviews in late 1988.

The 32 individuals I interviewed, 16 of them prisoners in Mozambique and 16 who had accepted the Mozambican government's amnesty, had spent an average of 37 months in the Renamo forces, ranging from late 1978 through late 1988. They were interviewed privately, out of sight and hearing of Mozambican government officials. I deliberately refrained from asking loaded or incriminatory questions, focusing on what they heard and saw, not on what they did.

Almost all spoke freely and fluently. Their willingness to answer questions with "No," "I don't know," or "I heard about that, but didn't see it myself" gave confidence that their information was genuine.

Conducted in Maputo, Chimoio, and Quelimane, the interviews included Mozambicans with experience in southern, central, and northern Mozambique, as well as two who had worked in Renamo's external offices and an Angolan who was a member of the South African special forces unit responsible for Renamo.

### A Kidnapped Army

Of the men I interviewed, only three cited ideological reasons for their involvement. One was a conservative Australian missionary who had served as a Renamo courier; the other two had been officials in Renamo's Lisbon office. One Mozambican—an illegal immigrant in the eastern Transvaal—had been arrested and then offered a job as interpreter for South African military intelligence. The Angolan had been a teenager in a refugee camp in northern Namibia in 1976 when he (and other young males in the

camp) were told by South African authorities that they had to join either Unita or the South African army. He joined the army, and made his career in the special forces.

All the other men, that is all those who had been involved as Renamo combatants inside Mozambique, said they had been recruited by force. The word used was *raptado*, meaning "abducted" or "kidnapped." The only common factor which seems to have determined their entry into Renamo was the bad fortune of being in an area vulnerable to attack, not any commonality in ideology, class position, ethnic group, or political attitude.

They stayed for training and then fought, they said, essentially because they had no choice. All said that attempts to escape were severely punished. Thirteen said they had personal knowledge of the execution of Renamo combatants who tried to escape, and they believed this was the normal punishment.

Most also said they were told that if they did succeed in escaping, government troops would kill them. Mozambican government officials confirmed to me that in earlier years there had been a number of cases of mob violence against Renamo soldiers or summary executions by local commanders.

Non-government as well as government sources agreed that such incidents became much less fre-



Children attacked with an axe by Renamo in Vilanculos: "A systematic pattern of human rights abuses overwhelmingly attributed to Renamo"

quent with the amnesty program widely publicized by the government in 1988 and continuing this year. Over 3,000 combatants accepted the amnesty in 1988. But access to information within Renamo ranks is limited, and it is likely that many still believe their commanders' warnings.

Yet another impediment to escape is a systematic process of transferring recruits away from their home areas, and mixing soldiers from different areas in the same unit. This is particularly effective in the northern part of the country, where there is little tradition of migration. A peasant moved 60 miles away from his home may have little knowledge of the local geography or even the language.

Those who enforce this discipline and run the Renamo military machine are those who have survived this process and climbed the ranks. The nucleus are the so-called "veterans" recruited in the period of Rhodesian sponsorship, who may include a larger proportion of men motivated by ideological or personal hostility to the Frelimo government.

Joel Chizambani

Several interviewees spoke of special *Grupos Limpas* ("Clean-up Squads") of these men, who they said were responsible for most of the large-scale atrocities.

### South Africa's Role

According to my informants, Renamo relied on forced contributions and raids for food and to some extent for clothing and other goods. But arms, ammunition, and medicines came primarily from outside the country. The pattern was coherent. None said that captured weapons were the major source of supply, or cited any provider other than the South Africans.

What they actually witnessed varied, but together they cited deliveries over land borders, by parachute drops, by landings of Dakota DC-3 aircraft, and by sea, as well as extensive transport by head portage within and even between provinces. Specific deliveries cited in the interviews included portage and helicopter landings in a base near the South African border as recently as mid-1988, airplane landings in Zambezia in April 1987 and April 1988, and sea deliveries in Zambezia and Sofala provinces in 1987 and 1988. Ex-combatants speaking to Mozambican journalists gave similar detailed accounts, including airplane landings in March, June, October, and November 1988.

The presence of South African personnel was episodic rather than constant, according to the interviews. The largest scale involvement was during the Renamo Zambezi valley offensive of 1986, when one interviewee was in a base in the Lugela area with at least 10 white South Africans and an entire battalion of black South African soldiers.

The usual pattern, however, according to the Angolan who was in the South African special forces, was a five-man team, normally including two white officers and three blacks, generally of different nationalities. The most recent reference to such a team is from an ex-combatant named Moises Macaxaze, who told Radio Mozambique after accepting the

amnesty in February in Manica province that there had been two white and three black South African soldiers in his base when he left.

Some observers still argue that South African assertions of non-support for Renamo should be believed because no recent "smoking gun" evidence has been uncovered. But Mozambique's size and coastline is roughly equivalent to the entire U.S. south, from Louisiana through South Carolina. By comparison, given the considerable number of small aircraft and ships that escape detection or capture by U.S. drug enforcement agencies, it is likely that a smaller number of deliveries could elude Mozambican authorities.

The author's interviews and Mozambican eyewitness reports make it difficult to accept South African denials as credible, unless one gives greater credence to a government with a proven record for deception than to numerous independent accounts by rural Mozambicans. U.S. officials agree that South Africa still supplies Renamo [see, most recently, the statement by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Alison Rosenberg, *The Independent*, March 11, 1989].

### Who's Calling the Shots?

Some speculate, however, that even if outside aid was stopped, Renamo would be largely self-sustaining. An anonymous "senior U.S. official," quoted in the *Christian Science Monitor*, thus argued that "a negotiated solution is probably required," and played down the need for additional pressure on the South Africans.

Of course, no one can be sure how long Renamo would sustain its activities without outside aid until such aid is actually cut off. But it is unlikely that the war could be stopped without dealing with the central role of the South African military.

The historical record makes clear that the initiative for Renamo's operations, and the delineation of strategy, came from Rhodesia and then South Africa. Paulo Oliveira, who ran

Renamo's radio operations in South Africa in 1983-84 and closely observed the command structure, noted that it was South African officers who exercised the greatest influence. Renamo's external wing of exiles and non-Mozambicans in Lisbon, Nairobi, and Washington have minimal direct involvement in running the war.

The core of commanders around Renamo leader Dhlakama certainly has accumulated military expertise. They would probably be able to keep going for some time with existing arms stores and captured weapons. But if they were deprived of a regular flow of ammunition and particularly of communications equipment, and were convinced that their patrons in the South African military had genuinely abandoned them, the combination of the government amnesty and military actions could probably reduce the Renamo threat very substantially within a year.

Most observers are convinced that some South African officials would be willing to abandon the military option that Renamo represents, opting instead to depend on economic and diplomatic influence with Mozambique. What is unclear is what faction is dominant within South Africa's State Security Council, and whether the missing ingredient is the will or the capacity to impose a ban on this covert military operation.

Given the forthcoming transition from President Botha's leadership, and the current focus on the other side of the subcontinent, it is unlikely that the aid to Renamo will be cut off without significantly increased international pressure. The State Department has refused to accept South Africa's implausible denials, and suggested that Pretoria keep its word by stopping any aid to Renamo, whether official, covert, or ostensibly private. But unless such criticism is expressed more forcefully by higher officials, and accompanied by credible threats of sanctions for non-compliance, it is unlikely to have any decisive effect on the internal debates in Pretoria. ○

## *Marcelino dos Santos:* OPENING NEW FRONTS

By MARGARET A. NOVICKI



Camerapix

One of the founding fathers of the Mozambican independence struggle, Marcelino dos Santos, president of the People's Assembly, speaks with *Africa Report* about the evolution of political and economic ties with the United States. Explaining the government's strategies vis-à-vis Renamo, he also outlines current military needs.

**Africa Report:** What is the purpose of your visit to the United States?

**dos Santos:** I am here in the United States in my capacity as president of the People's Assembly to continue to develop our relations with the U.S. and in the framework of these relations, to find out what contributions our two bodies—the People's Assembly and the U.S. Congress—can make to the well-being of our people. We already have relations between our governments and between several institutions and we feel that there must be some possibilities for the People's Assembly to cooperate with the U.S. Congress. Some delegations of senators and members of the House of Representatives have come to Mozambique on fact-finding and cooperation missions, but perhaps we can institutionalize relations between our two bodies.

But naturally to develop our relations, we have to look at the problems that we are facing. So we are coming to

exchange views: one, on developing economic relations with the U.S., and two, on what actions the U.S. intends to undertake regarding the problem of the armed bandits [Renamo]. We have already been in Washington and New York, and will continue to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston.

**Africa Report:** Over the last several years, there has been a positive evolution in American policy toward Mozambique. What is your government's view of the relationship?

**dos Santos:** No doubt that the evolution of relations between the U.S. and Mozambique has been very positive over the past few years. For several years, relations were quite cold—and I must say not because the Mozambicans didn't want to have relations with the U.S., but what could we do? We became independent and immediately we were put on the black list! I hope that that time is definitely in the past. Now the U.S. has better knowledge of Mozambique and of Frelimo,



Sarah-Jane Poole

Joaquim Chissano with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe at Nyanga border camp: "We maintain that we have to fight on all fronts—on the military, but also on the economic and diplomatic fronts"

and better understands the actions undertaken by the Mozambican government. You have your own history, we have ours, so it is normal that we present to each other very different aspects. But our personalities should not be based on denying the personality of others. It is the responsibility of our governments to take all steps to enable our peoples to understand each other better.

We have cooperation with the U.S. in the emergency program, for example, to help the victims of the armed bandits, as well of the drought and famine. We have bilateral cooperation mainly in the railways and also in agriculture, in spite of the fact that the U.S. thinks it should help only the private sector! But it is OK! One day, the U.S. will understand that the state sector and the cooperative sector are realities in Mozambique and there can be cooperation in that area as well. We also cooperate through the Southern African Development Coordination Conference on projects that serve the different member countries of the organization. And we have coopera-

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tion in the diplomatic field, exchanging views on security issues in southern Africa and naturally on the question of the armed bandits.

We have spoken to our American friends to show them that the armed bandits are really terrorists. Although it took some time for our views to be shared by the U.S., I think they are now closer than in the past and sufficiently near to enable us to take strong steps in order to bring about peace and promote economic and social development. Here, I want to mention what Charles Freeman [deputy assistant secretary of state] said concerning the situation in Mozambique. After his last visit to southern Africa, he went to Brazil, where he said that the difficulties that Mozambicans are facing are not the responsibility of its government, but rather a result of the aggression from the armed bandits. As he was speaking in Brazil, he also said that the Brazilian government has the moral duty to persuade those Portuguese that live

in Brazil to stop their support to the armed bandits. This was a very important statement which brings near our views.

Now we think it is very important for the U.S. to really, definitely state that the Renamo people are armed bandits—terrorists—and secondly that this organization must be destroyed. These forces are there just to destroy, without any social and economic aim that is acceptable to the people. This position must be clearly stated and at the same time, economic cooperation must be developed because it is through this that we will be able to establish a long-term relationship—if the U.S. finances more economic and social development projects.

If we all agree that the armed bandits are terrorists and the organization must be dismantled, we have to go a further step and see what military relations we can develop. To face the armed bandits, we need military equipment that is suited for counter-guerrilla action. During the struggle for our liberation, we were waging a guerrilla war and the Portuguese were waging a counter-guerrilla war. The people were with us.

Now the armed bandits have started a guerrilla war, but they don't have the people with them. We have to react with counter-guerrilla warfare. For this, we need military equipment, but what kind? We have to be able to undertake quick actions. We have to use equipment like helicopters, for instance. If you go by foot to reach one base, the armed bandits will know before you arrive and will run away. So we need this equipment. And we need light weapons to enable our people to defend themselves from the aggression of the armed bandits in all parts of the country.

We have been developing this with several countries. In our projects, there is a military component, some finance for the training of forces to defend the economic projects. We have it with the French in the Nampula corridor to build the railways, with the Italians, for example, in the construction of Pequeno Libombo dam, and with Britain in the Limpopo corridor. It is in all our interests to defend ourselves against the armed bandits and to act effectively to destroy them completely! It is important now that the U.S. take a step forward and say the organization must be dismantled—let us support Mozambique in the military field.

**Africa Report:** But there is a ban in Congress on military assistance to Mozambique. Is there more support developing now for supplying such assistance?

**dos Santos:** Frankly speaking, although I found more comprehension than before, for the time being, President Bush's administration is not able to tell us exactly what its position will be. But we will continue to try to reach this aim. We met with some senators and representatives and their understanding of the Mozambican reality was quite good.

**Africa Report:** A few months ago, the South African foreign minister suggested there should be an international initiative, involving the U.S. and Soviet Union, to end the war. What is your government's view of this proposal and do you see any diplomatic role for the U.S. to play toward ending the war, or is a military solution the only answer?

**dos Santos:** We always maintain that we have to fight on all fronts—on the military front, but also on the economic and diplomatic fronts. Everything is linked. I told you how we developed economic projects with France, Italy, and Britain, and also have military cooperation—equipment for the soldiers, uniforms, boots, weapons, provided by these countries. The military component is there. In the diplomatic field, we have been working together in trying to show the world the reality of the armed bandits.

Coming to Pik Botha's proposal, some people feel that all situations can be considered the same. But it is clear that the situation in Mozambique is not the same as in Angola. So we have to explain it to Mr. Botha. He makes a proposal to bring together the United States, the Soviet Union, Mozambique, and South Africa, but to do what? What is the meaning of this? One is forced to think this is an effort to convince the world that apartheid is no more! The successful development of the situation in Angola is not due to the fact that apartheid has changed its nature. Not at all! It is because the Angolans won militarily! This is the reason why there were changes. So we can't allow ourselves to be fooled. Apartheid hasn't changed its spots.

The armed bandits are not a political alternative. They are terrorists and thus have to be dismantled. So what kind of mediation or talks can be arranged? What role can the United States play? For example, it can tell the armed bandits that there is an amnesty law that was promulgated and that all of them can be reintegrated into Mozambican society. Then we will see what they will do. If they want to go and work in agriculture, or if they want to be reintegrated in the army, they must follow the normal channels. But amnesty means amnesty. Everybody is reintegrated. So one role is to tell them that they have this possibility. I think everybody understood that something was not right in Pik Botha's proposal.

**Africa Report:** Is South Africa still playing a role in supporting Renamo?

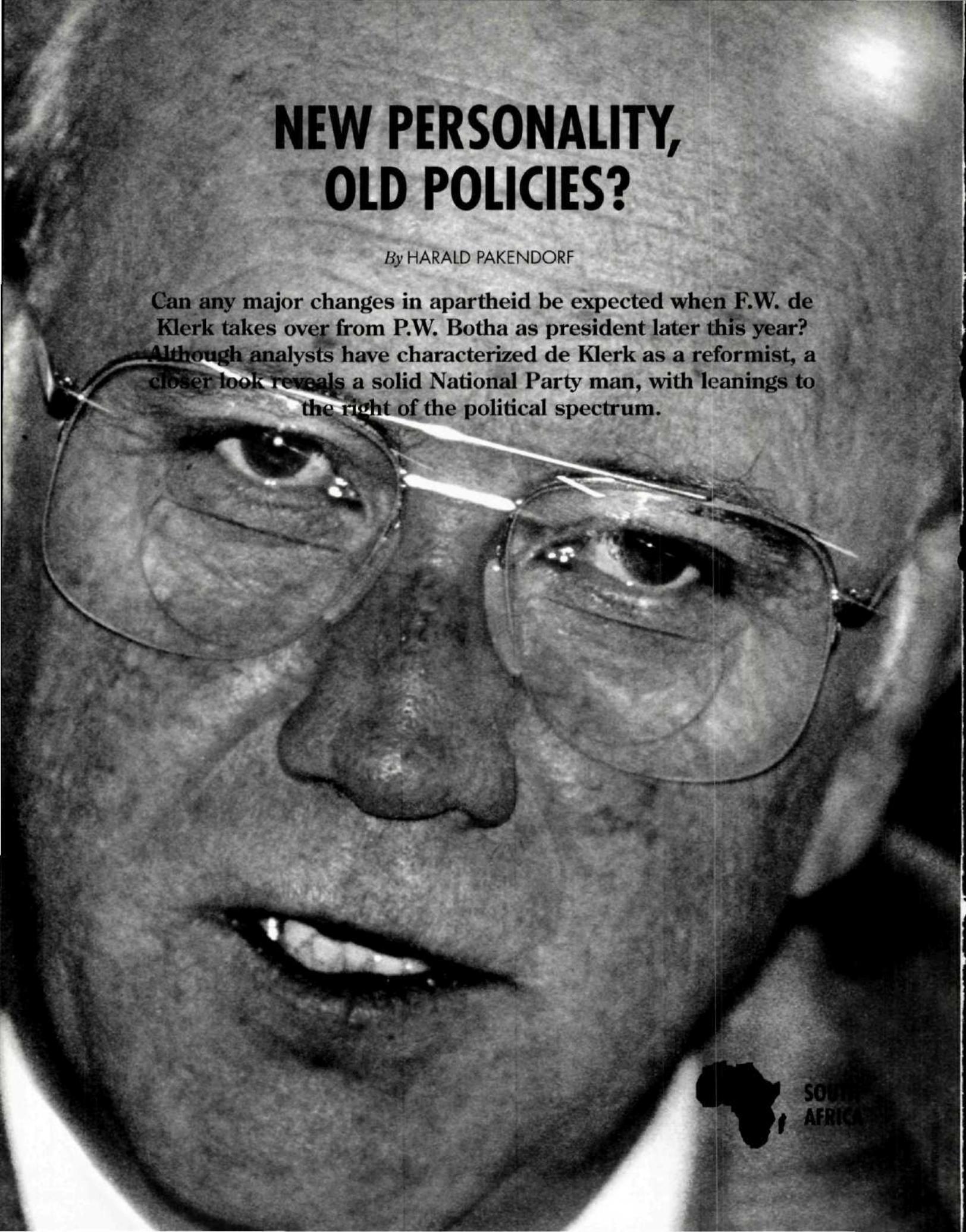
**dos Santos:** Yes, we say that to them every time. But they always ask: Where is the proof? Naturally if one plane comes during the night and drops ammunition or weapons, it is not easy for the Mozambicans to prove that the plane came. Then when we showed them the parachutes, they were forced to accept it. But every time we bring proof, they say it is not the government, it is someone else. But if this someone is doing it once, twice, thrice, five, ten times and those who have the power—the government—don't do anything, what do you want me to believe? We have to say this is just a bluff. So the fact is that they are still supporting the armed bandits.

They entered into the Nkomati agreement, etc., etc., but this is their form of diplomacy. We say that South Africa is supporting the armed bandits, but we will not say it is somebody here and there. Let them be the ones to say that those who are supporting the armed bandits are not the government. Let them make these statements.

**Africa Report:** There must be an effective way of stopping South African support. What role could the U.S. play in this regard?

**dos Santos:** There are two ways to stop South African support. We can act against the racist regime of apartheid, or directly against the armed bandits. To act against the armed bandits, we have to face them militarily. But the international community has already conceived instruments that could force apartheid to change. If we want to stop things peacefully, applying sanctions could have this impact. Sanctions are an instrument that the international community has already devised to avoid going to a full war.

When Senator Paul Simon went to South Africa, he said there are two ways to finish with apartheid. One is to apply sanctions and the other is to accept a full war in the region. Everyone has to assume his own responsibility vis-à-vis history. We will have to answer tomorrow for what we have done today. If we don't want to apply sanctions, we have to accept what could happen—the possibility of a full war. ○



# NEW PERSONALITY, OLD POLICIES?

*By* HARALD PAKENDORF

Can any major changes in apartheid be expected when F.W. de Klerk takes over from P.W. Botha as president later this year? Although analysts have characterized de Klerk as a reformist, a closer look reveals a solid National Party man, with leanings to the right of the political spectrum.



SOUTH  
AFRICA

**A**fter the coming general election in September, South Africa will have a new state president. Gone will be authoritarian, finger-wagging, prescriptive, yet reformist P.W. Botha. His place will be taken by F.W. de Klerk, who is about to be officially nominated as the ruling National Party's candidate.

Botha, 72, became prime minister in September 1978 when the late John Vorster resigned. When the new constitution came into being in 1984—which initiated the tricameral parliament, with separate houses for whites, Coloureds, and Indians and none for blacks—he became executive head of state.

In January, he had a stroke. Botha surprised his party in February by asking it to elect a new party leader, but to allow him to continue as head of state. The National Party caucus duly elected F.W. de Klerk.

The National Party has a federal structure and de Klerk leads the biggest province, Transvaal, one of the four comprising the Republic of South Africa.

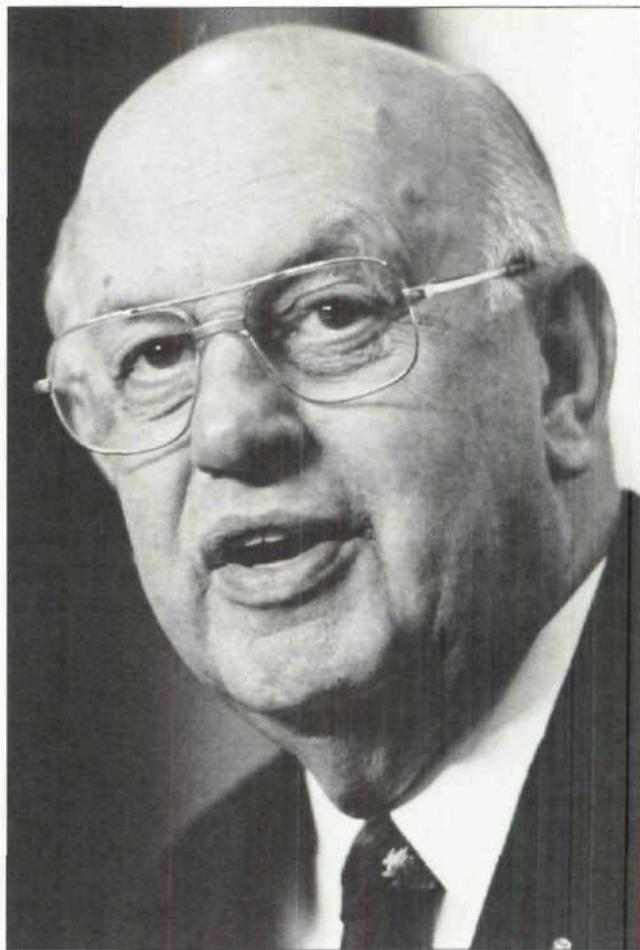
After a wrangle, during which P.W. Botha appalled his party members by insisting that he would stay on, the National Party said in very clear terms that it had turned its back on Botha, insisting that de Klerk take over as state president after the general election in September. Botha will automatically cease to be head of state, and the National Party, which is expected to win the election quite comfortably, albeit with a slightly reduced majority, can nominate de Klerk.

Ever since his elections as party leader, de Klerk has been signalling that he intends to push ahead with political reform. As a result, local and overseas media have left the impression that major changes in South Africa may be afoot.

But is this true and who is F.W. de Klerk? His history is very solidly within the National Party. His uncle, J.G. Strijdom, was prime minister

*Harald Pakendorf, former political editor of Die Vaderland, is director of Harald Pakendorf Informa in Johannesburg.*

*"Gone will be the finger-wagging, prescriptive, yet reformist P.W. Botha"*



Orde Eilander/Impact Visuals

between 1954 and 1958. His father, Jan, was a long-serving cabinet minister. Brother Willem, the former editor of the Afrikaans Sunday paper, *Rapport*, was fired for being too enlightened.

Willem is now also closely connected to the newly established Democratic Party, which has universal adult suffrage as its main guiding principle.

F.W.—like Botha, he is called by his initials, which stand for Frederik Willem—remains a solid National Party man. At the time of the split in the party in 1982, which led to the birth of the more right-wing Conservative Party, de Klerk fought valiantly to keep the party together. After the split, he just as valiantly fought against the CP and his former friends.

This is an important character trait. His tendency is to work through the party, its caucus, and Parliament. Botha tended to rely on the security establishment, with the

result that it has probably peaked in influence. It will obviously remain enormously strong, but de Klerk's instinct is rather to go to the civil administrators and his party men than the securocrats, as they have been dubbed locally.

Moreover, de Klerk is a man who tends to look to compromise rather than to prescriptions. Added to this is a keen intellect—he gave up a law professorship to become an MP—and his style will be totally different from Botha. He is comfortable speaking English, handles television with ease, and gets on well with the media, all of which makes him a much easier man to be around than Botha.

De Klerk comes from the most conservative and smallest of the three Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa—the Gereformeerde Kerk and its university at Potchefstroom, a small town in the Western Transvaal.

It should be noted that his church

is conservative in a social sense—it frowns on dancing, for example—but is enlightened on political matters. Thus, it consistently fought the Mixed Marriages Act when it was still mainstream National Party thinking that black and white should live separately, and most certainly not be allowed to marry.

De Klerk, 53, has always been seen as a conservative man, belonging to the middle of the National Party. If he had leanings at all, they were seen to be to the right.

But suddenly he is being touted as reformist. This impression is based on speeches this year opening up the discussion, again, about enforced racial segregation in housing (the Group Areas Act), the legal definition of people into racial and ethnic groups (Population Registration Act), and enforcement of separate public amenities for non-whites.

But what was missed by commentators was that what he said was merely a repetition of his own publicly held views, representing what the party itself also says. It contained nothing new, because what de Klerk was saying was that present approaches to these questions are unworkable and are a cause for strife.

He was suggesting that these bits of legislation be scrapped—possibly scrapped—but only to be replaced

by one similar act, an act which would do two things: It would still define people by law into specific groups, both racial and ethnic, but would have an option for those who do not want to be defined who could then live in areas specially set aside for them.

As he sees it, this means that the right of association and of disassocia-

National Party, which had developed in Botha's last years, and to begin to pave the way for the establishment of a National Council.

The latter is also old NP policy, intended to be a forum for negotiations about a future all-inclusive constitution. It has failed so far because the government has tried to get it off the ground by excluding blacks who

radically disagree with it, such as the United Democratic Front and the African National Congress.

How much will come of all this cannot be predicted now. It is clear, though, that de Klerk is signalling that he is a man of reform who intends to pick up from where Botha stopped.

Nevertheless, he came into Parliament and later the cabinet at the time of the demise of old-style apartheid, unlike P.W. Botha, who helped to establish apartheid. Psychologically, it should thus be easier for him to continue its steady dismantling.

Also, the general trend in

South Africa is away from racism and any change must be in that direction. De Klerk's different style may very well bring in its wake a speeding up of reform, even faster than he may intend.

F.W. de Klerk will bring a more open approach and will undoubtedly push reform much faster than Botha did in his last year—but he is still a strong party man. This will dictate how far he can go. ○

## A Democratic Alternative

**S**outh Africa's next leader, F.W. de Klerk, will not only have to contend with a party to his right, the Conservatives, but a new one to his left, the Democratic Party.

Formed in April, the DP is remarkable because it is the first political party in South Africa sitting in the white House of Assembly which openly says it believes in universal adult franchise, which has more Afrikaners as leaders than English-speaking South Africans, and which is being taken seriously even in extra-parliamentary, radical circles.

The Democratic Party is a fusion of three existing parties: the Progressive Federal Party, long-established, mostly English in support but with little influence; the Independent Party, led by former ambassador in London, Dr. Denis Worrall, whose base is mainly among members of the disbanded New Republican Party and some dis-

sident National Party supporters; and the National Democratic Movement of former NP member of Parliament Wynand Malan, based mostly on Afrikaners who have turned their backs on the National Party.

De Klerk's reformist signals may seriously threaten at least the short-term growth potential of the DP—opinion polls give it as much as 23 percent of white support. But it is not yet a coherent whole, still tends to squabble publicly over policy, and as a compromise, is headed by the leaders of all three former parties.

Presently, there is great enthusiasm for it, and its public meetings are well-attended, but its birth pangs are still evident. That, plus de Klerk's possible reformist moves, is causing a good deal of possible support to sit and wait. ■

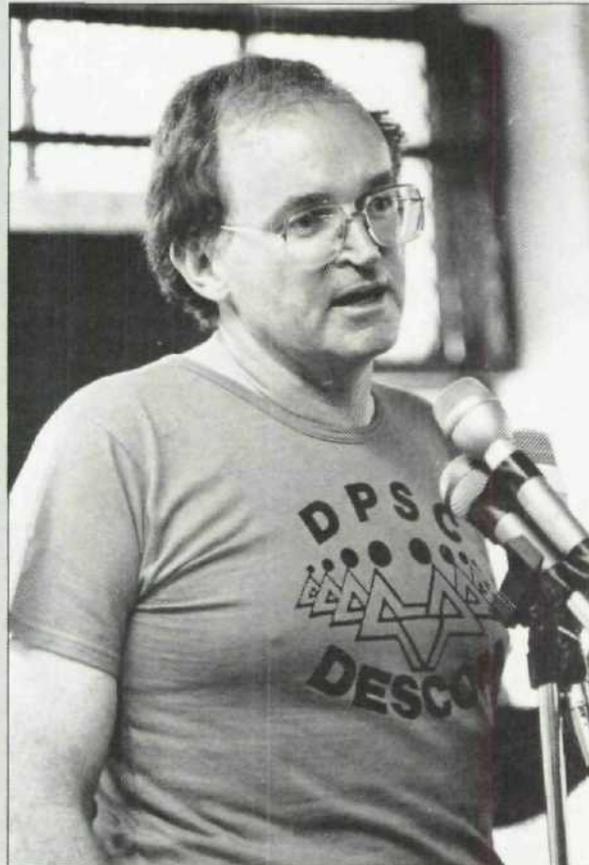
—H.P.

tion is thus brought in. But note, he is not veering away from the basic National Party tenet, namely that of a group-based approach.

He has also begun negotiations behind closed doors with the Coloured Labour Party, which sits in Parliament, but also with some homeland leaders, notably Gatsha Buthelezi, the Zulu leader. These discussions are aimed at defusing the tension between them and the

## *David Webster:* THE SPIRIT IS UNBROKEN

By DANIEL RIESENFELD



Eric Miller/Impact Visuals

On May 1, David Webster, a well-known anti-apartheid activist, was assassinated outside his home in a Johannesburg suburb by unknown assailants firing a shotgun blast from a passing car.

A senior lecturer in social anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Webster, 44, was a key figure in the Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC), a human rights organization that monitored the plight of the thousands of detainees jailed without trial over the past several years until it was banned in 1988.

Webster was also a founder-member of the Five Freedoms Forum, an organization of white South Africans in support of fundamental human freedoms, as well as the UDF-affiliated Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee.

In December last year, Webster spoke with *Africa Report* about the history of the DPSC, as well as the methods of intimidation utilized by the South African security police against political activists. We publish excerpts of the interview in tribute to the life and work of David Webster.

**Africa Report:** What led to the formation of the Detainees' Parents Support Committee?

**Webster:** In 1981, there was a wave of detentions focusing around a political activist named Barbara Hogan. On September 21, 1981, there was a major police swoop in which 21 people were taken, and over the next month or two, another 40 people. It ended up that 67 people were detained at that time. The DPSC was a spontaneous response by friends and family members, who gathered around the families to assist them to come to terms with the detention of their relatives.

**Africa Report:** From there, it seems to have grown enormously.

**Webster:** Correct. It snowballed because of a number of things. First, it became clear to us that the conditions of detention were dreadful. Torture was endemic, and I think probably still is. A number of people were having a very, very bad time. And you'll remember the death of Neil Aggett on February 5,

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1982. We'd been going for only about two to three months as an organization when we heard about his death. During his inquest some months later, it slowly unravelled that he had been very, very badly tortured with electric shocks, enforced exercise, and beatings. I believe what drove him to suicide finally was that he simply couldn't put up with the treatment that he was receiving. So that gave us an added impetus.

We realized that when the security police came to detain you, they really did mean business. So it made us all the more determined then that our organization shouldn't just be a temporary thing. We didn't understand anything then about the system of detention, but it became clear to us over time that this was an endemic system, how the government kept itself in power, by detaining and intimidating its political opponents. And rather than disbanding once our particular friends and relatives had been released from detention, this organization needed to exist for everybody in South Africa. So it carried on from that small beginning into an organization which, until it got banned in February 1988, had something like 56 different branches around the country, having begun with just a handful of people in central Johannesburg in 1981.

**Africa Report:** Was there any change in focus in what DPSC was doing with the introduction of the emergency regulations?

**Webster:** Yes, I think you have to cast it back a little further.

*Daniel Riesenfeld is producer-director for Nightingale Productions in New York.*

The DPSC began in a very tentative and low-key way, purely a care and welfare organization to provide some comforts and necessities for people in detention. We tried to supply food parcels, warm clothing, some reading materials when they allowed it.

After a short while, we began to realize that we were having just a tiny little impact. And we had no way of stopping, for example, the abuse of detainees. So we began to raise our profile. We decided that publicity was the only method by which we could make some impact on the security police. We tried all sorts of methods in the beginning. We gathered information about torture and then we sent a quiet delegation to the Minister of Law and Order and the Minister of Justice, to draw their attention to the fact that torture was taking place.

And instead of taking our complaints seriously, they turned it around against us and threatened us with prosecution under the Police Act. So we realized then that to play it by some meaningful set of rules wasn't going to work. We decided that publicity should be the next phase of our activity, to raise the political price that the police pays for either detention or torture. Then we went public with our allegations and we attempted to mount public meetings, write letters to the newspapers, and eventually we secured a regular column in the *Star* newspaper. And we started issuing a monthly report in which we documented the full range of deaths in detention.

Gradually our political profile began to rise and we gained quite a reputation for both accuracy of reporting and also for political courage, in terms of confronting the security police and the system with our activities. And that's really the period that gave rise to our subsequent banning.

With the state of emergency in 1985, in an eight-month period, something like 8,000 people got detained. Then that emergency lapsed and in June 1986, they reimposed another emergency, which is the one still in force. And suddenly in that one, there were something like 15,000 detained, more than 1,000 per month.

The scale of things escalated out of our control completely. And it became very difficult for us to monitor it as we had been up until then. So what we then did was open up an advice office where we could in some way process all the material that was coming through, and also provide real aid—legal aid to the families of detainees, as well as monitoring and providing welfare.

We ourselves adjusted to the emergency by expanding our operation, and starting to employ people full-time. That was a major change. But at the same time, our political profile rose dramatically. We worked very closely with the organizations under threat at the time, the United Democratic Front [UDF] in particular. Our links with those organizations and our raising of the public awareness, both internationally and locally, of the full scale and effects of detention were what gave rise to our banning.

One has to strike a very delicate balance in South Africa when dealing with human rights abuses, and especially the system of detention and repression. Detention is just one wing of repression in South Africa. For example, the government has an array of security legislation where ordinary democratic activity can be construed as terrorism or treason. The recent Delmas trial is an example.

A second and much more widely used form of repression is detention. Then there's a whole range of other activities, moving into a grayer area—vigilantes, death squads, which are unquestionably pro-apartheid. The government and police

seem unable or unwilling to prosecute such people. You don't see trials of people who wipe out large numbers of UDF or Cosatu supporters, for example.

So a young political activist from a township has to realize that he's letting himself in for a whole range of potential actions against him—one definite possibility being death. And giving interviews to press people, if you're a black political activist, raises your political profile to a level where all sorts of dreadful things may happen to you.

A case in point is a young worker for the DPSC called Sice-lo Dlomo, a school-boy at Pace College, who was detained and badly treated during that period. We assisted his mother and when he was released from detention, he joined the DPSC as a volunteer. He was interviewed by a number of TV crews, detailing the kind of things that were done to him in detention. He alleged torture and so on, and was called in by the security police. They captured him at the DPSC office and took him away for about eight hours, in which he was interrogated about his appearance on these TV programs. And 48 hours later, near his home in Soweto, he was taken off by a group of people and assassinated.

That murder's never been solved, like a whole range of other political murders in South Africa, clearly done by pro-apartheid death squads. I would link his death directly to his participation in those programs. As an organization which works in this field, we have to be very, very cautious about people doing interviews for fear for their lives. Of course, South African security police operate in a class and race-structured way, so a white middle-class person like myself is under much less danger than a black person. A black person in a township has no protection at all—he's at the sharp end of repression in South Africa—whereas those of us who operate from a central city, Johannesburg for instance, have a lot more political space in which to operate.

**Africa Report:** Was the banning of the DPSC a form of censorship?

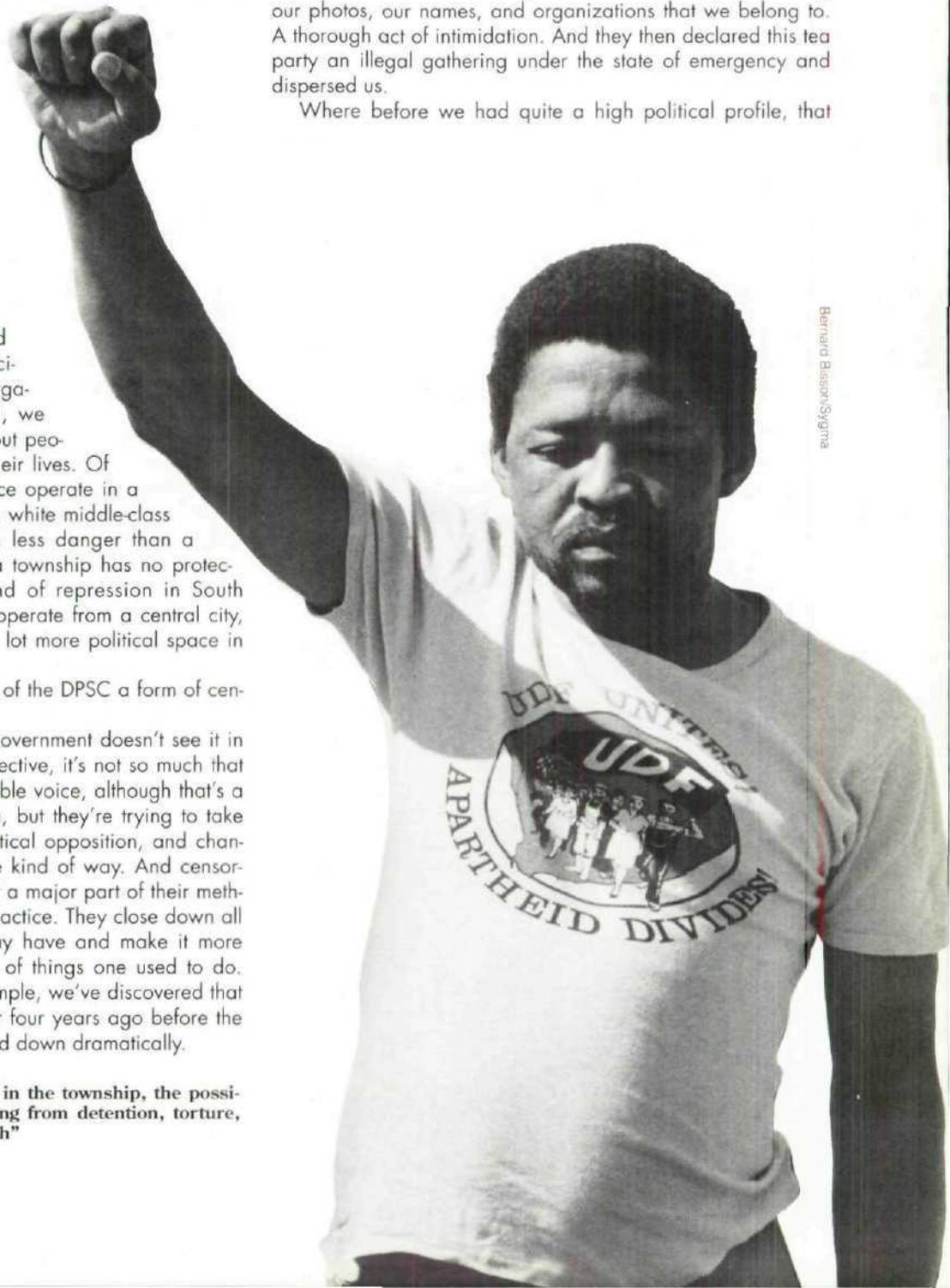
**Webster:** Yes, certainly. But the government doesn't see it in quite those terms. From their perspective, it's not so much that they want to silence an uncomfortable voice, although that's a major part of what they are doing, but they're trying to take control of a particular kind of political opposition, and channel it, control it, contain it in some kind of way. And censorship is one part of that process. But a major part of their methods is really straight intimidatory practice. They close down all avenues of operation that one may have and make it more and more difficult to do the kinds of things one used to do. And so as an organization for example, we've discovered that the political space we had three or four years ago before the states of emergency has been closed down dramatically.

**"If you are a black political activist in the township, the possible consequence you face is anything from detention, torture, intimidation, petrol-bombing to death"**

Things that we used to deal with and do very clearly and openly have also been taken away from us. A clear example: We run tea parties for the families of detainees. The main purpose is to bring together the families to show them that they're not alone. And they get quite a lot of strength and solidarity from these activities. From our point of view, the tea parties are very important. We gather a lot of information about what's happening in detention and people come forward with stories of harassment, abuse, torture, and we then refer these cases to lawyers.

We held a tea party in Alexandra township, which has been absolutely devastated by police and army action, and the tea party just couldn't take place. We were surrounded by the army. The security police arrived, having completely surrounded the church in which we were operating. No one allowed to enter or leave. Security police lined everybody up against one wall and then processed us one by one, taking our photos, our names, and organizations that we belong to. A thorough act of intimidation. And they then declared this tea party an illegal gathering under the state of emergency and dispersed us.

Where before we had quite a high political profile, that



Bernard Bisoen/Sygnia

has diminished dramatically, with the banning of the DPSC in February. And the other organizations which still carry on the work are finding it more and more difficult to get newspaper space or into the electronic media at all. And now even the welfare work is being made virtually impossible. So the political space is being closed down to an absolutely minuscule amount at the moment.

The government has followed what's called the Brazilian method—allowing some reform while increasing repression. So with each piece of reform that gets introduced, so too does an intensification of repression. The government is afraid to let go of the reins too far because by so doing, they would be allowing political expectations to rise in black communities and genuine political leaders to gain a larger measure of support. So, it's very important for them that they allow a certain measure of reform, but ensure that the kind of people who take advantage of that reform within the black community are the stooges and the Uncle Toms, the people who really don't have credibility.

**Africa Report:** Could you explain the banning of the DPSC?

**Webster:** At a certain point in its history, the DPSC realized that it had to align itself with the democratic movement, that just to be a free-floating welfare organization was not going to be enough. With the formation of the UDF in 1983, the DPSC decided that it should join. And so it became a UDF affiliate, and overnight, the character of the organization changed. Suddenly it had credibility in the townships and black people were streaming to join our township-based branches. And from a small group of white people in central Johannesburg, we became a mass-based organization. Every city and small town began to have its own detainees' movement. That raised our political profile in communities, but more importantly in the eyes of the security police. We became more and more called upon by progressive organizations to take a political stand on issues. And we were happy to do that.

Come February 1988, the security police was asked by the government to produce a hit list of those organizations that it deemed to be effective in the townships. It's the other side of the coin of detaining the individuals, you ban their organizations. So we appeared on a final list of 17 or 18 organizations ranging from Cosatu, the UDF, the National Education Crisis Committee—a whole range of other education, civic, political organizations—with a restriction order saying you may not undertake any activities whatsoever, crippling the organization in effect. It's part of that dual process of reform and repression.

Around the country, detainee organizations by now have had something like 63 of their serious activists and members detained. We had five killed in mysterious murders which have never been solved. Three of our offices around the country have been petrol-bombed, and burned to the ground. If you are a black political activist in the township, the possible consequence you face is anything from detention, torture, intimidation, petrol-bombing to death, whereas white middle-class people face personal harassment, threatening phone calls, car tires being slashed, paint stripper being poured on your car, maybe your pet cat being killed and hung from the front door of your house. They don't begin to measure up against what working class people have to face.

**Africa Report:** How would you describe the mood of the people in the democratic movement at this point?

**Webster:** It's not easy to tell. Since the state of emergency came into existence, there's been a major realignment, a

rethink about the kind of politics you can engage in. It is not possible now as a member of the UDF to hold a mass public meeting. In the 1983-85 period, mass meetings with crowds of 2,000 in a hall were very common. Rallies in big stadiums were huge and popularly attended. Those days are long gone. So what's actually happened is a much more sober realignment in politics, a move away from what the township people called microphone politics, mass meeting politics, to grass roots level organization.

So street committees, area committees, block committees, are much more seriously organized—actually a more healthy form of politics in some way. You just don't rely on charismatic leaders to give you guidance. Here people are making their own decisions at local levels, actually a consolidation phase, but you do need the charismatic leader and the mass meetings to make your organizations popular and viable as well. So that side of things has been very severely crippled. I would say that there's been a lot more realism in recent years, a lot more understanding of the hard slog that lies ahead.

In 1984, people believed that independence and freedom was coming within five years. The slogan was "Freedom in our lifetime." You had education slogans like "Liberation first, education after." People are understanding now that that's not viable. Freedom is going to take 10, 15, 20 years maybe, and a lot of hard, on-the-ground organization has to take place.

It's not exactly pessimism. There's gloom around, no doubt about it. We're in a very dark phase of South African politics. And for the moment at least, the security forces have achieved at least a stalemate. They were definitely on the defensive and on the retreat in the 1983-84 period. In 1985, the tide began to turn, and in the 1986-88 period, the security forces have at least established equilibrium, and at certain times have been in the ascendancy. And at the moment, I would say there's a stalemate or standoff where both sides are reassessing their tactics, looking to see what lies ahead.

The inevitability of freedom for South Africa is there. It's going to happen. What we are talking about is the renegotiation of the time schedule. The forces of democracy are obviously going to win. But it's not nearly as soon as people thought it would be. People in the townships are bruised, but they're determined. And at our most recent tea party for example, where there was an enormous presence of police and military, the chairman of the meeting informed people that the security police were now present, they were coming to film, and that people were more or less being held in this meeting.

The meeting was phenomenal, the youth in particular leapt to their feet. There's a famous song in South Africa, "Are you afraid?" and there's a reply chant, "No we're not afraid!" And these guys got to their feet as one, sang the song at the security police, telling them to get out of the hall. That spontaneous courage, that spontaneous strength is there, and it's unbreakable. That for me was one of the remarkable things about that meeting. There was this power, this unwillingness to be daunted and defeated by what is enormous repressive power. And for me, that is a hopeful sign. That spirit is not going to be broken by anything. The security police were really taken aback. They were full of self-confidence. They thought, "We've handled these people." But they were met with a wall of anger and fury. So from that point of view, there's a lot of hope for the country. But in order for that anger to be channelled correctly, to be politically organized, there's an enormous road still to go. ○



# A QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

By RAKIYA OMAAR

**According to Africa Watch, Jonas Savimbi's Unita movement has systematically committed gross violations of the human rights of Angolan civilians, with the objective of intimidating them into supporting the rebel movement. Forced conscription, starvation, sabotage, and murder are among its tactics—abuses which should be examined by American policy-makers who support it with military aid.**

By RAKIYA OMAAR

**T**here is one thing all observers of Angola agree upon: Angolans, victimized by war, want peace. Peace has not had a chance. Starting with the struggle against the Portuguese, war has been the norm for the last 20 years.

Now in its 13th year, the current conflict between the government and the U.S.-supported guerrilla movement, Unita, has been particularly brutal. There are many ways to count the cost: the world's largest number of civilian casualties from land mines, a high rate of infant mortality and malnutrition, a huge displaced and refugee population, a disturbing number of war orphans, and a severe shortage of manpower. The war has also destroyed the economy, in spite of Angola's wealth in oil and minerals and extremely fertile soil.

In Angola, as in Afghanistan, El Salvador, and many other parts of the world where governments are fighting guerrilla movements, a wide range of military problems displaces and threatens the lives and security

*Rakiya Omaar is executive director of Africa Watch, an organization that monitors human rights abuses and promotes respect for internationally recognized standards.*

of the civilian population, especially in rural areas.

In a recent report, *"Violations of the Laws of War by Both Sides,"* Africa Watch found that Unita has systematically committed gross abuses of human rights that no conception of military necessity could possibly justify. The report is based on testimonies of refugees who had recently fled Angola and were living in rural regions of Zaire and Zambia that border the country.

Africa Watch found that Unita's objective is to intimidate civilians into supporting it or to punish them for assisting government forces. In eastern Angola, many of Unita's tactics are designed to starve civilians. It plants land mines in the footpaths to the fields and at the sources of water; it has ambushed and sabotaged vehicles transporting food supplies. Nor has Unita hesitated to kill or capture peasants tending their fields so as to discourage people from planting and harvesting crops, which they claim will be used to feed government soldiers. In addition, refugees complained frequently that Unita stole food from villagers.

We received many first-hand reports that described Unita's tactics. Joaquim, an old Bemba man,

was born in Jimba and lived in a nearby village. Jimba was occupied by Unita in 1983. He said that Unita told the people to go to Zambia, Zaire, or to the bush with Unita. The villagers were told that no one could stay in the town. "We'll kill you when we come back, if you're still here. If the people stay and farm, Fapla [the Angolan armed forces] lives well and has food."

Unita's strategy of encircling and "strangling" larger villages is intended to starve civilians and has forced them to flee into the bush and later seek refuge in Zaire or Zambia. Starvation is also a means of "softening up" a town in preparation for a military attack.

Chinda, 49, a Luvale, came from a village a mile from Kavungo. Even after leaving Kavungo in 1985, Unita still maintained a presence outside, according to another refugee. This made it difficult to farm. It was dangerous to tend the fields far from the village, because Unita would attack or capture the farmers it happened to find. The fields close to the village became depleted. There was enough food in and around Kavungo until 1986, when Unita started to steal crops from the fields. It also started to mine the fields and kill farmers

tending their crops. People began to be afraid to work and reduced their farming.

Unita prides itself on its efforts to promote agricultural self-sufficiency for its troops and civilian supporters. In order to achieve this goal, however, it has resorted to the forcible conscription of individuals or whole villages as a pool of unpaid labor for its agricultural schemes or as combatants. Many villagers complained of having been forcibly marched to remote areas of Angola from which escape is difficult and dangerous. "Even if the men did not want to work on the Unita fields," one refugee commented, "they had no choice. They had the arms and we did not."

Unita has deliberately attacked and killed civilians, often as they were fleeing the fighting that resulted from Unita attacks on government forces.

Africa Watch gathered a number of testimonies which show that such attacks were not limited to military barracks, but extended to civilians and their homes. Gomes, a Luvale refugee in his 30s, said that Unita attacked Kavungo in October 1988 at dawn with bombs and bullets. The attack lasted until about 8 or 9 a.m. Fapla withdrew from the town and Unita entered.

Two civilians were wounded and two killed by mortar fire. One was a woman running from her house; she was hit on her left side by shrapnel. Also killed at the same time was a male relative of hers. He saw them fall to the ground, and saw another person fall, who was wounded but not killed.

Gomes made it safely to the bush and from there to Zaire with a group of seven people. Unita had attacked many times, he said, entering the town, capturing people, and robbing houses.

Many people have also died from Unita's failure to take necessary precautions to distinguish civilians from combatants. In urban areas, it has used time bombs which have killed and injured many civilians. It has also burned the homes of civilians

and attacked medical facilities. Unita has attacked the artificial limb center in Huambo four times.

Unita does not resort to these tactics on occasion, or only under exceptional circumstances, but as a deliberate strategy. Nor is there a prospect that this will change. Unita is committed to pursuing these policies in order to achieve its two principal objectives: first, to prove its military superiority over Fapla, and second, to create so much havoc that the Angolan government will be forced, on its own or under external pressure, to negotiate with Unita.

In this context, the interests of defenseless civilians are irrelevant.

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**In spite of Unita's efforts to portray itself as a movement committed to winning the hearts and minds of civilians, it has in fact shown a callous disregard for their welfare.**

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In spite of its efforts to portray itself as a movement committed to winning the hearts and minds of civilians, it has in fact shown a callous disregard for their welfare.

Unita's antagonism toward the government in Luanda has been used by the American government to justify its support for the rebel movement. Choosing to minimize Unita's human rights abuses and to overlook its dependence on South Africa—which has made it a political outcast in Africa and elsewhere—Unita's leader, Jonas Savimbi, was instead championed as a "democrat," leading a group of "freedom fighters" in a war of liberation.

The conflict in Angola has been used as a proxy war, an opportunity to contain Soviet and Cuban influence in southern Africa. Backing its

political support of Unita is military aid to the tune of \$15 million since 1986. Playing upon the anti-communist message of the Reagan years, Savimbi's rhetoric called for the formalities of a democratic system—free and fair elections and a mixed economy. These declarations have been cited as proof of Unita's commitment to a democratic Angola.

However, recent accounts in the international press suggest that it is important to question, or at least treat with caution, reports about Savimbi's human rights credentials.

Former supporters have accused Savimbi of murdering and torturing critics within his movement. In particular, in September 1983, he is reported to have burned to death several people accused of witchcraft but whose real 'crime' was to criticize Savimbi. He is accused of torturing and detaining in Jamba Tito Chingungi, Unita's former representative in Washington, D.C., and to have killed some of his relatives.

The American government has been quick to deny these charges, claiming that it has no evidence to substantiate them. At a minimum, however, an independent investigation should be undertaken. These allegations should at least cause the administration and Unita's supporters in Congress to be more attentive to actual human rights practices within Unita, rather than its promises about future performance.

The Bush administration has shown every intention of continuing to support Unita, defending it as the "Contras" of southern Africa. Unita was not a party to the recent regional settlement involving a Cuban withdrawal from Angola and independence for Namibia, and there are fears among its friends in Congress that Unita, a close ally, has been "abandoned." Consequently, there are reports that U.S. assistance will be increased from the current estimated \$30 million to compensate for the cut in South African assistance.

The Bush administration and Congress could draw a few lessons from the failure of Reagan's policies in Nicaragua. Neither the political

and economic policies of the Luanda government, nor its unacceptable counter-insurgency strategy can justify U.S. support for Unita's murderous policies. Continued U.S. support for Unita will only strengthen those within the Angolan government who advocate a tough military policy. Their intransigence will appear to be vindicated by the continued abuses of Unita.

We urge the administration to cease funding for Unita. By doing so, we are not seeking to minimize either the scope or gravity of violations by the Angolan government. Each side has a responsibility to protect citizens, no matter how egregious the atrocities committed by their military antagonists. The difference, however, is that the U.S. has a direct responsibility for Unita's abuses, as it funds its military efforts.

Clearly, the ultimate resolution of human rights problems in Angola depends on a solution to the underlying political conflict. In this context, the agreement for the withdrawal of Cuban and South African troops from Angola offers an opportunity for the U.S. to reassess its role in Angola. Internationally, there is a better climate for U.S.-Soviet cooperation on regional initiatives. There is Soviet and Cuban pressure on the MPLA to negotiate with Unita to bring the war to an end. The U.S. cannot hope to play a useful role until it is prepared to confront and act decisively on Unita's dismal record on human rights.

In this bleak picture, there are some encouraging signs. Some congressmen, in particular Howard Wolpe, chairman of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa, are challenging the wisdom of U.S. policy towards Unita, especially the failure to investigate its human rights abuses. It is to be hoped that before more defenseless Angolans are killed, starved, maimed, and abducted by Unita, the U.S. will cease to fund and champion an organization that has contributed so much toward Angola's devastation. ○

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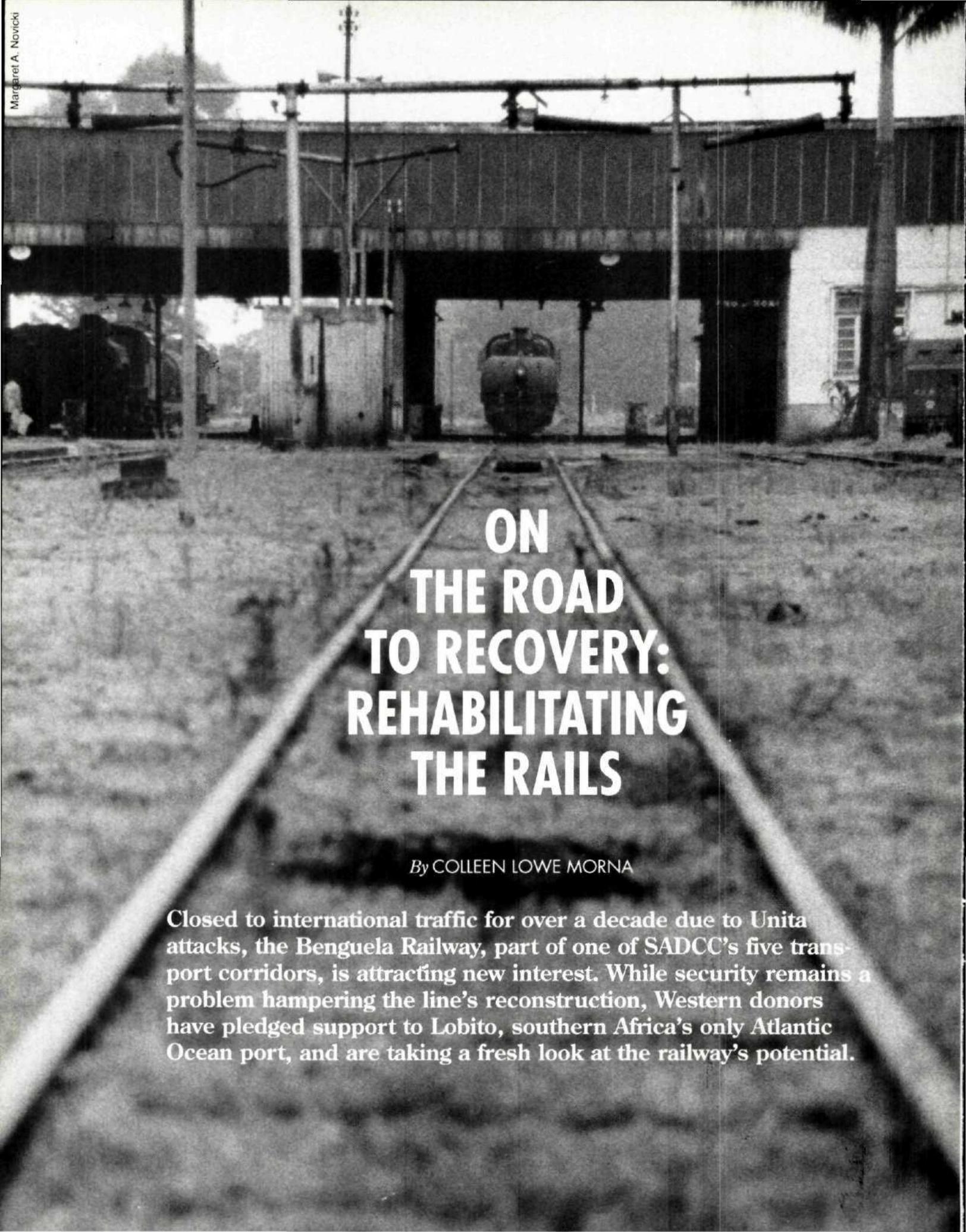
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# ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY: REHABILITATING THE RAILS

*By* COLLEEN LOWE MORNA

Closed to international traffic for over a decade due to Unita attacks, the Benguela Railway, part of one of SADCC's five transport corridors, is attracting new interest. While security remains a problem hampering the line's reconstruction, Western donors have pledged support to Lobito, southern Africa's only Atlantic Ocean port, and are taking a fresh look at the railway's potential.



**W**hen a group of donors visited the Angolan port of Lobito earlier this year, few could fathom why the trip had been planned to span two days. Putting up the 90-odd visitors in the war-impo- verished Angolan capital, Luanda, seemed enough of a business, with- out having to cater for them in the forlorn port town as well.

But by the morning of the second day, the hosts' reasoning became apparent. Apart from wanting the donors to tour the port and city, Angolan officials were determined that their visitors take a ride on the Benguela railway line, which has been closed to international traffic for the past 13 years as a result of attacks by the Unita rebels.

Even on the largely symbolic 18-mile ride from Lobito to Benguela, the Angolan town after which the 808-mile-long railway line is named, the train wagons were preceded by two trucks of sand—old-fashioned mine sweepers. On every inch of the journey, which attracted considerable curiosity among local inhabitants, donors had to be accompanied by a security escort.

Yet, judging from the jovial mood in the archaic rail cars, the idea of reopening southern Africa's fifth major transport corridor and its only link to the Atlantic Ocean had captured the imagination of the international community.

Although numerous obstacles, including security and complications over the ownership of the line, remain to be overcome, donors have now given their first nod of approval to a \$93.8 million "preparatory" phase for the re-opening of the Benguela railway, which before had hardly seemed possible.

The strategic importance of the

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railway has long been highlighted by the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), the nine-member group which aims to ease the region's economic dependence on South Africa, with transport the centerpiece of its \$6.4 billion "program of action."

Apart from the domestic importance of the Benguela, which slices through the center of Angola, Lobito once served as the primary outlet for the copper mined in Zambia and southern Zaire. It is not the closest port for any other southern African country, but as the only regional port on the west coast outside South Africa, Lobito is the shortest link to Europe and the United States—major trading partners for most countries in the region.

As such, along with its efforts to rehabilitate the access routes leading to, and the ports of Dar es Salaam, Nacala, Beira, and Maputo, SADCC prepared a \$600 million, ten-year development plan for the Lobito transport corridor, as it is known in SADCC parlance.

But repeated efforts to attract donor interest and get a donor conference off the ground came to nothing. The war in Angola, with its international dimensions, seemed too complex. To the extent that Western donors took any interest in the more troubled corners of the region, Mozambique commanded the most attention.

A coincidence of events finally helped to bring Angola into the spotlight. First, in line with its principle of rotating conference venues, SADCC chose Luanda to host its annual consultative conference this year, providing a good opportunity to hold a mini-conference on the Lobito corridor.

Quite by chance, the long drawn-out tripartite peace talks between

Cuba, Angola, and South Africa wound up just before the due date, with Angola agreeing to the withdrawal of Cuban troops in exchange for South Africa's pulling out of southern Angola and making way for Namibia's independence.

Capitalizing on the general upbeat mood in the region, Transport Minister Carlos Fernandes noted in an opening address that there is now "a real possibility that one of the tension spots most dangerous to world peace will be eliminated."

Although Unita still poses an internal threat, he added, "we cannot wait until absolute peace is guaranteed to begin a project of such fundamental importance for the economies of the region."

To be realistic, Fernandes went on, SADCC had reordered the original \$113.6 million emergency phase of the SADCC ten-year plan into a \$93.8 million "preparatory" phase, which dropped projects likely to be security-sensitive—such as feasibility studies along certain portions of the track—and added other "soft" projects from later phases, like welfare projects and office facilities.

Stressing that support for the reopening of the line at this stage is largely a political statement in favor of Angola's peace efforts, the EEC, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, the African Development Bank, UNDP, Norway, Spain, the Arab Bank for African Economic Development, France, Sweden, Unctad, and the European Investment Bank expressed concrete interest in \$61 million worth of projects.

Denmark, Finland, and Canada, which are heavily involved in rehabilitation efforts in Mozambique, said they might be able to offer assistance in the future, while Britain said it was "in principle interested in the rehabilitation of the

## Linking Southern Africa: SADCC's Transport Corridors

**D**espite considerable odds, the southern African regional group, SADCC, is gradually winning the war against South Africa's transport hegemony. Some 63 percent of the region's traffic passed through its own ports in 1987, compared to under half in the earlier part of the decade.

The figures for 1988 are likely to be slightly higher, and if rehabilitation work continues unhindered, the region could easily handle all its own cargo within the next three to five years. Security remains the main variable.

As any map of southern Africa will show, the ports of Tanzania, Mozambique, and Angola are geographically closest for all six of southern Africa's land-locked countries except Lesotho (whose overseas trade is minimal) and Botswana (though not in all cases, depending on which city in the country you start from).

Over the past decade, however, four out of the five main transport systems (Maputo, Nacala, Beira, and Lobito) have been severely dislocated by South African and—in the case of Angola—U.S.-sponsored rebel activity. Meanwhile, SADCC's only "safe" port, Dar es Salaam, suffered from considerable mismanagement. All this made South Africa a logical, if more expensive and politically unacceptable alternative.

But, vowing that "without the establishment of an adequate regional transport and communications system, other areas of cooperation become impractical," SADCC has raised close to half of the nearly \$3 billion it has been seeking to reverse this trend.

Where security has been assured, the results have been impressive. Over the last three years, Dar es Salaam's throughput has increased from 1.73 million tons to 2.2 million tons, and the aim is to increase capacity to 4 million tons.

Meanwhile, thanks to the protection provided by the Zimbabwean army, work has progressed steadily along the access routes to, and the port of Beira, which also handled 2.2 million tons last year, compared to 1.3 million tons three years ago. When work is complete in the early 1990s, the port should be able to handle 4 to 5 million tons of cargo.

Despite security problems, rehabilitation work has commenced on the access routes leading to, and the ports of Nacala (one of Africa's best natural harbors) and Maputo (SADCC's best-developed port, with a potential carrying capacity of 13 million tons per annum). With the new focus on Angola, the Lobito transport corridor, theoretically capable of handling 3 to 4 million tons of cargo, should soon be added to this list.

All told, even allowing for technical hitches and bureaucratic delays, it is not far-fetched to project forward to a time in the near future when SADCC ports are able to handle more than the region's total overseas trade of just over 10 million tons per annum. Whether or not that capacity is put to use will hinge largely on genuine peace being restored in Angola and Mozambique. ■

—C.L.M.

Benguela railway line."

Prominent at the deliberations were officials of both the World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), neither of which have formal relations with Angola at the moment.

Bank officials said they expect Angola to become a member of the IMF and subsequently the World Bank in the next few months, at which time the Bank would be interested in coordinating donor financing for the Benguela rehabilitation effort.

Meanwhile, the Harare-based deputy director of AID's SADCC program, Fred Zobrist, said he had come to "study, learn and be ready, in the event we are able to offer assistance. We are thinking ahead in our aid program, to a time when and if change comes about."

Both AID and World Bank officials appeared to enjoy themselves immensely during the day trip around Lobito, which included lunch at the quaint, beach-front railway hotel (recently patched up after a Unita attack), and a sundown cruise around the port's magnificent natural harbor.

Donors expressed amazement at how well the port has been maintained, despite the fact that throughput is down to less than one-quarter of its former 2 million ton peak.

A technical official who went through the port facilities in detail stressed that this could not all have been put on just for the visitors. Machines had been properly covered and equipment meticulously stored, the official said. "From what I have seen, and considering the conditions in this country, it is an incredibly well-maintained port," the somewhat surprised official told *Africa Report*.

An evening gymnastics display at the railway sports club and the train ride from Lobito to Benguela concluded a light-hearted, yet eye-opening weekend for the group of mostly Western donors—probably the largest ever to visit Angola.

Major challenges, however, still lie ahead. Security is perhaps the

most obvious. At present, trains are only running regularly between Lobito and Benguela, and less regularly to Huambo at the 229-mile peg. Since the signing of the December 22 peace accord, government forces have captured a few of the towns between Kuito, at the 350-mile peg, and Luena, at the 595-mile peg. But trains are still not running in this area, on which information is sparse and largely speculative.

Before the peace accord, it had been hoped that the U.S. would broker an agreement with Unita to

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**J**udging from the jovial mood in the archaic rail cars, the idea of reopening southern Africa's only link to the Atlantic Ocean had captured the imagination of the international community.

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cease hostilities on the line. Now, the reopening of the line hinges on a national rapprochement being achieved.

Despite Zobrist's presence at the Lobito donor conference, AID officials attending the main SADCC conference stressed that American policy toward Unita, which is believed to have received \$30 million in U.S. funding last year, had not changed. Some covert South African sponsorship is also more than likely to continue.

Running through a part of Angola where Unita leader Jonas Savimbi claims some genuine support, the Benguela railway has become a favorite rebel target. Savimbi also evidently sees it as a useful bargaining chip. The Unita chief was recently quoted as saying that he would let up pressure on the railway

if the Angolan government agreed to power-sharing talks.

This condition, however, is unlikely to be acceptable to Luanda, which is especially sensitive about any negotiations involving Savimbi himself. Instead, the government has instituted an amnesty aimed at luring some Unita heavyweights into its fold, thus weakening the movement. Despite the hopes raised by the December 22 peace accord, an internal settlement may still be far off, according to diplomats in Luanda.

Not surprisingly, at the pledging conference, donors showed most interest in the port projects, which are most secure. All projects selected by the EEC—which is taking a lead role in rallying Western support for Angola generally—were in the port sector, which has already been boosted from \$15.3 million in the emergency phase to \$24.4 million in the preparatory phase.

On the other hand, railway projects were scaled down from \$53.2 million in the emergency phase to \$33.9 million in the preparatory phase, and even then, interest was only shown in about half of these.

It is likely that at least in the short-term, Angola will end up with a snazzy port (already in fairly good working condition) and no railway to go with it—or a head without a body, as some cynics put it.

Unlike SADCC's other transport corridors which are government-owned, the rehabilitation of the Benguela railway is also considerably complicated by the historical agreement which led to Société Générale de Belgique, through its London-based subsidiary, Tanks, owning 90 percent of the company under a concession due to expire in 2002.

Because donors cannot fund a privately owned venture, Angola has to find a way of repossessing the line before then, but to do so in such a way that the move does not smack in any way of expropriation. The compromise proposed by Angola is to form two companies: one wholly Angolan-owned to control the physical assets; and another, in which

SGB, Zaire, Zambia, and Angola would have shares to manage its day-to-day affairs.

Angolans stress that they do not have the manpower to operate the line and want private sector involvement, while donors like the idea of an infrastructural project owned by the government, but run by businessmen. In principle, SGB representatives are favorably disposed to the idea. Apart from the railway, the SGB owns shipping lines and freight agencies, and has considerable mining interests in Zaire. The company would thus be happy to maintain a foothold in the Benguela.

The tricky point now is to come up with a mutually agreed sum for the termination of the old agreement, which, experts say, could take some time. Another complicating factor could be the current poor state of relations between Belgium and Zaire, which may reduce SGB's interest in the area, and lead to the company taking a tougher line.

Once work seriously gets going, a host of technical problems will also need to be sorted out.

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**I**t is likely that at least in the short-term, Angola will end up with a snazzy port and no railway to go with it—or a head without a body, as some cynics put it.

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Much of the line has not been properly surveyed, and some consultants believe that because of the years of neglect, the entire rail bed may have to be replaced, making the rehabilitation exercise more complex than it may at first appear. They caution that despite the welcome enthusiasm, it could take considerably more than 10 years to get trains going the full length of the Benguela railway again.. ○

**E**dgar Tekere solidified his image as the "bad boy" of Zimbabwean politics by launching a new political party in Harare in typically outrageous and outspoken fashion.

Robert Mugabe's former right-hand man lashed out with bitter attacks on the Zimbabwean president and his ruling Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

"Zimbabwe's national leadership in government is already so thoroughly decayed by corruption that we are very close to the point of total collapse of the executive," said Tekere at a press conference in May to announce the new party.

"The ruling party is vigorously advocating the conversion of Zimbabwe into a one-party state and thereby seeking to entrench its eternally undemocratic self as a state dictatorship," declared Tekere. "I'm in for a war against the ruling party."

With that, Tekere announced the formation of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM, pronounced zoom), the first new political party to be formed in Zimbabwe since the country became independent in 1980. ZUM's platform is anti-corruption, anti-one party state, and pro-economic growth.

Mugabe quickly dismissed the new party as "the joke of the year," but Tekere's attacks on his government have created a flurry of excitement among Zimbabweans, black and white alike.

These are heady days in Zimbabwe. Not since the early years of independence has the political scene appeared so open, with issues and alliances being debated at length privately and increasingly in public fora.

"Tekere is saying what people want to hear," said a Harare clerical worker. "We know about this corruption and we don't want it."

The grey-haired office worker, who is currently trying to find jobs for two sons who have recently finished secondary school, said that

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ZIMBABWE

## Mugabe's Maneuvers

By ANDREW MELDRUM

**Zimbabwe's political landscape has been altered by the launching of a new party, the corruption scandal which cost eight top officials their jobs, and the recent introduction of economic reforms. President Mugabe's adept handling of the challenges facing the nation has strengthened his hand, taking the sting out of critics' attacks.**

many people are discussing Tekere's pronouncements about corruption, the economy, and Mugabe's ZANU.

"A few years ago, nobody would say anything about ZANU," he said. "But now, people are not happy and everybody is talking about ZANU, in the beer halls, in bus queues, everywhere."

Tekere has astutely tapped corruption as the main point of discontent among the Zimbabwean public. In February and March, the growing suspicions of widespread high-level corruption were confirmed in the public's eye. Prompted by the exposé of an illegal car-selling racket in a series of articles by *The Chronicle* daily newspaper in the southern city of Bulawayo, Mugabe appointed a judicial commission of inquiry

headed by Justice Wilson Sandura.

The public hearings were packed daily with hundreds of Zimbabweans, who thoroughly enjoyed watching one cabinet minister after another contradict himself in the witness box. Those who couldn't fit into the courtroom read about the proceedings in front-page articles in Harare's *Herald* newspaper and Bulawayo's *Chronicle*.

The end result was that five of Mugabe's cabinet ministers and three other top officials resigned in disgrace because of evidence of their involvement in the car-selling scheme. One of them, Maurice Nyagumbo, who had been number-three in Mugabe's party and the government's senior minister of political affairs, felt so dishonored that he committed suicide in late April by drinking a strong insecticide.

Far from weakening Mugabe's government, the scandal and resultant resignations appear to have strengthened the president's hand in cleaning up corruption. Last September, widespread grumblings about high-level corruption erupted in two days of violent protests at the University of Zimbabwe. But Mugabe adroitly achieved a public relations coup by ordering the public inquiry into the car-selling deals—dubbed "Willowgate," as it involved the state-owned Willowvale vehicle assembly plant. Once the level of involvement of top ministers was made clear to an avid public, Mugabe only had to wait for the resignations to roll in, thereby avoiding the messy task of axeing the ministers himself.

In the wake of the resignations, Mugabe has empowered the judicial commission to investigate Zimbabwe's two other motor vehicle assembly plants, and has ordered an investigation into the finances of Zidco, a holding company worth \$50 million, owned by his ZANU party, which was implicated in the scandal.

Mugabe has won praise from Zimbabweans and from diplomatic observers here for deftly beginning to do what few African leaders have successfully accomplished: tackling corruption from the top.

So, while Edgar Tekere has picked a popular issue, corruption, on which to base his new party, Mugabe has already taken a good deal of the air out of the opposition balloon by dealing with the corruption issue head on.

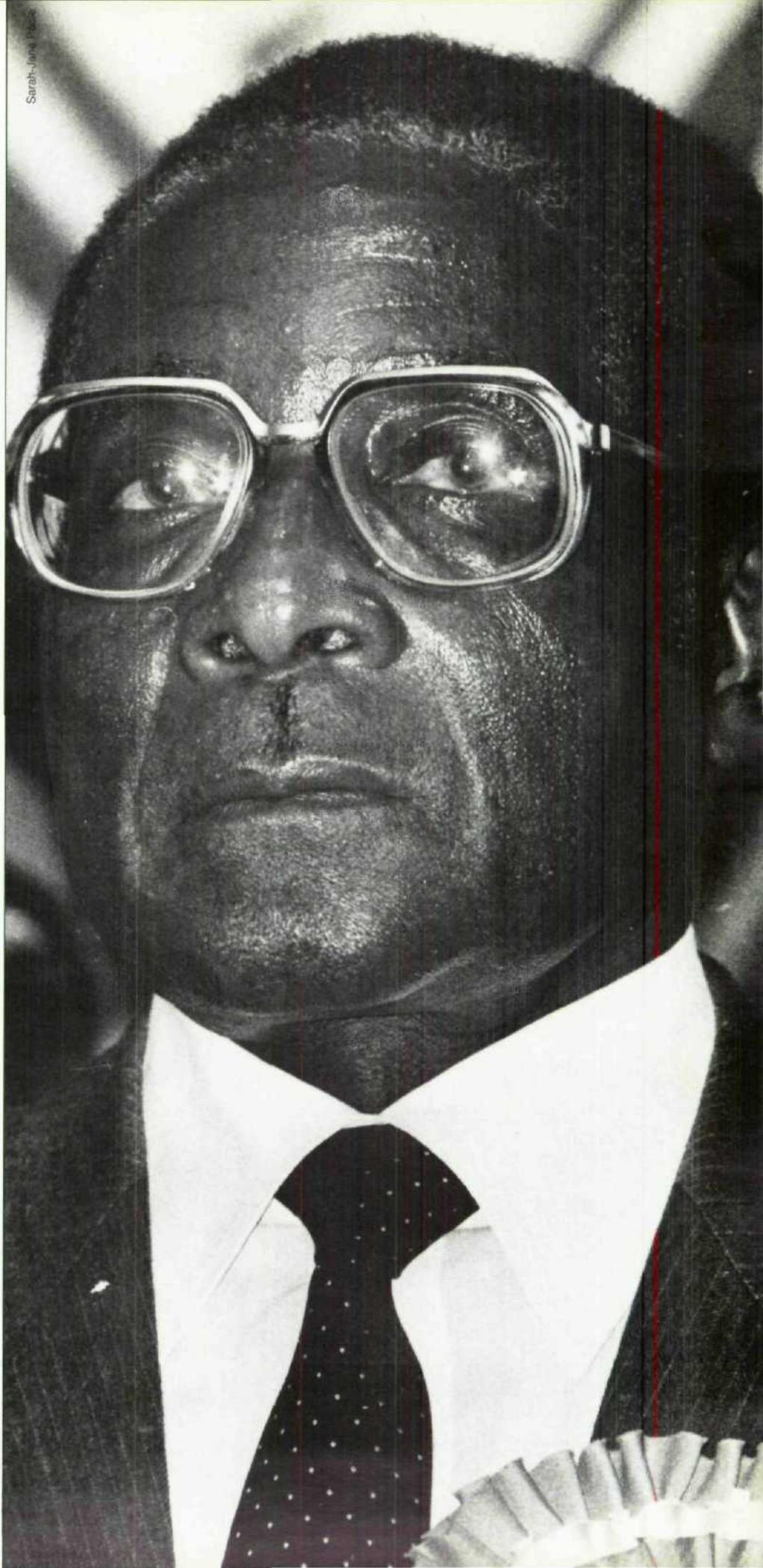
Tekere stated that his party aims to attract membership from all the country's racial and ethnic groups. The colorful politician, 52, said he would seek support from the largely white business community, the trade unions, university students, and veterans from the war against white minority Rhodesian rule. But it is telling that none of those potential supporters have stepped forward publicly, suggesting that many of Tekere's backers are afraid to come out of the closet in what is very nearly a one-party state.

Tekere also has to battle his intemperate and volatile reputation. At his party's launching, he flippantly responded to hostile questions about his trial for ordering the 1980 killing of a white farmer. Grinning broadly, Tekere said he was acquitted of the murder, but the reporters pointed out that acquittal was on a technicality.

Tekere has had a long tumble from ZANU's graces. He was a founder-member of ZANU and his escape with Robert Mugabe from Rhodesia across to Mozambique is one of the legends of the majority rule struggle. At independence, Tekere was secretary-general of ZANU, the second highest post behind Mugabe, and he served as cabinet minister. But he lost both posts following the damaging murder trial.

His maverick political actions in his home region of Zimbabwe's eastern Manicaland province did not please those in Harare. Tekere was stripped of his post as ZANU's Manicaland provincial chairman. In 1988, he was expelled from Mugabe's party for publicly criticizing the goal of a one-party state. On corruption,

**"Far from weakening Mugabe's government, the scandal and resultant resignations appear to have strengthened the president's hand"**



he attacked Mugabe as "the defender of the offenders."

For his leftist criticism of the now well-established ZANU government on the grounds that it was perpetuating the economic status quo, Tekere then won the allegiance of University of Zimbabwe students. But while courting student and trade union support for his new party, Tekere is also seeking support from Zimbabwe's right-wing side of the political spectrum.

Tekere has met with the white Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ, formerly Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front party), and publicly called for support from the United African National Congress (UANC), formerly led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa, and the splinter ZANU-Ndonga, led by the self-exiled Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole. That has proven to be controversial, as *The Herald* published information indicating that Rev. Sithole, currently living in Washington, D.C. and recently using the offices of the Heritage Foundation, had signed a friendship treaty with Mozambique's Renamo rebels.



Edgar Tekere at launching of new political party: "ZUM's platform is anti-corruption, anti-one-party state, and pro-economic growth"

The result is that many university students are questioning if they can support Tekere for his radical image while he is currying favor with the far right.

A stand for new policies to stimulate economic growth is another gesture of Tekere's ZUM. The economy too has become a hot topic of debate throughout the country as unemployment is burgeoning into a national crisis. There are 1 million

job-holders in the country out of a population of 9 million, and 1.25 million people seeking work. It is estimated that unemployment is running at 50 percent of those on the urban job market.

Those figures are to get worse every year as thousands of secondary school graduates begin seeking work and economists say there is only job for every six graduates. This is a particularly worrying problem, as there are high expectations among graduates and their parents, who had firmly believed that the education made available to them following independence would improve their standards of living, not just their literacy.

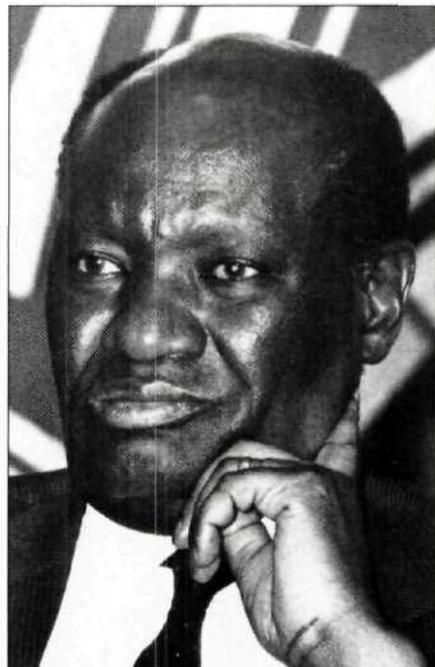
Once again, the Mugabe government announced new action just in time to stave off concerted opposition. On May 8, Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero announced a new investment code to promote both local and foreign investment in Zimbabwe. Although the investment guarantees themselves are fairly moderate, Chidzero described the investment package as the first of a series of fundamental changes that would reshape the Zimbabwean economy to promote growth and to create new jobs.

While the immediate response to the investment code has not been overwhelming, economists in Harare say the program of gradual economic liberalization will have far-reaching positive effects over the next five years.

Well respected internationally for his years at the United Nations, Chidzero now appears to have the firm backing of Mugabe and ZANU to thoroughly re-make Zimbabwe's economy. Chidzero describes his plans as measures to make Zimbabwe's economy more market- and export-oriented, while maintaining the government's socialist policies to improve the standards of living of the country's majority.

Almost since independence, the Mugabe government has resisted Western pressure, including that from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to liberal-

ize the economy. But it now appears that domestic political and economic pressures have brought the government to the realization that action must be taken.



Sarah-Jane Poole

"Bernard Chidzero now appears to have the firm backing of Mugabe and ZANU to thoroughly re-make Zimbabwe's economy"

The effective measures that Robert Mugabe used to turn around the corruption issue—so that he is viewed as the scourge of corruption rather than its protector—and the process underway to reform the country's economy, have resulted in the ZANU leader cannily taking the sting out of Tekere's attacks. The main point that Tekere has left to campaign on is opposition to a one-party state. For years, Mugabe and ZANU have laid the constitutional and political groundwork to establish a one-party state and it seems unlikely that even Edgar Tekere will deter them from that course.

A spell-binding speaker, Tekere has widespread support in the eastern Manicaland province, as well as enthusiastic followings in Harare and Bulawayo. But it is not clear if his fiery image is enough upon which to build a national party. It remains to be seen if his charisma is a match for Robert Mugabe's strategic intellect, particularly in the impending national general elections in 1990. ○

## A New Economic Order?

**Z**imbabwe began shifting from its socialist economic orientation with May's announcement of a new code to attract foreign and domestic investment, in hopes of reducing the country's raging unemployment.

The new investment code was quickly attacked as "Zimbabwe's Satanic Verses" by leftist university students and trade unionists who see the move as a reversal of the Mugabe government's socialist principles. On the other hand, the local business community complains that the code does not give them enough incentives.

Zimbabwe's economic helmsman, Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero, argued that the government "remained dedicated to the transformation of the social system so that the poorest can be included. The direction toward socialism is clear. There is no inherent contradiction between socialism and market forces." He said, "There are many different types of socialism and we intend to develop one suited to Zimbabwe's unique situation."

The investment code itself, which guarantees new investors they will be able to remit from 50 to 100 percent of their after-tax profits in foreign currency, is not a shocking change and only brings Zimbabwe's policies in line with those in neighboring majority-ruled countries. But as Chidzero pointed out, the unveiling of the new investment guidelines "is not an event but the beginning of a process."

That process is a gradual liberalization of Zimbabwe's highly closed and regulated economy—one that could see Zimbabwe charting a new economic path somewhere between doctrinaire socialist planning and the wide-open monetarist policies pushed by the World Bank and IMF.

"This is the first concrete sign of the government's intentions to move away from an economic policy imposed from the top down to a more market-oriented policy, responsive to both foreign and domestic investors," said an economist for a multinational bank in Harare. "It could be the start of Zimbabwe moving to an outward-looking, yet self-determined economy that would be unique in Africa and spark international interest."

The new package also includes the signing of the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), as well as negotiations to sign the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) agreement and similar British and West German bilateral investment codes. Another incentive is the

creation of a one-stop investment center which will approve investment proposals within 90 days, a major improvement from the 18-month or longer wait investors have faced in the past.

Chidzero said the code will be followed by a relaxation of rigid wage and price controls and an announcement on that is expected soon. President Mugabe said that collective bargaining would be established for workers, within parameters based on the annual profits a firm earns.

Further economic changes include a loosening of Zimbabwe's current tight restrictions on the movement of hard currency in and out of the country. There could be a gradual trade liberalization expected to begin in 1990 and take about five to seven years.

Another important measure to come is the reduction of the country's budget deficit, currently at \$1 billion Zimbabwe dollars (U.S. \$500 million) out of an overall government expenditure of Z\$5 billion (U.S. \$2.5 billion). At ten percent of the current gross domestic product of Z\$10 billion (U.S. \$5 billion), the budget deficit is viewed by both local and foreign economists as unsustainably large.

Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's foreign investment has been limited to about U.S. \$50 million and the lack of investor guarantees has been cited as a reason that figure has been so low. Chidzero said he hopes the economic change of heart will bring in new investments worth up to \$250 million. Such a target is not far-fetched, as Zimbabwe's highly developed infrastructure, wealth in minerals, and agricultural production make the economy one of the most productive in Africa.

Zimbabwe's rampant unemployment, estimated to be more than 1 million of the country's 9 million population, or 50 percent of the potential workforce, has become a pressing political issue that must be addressed. Widely regarded as an able economic strategist but not a political fighter, Finance Minister Chidzero, 61, has never had enough clout in Mugabe's ruling ZANU party to push his moderate policies through.

But the unemployment crisis, the stagnant economy, the political aftermath of the country's "Willowgate" cabinet scandal, and the challenge created by a new economic growth party formed by Edgar Tekere have combined to strengthen Chidzero's hand to begin thoroughly revamping the nation's economy. ■

—A.M.



# A JOINT APPROACH TO AFRICA'S DEBT

**T**he external debt of sub-Saharan Africa is currently the focus of much discussion and concern, not only on the part of Africans, but also of Soviet and U.S. development and financial experts. Its large external debt, together with its other economic afflictions, represents an obstacle to economic recovery and growth.

Africa's debt is nearly all owed to official lenders—foreign governments and international financial institutions. As of 1986, of the \$55.3 billion in external debt of low-income Africa, \$14.4 billion was owed to multilateral institutions (mainly the IBRD, IDA, and the African Development Bank and Fund) and \$25.5 owed to bilateral creditors (just over half in the form of concessional loans and the rest in the form of non-concessional export credits).

Of the remainder, \$6 billion was owed to private creditors, \$5 billion to the IMF and \$4 billion was in short-term credits. Low-income African countries were scheduled to pay out an average of more than 30 percent of their annual export earnings to service their debt.

In recent years, a number of modest changes have been made in the management of Africa's debt problems. A few creditors have turned concessional loans into grants—in effect, canceling some of the debts owed them. The grace and repayment periods in debt rescheduling negotiations have been lengthened from an original period of five years to up to 25 years at present.

The IMF has sought to ease the repayment burden on low-income

countries through the establishment of two new lending programs: the Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF), set up in 1986, and the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF), established in 1988 to provide concessional loans to low-income "prolonged users" (largely Africans). The World Bank has initiated its own refinancing program, offering concessional loans to low-income countries to refinance earlier World Bank loans under harder terms.

The 1988 Toronto Economic Summit endorsed a "menu" approach to concessional debt relief for Africa. In negotiating the terms of debt reschedulings, creditors can now choose one of the following arrangements: They can cancel one-third of the stock and debt service payments owed; they can provide subsidies on the interest rates charged on rescheduled debts; or they can lengthen the debt repayment period to 25 years.

Another debt relief proposal is the "securitization" scheme, developed by the African Development Bank, whereby the public and private debt of individual countries (except that owed "preferred lenders" like the World Bank or IMF) would be consolidated into 20-year, single premium bonds offered to creditors at agreed interest rates. The debtor would make annual payments into a "redemption fund" which would be managed by creditors and international financial institutions, which would periodically review the economic performance of the debtor. At the end of the 20-year period, the funds in the redemption fund would pay off the debt. This proposal has met with resistance from creditors, particularly from the U.S., and at present, appears to have few

prospects for being implemented.

Finally there is a menu of debt relief measures for middle-income countries, including debt-equity swaps, debt for conservation, the sale of debt in secondary markets, and repurchases by governments of their debts at discounted prices. While some African debtors, like Nigeria or Zambia, have engaged in a variety of these schemes to reduce their debt, for most of low income Africa, these measures promise little relief since the private sector interest in the debtor country implied by many of them is lacking.

## The Soviet Perspective

Sub-Saharan Africa's debt to the Soviet Union constitutes only a small fraction of its total indebtedness. Data on its debt to the USSR is fragmentary or estimated, but by any measure, it is less than 15 percent of the total, with under one-fifth of its volume in the form of commercial claims. The debt is heavily concentrated, with three top debtors (Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, in decreasing order) accounting for at least two-thirds of Soviet claims on the continent.

Most credit arrangements between the Soviet Union and African countries include the option of debt-servicing not only in convertible currencies, but also through exports of goods to the Soviet Union. During the early stages of the debt crisis, this led to unfounded optimism that the special nature of Soviet-African credit relationships would provide an adequate shelter against debtors' unilateral refusal to repay their debts. Yet reality proved to be more complicated. As financial pressures on African debtors to increase their hard currency exports mounted,

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**With recent economic reforms in the Soviet Union and a new era in U.S.-Soviet relations, there are opportunities for cooperation in addressing the debt crisis plaguing many African countries. Although the U.S. and the Soviet Union are not Africa's major creditors, coordination of debt relief strategies could provide some measure of assistance.**

By CAROL LANCASTER and SERGEI SHATALOV

some of them diverted part of those exports previously earmarked for servicing their debt to the USSR.

Despite these problems, no comprehensive debt management policy emerged in Moscow. Rescheduling was implemented on a case-by-case basis. Reliable estimates put the amounts of sub-Saharan Africa's debt rescheduled, refinanced, and written off by the USSR from 1982 to 1988 at \$5 billion. This approach proved to be self-defeating. It failed to stop tensions from developing in Soviet-African economic relations under the pressure of debt crisis, nor did it prevent significant losses to Soviet credit institutions.

The Soviet aid program has suffered from the conflicting interests of different organizations and institutions which are directly responsible for the specific development projects. Often, departmental ambitions have overtaken the broad interests of development cooperation.

Thus, a number of grandiose "white elephant" projects, poorly integrated into the recipient country's economic structure, were implemented. As these projects involved significant outlays in local currency, they also distorted credit markets in recipient countries. The projects were not always thoroughly prepared, with forecasts of future trends (exchange rates, prices, etc.) rare, leading to miscalculations. There is no concise data on their overall efficiency, but estimates put the share of unprofitable entities at 10 to 20 percent of all Soviet projects in Africa.

The Soviet aid agency, the State Committee for Economic Cooperation, merged in 1987 with the Ministry for Foreign Trade, was responsible for specific development projects, with the Ministry of Finance

providing loans. The Committee's major success criterion was the total cost of development projects executed—to ensure their profitability was not its task.

If the option of covering debt with exports of tropical goods was open, there emerged another problem: the Committee was not empowered to enter into such agreements. The Ministry for Foreign Trade, on the other hand, preferred to make its purchases through major international commodities exchanges, though the same goods could be delivered by the debtor country as part of the debt-servicing deal at a significant discount.

There is another issue which limits the Soviet Union's freedom of choice with respect to the debt crisis. The USSR does not participate in the activities of leading international bodies involved in debt rescheduling. African debtors usually negotiate with the Paris Club and/or the IMF, and only then approach Soviet organizations, expecting treatment on the terms comparable to those provided by the Paris Club.

The first shifts in Soviet debt policies appeared in 1985, and recently the debt problem has been upgraded to the status of a major issue in Soviet external economic policy. A new approach was described in General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at the UN on December 7, 1988. This debt initiative, as well as the Toronto decisions, is targeted at the group of poorest debt-distressed African countries.

The Soviet initiative stresses the need for solutions balanced and flexible enough to make adjustment sustainable. Grand schemes of debt reform have little chance of being realized, due to budgetary concerns in leading creditor countries, both

Western and socialist. The Soviet debt initiative aims at strengthening existing arrangements to address new challenges, with the IMF and the World Bank remaining the leading institutions dealing with debt issues.

The USSR has already indicated its readiness to establish technical cooperation with both institutions. The establishment of such cooperation serves the central aim of economic reform in the USSR—to qualitatively upgrade the country's involvement in the global economy. The list of institutions with which such interaction is desirable includes the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, the Paris Club, and the Bank for International Settlements, as well as regional development banks. Full membership in most of these institutions is, of course, the optimal solution, and there has recently been a positive reaction from some OECD countries on this point.

The Soviet position on the debt issue must also address longer-term tasks, in particular the extensive restructuring of the entire Soviet development assistance program. This task is urgent not only because debt service arrears to the USSR are significant, but also because the turnover of Soviet-African trade is declining.

Reform of the whole structure of Soviet external economic ties is currently underway. In this area, as in other sectors of the economy, this means, above all, further deregulation and decentralization. Characteristic of this present stage of reform is the appearance of new entities in the foreign economic sphere. The Soviet Law on State Enterprise (Association), which laid the foundation for the reforms, came into effect

on January 1, 1988, specifying that enterprises must have the ability to pay their own way on a self-financing basis. Since April 1 this year, cooperatives also obtained the right to engage in external trade and convertible currency transactions.

This reform is bound to have a profound impact on the nature of Soviet credit relationships with sub-Saharan Africa. Decentralization of external economic ties means above all that the state will no longer assume the credit risk of most economic entities involved in foreign transactions. In this situation, the importance of precise guidelines for foreign lending is paramount.

The traditional blurring of borders between different forms of credit must be terminated. Foreign lending must be provided in three strictly separate forms: development assistance as such, financed directly from the budget; bank lending (including export and import credits) with the responsibility fully laid on the banking system; and commercial lending from the resources of enterprises which have the right of access to the foreign markets. The state will no longer assume any direct responsibility for the latter two forms of lending.

### The U.S. Perspective

Like the USSR, the United States is not a major creditor to sub-Saharan Africa. Long-term debt owed the U.S. government by sub-Saharan Africa totalled \$3.2 billion at the end of 1987. (This figure includes principal only. When interest owed is added, the total debt rises to \$4.5 billion.) Of the \$3.2 billion owed to the U.S. government, \$2.4 billion is owed by low income, debt-distressed countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Between 1984 and 1987, the U.S. rescheduled \$921 million in sub-Saharan African debt, \$860 million of which was debt owed by the low-income countries.

Despite the relatively small amounts of debt involved, the U.S. has been a reluctant participant in initiatives involving debt relief for

African countries. In 1988, the U.S. relented in its opposition to other creditors providing interest rate subsidies, but maintained its opposition to any subsidies itself or to any form of debt cancellation. As part of the Toronto Summit agreement, however, the U.S. has supported a lengthening in the repayment of debt by low-income countries to 25 years.

There are a number of reasons why the U.S. has been the least forthcoming among Western governments on debt relief for low-income Africa. First, it is possible that Congress would require that the value of any debt cancelled be covered by new appropriations on the grounds that canceled debt represents a loss of an asset owned and revenue due the U.S. government.

Any such appropriations would likely come out of foreign aid, reducing the amounts of new aid available. As a result, the value of debt cancelled could be offset by an equal reduction in foreign aid, leaving developing countries no better off.

Second, there is a fear in Washington that debt relief, even in the form of interest rate subsidies, would be claimed as a precedent, not only by the large Latin American debtors, but by Americans—farmers or students—who owe the U.S. government money. Other debtors could well demand equal treatment and domestic groups could back up those claims with political clout, ultimately costing the government substantial sums in lost revenues.

Despite these problems, the challenge of providing relief to African debtors would not be insurmountable by an administration and Congress with sufficient political will and creativity. One recent legislative change already provides an opportunity. In the foreign aid appropriations bill passed in 1988, Congress authorized the president to accept payment of debts to the U.S. in local currencies or to waive repayments entirely from those low-income countries with an IMF program in place.

This legislation, to take effect in 1990, did not include any indication

of what its implications would be for the federal budget or for foreign aid appropriations. Thus, whether and how this legislation will be implemented remains unclear.

### Remaining Problems and Opportunities

Despite the modest debt relief measures already available for low-income African countries, the current system of dealing with the debt problems through periodic reschedulings creates a number of problems. First, it is extremely time-consuming, especially for that small number of top-level economic managers in African countries. The minister of finance and the governor of the central bank must spend a great deal of their time preparing for and negotiating reschedulings. While they are negotiating debt reschedulings, they are not managing their economies.

Second, the need to negotiate frequent reschedulings can inject a degree of uncertainty into economic planning and increase the costs of imports. Arrears on unpaid debts typically build up while negotiations are planned and underway. Such arrears can threaten the availability of short-term trade financing and result in exporters charging premium prices to African importers.

Third, the way debts have been rescheduled in the past has greatly increased the stock of debt. Unpaid interest has been combined with unpaid capital to create a new, much larger loan to the rescheduling country, which is then charged market rates of interest. The capitalization of interest payments has added more to the stock of African debt than new borrowing in recent years and has increased future debt-servicing burdens.

Fourth, the existing stock of debt still represents a heavy mortgage on the future of many African countries. Indeed, in a number of countries, it is already so large that no one realistically expects it to be fully paid. It likely acts as a disincentive to officials to undertake and sustain the

difficult policy reforms necessary to restore their countries to growth. Why suffer the pain and risk of such changes today if much of the gain from growth tomorrow will simply go to service a virtually limitless debt?

Future debt relief for low-income Africa should address three problems: It should be coherent and equitable; it should be efficient; and it should reduce debt-servicing and the stock of debt to levels which are manageable and consistent with long-term growth. Creditors (including the U.S. and the USSR) should agree on a coherent framework for debt relief—perhaps involving a ceiling on debt-servicing based on the amount of export earnings, import prices, and other relevant economic variables.

The ceiling would be tailored to what individual debtors could realistically pay and would be adjustable to changes (improvement or deterioration) in their economic conditions. The stock of debt should be brought down, where appropriate, to levels consistent with the debtors' likely future ability to pay. At the very least, creditors should refrain from adding to the stock through rescheduling arrangements. And consolidation periods should be extended beyond the 12 to 18-month periods typical today. The reason for these short periods is to keep debtors on a "short leash," to lever or force them to maintain reform programs acceptable to the IMF, or to return to the Fund for such programs where they have broken down.

Creditors have every right to expect effective reform programs from debtors who are benefiting from debt reschedulings or relief. But there are other means of ensuring leverage which are less demanding on scarce human resources. Conditioning aid disbursements on annual or semi-annual reviews of economic performance would exert plenty of leverage. And for those governments which sign IMF standbys and Paris Club agreements with little intention of fulfilling them, debt

relief should be withheld.

In evolving a debt policy for low-income Africa, there is an opportunity for cooperative action involving the USSR. First, there is an opportunity to exchange information and coordinate activities in the area of resource transfers.

The now-reformed Soviet development cooperation strategy is focusing increased attention on agricultural projects and the need to shift from mega-projects to smaller ones which more easily fit into the recipient economy. Special attention to the social groups benefiting from development projects is another central point. These areas can provide common ground for aid coordination with DAC member countries.

Successful aid coordination could lead to some form of joint financing of projects, either on a bilateral basis, or in conjunction with the international financial institutions—the World Bank and regional development banks. Taking into account current budget constraints in all donor countries, this is an attractive option.

Among specific measures, the option of debt forgiveness was traditionally considered unacceptable as an across-the-board solution. However, writing off even the whole ODA debt of the poorest African countries entails small losses to the creditors, Western or Soviet. This initiative must, of course, take into account legal constraints in some creditor countries. Corresponding amounts of grants can be provided, or a 99-year moratorium on ODA debt of the poorest African countries can be announced.

Second, there may be opportunities for coordinated approaches to debt relief combined with new commitments. Creative use of debt swaps is one possibility, now accepted throughout Africa as a way to revive the flow of foreign investment to the continent. New investments involving trilateral arrangements between the debtor government, Western governments or companies, and the USSR could involve providing the capital and absorbing part of

exports of such companies as debt service payments. Exploratory work is already underway in the USSR to set up joint ventures in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and some other African countries.

In August 1988, a specialized financial company, "Sovfintrade," was created, which can organize both debt-for-equity swaps and debt conversions into bonds. This company could serve as the Soviet agent in starting such trilateral ventures. The number of Soviet state-run and cooperative entities, including small and medium-sized ones, which now can participate in such arrangements is quite significant. Another idea is being discussed now—the option of selling credit claims on African countries to independent economic agents in the USSR.

Bridging the information gap also requires cooperative action. As of now, data on Soviet aid programs and the structure of its claims on foreign countries is fragmentary. Obviously, research on aid and debt problems requires comprehensive information, yet this remains inaccessible to the general public in the USSR. Publication of this data will strengthen the prestige of the Soviet Union and the outside world's perception of the present economic reform as an irreversible process.

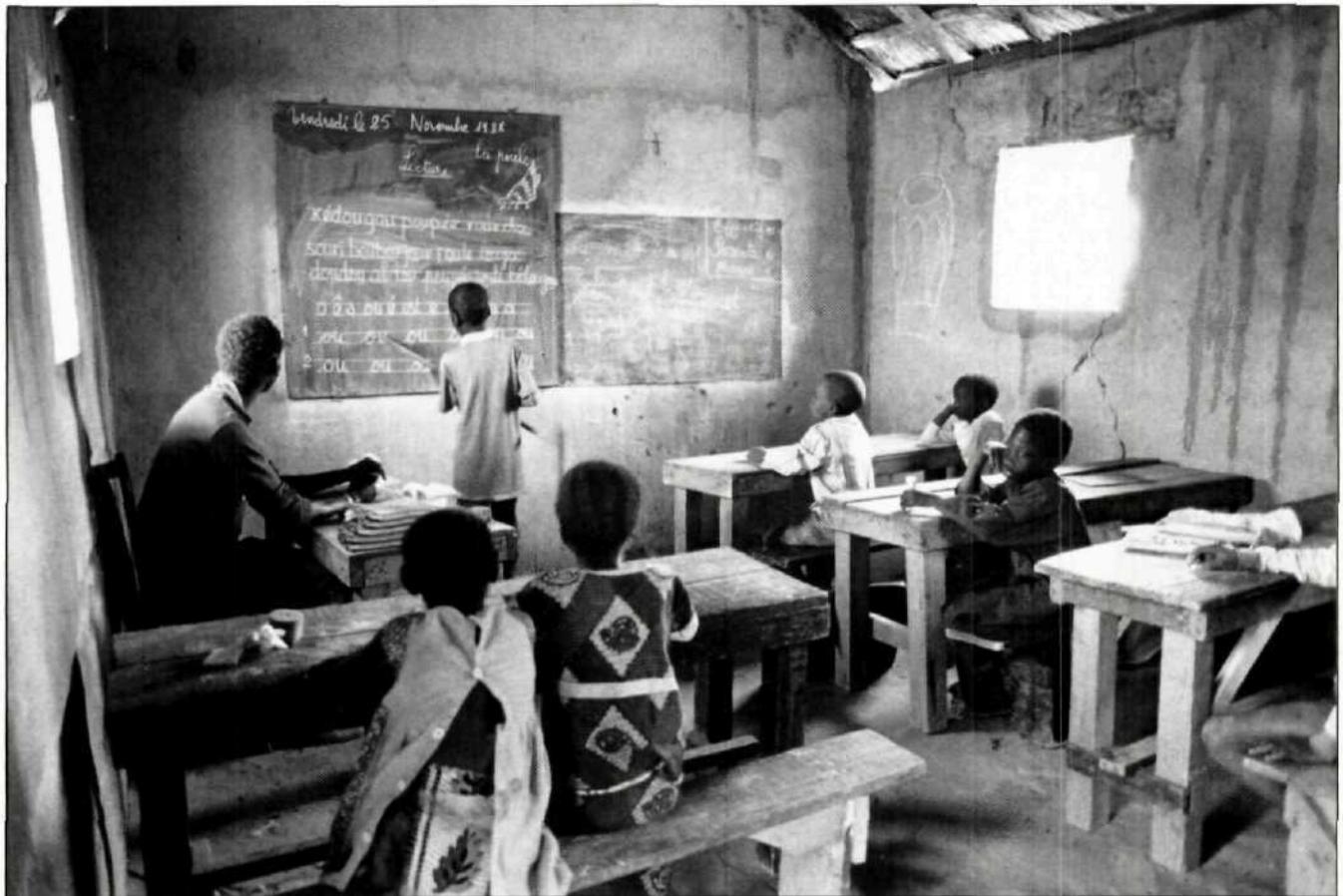
Here too, positive trends are apparent. Work is now under way in the Soviet Union to harmonize national accounting practices with UN methodology. In 1987 for the first time, GNP figures were published both according to the UN methodology and in the traditional manner. We can soon expect publication of data on the Soviet balance of payments, official development assistance, and the structure of overseas liabilities and claims. In this respect, possibilities should be explored for dialogue between the Soviet central statistical bodies and the corresponding units of the DAC, the World Bank, and the IMF. This would fit quite logically in the context of "glasnost" and would serve in itself as a significant confidence-building measure. ○



# AFTER ADJUSTMENT

By ERNEST HARSCH

**Are African economies really better off after having adopted structural adjustment programs promoted by the World Bank and the IMF? Controversy has been raging between proponents of reform, in particular the World Bank, and the Economic Commission for Africa, which finds little improvement in Africa's overall growth and rate of development.**



Betty Press

**A**s this decade of unprecedented economic and social crisis in Africa draws to a close, many within the continent and without are asking whether the 1990s need bring more of the same.

How can Africa break away from its image of widespread hunger, suffering, and decay? What can Africans themselves do, and how can the international community more effectively support them? Do the structural adjustment programs currently promoted by the IMF and World Bank hold the answers?

As could be expected, views on such questions vary widely. To an extent, the discussions on Africa's prospects and options appear linked to different readings of the situation today.

In a report issued in April, the UN's Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) found little of cheer. True, 1988 signaled a marked improvement in Africa's growth rates over the previous year, particularly in agriculture. But this could be attributed largely to exceptionally good weather, itself a sign of weakness and vulnerability.

Even this good fortune, noted the ECA's *Economic Report on Africa, 1989*, was not enough to pull overall economic growth above Africa's rate of population increase. So while the

continent's gross domestic product grew 2.3 percent last year, in per capita terms, it fell 0.7 percent, continuing the decline that has been underway for most of this decade.

Africa's economic performance has been seriously hampered by unfavorable external constraints, the ECA report emphasized. The commission's executive secretary, Adedeyo Adedeji, recently observed that unless the "unbearable albatross" of debilitating debt burdens, low export prices, and a net outflow of resources is lifted, "recovery and development will continue to elude Africa."

In an effort to convey what this economic crisis means in human terms, the ECA report devoted a major section to Africa's social situation. It is grim reading. Incomes, employment, nutrition, and health and educational levels have all declined, with a fall in average living standards of one-fifth since 1980.

In its latest *State of the World's Children* survey, Unicef similarly focused on the social consequences of the economic crisis. There were a few bright spots, such as the strengthening of primary health care and improved immunization programs.

But in the 37 poorest countries (most of which are in Africa), per capita spending on health has fallen by half over the last few years, and on education by a quarter. Malnutrition is rising in Burundi, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Nigeria, and other African countries. Some 350,000 more African children died last year due to reduced health budgets, deteriorating sanitation, and the lack of foreign exchange to import even basic medicines. "Children in debt" is the dramatic phrase Unicef used to capture this reality.

One recent World Bank report sees Africa's situation in a cheerier light. Entitled *Africa's Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s*, and issued in conjunction with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), it argues that "the statistics commonly reported mask a more complex, less dismal picture." Stacking the numbers

somewhat differently than usual, the report perceives "signs of a turnaround" in Africa, with countries that have adopted strong structural programs doing markedly better overall.

"Recovery has begun," the World Bank's vice president for Africa, Edward Jaycox, told a Washington news conference on March 8, the day the report was issued.

One of the motivations behind the World Bank report appears to be an effort to induce international donors to provide more funding for Africa. By placing an accent on the positive, it seeks to dispel the notion that Africa is a hopeless case.

Adedeji, however, does not agree that this can be effective, arguing that "it is only by appreciating the reality—sometimes the bitter reality—that the rest of the international community can continue to rally round with support." It is wrong, he says, "to portray the economic situation currently prevailing in Africa in rosy terms, to minimize the impact of an adverse external environment, and to depict the effects of structural adjustment programs as having been always positive."

Some within the World Bank itself view Africa's situation more soberly. "There's no room for complacency or excessive confidence among any of the major actors on Africa," stated Dr. Ramgopal Agarwala in February. He said that it is "time to recognize that we've all failed" and that new strategies for African development are desperately needed. Agarwala, who heads up the special economic office of the Bank's Africa Technical Department, is currently drafting a major World Bank report that will explore such strategies. *Beyond Adjustment* is the working title.

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It remains fashionable among Western government officials, bankers, economists, and editors to deny that their own countries' economic policies have much to do with Africa's current difficulties. They suggest that the fault must lie with Africans themselves, who have sim-

ply made a mess of it since the departure of the colonial governors.

"Africa's problems are largely of its own making," an article in the London *Economist* recently proclaimed, "and so must be the solutions."

Africans take issue with such an apportioning of blame, pointing to unfavorable terms of trade, rising protectionism in the U.S. and Western Europe, and high interest rates on external loans as major constraints on Africa's development. But many nevertheless agree that Africans must shoulder the prime responsibility for finding a way out of the crisis. During a special 1986 UN session, African states collectively vowed to carry out sweeping reforms to cope with the challenge.

Many were already in the process of doing so. There is now hardly an African state that has not introduced some economic reform measure, be it an adjustment in fiscal or trade policy, an increase in agricultural producer prices, a streamlining of the public sector, programs to safeguard the environment, or enhanced support for cooperatives and small-scale enterprises.

Some 30 African countries have adopted formal structural adjustment programs supported by the IMF and World Bank. Others have programs that differ in some respects, or have implemented specific measures not usually associated with structural adjustment packages. Zimbabwe, which lacks the full IMF/World Bank stamp of approval, has achieved remarkable results in agriculture. Increased producer prices, the introduction of a more efficient marketing system, and assistance to farmers' cooperatives have encouraged small-scale African farmers to quadruple their maize output since independence in 1980.

Under the late Thomas Sankara, Burkina Faso pursued energetic rural development programs that saw new schools, primary health posts, and other facilities built in practically every village, with genuine grassroots participation. Some 2 million children were vaccinated

against three major childhood diseases in just a two-week period, winning Burkina international recognition for this feat and serving as a model for similar campaigns that Unicef is projecting elsewhere in Africa.

For several years, Ethiopia, with assistance for the World Food Programme and other donor agencies, has been carrying out one of Africa's most ambitious soil conservation programs—an especially high priority for a country so vulnerable to periodic drought and famine.

There are other such "success stories" on the continent, underlining the potential for development that exists even under today's difficult circumstances. Some of these efforts, by their nature, are not well reflected in the customary statistics on economic growth. But they are nevertheless attracting growing interest among development experts, donors, government officials, and some within the World Bank and IMF as well.

Thus far, however, it has been the structural adjustment programs that have been dominant. Their slant is largely monetarist: a focus on (some would say preoccupation with) market-determined exchange rates and price levels, budget balancing, tax reform, trade liberalization, and generally, an energetic policy of cutting domestic demand.

Adoption of these programs has not been entirely voluntary. More and more, the IMF, World Bank, Western governments, commercial banks, and donor agencies are insisting that an approved structural adjustment program be in place before debts can be rescheduled or new loans extended. The recent World Bank report found that in the period from 1985 through 1987, African countries with "strong" structural adjustment programs netted an 18.7 percent average annual increase in foreign aid; those without were clearly penalized, with the amounts they received *declining* an average of 4.7 percent a year.

Partly as a result of such pressures, structural adjustment pro-

grams have often been pushed through hastily, without adequate attention to the specifics of individual countries or the impact on living standards and production patterns.

Public criticism and opposition has flared across the continent, usually in response to sudden price increases or severe cutbacks in public expenditures. Morocco, Tunisia, and Nigeria have seen street rioting. Sudan's Gaafar al-Nimeiry was toppled in 1985 after an IMF-approved reform program sparked an urban insurrection. Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda did not wait to test his fate; after rioting swept the copperbelt, he replaced an orthodox structural adjustment program with a more acceptable home-grown variety.

African manufacturers have likewise complained bitterly about the scrapping of protectionist safeguards on their infant industries.

"Draconian" was the way Mali's then prime minister, Mamadou Dembélé, described the solutions of the IMF and World Bank in March 1988. "There is in these measures a great social component that calls for some prudence."

Some countries with structural adjustment programs have fared better than others. Despite serious social difficulties, both Ghana and Senegal have experienced respectable economic recoveries, with average annual real growth rates from 1985 through 1988 of 5.1 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively. For most of the others, the payoff has been more elusive.

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The World Bank report, *Africa's Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s*, acknowledges that uneven performance, structural rigidities, the time required for reforms to bear fruit, and other factors make it difficult to draw general conclusions about the effectiveness of adjustment programs.

Nevertheless, it attempts to do just that, concluding that countries with strong structural adjustment programs demonstrate "higher agricultural growth, faster export

growth, strong GDP growth, and larger investment" than do other countries. Appropriate tables and graphs are included to make the case.

On closer examination, key parts of this statistical presentation appear shaky. From a sample of 19 countries with strong programs and 12 without, the report finds that from 1985 through 1987, the former had average annual GDP growth rates of 2.8 percent, and the latter of 2.7 percent. Hardly a compelling difference.

But then the report weeds out of each grouping countries that are said to have suffered strong external shocks. The result is a much sharper spread in the figures, with an average growth rate of 3.8 percent for countries with strong programs and 1.5 percent for the other category.

Is such selective comparison statistically meaningful? The sizes of the country samples are reduced considerably (to 14 and 8, respectively), thus weakening the significance of any results. Nowhere in the report are "strong external shocks" clearly defined, so it is impossible to tell by what criteria some countries are eliminated and others not.

Zimbabwe, grouped among the countries with "weak" reform programs, is inexplicably removed, although it has been doing very well overall. Nor is it clear why Zambia is included among the "weak" reformers, since for most the period covered, 1985-87, it had an adjustment program that was highly praised by the World Bank.

Economic data from Africa is notoriously unreliable and fragmentary, and can lend itself to a wide range of interpretations. This is evident in reading another recent World Bank study, *Adjustment Lending: An Evaluation of Ten Years of Experience*, which found no evidence that adjusting countries in Africa are performing better. In fact, an evaluation of 15 such countries in sub-Saharan Africa revealed that average annual GDP growth rates had *fallen* from 2.7 percent before the beginning of the adjustment programs to

1.8 percent after. It also found somewhat worse investment and inflation rates and debt service ratios.

Even if some real improvement could be shown for countries with such programs, a further question would have to be asked: How much of the better performance comes from structural adjustment itself, and how much from these countries' greater access to external financing? The greater inflow of foreign aid and other funding would by itself give their economies some extra buoyancy.

There is a further—and highly controversial—side to structural adjustment: its immediate social impact. Any attempt to evaluate such programs solely on the basis of macro-economic indicators would fail to take this aspect into account.

Though it is sometimes argued that incomes and living standards would have fallen anyway, there is now broad acknowledgement that structural adjustment can have a detrimental effect on the more vulnerable sectors of society, such as women, children, and the aged. Unicef, the ECA, the International Labour Organization, and the IMF and World Bank themselves have conducted a variety of studies documenting serious deterioration in social services, wages, and employment levels associated with structural adjustment.

"Structural adjustment policies naturally produce gainers and losers," noted the World Bank study on adjustment lending. "Scattered and anecdotal evidence suggests that stabilization elements of programs have often hurt welfare."

A staff study on Senegal and Ghana issued this March by the U.S. House of Representatives Africa Subcommittee reported a worsening of social inequities and poverty among some sectors, despite impressive economic growth in both countries. It strongly criticized the standard adjustment formula for "producing little enduring poverty alleviation."

"Among urban Senegalese—about 35 percent of the population—poverty has clearly been

aggravated by structural adjustment," the report said. Real per capita health spending has fallen 20 percent since 1981. Peasant farmers suffered from a precipitate dismantling of state rural development institutions, bringing diminishing yields of groundnuts, the main cash crop.

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## **A**mong the more fundamental criticisms of orthodox structural adjustment is that it is not really *structural*.

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Madagascar, which has a "strong" adjustment program according to the World Bank, is an especially glaring case. It has seen a doubling of its infant mortality rate since the beginning of the decade. An estimated 150,000 people died in a malaria epidemic last year, which went largely unchecked because of a lack of medicines: Madagascar's medicine purchases are just one-fifth what they were 10 years ago. Health workers report rising malnutrition.

A UN-organized conference in Khartoum on the human dimension of Africa's recovery efforts concluded in March 1988 that "adjustment measures have been implemented at high human costs and sacrifices" and are "rending the fabric of African society."

World Bank and IMF officials have acknowledged these criticisms and are showing somewhat more sensitivity toward social factors. Several African countries now have special programs to soften the burdens of adjustment on those who are more vulnerable.

Madagascar, for example, has just introduced a modest social action program funded by the World Bank's concessionary lending affili-

ate, the International Development Association. Ghana has perhaps the most ambitious program, known as PAMSCAD, which includes a wide range of measures such as job retraining and placement for laid-off workers, credit schemes for small-scale farmers, public works projects, and improvement of health, sanitation, and nutrition. Funding has come from the World Bank, U.S. AID, Japan, Austria, and other donors.

Hopes have been expressed that such "adjustment with a human face" will bring at least some relief to those most seriously hit—and to African governments facing mounting public discontent and unrest.

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The difficulties associated with structural adjustment and the absence thus far of any clear trend toward economic recovery are spurring some deeper thinking about Africa's development strategies. An increasing number of African and non-African analysts are concluding that the problems do not just stem from temporary economic imbalances, but are rooted in the very structures of Africa's economies.

Looking at structural adjustment, they ask: How appropriate are policies that revolve mainly around prices and monetary supply for countries with such weak markets, where links between one economic sector and another are minimal at best? How much of an incentive is a higher producer price for the average African food farmer, whose output is largely for domestic consumption, not the market, and who in any case lacks access to consumer goods or agricultural inputs worth buying? How can the lifting of all trade controls strengthen fledgling indigenous industries when they are immediately inundated and overwhelmed by floods of cheap import goods?

Among the more fundamental criticisms of orthodox structural adjustment is that it is not really *structural*. According to Adedeji, Africa's basic difficulty lies in the

"neo-colonial monostructural production system" that makes its economies highly dependent on export earnings from one or two primary commodities.

Inherited from the days of colonial rule, this extreme export orientation—which is more pronounced in Africa than in other developing regions—makes the continent especially vulnerable to fluctuations in a world market over which it has no real control. With just a few exceptions, the prices that Africa receives for its main exports have been on a downswing for most of this decade.

This problem of commodity prices has stirred sharp reactions from virtually every African government, of whatever political persuasion, whether it has an adjustment program or not.

"It cannot be overemphasized that our difficulties stem from the insufficient remuneration received from the sale of our raw materials," stated Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny in his December 6 independence day address. "As long as the spirit of speculation continues to reign over transactions between developed and developing countries, we will wait in vain for the advent of a new world economic order based on justice."

This fall in export earnings has done much to aggravate Africa's foreign debt, now standing at some \$230 billion and rising at a faster rate than in any other region of the world. For the 34 least developed sub-Saharan countries, the ratio of debt to annual export earnings exceeds 500 percent.

Some modest steps are underway internationally to bring at least a measure of debt relief to the hardest hit African countries. Yet, states African Development Bank president Babacar N'Diaye, "Debt rescheduling, or even its partial cancellation, doesn't attack the heart of the problem. Everyone knows that we haven't found a real solution to the debt problem and that we need to show more creativity."

Whether Africa's creditors, donors, and trade partners will move

in a sufficiently "creative" direction remains to be seen.

But within Africa itself, there are already greater signs of creativity, as community associations, private voluntary organizations, local representatives of donor agencies, and some governments demonstrate more openness toward new solutions and alternatives. The failures of the top-down development strategies of the past are being increasingly recognized and there is growing appreciation for newer, innovative initiatives that stress equity, reliance on local resources, environmental protection, and grassroots participation. "Sustainable development" is the common term for these approaches.

Meeting in Addis Ababa this April, African finance and planning ministers adopted an ECA-proposed "African alternative" to standard structural adjustment programs.

"Africa has to adjust," the finance ministers conceded. But they insisted that this must be "adjustment with transformation" and that African countries themselves must play the central role in the design and formulation of adjustment programs.

Highlights of their alternative include:

- Maintenance of social expenditures and "human resource development," in part through reductions in military and other non-essential public spending.

- Channeling of investments toward production, in particular agriculture, and the provision of effective incentives to both farmers and domestic manufacturers.

- Diversification of exports, strengthening of the domestic market, and greater use of local inputs instead of imported ones.

- Flexible trade and exchange rate policies that introduce some liberalization while maintaining adequate protection for consumers and producers.

- Improved efficiency of the public sector.

- Broad popular participation in decision-making, both to ensure public support for economic

programs and to better mobilize local human resources.

- Increasing collective self-reliance through more effective regional cooperation and integration.

Some of these ideas have been around for a while, with little practical impact so far. Others are already being implemented. Some aspects of the African alternative draw on specific policies included in existing structural adjustment programs. On those points at least, an element of consensus thus exists between African governments and the international financial institutions.

This consensus could well increase further. The preliminary draft of the World Bank's *Beyond Adjustment* report calls for a drastic reorientation of development strategy in Africa. It incorporates major elements of the recent thinking on "sustainable development" and some of the policy suggestions put forth by the ECA and African finance ministers.

One of the initial aims was precisely to find some common ground; Dr. Agarwala and his team spent a year soliciting suggestions, ideas, and criticisms from more than 300 African economists and development experts, as well as from the ECA, African Development Bank, and other African institutions.

The Addis Ababa meeting of finance ministers expressed the hope that a broad consensus could be built around the African alternative, one that will actively involve Africa's bilateral and multilateral donors.

Whatever the case, there seems to be a greater determination among Africans to demonstrate that they can develop their own strategies, and do not simply have to follow policies dictated from abroad.

"We must not be afraid to stick our necks out and put forward our own proposals," Adedeji told the opening session in Addis Ababa. "Let us show to an increasingly skeptical world that, poor as we may be, we are Africans first and last, and that we will forever defend its vital interests."○



OAU

By SAMMY KUM BUO



Salim Ahmed Salim: "The personality, vision, and experience needed to begin to revitalize the OAU"

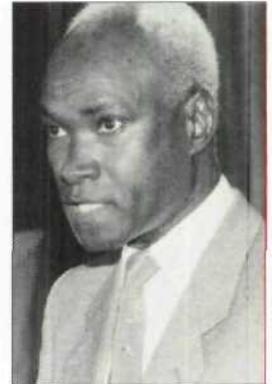
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# STRENGTHENING AFRICA'S VOICE

Created to maximize the continent's influence in the international arena, the OAU has seen its authority eroded by the growing involvement of foreign powers in Africa's political and economic crises. Revitalizing the organization and maximizing Africa's voice on the world scene should be paramount in choosing a new secretary-general.



Betty Press



Betty Press

Idé Oumarou, OAU secretary-general: "Working according to the existing, albeit restrictive rules of the game"

The Tanzanian government is basing its campaign for the election of one of its best-known citizens, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Salim Ahmed Salim, to replace Niger's Idé Oumarou as secretary-general of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), on the need to revitalize and enhance the role of the organization and reverse the current trend toward the marginalization of African issues and Africa's role in the world.

Thus, in recent campaign visits to Abidjan, Lagos, and Yaoundé, among other African capitals, Tanzanian Foreign Minister Benjamin Mkapa has almost completely side-stepped the issue of the personalities involved in the OAU election, concentrating instead on the vision which his government projects for Africa's oldest and most important inter-governmental organization.

Tanzania's approach to the OAU

*Sammy Kum Buo, a specialist on African political and security affairs, is currently writing a book on that subject.*

campaign appears sound and credible, for the consequence of the growing internationalization of African problems and of the expanding role of non-African actors in the search for solutions has clearly been the steady side-lining of Africa's role and African views.

Indeed, the critical decisions of the day on pressing African issues of peace and security in southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, southern Sudan, and Western Sahara, as well as on the debilitating debt burden, the worsening problem of commodity prices, and the overall economic crisis, are not being taken in Africa, but elsewhere and by others.

Thus, for instance, as the United Nations struggles to lead Namibia to independence and to resolve the Western Sahara imbroglio, as the United States, Soviet Union, and Cuba work to bring peace to Angola, and as the World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD, and GATT are grappling with the problems of Africa's poverty, debt, and raw materials, the OAU is most conspicuous by its absence

from center-stage, from the frontline of decisive action on these issues of paramount importance to its members.

Nearly three decades after most African states attained their independence and over 25 years since the creation of the OAU, the continued—indeed increased—dependence of African countries on foreign powers and institutions to resolve African problems has become a source of growing frustration, humiliation, and anxiety to many Africans. Not only does such dependence contradict and undermine African states' assertion of their independence and sovereignty, but it also more ominously contributes to turning Africa into a battleground for competing foreign ideologies more concerned about advancing their own interests and claims, often at the cost of African lives and property.

In an increasingly interdependent world where the concept of absolute sovereignty is largely meaningless, inter-state cooperation, whether at

the sub-regional, regional, or international level, is essential. This is particularly pertinent in Africa where the small and weak countries saw the creation of the OAU not only as a way of maximizing their influence collectively on the international scene, but also as a more realistic and appropriate approach to dealing effectively with their common problems.

The establishment of the OAU has also proved valuable to non-Africans, in particular as a forum for gauging African views on a variety of issues. When Africa's position on a particular issue is sought, it is easier to consult the OAU than each of Africa's 50 independent states, especially since such individual consultations would probably produce 50 different, even opposing positions on the same subject.

One of the most remarkable features of regional diplomacy within the OAU—and a major source of strength for the organization and for its survival prospects—is the ability

of African governments to paper over their differences in order to save the organization and preserve the appearances of African unity.

Thus, although African states were badly divided in the early 1980s over the admission of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as a full OAU member-state (Morocco withdrew and Zaire, which has since rejoined, suspended its participation), the organization managed to survive perhaps its most serious threat of disintegration.

To many Africans, the OAU has become a sacred cow—to be preserved, even if in practice, it is ignored. A generation of Africans have grown up with the OAU and no African country, especially one from south of the Sahara, would feel completely legitimate unless it gained admission to the organization. The survival of the OAU is therefore an emotional issue to many Africans, largely because of its symbolic value as the embodiment and the concrete assertion of Africa's collective politi-

cal personality on the world stage.

To many Africans, however, one should not be content with the mere survival of the OAU. While the symbolic value of its existence and of its annual ministerial and summit conferences should not be underestimated, the OAU's real importance and credibility derive principally from the effectiveness of its contribution to the promotion, realization, and maintenance of peace, freedom, and progress for the people of Africa. Thus, greater efforts need to be made to enhance the organization's authority and influence—upon which its credibility, both within and outside the region, ultimately depends.

Clearly, when member-states disregard or violate agreements, decisions, or resolutions adopted by them by consensus at OAU meetings, such attitudes only tend to undermine the credibility and effectiveness of the organization. Furthermore, when African countries appear to honor their commitments to inter-



11:15 p.m.  
*Champagne—Laurent Perrier*

11:28 p.m.  
*Caviar frais*

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*Homard Thermidor*

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*Piece de boeuf poele au jus*

**HAUTE**

national organizations, including the payment of their assessed financial contributions, more readily than they do to the OAU, this also tends to erode the OAU's effectiveness, especially in its interaction with those international organizations.

The primary objective of the OAU was to help realize the total liberation of Africa from colonial rule. The second major objective, was to defend the independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty of its members. The OAU has largely been successful with regard to its two principal objectives, as decolonization nears completion in the continent and as the independence and sovereignty of its members have generally been respected.

But it is through its involvement in peace-making and peace-keeping activities in an effort to prevent and resolve conflicts between and within African states that the OAU has generated the greatest notoriety and controversy. The OAU's very limited success in this field has led to com-

plaints of ineffectiveness. Although it could have performed better in many of these cases, it should be recognized that African governments have not given the OAU the requisite tools with which to carry out such delicate and expensive missions.

Although the OAU Charter provides for a commission on mediation, arbitration, and conciliation to resolve inter-state disputes by peaceful means—an organ which has remained moribund since the OAU's inception—the OAU's involvement in regional peace-making and peace-keeping efforts constitute a challenge on a scale far greater than that originally envisaged for the organization under its charter and surpassing its present capacities.

The OAU does not have supranational enforcement powers such as those given to the UN through the Security Council. It is not a formal security or defense alliance, but rather a forum for the harmonization and coordination of policies and

actions on matters of regional interest. It depends on inter-state collaboration on the basis of voluntary political will. Its resolutions and decisions are not binding and are merely recommendatory.

Furthermore, its secretariat is hampered by grossly inadequate resources—a very small budget and staff, and very limited and largely administrative powers for the secretary-general. These restrictive circumstances have contributed significantly to the steady marginalization of the OAU's, and hence Africa's, collective role in major operations, such as the ongoing peace-keeping efforts to lead Namibia to independence or to resolve the Western Sahara conflict.

It is frequently argued, even by its well-wishers, that the OAU should leave peace-keeping operations to the United Nations which, despite the shaky and faltering start of the Namibia operations and the unending controversy over the Congo mission of the 1960s, has acquired the

12:41 a.m.  
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most experience and expertise—and can muster the necessary resources—for such operations.

The OAU should, nevertheless, be actively involved in peace-making and peace-keeping activities in the continent, especially since, in certain cases, a regional approach is more appropriate than resorting to international mechanisms where extraneous considerations could be injected into the picture and further complicate the efforts to resolve the conflicts concerned.

In this connection, for example, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe has revived Kwame Nkrumah's idea for the establishment of an African military high command by calling upon the OAU to create a united African military force to defend the frontline states against South African aggression and other acts of violence. For, though the frontline states may bleed alone, it is Africa as a whole that is attacked. An effective multinational African force under the OAU's aegis, sent to defend the territorial integrity of an OAU member-state victimized by armed aggression, would receive the support of the international community and undercut efforts by the aggressor and its supporters to justify their actions.

The OAU's current weaknesses are particularly disconcerting because the need for an effective inter-governmental institution to deal with the increasing range of pan-African or trans-national problems requiring collective inter-governmental solutions is more urgent and relevant today than ever.

Problems of war and peace have contributed to giving Africa three dubious international distinctions—the most conflict-ridden continent, with the largest number of ongoing armed conflicts; the region with the largest number of refugees; and the poorest and least developed region. These challenges demand collective action at the regional level as a whole.

Efforts to revitalize the OAU to enable Africa to meet the challenges of the new world order would

require, above all, the concrete expression of the political will of African states toward that end. At the same time, the personality of the OAU secretary-general and the quality of performance of the secretariat as a whole can make a major difference. That is why at this critical stage in Africa's history, many Africans believe it is important to pay closer attention to the issue of the election of the OAU secretary-general.

Although his/her powers are limited, the secretary-general, even more than the chairman of the OAU who is rotated annually, personifies the organization. The office-holder's personality and contribution can impact in one way or another on the OAU's image and effectiveness and thus can make a difference between the organization's success or failure. The current secretary-general, Idé Oumarou, Niger's former ambassador to the United Nations and later foreign minister, has, according to his supporters, successfully discharged his mandate, working according to the existing, albeit restrictive rules of the game. He has, they contend, performed as well as anyone could under the circumstances. It would therefore be unfair and baseless, they stress, to place the blame for the OAU's current malaise and ineffectiveness on the secretary-general.

Rather, it is pointed out, it is the 50 member-states, and in particular the 50 heads of state concerned, who constitute the OAU's highest and final decision-making authority. The secretary-general has little freedom of action and even the appointment of his senior aides in the secretariat must be approved, through a vote, by member-states.

To his supporters, the candidacy of Salim Ahmed Salim presents Africa with an excellent opportunity to elect someone with the personality, vision, and experience needed to begin to revitalize the OAU. An Afro-Arab from the Zanzibari region of the United Republic of Tanzania, Salim appears well-placed to deal with the sensitive issue of harmoniz-

ing black African and Arab-African interests within the OAU and to articulate a vision and a strategy that carefully balances African interests north and south of the Sahara.

Furthermore, as former ambassador to the People's Republic of China and to the United Nations, among others, and having served as his country's foreign minister and prime minister as well as his current positions, Salim has handled bilateral relations, multilateral diplomacy, and faced the awesome challenges of domestic leadership in a developing country.

Salim, his supporters point out, is known and respected in international circles, which could be helpful in bringing the OAU's views to the attention of influential circles worldwide. Critics charge that Salim intends to use the OAU secretary-generalship as a platform from which to launch another campaign for the post of UN secretary-general. While denying that that is Salim's objective or strategy, his supporters stress that it could be a positive development and an honor to Africa if a former OAU secretary-general were to be elected secretary-general of the United Nations.

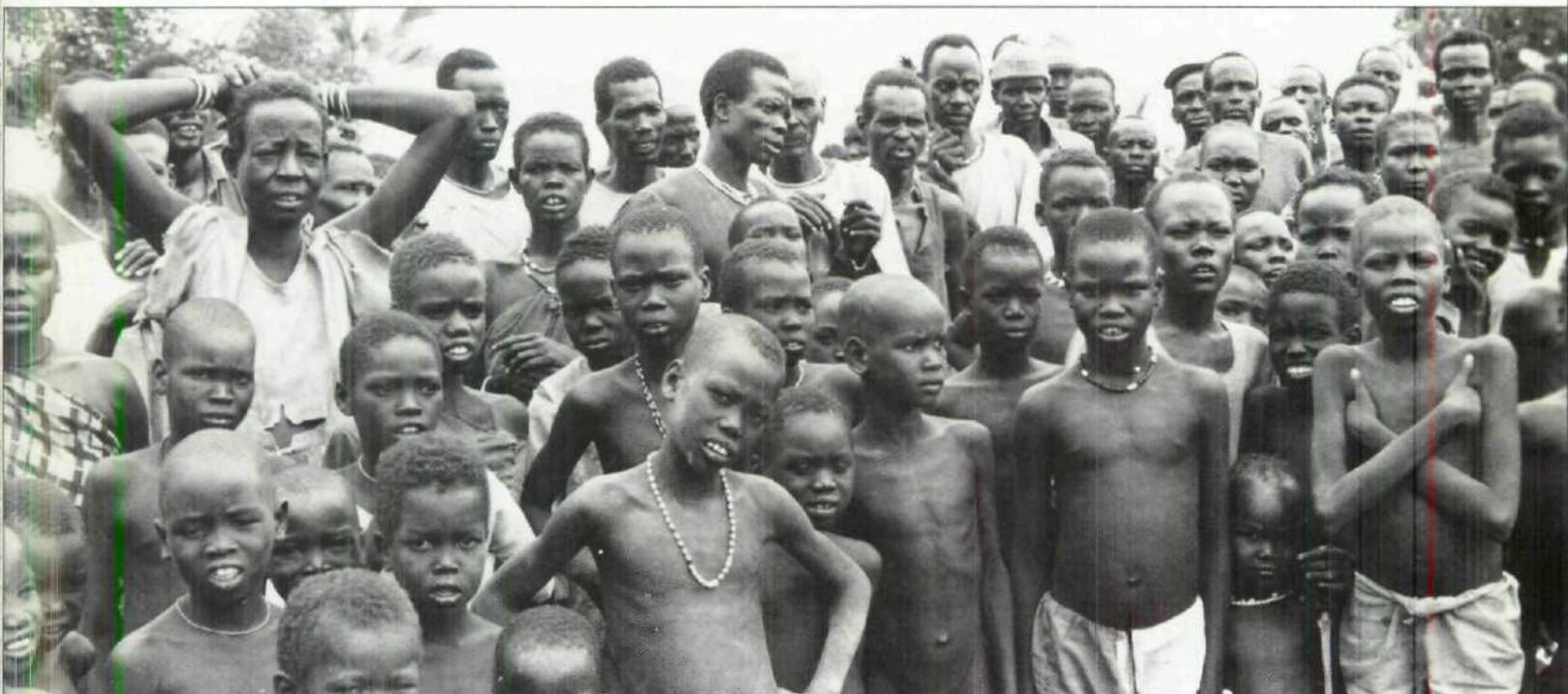
An OAU secretary-general with such a high profile, especially if he proceeds to institute the reforms which the OAU, particularly the secretariat, needs to enhance its effectiveness, might generate a new and more dynamic concept of the organization. Some member-states, which prefer a low-key, almost passive OAU, might resist that, but clearly this is the choice before African leaders as we approach the 21st century in an increasingly complex and competitive world.

Time is fast running, and the imminent emergence of a "mega-Europe" in 1992, when the European Community's economic integration plan takes effect, should sound a loud alarm for African countries on the need to enhance regional cooperation among themselves in order to enable the continent to compete more effectively with other areas of the world. ○

# "OPERATION LIFELINE"

By JOE NEFF

The people of southern Sudan are facing another famine this year created by the civil war between the Khartoum government and the SPLA. The United Nations has launched a major relief effort, however, there are no assurances that the 100,000 tons of emergency food will reach their destination in the remote, war-torn region.



**B**y the middle of May, seasonal rains have turned the roads of southern Sudan into impenetrable muck, virtually cutting off large areas of this famine-stricken region from relief efforts.

The United Nations "Operation Lifeline Sudan" is struggling against the clock to ship food into the area by train, plane, barge, and truck, but a seemingly endless chain of obstacles twice pushed the UN to lower its original goal of moving 119,000 tons of food in the month of April.

"Our hopes had been to get 100,000 tons in before the rains," said the head of Operation Lifeline,

*Joe Neff is a freelance writer in New York who reports on the United Nations.*

James Grant, on April 26 in New York. "We are clearly going to fall short of that target, but we certainly can get more tonnage in."

Last year, very little food reached southern Sudan. The UN estimated that 250,000 people died from hunger in a famine created by civil war. Food has been a major weapon in the war between the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the northern-based government. Both sides have destroyed crops and cattle, and have blocked the flow of food to civilians caught on both sides of the war.

There will be suffering and starvation again this year, but not on the scale of last year. By the end of April,

the UN had "pre-positioned" 37,000 tons of food in centrally located warehouses. Relief workers in place at 18 stations throughout the south guarantee the UN greater control than last year, when relief agencies sat in the capital, Khartoum, and outside the country, relying on a trickle of reports of famine from the war-torn areas.

Even so, the UN's crash food delivery program has come under heavy criticism for reacting too late and too bureaucratically.

Norwegian People's Aid, the most experienced relief agency operating in southern Sudan, claimed that the UN rejected earlier appeals to help because the political timing was not

right, even though other agencies had been working in the area for several years.

UN officials respond that they could not operate in the south before reaching an agreement with Khartoum and the SPLA, which took months to obtain and was only finalized on March 23.

In this truce, the Sudanese government and the rebels have agreed to respect eight "corridors of tranquility" through which unarmed convoys will move food into famine-stricken areas. Half of the food is to go to government-held towns, and half to SPLA-held areas. The SPLA now controls virtually all the countryside in the Texas-sized southern provinces, while government troops hold on to a dwindling string of garrison towns.

"We are on a tightrope [between warring factions] and have to walk very carefully," said Ulf Kristoffersson, chief of emergency operations at Unicef.

The truce itself was a major breakthrough, UN officials point out, in that the government has agreed to let the UN operate deep inside rebel areas. This never happened in other war-induced famines in Ethiopia, Angola, or Mozambique.

Others have criticized the intense public relations blitz accompanying the \$133 million operation. Aid agencies are annoyed that the UN has diminished the ability of other organizations to raise donor funds. Others have charged the UN with raising expectations beyond its ability to deliver.

Yet propaganda is an integral but touchy part of famine relief strategy.

"You have to give the impression you're doing huge things so that the combatants are afraid to break up the operations and look like the bad guys," explained one official.

Second, a snowball effect is wanted. More support drums up more publicity and heightens public awareness, which in turn draws in more money. With their dollars on the line, major donors will ratchet up pressure on the two combatants to respect the agreement.

Yet the problems of raising money and mobilizing media attention pale beside the tasks facing aid workers in war-torn Sudan.

The corridors of tranquility do not constitute a ceasefire; fighting continues along and around those routes. The SPLA has captured a string of outposts recently and is on the verge of taking some major garrison towns.

Both sides have sabotaged efforts at getting relief to those starving in the countryside. The fragile coalition government in Khartoum, led by Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, has cloistered relief workers in the capital and evicted those who protested, including UN officials.

Instability and factional fighting have paralyzed the government. In February, the supplies-starved army threatened to topple the government unless Khartoum started peace talk with the rebels.

In the countryside, the government has armed Arab tribal militias to fight the SPLA. Instead of fighting the rebels, however, the militias have become a rogue element, increasing the chaos by attacking, robbing, and killing African villagers with a vengeance.

For its part, the SPLA has blown up convoys and threatened to shoot down planes carrying relief aid to government-held towns. As a result, barge, train, and truck convoys stood idle on the ground in April because workers were unwilling to traverse dangerous territory. Transport workers have demanded life insurance, which the UN has provided, and barges and trains should begin moving once the SPLA broadcasts guarantees of safe passage to unarmed convoys on its radio. Khartoum has been insisting that armed personnel accompany the food shipments, pressure which the UN has resisted so far.

War aside, the logistics of Operation Lifeline are daunting. "Never before has a relief operation attempted so much over so difficult terrain in so little time, and this apart from the civil war," said Grant, who also heads Unicef. "The chances of suc-

cess, by Lloyds of London standards, are not very good."

The swampy southern Sudan is one of the logistically most remote places on earth, and rain is already beginning to fall. Sudan's infrastructure is crumbling, and is nearly nonexistent in the south. Roads in the area are primitive at best, especially those leading from Uganda and Ethiopia. The chronic shortage of jet fuel keeps planes grounded. There is no telephone contact from the south to the rest of the country.

Even if the entire 100,000 tons reaches the south, questions remain if it will reach remote areas where many of the victims are. As much as possible, relief workers want to avoid creating massive refugee camps that become centers of disease and dependency. The exodus of villagers has begun much earlier this year than last, as refugees abandon all and begin to trek toward central food stores, as much as roads and rain permit.

At least 3 million people are displaced in Sudan, with 1.5 million around Khartoum, and perhaps 2 million in the south. In addition, price-gouging and profiteering have been common in prior famines, diverting scarce food resources from famine victims. Some Sudanese merchants have made small fortunes by swiping food aid and selling it in the open market.

Even if Operation Lifeline reaches its goals, safe passage of food aid this season will not address the political roots of the Sudanese famine.

"Food is not going to save Sudan," said a UN official formerly stationed in Sudan. "It will alleviate the suffering of thousands of people, but it is only a palliative. A political settlement is needed."

Though a long-term political settlement appears remote at this time, observers stress the urgency of pushing ahead with Operation Lifeline. Troubled by the specter of rain on the horizon, Special Representative Grant was clear about the immediate goals of the mission. "If we don't try, we face the equivalent of a Hiroshima on our hands." ○

## *Bachir Mustapha Sayed:* POLISARIO'S POLICIES FOR PEACE

By MARGARET A. NOVICKI



André Astrow

**Diplomatic efforts to end the war in the Western Sahara have accelerated this year thanks to the efforts of the UN and the OAU. However, the dialogue begun in January between Moroccan King Hassan and Polisario has run aground for the moment, according to the head of the movement's external relations committee, and renewed efforts are required to bring the peace process back on track.**

**Africa Report:** You led Polisario's delegation in the first face-to-face discussions with King Hassan of Morocco and are here in New York to meet with the UN secretary-general. What is the state of the peace process in the Western Sahara?

**Sayed:** I came to transmit a message containing some important points to the UN secretary-general: first, the commitment of the Polisario Front to the continuation of the peace process undertaken jointly by the secretary-general and the OAU [Organization of African Unity] chairman, and thus to ask for the acceleration and intensification of the laudable efforts they

have been undertaking which resulted in the first direct negotiations between Morocco and Polisario. Second, the Polisario Front regards the direct dialogue, to which Morocco was opposed for years, as in line with UN's efforts, and not a parallel effort. I came to tell the secretary-general that the UN-OAU peace process should not have to suffer from the ups and downs in the dialogue between Polisario and Morocco.

**Africa Report:** You characterized the discussions with Morocco as a dialogue rather than negotiations.

**Sayed:** I said dialogue not because there is a precise distinc-

tion between dialogue and negotiations, but to suit the King who very much likes to use this term. In reality, there is no real difference between dialogue and negotiations—it is an exchange of ideas, an effort to find common ground and understanding, as well as ways and means to peacefully resolve this conflict.

**Africa Report:** What was the spirit of the meeting with King Hassan?

**Sayed:** At the beginning, it was cordial, and by the end, confident. The King showed himself as a man of dialogue, of political realism, and of peace. He said many important things: first, that he had concluded from the many years of war against the Sahrawi people that this conflict cannot have a military outcome. Second, even if one wanted to continue this war, the Moroccan economy can no longer meet its increasing cost. Third, even if Morocco had succeeded in annexing most of the territory, it didn't succeed in winning over a single Sahrawi heart and mind.

The King committed himself to continue this dialogue with us and said that we should work more than ever before to bridge the gulf between the Moroccan and Sahrawi people caused by 14 years of a war of destruction. He asked us to help so that there will be no more more orphans on either

favor of Sahrawi independence?

**Sayed:** The King had various motivations. His first concern is to ensure the succession of the monarchy. He feels the need to resolve this conflict before his son can succeed him, before the time of the succession question. Then there was political pressure from all of the international community, especially after the return of Egypt to the Arab fold and the start of a U.S.-Palestinian dialogue. Morocco's importance in the Middle East is thus lessened. Also in this climate of detente, Morocco is less important to the U.S. as far as the granting of military bases, etc. But in particular, Morocco's financial supporters are tired and are not giving as generously as before. There is also the cycle of popular discontent resulting from the continuous deterioration of the social and economic situation. Finally, Morocco is trying to take advantage of a new situation in the region to regain its strength and a little of its lost ground. All these are real motivations. However, if Morocco is realistic, its primary motivation should be based on the fact that a military solution is not possible, that Morocco cannot break down the Sahrawi people's resistance.

Will Morocco respect the outcome of the referendum? It cannot be otherwise. But will Morocco allow the holding of an honest, free, and fair referendum on self-determination? I

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"WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR IS TO CREATE THE NEEDED  
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MOROCCO AND THE POLISARIO FRONT."

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side. Thus, it was a very cordial meeting, of good spirit, and provided grounds for optimism. Unfortunately, immediately after the meeting, he made some statements contrary to the spirit of Marrakesh, and then he denied declarations made by us concerning the scheduling of a second meeting. All this recreated a certain mistrust, instead of preserving the positive climate born out of the first meeting.

**Africa Report:** Did he promise to hold a second meeting, which did not materialize?

**Sayed:** Yes, and this created a mistrust that didn't need to have been created, because the establishment of a basis of trust is a major accomplishment, and it is a grave responsibility to maintain it.

**Africa Report:** You proclaimed a truce for the February.

**Sayed:** Yes, to contribute to the success of the Maghrebi conference and also to help create and prolong a climate of confidence and peace for continuation of the dialogue with Morocco. Unfortunately, the month of February ended without any new meeting and the results of the Maghrebi conference were interpreted unilaterally by Morocco, presenting the formation of a Maghrebi union as a means of encircling the Polisario Front and limiting the actions of the Sahrawi peoples to secure their national rights.

**Africa Report:** What do you think was King Hassan's motivation in meeting with you? Should the UN organize the referendum, do you expect him to respect the outcome if it is in

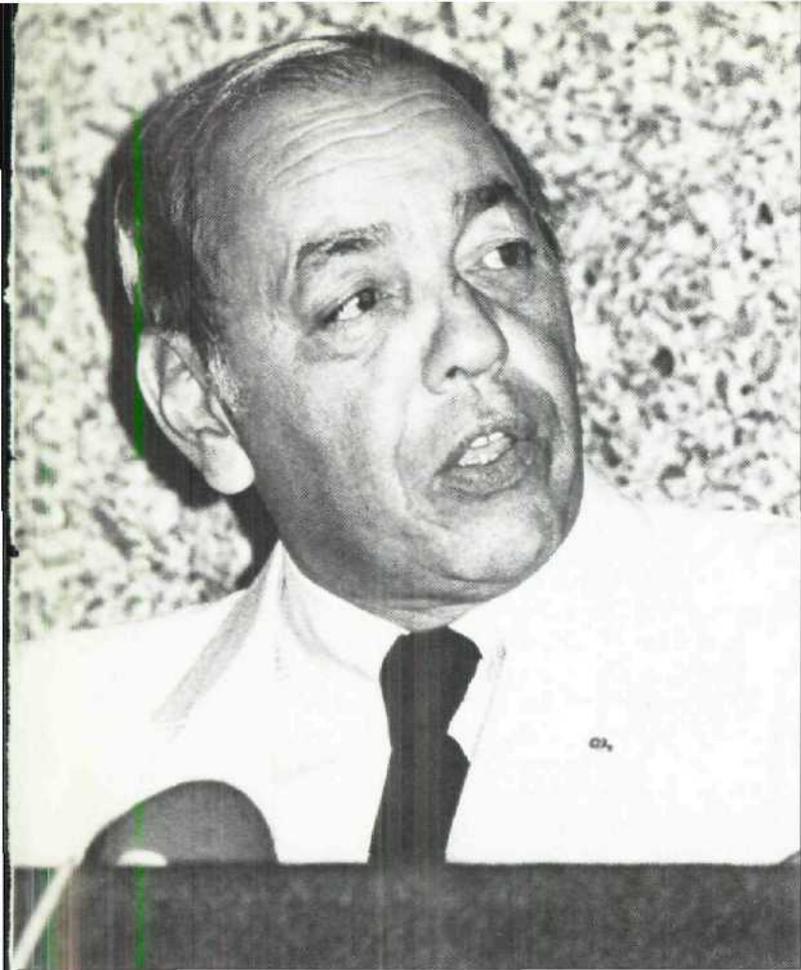
doubt it very much. Is it in the monarchy's interest to withdraw from this conflict? After all, this conflict has been created artificially, for domestic, internal reasons, to isolate the army and divert Moroccan public opinion. Whether or not it is in the interest of the monarchy to withdraw from the Western Sahara at this particular juncture is a very difficult question to answer.

**Africa Report:** After the January discussions, the next stage was to have another meeting. Since no meeting has taken place, is it a stalemate? Or is the UN involved in trying to break the impasse?

**Sayed:** There was recently a UN-OAU delegation visiting Morocco to discuss aspects of the administration of the Sahara and military issues, seeking to remove the obstacles that still impede the holding of the referendum. That delegation will soon submit its work to the UN secretary-general, who has committed himself to work to reinvigorate the peace talks and even go to the region, to meet us and the Moroccans. Furthermore, our direct dialogue with Morocco could resume at any time.

**Africa Report:** What obstacles remain in organizing the referendum?

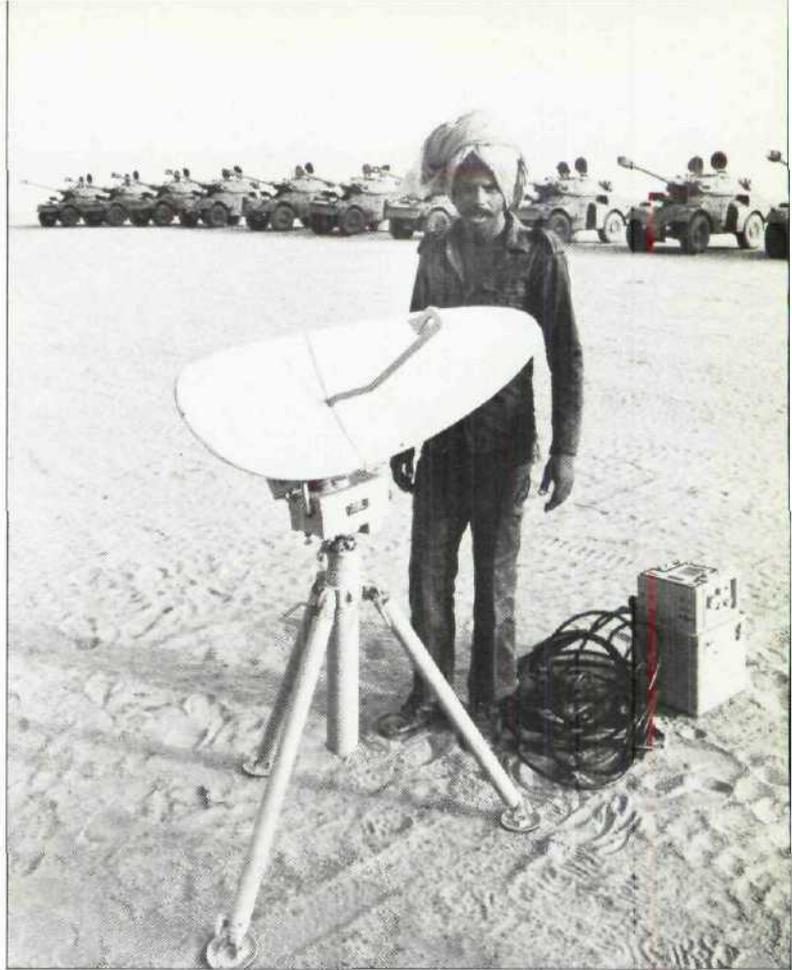
**Sayed:** The obstacles that have been removed are the electoral rolls—who will have the right to vote. Sahrawis who are 18 at the time of the referendum, and who were included in the 1974 Spanish census are eligible. The second problem which was resolved was the question to be asked during the



Christine Spengler/Sygma

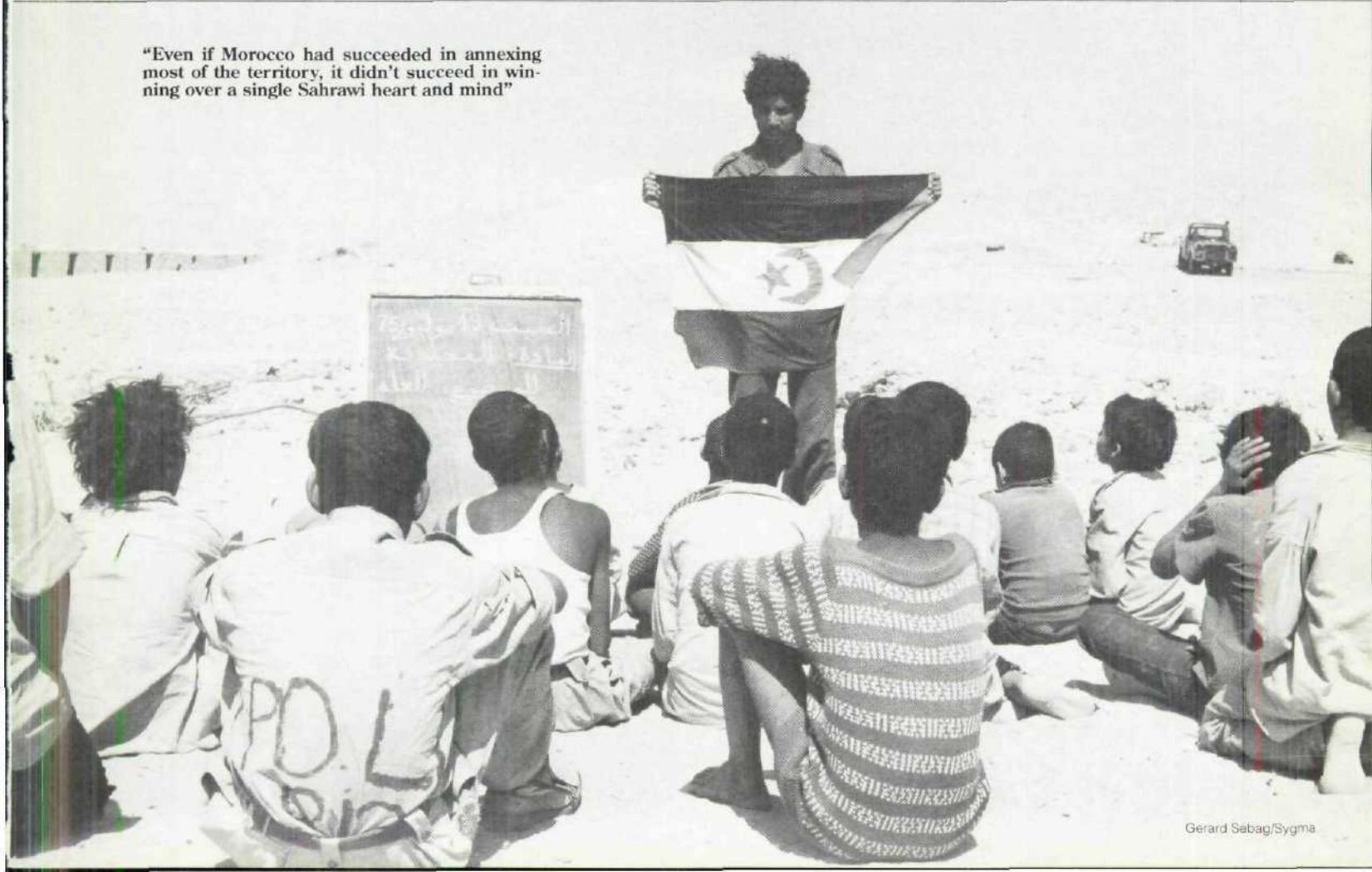
"The King showed himself as a man of dialogue, of political realism, and of peace"

Camerasix



Captured Moroccan equipment: "Even if one wanted to continue this war, the Moroccan economy can no longer meet its increasing cost"

"Even if Morocco had succeeded in annexing most of the territory, it didn't succeed in winning over a single Sahrawi heart and mind"



Gerard Sebag/Sygma

referendum. It will be: Do you want independence or integration with Morocco?

Still to be dealt with are issues linked to the Moroccan presence in the territory. It is not known how many Moroccan military will stay in the Western Sahara until the outcome of the referendum. Second, the status of Moroccan administration in the interim period that will prepare for the referendum has not been resolved. Then there is also the problem of the Moroccan population that was introduced into the Sahara during the Green March, which has been growing over time with the Moroccan occupation. Then there is the question of what laws will govern the territory during the transitional period.

**Africa Report:** Given these unresolved issues, is it likely that the referendum can be organized this year?

**Sayed:** I don't know. I am not sure if the referendum can actually be held this year. There is a lot to do, we have to temper the euphoria. The King is trying to gain time, to lessen international pressure, and he is vacillating. Hence, we must stay vigilant.

**Africa Report:** Would Polisario accept anything short of a referendum on independence?

**Sayed:** I can only say that the Sahrawi people want their independence and sovereignty. The logic of history regarding all decolonization questions is that the result will be sovereignty and independence. The question to be resolved, whether by a referendum or negotiations, is how to ensure that Morocco withdraws from the territory, and we can help Morocco in the process.

But there is no third alternative between slavery and liberty. One is either free or a slave. The question that will be posed during the referendum has practically resolved this problem—*independence or integration?* The King himself recognized that it is not in his interest to integrate a population that has gone through our experience, which is a symbol of resistance, and which will cause a lot of problems for Morocco. I think that in the final analysis, there will be a referendum. What we are looking for is to create the needed conditions—*freedom and impartiality*—to hold the referendum, and see to it also that this referendum will take place in a spirit of friendship between Morocco and the Polisario Front. But in any case, there will be a referendum, because there is no other way.

**Africa Report:** Won't an independent SADR be highly dependent on the Moroccan economy, given the amount that Morocco has invested in developing the territory to try and win support?

**Sayed:** Sure. Morocco is our big neighbor, because of its size and because of the borders which link us, and also because of the need we will have for its assistance and cooperation. We have already told the King that we want to be neutral with regard to the problems of the region. We want to be equidistant from Algeria and Morocco. We commit ourselves against forming treaties or alliances with countries or groups of countries hostile to Morocco and that no aggressions against Morocco will be permitted from our territory.

With regard to the economy, we commit ourselves to put our resources at the benefit of the Sahrawi people, of course, but also to open the most cooperative relations with Morocco on the economic front as possible. We want to profit from Morocco's experiences in building its economy, and we can also help Morocco with its unemployment problem.

**Africa Report:** Given the amount of support Algeria has given you over the years in your war against Morocco, won't

that necessitate a closer relationship after independence?

**Sayed:** Algeria's support was always unconditional. It is natural that we will continue our relations with Algeria. The Algerians, yes, have helped a lot, but without asking anything in return, whereas Morocco from the beginning wanted to annex the Western Sahara for its resources and geo-strategic position.

**Africa Report:** What role has Algeria played in helping to bring about the referendum?

**Sayed:** From 1975 to now, Algeria has supported the SADR and Polisario in practically all fields. At this stage, it is seeking through cooperation with Morocco to help the Sahrawi people resolve the conflict peacefully.

**Africa Report:** What role has the U.S. played?

**Sayed:** In 1974, the U.S. helped Spain so that the Western Sahara was divided between Morocco and Mauritania. Then it observed strict neutrality in the conflict until the end of the Carter administration, until 1980. From 1980 to 1985, the U.S. increased all kinds of support to Morocco and against the Sahrawi people. Since 1986, the U.S. has maintained its level of the support, while calling for a peaceful solution to the conflict. Since 1986, we believe that the U.S. has put pressure on the King so that he will change little by little his policy on the Western Sahara. In times as difficult as when the American plane was shot down in the Western Sahara, the U.S. has comported itself in a very acceptable, even friendly manner toward the Polisario Front and the Sahrawi people.

**Africa Report:** Do you expect a more favorable policy from the Bush administration?

**Sayed:** It is what I hope. President Bush knows the region very well, and in 1987, he personally asked certain European heads of state to do something so that the King would accelerate the process of a referendum. Of course, the U.S. has a globalist policy and thus the conflict in the Western Sahara is part of an overall regional policy. But we have no prejudices against President Bush and his administration.

**Africa Report:** Are you satisfied with the role now played by the UN? Is it giving sufficient attention to this issue?

**Sayed:** The UN secretary-general has not spared any efforts in order to see to it that there are possibilities for peace. He merits being called a man of peace. One has to also say that it is a great opportunity for him, that the willingness of the superpowers gave more vigor, efficacy, and weight to the office that the secretary-general is occupying and to the prestigious organization of the United Nations. Thus, two elements merged: the availability and the will of the secretary-general and an international climate favorable to the role of the UN.

His special representative, Gross Espiel, is a man of integrity and experience, and is very attached to the success of the important responsibility that the secretary-general has conferred on him. So I am satisfied and optimistic regarding the role of the United Nations, the secretary-general, and his special representative.

**Africa Report:** Anything else you would like to convey to our readers?

**Sayed:** I thank you for giving me this opportunity to address your readers directly. Because they choose to read your magazine, it shows they already have a position on the tragedy of our peoples and have already chosen to sympathize with the peoples of Africa who just now are starting to overcome the effects of foreign occupation and who are suffering from underdevelopment, famine, and illiteracy. We need your support, assistance, and understanding. ○

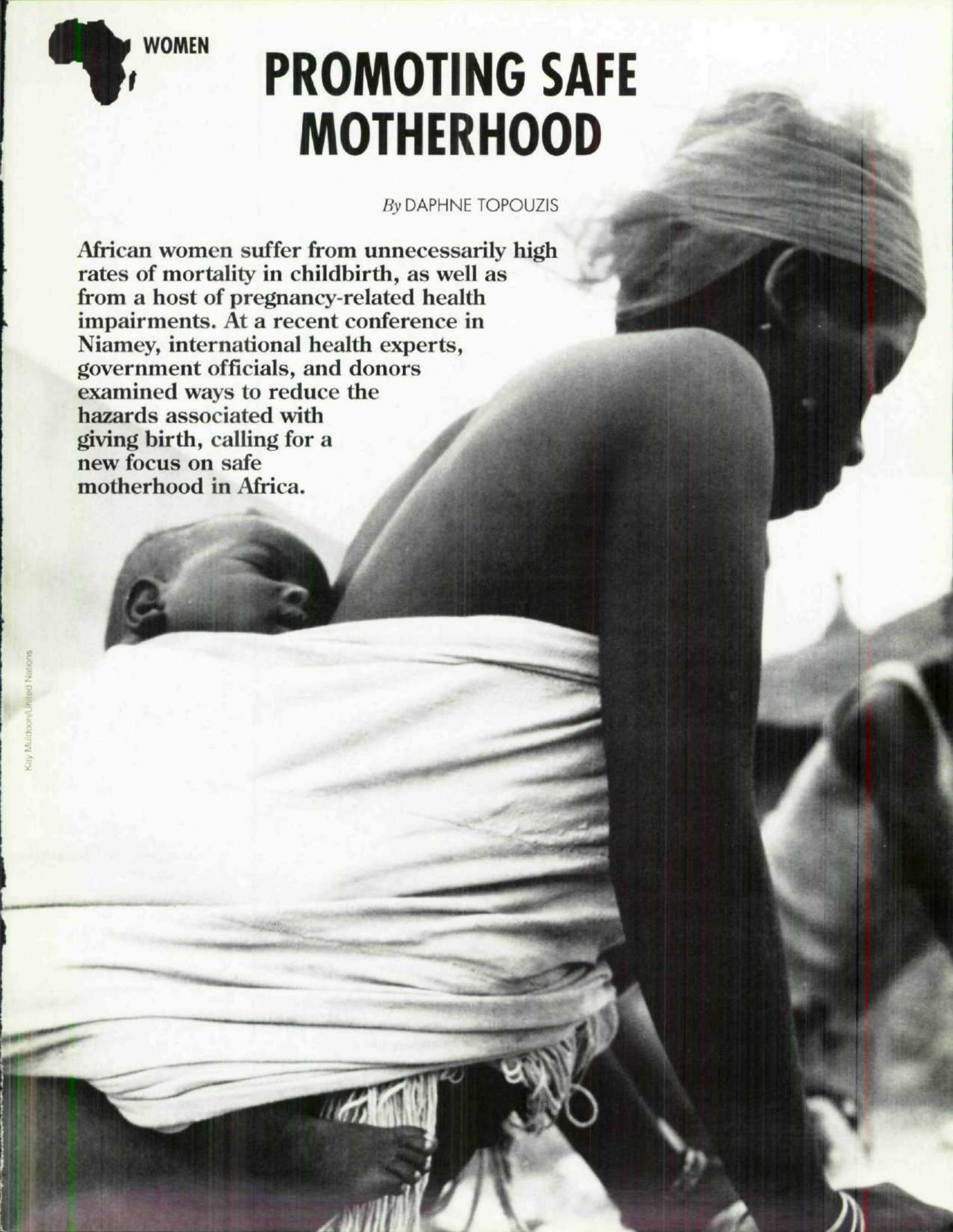


WOMEN

# PROMOTING SAFE MOTHERHOOD

By DAPHNE TOPOUZIS

**African women suffer from unnecessarily high rates of mortality in childbirth, as well as from a host of pregnancy-related health impairments. At a recent conference in Niamey, international health experts, government officials, and donors examined ways to reduce the hazards associated with giving birth, calling for a new focus on safe motherhood in Africa.**



**P**regnancy is a gamble and giving birth is a life and death struggle," runs an ancient Bambara proverb. Today, this bleak and poignant truism continues to epitomize the lives of many African women across the continent.

According to recent epidemiological studies, every African woman of childbearing age has a one in 20 chance of dying in childbirth, in sharp contrast to a woman in an industrialized country who has a one in 2,000 chance. In global terms, Africa has the highest maternal mortality rate (annual number of deaths of women from pregnancy-related causes per 100,000 live births), with over 150,000 deaths per year.

Over half of these deaths are a

The tragedy of maternal mortality is further compounded by high figures of morbidity: For every maternal death in sub-Saharan Africa, another 15 women become handicapped or crippled by incontinence, uterine prolapse, and infertility due to pregnancy or childbirth-related causes. It has been estimated that between 2 and 3 million women are left handicapped or crippled from obstetric complications each year.

The dramatically high toll of maternal mortality and morbidity in Africa and the urgency of mobilizing concerted action to curtail it were addressed at a recent conference on safe motherhood, held in Niger's capital, Niamey, from January 31 to February 3. Co-sponsored by the

of maternal mortality and morbidity and assess their socio-economic ramifications; and to assist country teams in identifying concrete plans of action that are practical, relatively moderate in cost, and readily applicable. The joint participation of health ministers was intended to ensure that the adopted action plans are integrated into national strategies.

The significance of the concept of safe motherhood was underscored by Edward Jaycox, vice president for Africa of the World Bank, who indicated that maternal health is inextricably linked to the continent's economic development: "Safe motherhood, child spacing, and the role of women are not just optional extras, but essential links in the development mix. Yet, this area remains an area of weakness for both donors and African governments in their development strategies."

At present, approximately half of all deliveries in Africa do not benefit from any medical assistance, while only 34 percent of women give birth with the supervision of a properly trained staff. Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are frequent, in view of the fact that 55 percent of women marry in adolescence, while a third bear children before they turn 18.

In Niger, for instance, women marry on average at age 15, and there are 700 deaths for every 100,000 live births. Some women have their first child as early as 12 or 13 years of age, while others continue to bear children well into their 40s, thereby further risking their chances of surviving the delivery. While there are no figures available for the number of births by young adolescents, in Senegal, 17 percent of births are attributed to women over 35 years of age.

Benin and Nigeria have among the highest recorded maternal mortality rates on the continent, with 1,680 and 1,500 deaths per year per 100,000 live births respectively, according to Unicef's State of the World's Children.



Campbell/Unicef

**"Every African woman of childbearing age has a one in 20 chance of dying in childbirth"**

direct result of easily preventable causes, including obstructed labor, excessive bleeding, severe infection (sepsis), toxemia during pregnancy, and unsafe abortion. Such complications are in turn linked to overwork, chronic anemia, malnutrition, and malaria, which can have a devastating effect on pregnant women.

*Daphne Topouzis is a contributing editor to Africa Report.*

World Health Organization (WHO), Unicef, United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), UNDP, and the World Bank, the conference gathered over 200 physicians, midwives, health workers, ministers, and development professionals from 22 francophone countries.

The objective of the conference was two-fold: to examine the causes

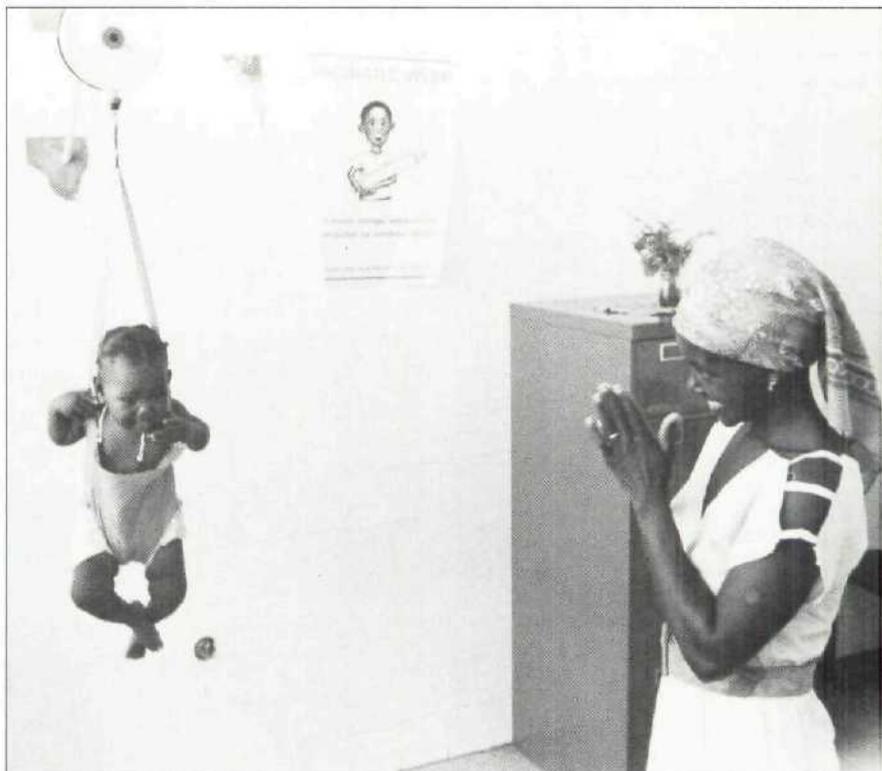
The dominant theme of the Niamey conference was that women should avoid pregnancies "too early, too late, too many, too close together." In her opening address to the conference, Dr. Nafis Sadik, executive director of UNFPA, argued: "The key role played by the proper timing and spacing of births for both maternal health and that of the infant has to be stressed. Ensuring that childbearing is not started too early in a woman's life and that each pregnancy is well-spaced, as well as ending childbearing at age 35, will contribute significantly to reduce maternal mortality and improve infant health."

Physicians and health experts at the conference indicated that the ages between 18 and 22 were safest for women to begin bearing children; two to three years was earmarked as the ideal spacing between births; four to five children was designated as the desirable number of children per woman; and 35 to 40 years of age was set as the limit for childbearing.

The rate of maternal mortality is one of many indicators of unsafe motherhood in Africa. Another equally important factor is morbidity. Not all women who survive the delivery resume normal lives. For the 2 to 3 million women across the continent who become disabled or incapacitated each year, the condition is often permanent, seriously affecting the quality of their lives and those of their families.

Infertility is one of several afflictions caused by complications from childbirth. It affects 15 to 20 percent of all women in Africa and is often irreversible. Infertility can result from pelvic inflammation following childbirth and is brought about by the use of medical instruments that have not been sterilized or else by unclean hands.

Women who survive the delivery can become chronically ill and eventually die from indirectly related conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and infectious hepatitis. These illnesses can be adversely affected by pregnancy and childbirth if prop-



"Measures which can have an immediate impact on maternal mortality and morbidity include supervised delivery, pre- and post-natal care, and properly equipped and trained staffs in primary health care"

er medical attention is not administered.

But the most tragic and debilitating form of maternal morbidity is the development of fistulae. Fistulae are openings that develop between the vagina and the rectum or the bladder as a result of prolonged obstructed labor or infection. The *fistuleuses*, as women with the condition are frequently referred to, suffer from incontinence and bear a strong odor of stale excreta. It is not uncommon for these women to become ostracized from their families and communities for the rest of their lives. Adolescents are more prone to developing this disability, as they become pregnant before their bodies are adequately developed.

The fact that the highly sensitive issue of the *fistuleuses* was raised with compassion at the Niamey conference by none other than the health minister of Niger, Capt. Mai Manga Oumara, was signalled as an important first step toward tackling a grave problem which affects a substantial number of women in Africa.

At a maternity hospital in Niamey, a new special ward for the *fistuleuses*

has been recently created. During a visit to the hospital, a handful of young mothers suffering from fistulae were anxiously waiting for a Chinese woman gynecologist to perform reparative surgery that would enable them to return to their families.

This is reportedly a new development, for the majority of *fistuleuses* have had little or no support from the community in the past. According to the resident gynecologist, the critical point is that it is not an irreversible disability. Reconstructive surgery has been very successful, and most of the women that are operated on are able to resume normal lives. However, one midwife indicated that more wards are needed, as well as more qualified doctors to treat women suffering from this condition, not only in the capital cities, but especially in the rural areas.

While the tragedy of maternal mortality and morbidity in Africa has been occurring for centuries, it is only recently that the extent of the problem has been fully appreciated by African governments and the

international community. Until WHO conducted the first studies that led to the development of the safe motherhood concept, maternal mortality and ill health had been neglected in development programs and fared low on the priority list of the international donor community, while maternal death rates had been absent from the quality of life and quality of health indices.

The Safe Motherhood Initiative was elaborated in detail at the Nairobi international conference held in February 1987, which dealt with maternal mortality and morbidity in English-speaking Africa. The World Bank and UNDP, co-sponsors of the conference, pledged \$1 million each toward the establishment of a Safe Motherhood Fund to support operational research. In addition, Barber Conable announced that the World Bank's lending for health, population, and nutrition projects would double over the next decade. At present, the World Bank allocates between 1 to 2 percent of its total budget on health care projects, which are administered by a health division created in 1980.

According to World Bank experts, an integral component of the Safe Motherhood Initiative is the link between maternal mortality, population growth, and underdevelopment. "Africa has the choice of filling its spaces quickly with many relatively ill-fed, unhealthy, uneducated, under-employed people," Jaycox indicated, "or of spacing its children so that both they and the society as a whole have a better chance of a much better life."

He thus pointed to the urgency of reducing the total fertility rate in Africa by 50 percent by the year 2015 as a means of reducing maternal and infant mortality, as well as checking the pace of population growth. "Population growth is running ahead of economic growth," he said, and "Africa's population growth rate is the highest seen anywhere, anytime in human history. No region of the world has ever managed to achieve economic development with this rate of population growth,"

referring to the fact that the continent's population will double over the next 22 years.

Jaycox also urged for additional research into Africa's high fertility rate, as well as integration of population issues into policy dialogue with African governments, and family planning education. Critics of the World Bank, however, maintain that a far more serious problem than overpopulation is the abject condition of African women, which is deteriorating further under the strain of the on-going economic crisis, and particularly under the austerity of structural adjustment policies.

The improvement of the overall status of women was deemed essential for the promotion of safe motherhood by conference participants in Niamey. The conference workshops dealt extensively with women's restricted access to proper health care, nutrition, education and financial resources. It was noted that the average African woman works 2,490 hours a year without pay, while the African man works 1,400 hours with pay. This discrimination was pointed out as one of many instances where women's contributions to socio-economic development have been consistently undervalued. The need to alleviate the workload of women in the home was earmarked as a priority and was incorporated in the conference call to action.

The Safe Motherhood Initiative is premised on measures which can have an immediate impact on maternal mortality and morbidity, such as supervised delivery, pre- and post-natal care, family planning, and properly equipped and trained staffs in a system of primary health care. Jaycox argued that health care, better referral facilities, and an "alarm" and transport system to transport women with high-risk pregnancies can and should be adopted without further delay.

However, as health budgets of most African countries continue to shrink, cost-sharing of medical fees is being introduced, and infant mortality rates are on the rise, the UN target of reducing child and mater-

nal mortality by 50 percent by the year 2000—a goal frequently reiterated at the Niamey conference—is becoming a formidable challenge for African policy-makers and Western donors alike.

According to WHO figures, African governments currently spend on average 4 percent of their budgets (or between \$8 and \$10 per head per year) on health, when, it is argued, they should be devoting at least 9 percent. The World Bank maintains that the recommendations adopted at the conference should cost no more than about \$2 per head per year to be implemented.

Jaycox argued, "Even in this era of constrained resources, I believe we can find the money to do this. Indeed, I would say that we cannot afford not to do this." He further maintained that despite financial constraints, a reallocation of existing resources is necessary to finance, at least in part, the proposed plans of action.

The question of how the Safe Motherhood Initiative would be adequately financed was repeatedly brought up by the health minister of Côte d'Ivoire, Alphonse Djedje Mady, who launched an attack on the World Bank's structural adjustment policies and underscored their adverse effect on social services. Mady urged conference participants to support him in his demand for "grants not loans," and requested a debate on the impact of structural adjustment on the health sector.

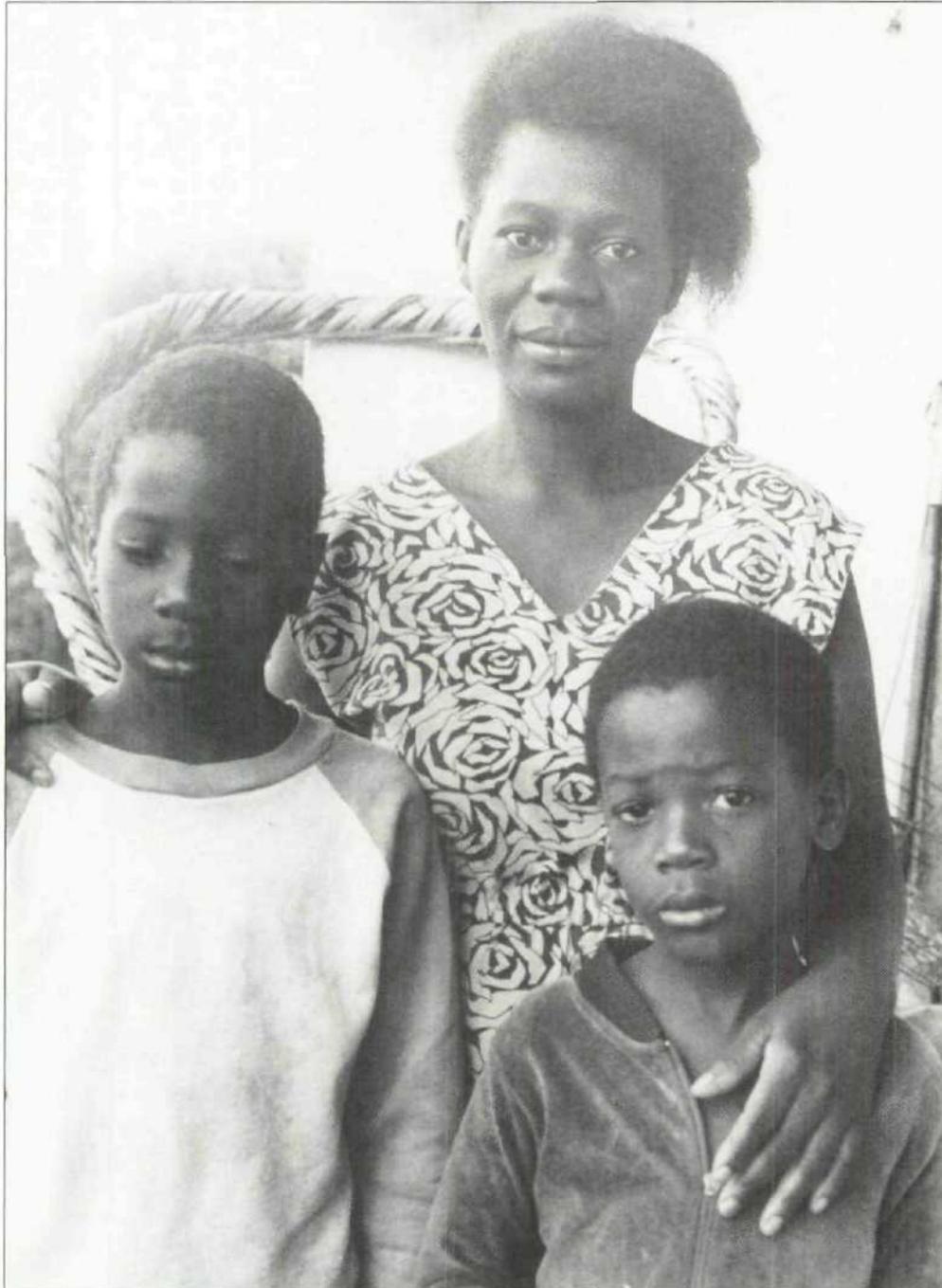
Even though his attempts failed, the conference call to action incorporated a clause on the need to revise the criteria applied by the donor community in the allocation of financial assistance to francophone Africa, in view of the current economic crisis.

While the conference made an important contribution to the problem of maternal mortality and morbidity and adopted efficient, low-cost strategies to reduce it, without sustained financial support, the proposed measures are unlikely to reverse the tragedy of maternal death in the continent. ○



# "PROTECT THE WIDOW"

By RUTH ANSAH AYISI



Ruth Anisah Ayisi

Nora Mumba and her sons: "Her in-laws took most of the possessions she and Stanley had bought together"

**In southern Africa, women are often caught in a conflict between tradition and modernity, with widows in particular the victims of customary practices which deprive them of their assets. Legal efforts to protect women's rights must be supported, along with attempts to change cultural attitudes.**

**N**ora Mumba had not been prepared for what she describes as "the most traumatic time of my life." She had enjoyed a relatively high standard of living with her three children and Stanley, her husband of nine years, until one night three years ago.

Mumba had been particularly exhausted that night as she lay her head on Stanley's chest, who she thought had finally fallen asleep. But a few minutes later, a nurse woke her up to tell her that Stanley had died. "Everything was blurred. I had no real sensation," said Mumba. "I never expected him to die, I had always kept hoping."

She had nursed Stanley for over a year and had seen him change from a healthy 196-pound man who loved boxing and squash to a mere 112 pounds, a man who barely had enough energy to climb a flight of stairs. Stanley, a law lecturer at Zambia's national university who had gained his Ph.D. in England, had suffered from a series of infections. A combination of tuberculosis, leukemia, and a serious ear infection eventually killed him, leaving Mumba a widow at the age of 30 with three children under the age of 10 to support.

Yet, another shock was in store for Nora Mumba. Just a few days later, her in-laws took most of the possessions that she and Stanley had bought together. They took the car, the refrigerator that Mumba had shipped from England, a camera with film containing the last picture of Stanley alive playing with his children, a hi-fi system and their records, Stanley's clothes, including his graduation gown which Mumba had hoped their children would one day wear, and even their suitcases. "When we had to leave the house, we had to pack in sacks," she said. "They had almost stripped the house clean."

Mumba's experience is a stark example of problems women face in southern Africa—caught in a trap between traditional practices and

urban lifestyles. Perhaps it is most evident in Zambia, where almost half of the country's 8 million people live in urban areas. But even in Zimbabwe, southern Africa's youngest nation, extended families are broken up and norms and customs are eroded as more people flock to towns in search of jobs.

Traditionally, if a member of the family was wronged, other members would advise what was the best recourse. Today, more women are isolated.

To take legal action is a complicated procedure because in southern Africa there are two legal systems, customary and general law, a legacy of the colonial era. Most women's lives in the region have been governed by customary law. Under customary law, if a man dies without making a will, his wife cannot be the legal heir to his property.

Among most ethnic groups in Zambia and Zimbabwe, the deceased's eldest male relative inherits the home and property and can marry the widow and take her children into his house so they are not destitute. But today, as an increasing number of women live in urban areas, have a more independent life from their extended family, and have bought their own possessions, the custom has little relevance.

The director of the Catholic church's Justice and Peace Commission in Zimbabwe, Nicholas Ndebele, says part of the problem is that the traditional concept of family and its legal definition differ dramatically. "There is a conflict between traditional values and new laws. In Western culture, a man and his wife are an entity, but in African tradition, my family marries my wife's family. We're an extended family. If a woman's husband dies, a wife should be accommodated in the family. But if she refuses, she is voluntarily refusing to be part of that family."

But for many women like Nora Mumba, moving into the countryside to be supported by her husband's family is out of the question. She does not see her in-laws' actions

as part of custom, but as "pure greed." She told her in-laws: "Anything you take out of this house, you're stealing."

Despite her double loss, Mumba, a university librarian, realized that her experience was by no means the worst. It was this realization that made her mount her own campaign both to make Parliament pass legislation to protect widows and also to raise people's awareness about the problem.

"Perhaps one day Zambia will enter the 20th century," concluded Mumba in a letter to the *Times of Zambia* on June 21, 1986.

The letter made Nora Mumba a public figure. The Zambia Association for Research and Development (ZARD), an organization established in 1986 to look into the position of women, traced the letter to Mumba. ZARD had also been campaigning against "property grabbing," as it is commonly called. But it wanted a widow who had experienced it to speak out publicly. Over 200 people attended a meeting organized by ZARD in March 1987 on the inheritance problem. Mumba came out openly to tell Zambians about her experience. "They gave me five minutes to talk," she said, "but I talked for 20."

Mumba was given another opportunity to talk again last December, when she addressed a public meeting organized for the Ecumenical Decade of Churches. President Kenneth Kaunda, who was also on the panel of speakers, was so moved that he promised Mumba personally that a bill would be introduced in Parliament this year to protect widows. The bill was introduced at the end of March this year. A crowd of over 50 women of all ages, wearing "Protect the Widow" tee-shirts, bustled their way into Parliament to hear the debate.

Under the new law, the deceased's property will be divided up, giving 20 percent to the widow or widower, 50 percent to the children, 20 percent to the deceased's parents, and 10 percent to other dependants.

But like other women campaign-

*Ruth Ansah Ayisi is a freelance journalist based in southern Africa.*

ers, Mumba is aware that this law alone will not solve the problem. She would have liked the children to receive more than 50 percent. She also realized that many women will not take advantage of the new legislation. "It gives us something to work on," she said.

Now she plans to continue talking in public meetings whenever she has the opportunity, to lobby MPs about possible amendments to the new law when it comes into effect, and she would also like to set up a widows' association, so that widows have the chance to share their problems and give each other advice.

Mumba is also seeking a publisher for a book she has written on her experiences. "Initially, I decided to write the book because I felt as if the world had turned against me. I needed an outlet," she said. "But now I feel that it might be comforting for other widows to know what I have been through." Changing the law is the first step, said Mumba, but changing attitudes and increasing support for widows is just as important.

Unlike in Zambia, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's government passed a series of laws after independence in 1980 to uplift women's status. Although "we've come a long way since independence," said Amy Tsanga, a lawyer, "laws have run ahead of the way people see things. People are particularly slow to change their attitudes about family-related matters."

Among the most contentious family-related laws passed by the government is the 1987 Maintenance Amendment Act. Women's rights to maintenance have become a major campaigning issue in southern Africa. Men have written angry letters to Zimbabwe's daily newspapers accusing women of making a business out of maintenance claims. They say that women are able to buy expensive clothes and cars out of maintenance claims.

But most women only receive about \$20 per month for each child, barely enough to cover food. And the process of making the claim can

be tiresome. "The bureaucracy can take up to five years, at the time you need it most, it's not there," said Viola Sambe of the Citizen's Advice Bureau in Harare. "Women go to the magistrate court only to find their file has been lost. Then by the time that they have found it, the father of the child has left his job and the woman can't trace him."

Possibly one of the most far-reaching and controversial acts passed to uplift women's status in Zimbabwe is the 1982 Legal Age of Majority Act, which recognizes

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**Three days later, while Murwira was still trying to come to terms with losing her husband of 22 years, her stepson piled all her possessions onto the verandah of her small home.**

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women as majors along with men at the age of 18. Before, women lived as dependants of their fathers or husbands. Now a woman can open a bank account, take her own court action, and if she is the eldest family member, be a legal heir to her father's property.

But while legislation has helped some women, many are not aware of their rights or do not have the economic power to carry them out. Before independence in Zimbabwe, black women under Ian Smith's white minority government had limited access to education. Most stayed in the rural areas, working in the "Tribal Trust Lands." Now primary education is free for all, an important gain, but a large number of women still are unemployed or only earn the minimum wage (about \$60) a month or less.

Being poor and unaware of her

rights, Zimbabwean Ester Murwira, unlike Nora Mumba, accepted her new circumstances without protesting. Three years ago, her husband, George, fell off his bicycle on the way to work and was crushed under the wheels of a bus. Three days later, while Murwira was still trying to come to terms with losing her husband of 22 years, her stepson, Sebastian, piled all her possessions onto the verandah of her small house. "Now after the burial of our father you must no longer stay here," she said Sebastian, 45, told her. "We [the sons] are the right people to live here."

Murwira was shocked. "I had got this house with George when we were married, but I could do nothing. Sebastian was so violent when he said this, I couldn't resist. I had to keep myself quiet, otherwise I knew he would assault me," said the 46-year-old market vendor.

Sebastian had not been living in the house, but now that his father had died, he believed he had the right to move back in. He also went to his father's work place and demanded that he receive George's pension fund. But the employers refused to give it to Sebastian and instead kept it for Murwira.

Three years later, Sebastian lives with his wife and three children in Murwira's home. She now sleeps in the kitchen and for that she pays Sebastian \$10 a month.

"Before my husband died, his children were very friendly, but now they have changed," she said. "They even cook and eat separately. Sebastian is frightened I will poison them."

Sebastian is still very angry about not receiving his father's pension money of about \$82 per month. Sometimes he comes home drunk and shouts, "What are you doing, you parasite?"

Murwira wants to seek legal advice but she does not know how to, and her friends warn her against it. "They say that as a Christian I shouldn't quarrel with Sebastian," she said. "But I feel very oppressed. I would like my home back. I now live like a captive." ○



## AFRICAN CINEMA: A MARKET IN THE U.S.?

By MARCO WERMAN

**Africa's considerable cinematic talent was showcased at this year's Fespaco film festival. But whereas African films are finding a growing audience in Europe, they are virtually unknown in the United States. Reviewing Fespaco's prize-winning films, our correspondent investigates what can be done to open the American market to African film-makers.**

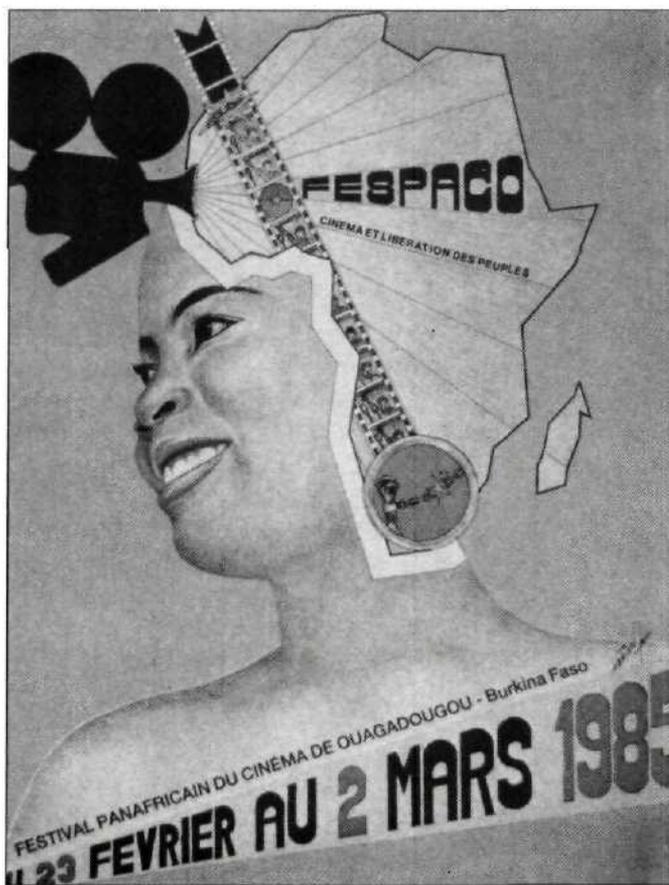
**T**he themes presented in African cinema are timely and provide a unique outlet to learn about a continent that is often referred to as forgotten. So why is American participation in the evolution of African cinema so low-key? The 1989 edition of the Pan-African Film Festival in Ouagadougou (Fespaco) boasted a surfeit of talent, demanding that this question be dealt with.

European foundations and cultural cooperation programs are financing African film-makers. Things African are making waves in Europe these days. The plastic arts, literature, music, and history are turning heads primarily because Europe is the doorstep for many African immigrants.

African cinema does not escape the European craving for a healthy, chic dose of Third World culture, falling not surprisingly into the category of what is considered "*branché*," the French term for "cool."

The African wave is comparatively mute in the United States. It's making squeaks in New York, Washington, Atlanta, and Los Angeles, but even less noise elsewhere. This is especially para-

*Marco Werman is a Ouagadougou-based freelance journalist.*



**"The Pan-African Film Festival in Ouagadougou boasted a surfeit of talent"**

doxal, because, according to Burkinabe film-maker Idrissa Ouedraogo, the maker of "*Yam Daabo*" ("The Choice") and "*Yaaba*" ("Grandmother"), of all the different film styles in the world, African cinema probably has most in common with American independent film—the 16 mm productions made on shoe-string budgets, edited in small New York

apartments by film-makers who, for various reasons, have never bitten at the Hollywood bait.

Says London-based, self-exiled South African film-maker Lionel N'Gakane, "We are not interested in making exploitative Hollywood-type movies."

African cinema is traditionally a militant one and most African film-makers wrestle constantly with this reputation. "It doesn't have to be militant and it shouldn't be," claims N'Gakane. And if African cinema intends to carve out a market in the U.S., it almost may be obliged to mellow out that reputation, since overtly militant cinema has never proven to be a big box-office draw.

Indeed, the African films that have begun to affect Western box office receipts—"Yeelen" by Souleymane Cisse and "*La vie est belle*" by Zairian Mweeze N'Gangura—are those that are breaking away from that stereotype.

This year's Grand Prize winner at Fespaco, "*Heri-tag-e...Africa*" by Ghanaian Kwaw Ansah, could be described as mildly militant. It follows a pith-helmeted Ghanaian who has risen to a high post in the British colonial administration.

Born Kwesi Atta Bosomefi and renamed Quincy Arthur Bosomfield, the protagonist has styled himself more English than even the English themselves. He recites Shakespeare, is a devout Christian, and goes so far as to

give away his family fetish to the British governor as a symbol of his pride for having been given the opportunity to be an obedient servant to the Commonwealth.

By the end of the movie, Bosomfield realizes that he has cut himself off completely from his own cultural identity. The character of young Kwame Nkrumah hovers over the action of the film, a sort of Banquo's ghost guiding the inevitable events.

When *"Heritage...Africa"* premiered last year in London, Ansah said that he planned to bring the 120-minute reel time down by a quarter. At Fespaco, it remained uncut. Otherwise, technically speaking, *"Heritage,"* like most of the films presented at this year's Fespaco, are competitive on an international scale.

Must African cinema therefore compete internationally? Many African film-makers define African cinema simply as good films made by Africans about Africa for Africans. The question should then be asked whether foreigners even have a role in African film production.

Europeans have almost automatically, especially francophone Europeans. Like many developmental endeavors, assisting film productions both technically and financially is part of the job of "taking care" of the former colonies. If African film-makers are going to make good movies, help must come from somewhere. Since the beginning of time, all artists, regardless of race or nationality, have found themselves in this position.

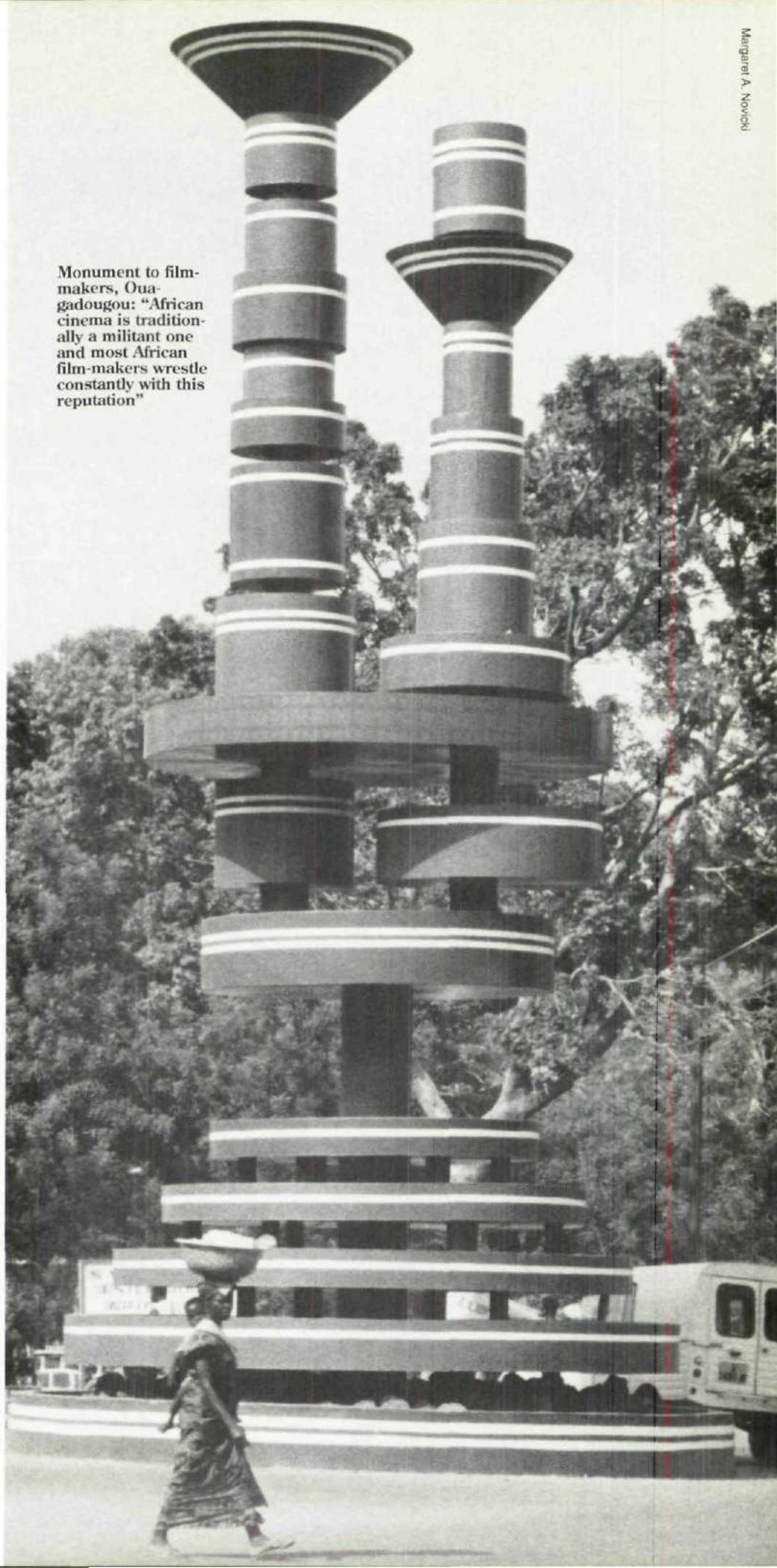
The goal of the Pan-African Film-makers' Federation (Fepaci), according to its secretary-general, Burkinabe film-maker Gaston Kaboré, is to "develop African cinema as an art, industry, and mass media that can aid the African people in their full social, cultural, and political liberation."

However, the majority of Africans live in rural areas. And with a handful of exceptions, the few movie theaters in Africa are located in cities.

These theaters present what Burkinabe film critic Patrick Ilboudo calls "cultural toxic waste:" karate flicks, Indian musical love stories, grade-C Hollywood war pictures, cop stories, 90-minute chase scenes, and chainsaw massacres. They create fast profits for the theater owners who invariably are not African.

A priori, African film-makers must find way of expanding their foreign markets. The other possibility—building movie theaters in the countryside, creat-

**Monument to film-makers, Ouagadougou: "African cinema is traditionally a militant one and most African film-makers wrestle constantly with this reputation"**



ing mobile theater units, revamping the distribution system, dubbing films into umpteen different local languages, generating the income so that villagers can afford an evening at the movies, etc.—can be considered too logistically complicated to be harnessed for the time being.

But finding foreign markets other than Europe may be equally difficult. "We don't know what the United States has to offer," explains the soft-spoken assistant secretary-general of Fespaco, Rasmene Ouedraogo. "It's a problem of communication, we don't know what is there."

If the Fespaco representatives know little about the American film market and distribution network, this journalist knew even less.

A discussion with Claus Mueller, director of the graduate social research program at Hunter College in New York and a specialist in the area of the African film market in the U.S., served as an eye-opener. Mueller attended the 1989 Fespaco to present a paper he wrote entitled, "The Distribution of African Feature Films in the United States: Problems and Prospects."

"Before entering the U.S. media market," explained Mueller, "one must understand that it is extremely complex." African films have a potential market in three areas in the U.S.: the black and Puerto Rican studies programs at 5,000 colleges and universities; upscale cable networks—Discovery Channel, Arts & Entertainment, and Bravo currently occupy 60-70 percent of their programming with material from abroad, most of it British—and standard theatrical distribution, which includes 17,000 theaters, 300 of them being specialty theaters located mostly in New York City.

"There has been a tremendous decline in commercially viable feature films over the past year," pointed out Mueller. Of 157 independent films selected at the last Independent Film Market in New York, only one was picked up for commercial use. "The consensus is that there just isn't enough good stuff around," said Mueller, "and there seems to be a void of original conceptions."

This observation, of course, opens the door for African films which offer nothing but new ideas for the thirsty American movie-goers.

One thing African film-makers must realize about the curiously fickle American film market is that their works are

just as distinct as other foreign films. Japanese, French, and Italian films are all first "profiled" by interested movie-goers before they can attract larger audiences.

So far, no film has been technically up to snuff to even permit the "African cinemas" (Burkinabe film-maker Idrissa Ouedraogo always puts the term in the plural since there are so many different styles and forms) to be profiled. Mueller cited "Yeelen" and explained that it might be the beginning of an African film profile in the U.S.

"Yeelen" is one of 21 African feature films currently in distribution in the U.S. through companies such as Cinecom (one title), New Yorker Films (10 titles), and the Washington, D.C.-based Myphedu Films, Inc. (10 titles).

Aside from these distributors, there are also the competing "fluid distributors," dealing mostly with fee-based screenings, specialty festivals, one-time bookings, and community screenings. These reach a smaller audience than commercial screenings, but as Mueller explained, "the 'fluids' represent a crucial link to the U.S. media market by further profiling the African feature film in the mind of the American audience."

Between the various distributors, the share of feature films from developing countries presently occupies 10.4 percent of the imported titles in 1987. Theoretically, this figure should be growing, especially for films coming from Africa.

One stumbling block appears to be a dominant laissez-faire attitude among African cinematographers regarding the funding arrangements that have been created between them and their French, German, Swiss, and Dutch television co-producers. When Europe finances an African film, it also handles distribution. Why go to the States when the package is complete on the European continent?

One answer is that "Yeelen" opened on the U.S. west coast in February and netted \$14,000 in four days and \$18,000 in one week in another theater. "La vie est belle" pulled in \$12,000 in two weeks in one theater. The money does not sound as impressive as *Variety* magazine's weekly track record for a new Eddie Murphy release, but for a softly publicized African picture in the States, it is commendable.

Commercial distribution is not the only way for African film-makers to gain coverage. The ultimate foot-in-the-American-door for an African film-maker would be a sale to one of public broad-

casting's affiliates such as Channel 13 in New York, whose associate director for program acquisition, Andrea Traubner, also happens to be vice-president of the non-profit, New York-based Third World Television Exchange.

"If a film gets sold to Channel 13," remarked Mueller, "the Rockefeller Foundation, for instance, would be convinced of its value."

Film festivals specializing in alternative cinema are other springboards for African film-makers to have their works exposed in the U.S. The Black Light Festival in Detroit, the Washington International Film Festival, the New York Third World Screening Days, and the Third World Film Festival in Atlanta are all reputed proving grounds for hot talent. However, American participants at the 1989 Fespaco often remarked that lack of information about these festivals shrouds their importance for African film-makers who are invited to them.

For those on both sides of the Atlantic, the bottom line is quite simple if African cinema is going to make some headway in the U.S. African film-makers must establish contacts with the film festivals and the movers in such places where one can be seen. And at the same time, they must be extremely judicious about to whom they sell rights and copies of their works.

The credibility of fluid distributors can be checked out through a simple review of credentials: What other titles have they handled? Do they have the necessary communication infrastructure for handling such a business, i.e. telex and telefax? What press coverage has the "fluid" received in *Variety* and *Box Office* for the titles it has handled?

And though it ultimately comes back to the distribution question, American money should open its eyes to what movies are presently being produced in Africa. As one American visitor to Fespaco remarked, one could blame the lack of American interest in African cinema on the heavy-handed super-structure of monopoly capitalism. But that would mean that American money has given African cinema a chance already and decided it wasn't worth it. But African cinemas haven't even made a ripple in the ocean of the U.S. media.

New films like Idrissa Ouedraogo's "Yaaba" (Burkina Faso) and "Bal Pous-sière" (Côte d'Ivoire) by Henri Duparc may contain some pleasant surprises for American financiers on the hunt for professional and fresh material. ○





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