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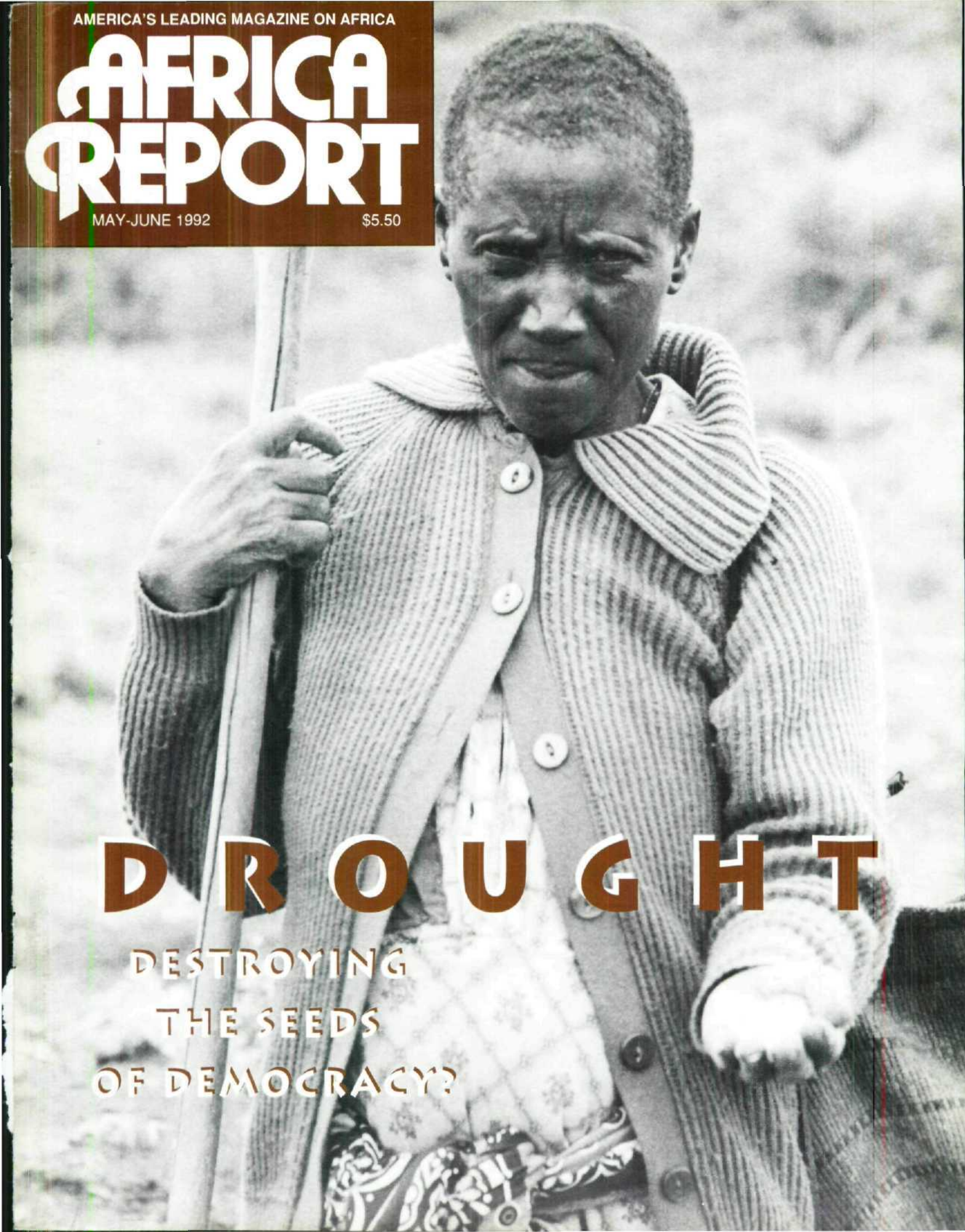

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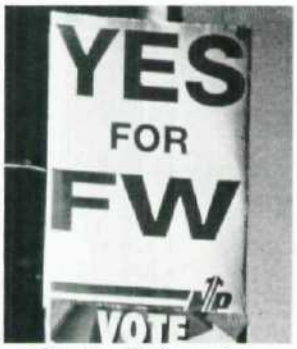

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UPDATE

IN THE NEWS

Can Unita Survive the Democratization Process?

In the 1980s, Washington lobbyists for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita) successfully cultivated Jonas Savimbi's image as a "freedom fighter" and an indispensable ally of the United States, ensuring that his armed movement was well financed. When Unita and the Angolan government signed peace accords in May 1991, officially ending Angola's 16-year civil war, the guerrilla group, known for its prowess in the bush, was forced to refocus its energies on the country's first multi-party elections, scheduled for September under UN supervision. With the voting less than six months away, the confirmation of human rights abuses and high-level defections within Unita have seriously shaken the movement's efforts to present itself as a viable alternative to the governing Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), raising questions about the continuation of U.S. support for its Cold War-era client.

Margaret A. Novicki
"From Cabinda to Cunene, only one people, only one nation"

Past reports of divisions and human rights abuses within Unita were resurrected after two senior leaders from the movement defected in February and accused Savimbi of rights violations in mid-March. On March 25, Savimbi, who had always denied these allegations, confirmed that they had been taking place inside Unita for years, but blamed the defectors, Miguel N'Zau Puna and Tony da Costa Fernandes.

Coinciding with his remarks were Unita assertions that the defections were linked to an MPLA plot to assassinate Savimbi, which it claimed "Western intelligence sources" had uncovered. In an interview on Unita's radio station, Voice of the Black Cockerel, the movement's chief of staff of the armed forces, Gen. Arlindo Chenda Pena "Ben-Ben," said, "There is a very clear link between the desertion of Puna and Tony and the macabre MPLA plan to assassinate Comrade President Savimbi." Observers feel Unita statements about the plot were aimed at minimizing the damage done to the organization's image by Savimbi's acknowledgement that abuses had taken place.

Perhaps the most notable of the rights violations which Savimbi confirmed were the disappearances of Pedro "Tito" Chingunji and Wilson dos Santos, who were both high-level Unita officials. Questions about the fate of the two men, which Unita backers and critics alike had found troubling, are believed to be responsible for much of the pressure on Savimbi to explain alleged abuses in Unita.

Chingunji, who was Unita's representative to Washington in the 1980s, had been well-liked by pro-Unita decision-makers in the United States. Savimbi's claim in February that he was alive and well did little to quell allegations that the former Unita representative had been murdered. The State Department had been raising the issue of Chingunji's fate with Savimbi "regularly" over the past six to eight months, according to a statement it issued in March.

Chingunji's fall from grace in Unita was described in an article for *The Washington Post* by Fred Bridgeland, who is known to have had close contact with the Unita leadership and is the author of a flattering biography of Savimbi. Bridgeland recounted that four years ago, Chingunji, at the height of his Unita career in Washington, had said that Savimbi was responsible for the deaths of his parents and several other relatives. Despite warnings from friends that he was in danger, Chingunji returned to Unita's headquarters in Jamba, Angola, in November 1988, with the belief that prospects for peace had made Savimbi a "changed man." Bridgeland described Chingunji as "fighting for survival" when he last saw him in December 1988.

In a blow to Unita, Savimbi's assertion that Puna and Fernandes were to blame for the disappearances was reportedly called insufficient by Secretary of State James Baker in a March 28 letter he sent to Savimbi, formally demanding a detailed explanation of Unita's abuses. The State Department spokeswoman, Margaret Tutwiler, said, "We have called upon Unita to address these allegations, including the welfare and whereabouts of the two former Unita officials [Chingunji and dos Santos], in an open and public manner." The letter reportedly said that a failure to address the allegations could threaten the continuation of the ceasefire and elections. It is also reported to have said that those responsible for the abuses should be punished.

Puna and Fernandes, who talked to the press in Paris, maintain that Chingunji, his two children, and dos Santos were murdered in August, under orders from Savimbi. Puna, Unita's former secretary for home affairs, said that Savimbi is also responsible for the disappearances of 30 other Unita leaders.

Savimbi countered the defectors' accusations in more depth in a press conference on April 5, claiming that the murders took place in November of last year, when he was in the Angolan capital, Luanda. He was away from the Unita base in Jamba from September 24 to February 20 and has said that Puna was in charge during his absence. Savimbi maintains that he only learned of the murders upon his return to Jamba in February and that he was not lying when he said that Chingunji was alive and well prior to that. On April 5, he also reportedly told sup-

porters, "The head of a company doesn't know everything that goes on in a company...It's not possible. But the company head has to take responsibility."

Savimbi says that four Unita people have been arrested in connection with the case, but that they had acted under orders and that Unita's vice president, Jeremias Kalandula Chitunda, is leading an investigation into the case. Savimbi's iron-fisted control of Unita has led observers to state, however, that it is implausible that Savimbi was not cognizant of the murders.

Accusations of abuses aside, the defections of Puna and Fernandes leave Unita with troubling questions about the unity and makeup of its leadership in the run-up to the scheduled elections. Critics point out that the senior leadership is now made up almost exclusively of the Ovimbundu (the country's most populous group) and gains most of its support from south and central Angola. As natives of Cabinda, the northernmost province in Angola, Puna and Fernandes had been considered important in Unita's bid to gain nationwide support. Savimbi himself recognized the importance of the two lost "comrades" in a March 13 Unita anniversary rally speech when he said, "If Puna and Tony were here to attend our 26th anniversary celebrations, we would have been more complete." But, in keeping with Unita's attempts in early March to downplay the significance of their departure, he added that differences in policy toward Cabinda led the two to leave Unita and that they had always had different objectives from the organization.

Puna has stated that Savimbi's neglect of Cabinda, an oil-rich exclave of Angola wedged between Congo and Zaire, was the deciding factor in his decision to split with the rebel leader. The territory's more than 100,000 inhabitants are desperately poor, even though better than half of Angola's main export, oil, is produced there. Unita and the MPLA are both opposed to independence for Cabinda where a secessionist movement active in the territory since the mid-1960s has become increasingly violent. Puna and Fernandes have reportedly joined the separatists, but Puna says that he is not resigning from Unita and will instead be fighting to make it more democratic.

It remains to be seen if the MPLA, which itself is criticized for having a poor human rights record, mismanaging the economy, and doing little to stop rampant corruption, can use Unita's recent embarrassments to its political advantage. In a speech in Luanda on March 14, President José Eduardo dos Santos said, "A reality, which many used to regard as mere MPLA propaganda, is now unfolding before the eyes of all of us. As we had forecast, the farce that had for a long time been nourished by propaganda and lies, could not withstand the first shock of reality and the dynamics of social democratization. We shall continue to strive for freedom and transparency."

While the effect that the defections and revelations about abuses within Unita will have on the organization's support within Angola is hard to gauge, the issues have certainly raised eyebrows in Washington, which has supplied Unita with hundreds of millions of dollars in aid over the years. The end of the Cold War has increasingly made U.S. aid to Africa conditional on human rights records and democratization, rather than containment.

After Savimbi's confirmation of human rights abuses, an administration official was quick to point out that the only aid the U.S. is currently providing Unita is part of a package for implementing the peace accord and the electoral process. This assistance, which is reported to be worth $14.5 million, is available to all of the 30 political parties expected to take part in the elections.

But there is another roughly $30 million in aid earmarked by Congress for fiscal year 1992 to assist Unita in transforming itself into a political party. No new covert aid had been granted for Unita for fiscal year 1993 as of March 31, the deadline for allocating such aid.

There is talk in Washington that members of Congress are considering holding hearings in the near future on Savimbi's human rights violations in recognition of the recent revelations, but at this time it seems unlikely that either the $30 million earmarked for Unita or its share of the $14.5 million set aside for the democratization exercise will be denied the organization.

Assisting Unita in its efforts to prevent the U.S. from cutting off its aid are a number of lobbying firms it employs in Washington. The most notable, which handled Unita's public relations during the heyday of U.S. covert assistance in the 1980s, is Black, Manafort, Stone and Kelly, Public Affairs Inc. The corporation is currently entered into a one-year contract with Unita signed last September which stipulates that the organization compensate it the base amount of $600,000 on a semi-annual basis. After sitting on the sidelines in the Washington lobbying market for years, the Angolan government has also hired the services of two high-paid lobbyists.

International observers have expressed concern that the elections might be jeopardized because of slow progress in the implementation of the Bicesse ceasefire accord. The terms of the agreement for holding elections are running months behind schedule. The most troubling lack of progress has been in the demobilization of troops and relinquishing of control of territory to the government by Unita.

Fernandes accused Unita of maintaining an army on the Namibian border and it is widely reported that Savimbi is unwilling to relinquish control of the Jamba area. The London *Guardian* also reported in March that aid workers said Unita was keeping peasants in its areas through its control of large quantities of UN-provided food.

The problems are not all caused by Unita, however. Undisciplined government forces, a lack of resources, and a ravaged infrastructure have all played their part in slowing down the process. President dos Santos recently said, "These problems are mainly caused by Unita, but not always."

In a sign that Unita wants to show that it is willing to cooperate in matters relating to abuses within the territory that it controls, the movement agreed to hand over to the government a Unita official considered responsible for the deaths of four British tourists in January. At the time of the murders, Savimbi denied Unita involvement on the grounds that his forces were too disciplined to have carried out the act.

As the election date in Angola draws closer, the U.S. has begun to show that it is serious about a commitment to human rights and democratization in Angola. After keeping its pledge that it would support Unita until the last Cuban soldier had left—this happened on May 26, 1991—the State Department is now willing to question its ex-client's undemocratic practices. Regardless of who wins Angola's elections—at present it appears to be a two-party race, between Unita and the MPLA—war-weary Angolans will be most able to maintain a democracy if they can rebuild their country. This will require large amounts of aid akin to the assistance Unita received to wage its long and successful guerrilla struggle. ■

POLITICAL POINTERS

TOGO

Amnesty International released a report in April calling on the Togolese government to bring past perpetrators of "widespread human rights violations" to justice. The report, *Togo: Impunity for Human Rights Violators at a Time of Reform*, expresses concern that despite the open discussion of human rights abuses at the national conference last year—which reduced President Gnassingbé Eyadéma's power—and the public examination of the violations by Togo's National Human Rights Commission, "those responsible appear to have been allowed to act with impunity."

The June-August national conference did not strip Eyadéma of power for long. In December, elements of the military forced the interim prime minister, Joseph Kokou Koffigoh, to name a new transitional government. The rattled Koffigoh retained his post as prime minister, but Eyadéma clearly showed that he still wields power. With Eyadéma maintaining his grip on the army, it is dubious at best that people responsible for human rights abuses during his long reign will be prosecuted.

Included among the numerous violations Amnesty cites in the report is the case of a prisoner being forced to stare at the sun until he went blind; the death in detention of a former vice-president of Togo, Idrissou Antoine Meatchi; and the deaths of 28 demonstrators who were dredged from a lagoon in Lomé in April last year. The bodies of the demonstrators were found at a time when repression by government forces was particularly severe in response to the growing opposition to Eyadéma's rule.

The Amnesty report says that if the current government does not bring those responsible for the violations to justice, torture and extrajudicial executions can happen again.

NIGERIA

To the surprise of the Nigerian government, the World Bank, and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, there are only 88.5 million Nigerians—20-30 million fewer than had been believed. This is according to Nigeria's National Population Commission (NPC), which released its 1991 census findings on March 19. The commission's chief, Alhaji Shehu Musa, has called the census results the most accurate in Nigeria's history.

As a result of the new population count, previous estimates of 3.3 percent per annum growth are expected to be adjusted to 2.1 percent and annual per capita income should now rise from $250 to about $350. Nigerians, who took pride in boasting that Nigeria's population exceeded 100 million, can take solace in the fact that theirs is still Africa's most populous country.

Always a contentious issue, the three previous post-independence attempts at a national headcount—in 1962, 1963, and 1973—resulted in accusations of fraud, political tension, and violence. All three exercises had been used to determine political representation as well as federal revenue allocations, and brought to the surface religious, ethnic, and political rivalries.

To avoid past problems, the military regime of President Ibrahim Babangida deliberately structured the 1991 census to avoid issues of language, ethnicity, and religious affiliation and discontinued the practice of allocating federal revenues based upon state population. The count was also executed under strict control. From November 28 to 30, the government closed Nigeria's borders, cancelled international flights, closed schools and government offices, shut almost all businesses, and introduced a decree to discourage fraud while 800,000 enumerators were at work. Other provisions included computers set up in seven zones (with special software to detect cheating), a trial census, a special communication and transportation committee, and a major publicity initiative. The UN, Japan, Britain, and the Netherlands assisted in the operation, which cost an estimated $120 million.

President Ibrahim Babangida has reportedly said of the census, "It is not a contest in ethnic or religious strength, nor is it a contest between region or cultural groups." But the results reported in March did offer some answers to questions pertaining to the strength of different groups in Nigeria. The Nigerian magazine, *Newswatch*, reported that the census revealed that there are 46.9 million people in the northern region, which is predominantly made up of people of Hausa-Fulani descent, and 41.3 million in the southern region, which is dominated by Christians of Yoruba and Ibo descent. But the census also revealed that the population of the states dominated by the Yoruba and Ibo is greater than that of the states made up primarily of the Hausa-Fulani if states dominated by minorities are left out of the comparison. Problems with past counts had occurred when southerners accused the northerners of inflating their counts.

A more startling census result was that there are an impressive 27 million people belonging to minority ethnic groups in both the north and the south. Some groups have organized themselves into a forum, but relations between minorities have remained strained and it does not appear that they will form a united third force.

The enumerating was an essential step in Nigeria's return to civilian rule in January 1993 being carefully managed by the government.

GHANA

In a speech marking the 35th anniversary of Ghana's independence in March, the chairman of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), Flt.-Lt. Jerry Rawlings, announced the timetable for Ghana's transition to civilian rule. He said the process would kick off on April 28, with a referendum on Ghana's new constitution. This is being followed by presidential elections on November 3 and parliamentary elections on December 8. The process will be completed on January 7 when a civilian government takes over.

Opposition groups in Ghana have questioned the decision to hold the referendum prior to the May 18 lifting of the ban on political party activity, also announced by Rawlings. They say the six months this leaves them to organize is insufficient. They have accused the PNDC of staging the transition to allow it to remain in power.

In a move seen as a concession to the opposition, which also accuses the PNDC of political imprisonments, Rawlings announced that he would release political prisoners incarcerated since 1966.

Still unanswered is the question of whether or not Rawlings will run for president. Many Ghanaians and observers believe that he will.

INTERVIEW: THE WEEKLY MAIL'S ANTON HARBER AND DON MATTERA

The alternative press in South Africa is credited with having played an important role in the transition toward non-racial democratic rule. At the cutting edge of alternative reporting has been The Weekly Mail. *After the closure of* The Rand Daily Mail *and* The Sunday Express, *the English-language paper was started in 1985 by out-of-work journalists who were concerned that the media in South Africa didn't include enough "critical, questioning, independent anti-apartheid voices," according to the paper's co-editor, Anton Harber.*

The Weekly Mail*'s journalists were frequently intimidated and detained during South Africa's 1986-1990 state of emergency, and the paper was temporarily closed by the government in 1988. Since President F.W. de Klerk signaled the end of apartheid in February 1990,* The Weekly Mail *has continued to play a leading role in the South African alternative media, gaining worldwide fame in April of last year when it broke the "Inkathagate" story of secret government funding for the Inkatha Freedom Party.*

Africa Report *spoke to the* The Weekly Mail's *co-editor, Anton Harber, and chief training and development officer, Don Mattera, about the alternative media in South Africa shortly before white South Africans went to the polls in March and overwhelmingly confirmed their support for the negotiating process.*

Africa Report: Who reads *The Weekly Mail*?
Harber: Its readers are overwhelmingly South Africa's professional, educated people.
Mattera: Decision-makers read the paper and the government is the most avid of them.
Harber: It's a very interesting spectrum. I use "professional" loosely, because I think there is a trade union leadership and a political leadership, across the spectrum, that reads us—like us or not—ranging from Communist Party leaders to the Conservative Party.
Africa Report: What is the state of press freedom in South Africa today?
Harber: It has certainly improved from the dark days of the state of emergency, when we were battling for our survival and threatened with closure—and in fact closed—and constantly facing seizure of newspaper copies, detention of journalists, and a huge string of prosecutions. It has certainly eased off from those days, but it's a position of flux. While the restrictive press laws are hardly being implemented, they remain on the statute books, and they remain a threat—all of them, the Prisons Act, the Defense Act. They still remain the laws that govern reporting on all the major areas of South African life.
Mattera: The Police Act, the Official Secrets Act, the General Amendment Law Act—not one of those statutes has been removed. Free press is a relative term: As far as I'm concerned it's how free we make the press that is important. We have also freed the press from commercial chains.


Russell Geekie

Don Mattera, chief training and development officer, left, and Anton Harber, co-editor

Harber: A major issue of our press freedom at the moment is the issue of ownership and control and the lack of access to the media for most people, including many important political groups.
Africa Report: Ownership and control is a major concern. The ANC Media Charter, published in January, would broaden control of the media. Do you foresee this happening before elections, as the ANC would have it?
Harber: I think the priority now would probably be neutralizing control of state-owned media and insuring its independence. I don't think that in the interim there is going to be quick action on the question of ownership and control of the rest of the media. I think that will be more complex, and probably slower. There will be a great many powerful conservative forces ranged against attempts to introduce even standard anti-trust legislation in South Africa.
Mattera: The "free the airwaves" slogans that are being bandied around are serious because the South African Broadcasting Corporation [SABC] controls 100 percent of almost everything with the exception of Radio 702. There is no other radio station that I know of that is in the hands of private people. The ANC is making noise and this is important because it is making people think about the liberation of the airwaves.
Africa Report: What about the role of the outside media, such as the BBC?
Harber: It's limited. There aren't that many people in South Africa who can afford shortwave radio. Radio is very important in South Africa. Shortwave radio was important during times of repression. Many of those who had a radio depended on international reports for a lot of information. The BBC is there with a strong signal through most of southern Africa, but most people have FM radios and the power of the SABC is enormous.
Mattera: It controls FM and the people want to tune in to FM, not shortwave.
Harber: There are two processes: one is to try to neutralize

the SABC, within the political process. The other is to ensure that there are more voices on the FM spectrum, offering greater diversity.

Africa Report: Has there been more talk of a private FM station?

Harber: There's plenty of talk and there are a whole lot of people who have put in applications to the authorities in anticipation of the creation of an independent broadcasting authority. But I think the major problem is like all problems of media ownership and control in South Africa: There are not that many people who can afford to start radio stations and most of those who can are already the overwhelmingly dominant players in the media market. The fear is that we might have more radio stations, but we may not have more voices in the media spectrum. It's diversity that we need.

Mattera: The cable television that we have is about hedonism through the movies. You could count the educational things that come up.

Harber: That is a perfect illustration. It's the only non-state owned television, so you would imagine the responsibility is enormous and the opportunity is fantastic. At last you can counter state broadcasting, and all we get is old American soaps and movies. It has been the most disgraceful illustration of the mainstream press not meeting their responsibilities.

Africa Report: As an alternative newspaper, *The Weekly Mail* has been in the vanguard of the media in South Africa in terms of breaking stories. Do you foresee this role changing in the "new" South Africa?

Mattera: I don't see it changing. I can just see it intensifying its need to bolster the bastion of the press as an article of democracy. *The Weekly Mail* has done it excellently, but let's create the hypothesis that the ANC is the government tomorrow. Will *The Weekly Mail*'s role now be lessened? More so, it will be required of *The Weekly Mail* to keep a check. It is an important and exciting role.

Harber: We very much see ourselves playing the same role of an independent, sharply critical watchdog of the values that we stand for—human rights, democracy, non-sexism, and equality generally—and we are going to need to be even more vigilant about those things in the future.

Mattera: We have a history as a mirror for us, particularly African history.

Africa Report: Do you see an expanded role for the paper? There was a failed attempt to make it a daily a few years ago. Can the paper increase its circulation?

Harber: Obviously we'll be attempting to sell more copies. I don't think we'll change the basic target that we are aimed at, which is decision-makers across the political and racial spectrum. There are more of those that we would like to get to. That remains our key target.

Mattera: A comment by the judiciary through Judge Goldstone [in regard to the paper] is significant. He said to one of the Inkatha people that are accused, "You don't know about this case, why don't you read *The Weekly Mail*?" That tells you that we are being read at very high places, but that does

Continued on page 11

The Weekly Mail Training Project: An Investment in Democracy

In 1986, *The Weekly Mail* launched "a project to train a new breed of journalists: critical, creative, and committed to exposing both the good and the bad of South African society," according to the 1992 status report and prospectus of the project, called The Weekly Mail Training Project. The training program, which places particular emphasis on training blacks who would otherwise not have access to the journalistic profession, can be called a by-product of the widespread violence in South Africa the previous year when the *The Weekly Mail* was founded. According to the report, the decision to implement the project was based on the paper's experiences that year, which "starkly revealed the limitations independent and alternative newspapers faced in finding journalists from the underprivileged sections of the society who could report fairly and capably—and with first-hand knowledge—about the terror and the torment of that time."

Now in its seventh year, the program has expanded from training three people in 1986 to 14 in 1991, including trainees who participated in the "outreach program" which offers training at the paper to people from community-based organizations. The project received over 300 applications for the 1992 training period, some from as far afield as Malawi.

The training program's development officer, journalist/poet Don Mattera, told *Africa Report* that the program has proven to be mutually beneficial to the trainees and the 12-member editorial staff of *The Weekly Mail*. He said, "The interns play a very important part in the paper and this is an important training ground for them...Some of them have been absorbed into very key positions in the industry."

But Mattera and *The Weekly Mail* also see the training project as playing a major role in the development of the alternative media in South Africa and in the future of the country itself. Mattera said, "We give the industry the important critical person we would like to see involved in the new country, during and after the reconstruction period."

The Weekly Mail reports that most of its former trainees currently hold positions of authority in South Africa's newspapers. The project also provides instruction in the various aspects of newspaper management, including accounting, advertising, and general management.

The training project is financially independent and is registered as a charity, with the South African Newspaper Education Trust administering its funds. Mattera and *The Weekly Mail's* co-editor, Anton Harber, have both expressed disappointment with the low level of support that American companies with interests in South Africa have offered for media training in the country. Mattera said: "One of the Sullivan Principles was managerial training and so on. This has not really been forthcoming from the American companies operating in our country. Although there has been some minimal entrepreneurial support, there hasn't been support for the kind of training that we want for our people. Our training is not to just make you a journalist, it is also to make you a newspaper manager and administrator. We haven't seen a great input into the long-term human investment in South Africa."

Harber, who views the training as "fundamental" to the survival of the alternative press in South Africa, said of support for training, "We see it as an investment in a free press and a free media, which is an investment in democracy." ■

Green Is Finally In, But Who Will Have to Pay For It?

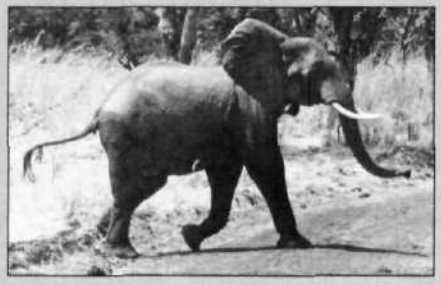
After decades of giving the topic little more than lip service, the world community finally agrees that protecting the global environment is a paramount issue. The disagreements begin when discussions are undertaken on how this should be carried out and who should pay for it.

Representatives from more than 160 countries have debated these issues over the last two years in sessions of the preparatory committee (Prepcom), in anticipation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), better known as the "Earth Summit," to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June. Battle lines have largely been drawn between the industrialized nations of the North, which are pushing for global agreements on the environment, and the developing countries of the South, which are more concerned with the local environment and development. In the fourth and final Prepcom conference, which met for five weeks in March and April, negotiators agreed to the principle that developed nations have a responsibility to help the Third World develop in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner, which was a fundamental point argued by the South.

The agreement, which was part of a 27-point draft of environmental rules to be considered at UNCED, also recognized "eradicating poverty as an indis-

When Is Culling the Animal Not Killing the Animal?

As expected, the most hotly debated issue among the representatives of 112 countries at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) meeting in March was whether or not to reverse the international ban on ivory trade. The eighth triennial meeting in Kyoto, Japan, retained the three-year ban. But the debate, which pits East African countries and other proponents of the ban against a group of southern African nations which are against it, is not closed.



The southern African countries leading the opposition to the ban are Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Malawi, and South Africa. Implicit in their argument is that their countries have an over-abundance of elephants which frequently compete with people for scarce land. Culling the animals is necessary to maintain a sustainable environment for the herds. They say trade in elephant products is warranted because it makes the costly activity of controlling the elephant population economically viable. Stephen R. Mishkin, the publisher of a new publication, *African Wildlife Update*, told *Africa Report*, "The southern African countries, especially Zimbabwe and South Africa, have a utilization philosophy, which they believe is the most effective way to conserve their wildlife." The southern African countries maintain that as long as they have funds, their healthy elephant populations are not in danger from poaching.

In their effort to get the elephant off the Cites treaty's appendix I, which bans all sales of elephant products, the southern African nations at Kyoto argued a compromise stance which called for a limited resumption in trading elephant meat and skin, but not ivory. South Africa said that it would accept a ban on ivory sales until the next Cites meeting in 1994, and the other four southern African countries said they would agree to a "moratorium for a reasonable period which would allow time to put in place a trading system that would not encourage any illegal opportunities for ivory trading."

But the southern African countries dropped their proposals, reportedly under heavy pressure from Western and African countries which support the ban. Some of the angered southern African nations reportedly accused the developing countries' leaders of catering to their constituents who support the ban, rather than examining the realities of wildlife conservation in southern Africa. With the exception of South Africa, the proponents of trade in elephant parts argued that the Cites decision to retain the ban was largely the result of the developed nations imposing their will on the developing nations.

But Kenya and several central and West African nations support the 1989 ban, which came about after conservationists estimated that Africa's elephant population had been halved to 600,000 animals between 1979 and 1989. Proponents of the Cites ban on ivory trade cite as reason to maintain the ban a decreased price for ivory, less poaching in southern and eastern Africa, and an estimated 50,000 increase in the elephant population since 1989. Many argue that even a partial resumption of the ban can lead to a full-scale resumption of the ivory trade. In a study of six African countries, the World Wide Fund for Nature found that poaching had in fact decreased since the imposition of the ban, but said that tougher policies by local authorities were responsible.

It remains to be seen what the response of the proponents of ivory trade will be to the Cites refusal to a partial lifting of the ban. A threat by Zimbabwe and Botswana to quit the organization is probably a hollow one, but it nonetheless underscores the southern African nations' determination not to let the issue rest. Last year, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, and Malawi formed the Southern African Centre for Ivory Marketing (Sacim), a cartel for selling ivory from legally culled elephants under tight controls. The cartel faced an early setback when Zambia withdrew after reversing its decision to trade ivory.

Many Western leaders are reportedly wavering on whether or not to accept the case that the best road to conservation is to relax the ban. It is possible that they will support a repeal of the ban by the next Cites meeting. The problem remains, however, that the rest of Africa is simply not nearly as well-equipped to protect its wildlife as is the southern African bloc. ■

pensable requirement for sustainable development," and the essential role of women in environmental development and management. The draft also included the principle that nations have "the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental needs," but are responsible to clean up pollution they cause beyond their boundaries.

The issuance of the detailed draft document, which assigns responsibility to polluters in lieu of a more general statement of shared principles that the industrialized nations had favored, was seen as a victory for the developing nations. But a number of burning issues remain to be negotiated at the Rio de Janeiro summit, which was supposed to be the ceremonial conclusion of the Prepcom sessions.

Probably the thorniest North/South issue remaining is the price developed countries must pay for environmental cleanup. The South argues that additional development aid is essential to any global package on the environment. UNCED Secretary-General Maurice Strong estimates that to carry out Agenda 21—a comprehensive 29-point plan of action for cleaning the environment that is expected to be adopted at Rio—the cost to industrialized countries would be $125 billion a year, $70 billion more than is currently being given in development aid. *Africa Recovery* reported that Strong hopes the Earth Summit will lead to commitments of $7 billion per year for Agenda 21 and related activities on global warming and biodiversity. However, most commentators do not estimate increases of more than $6 billion in aid. In March, the United States backed away from its earlier position that the Third World did not need additional aid to carry out the plan. European countries had previously pledged to supply additional aid.

Another hotly debated issue not fully addressed regards the transfer of technology. According to *Africa Recovery*, Senegal's Minister of Tourism and Environmental Protection Jacques Baudin echoed a common Third World sentiment when he argued that developing countries have a right and a duty to develop, and they could do so either by using environmentally friendly technology, or through the environmentally damaging methods that the industrialized countries had used to develop.

Also left for UNCED are the highly publicized issues of biodiversity and global warming, which pit the U.S. against Europe because of the former's refusal to agree to set specific limits of carbon-dioxide emissions.

African negotiators were generally pleased with the draft agreement, which addressed several issues—including poverty and additional assistance—that they had outlined in the "African Common Position on Environment," a position paper presented to Prepcom.

But Africans felt that other issues must be more fully addressed, including desertification, which is proving to be particularly threatening to African development. The North has reportedly been quick to write the problem off as a local environmental concern. But Africans point to the case of deforestation which has received international attention because of its effect on global warming and argue that desertification is also related to the world's climate and should be a global concern. ■

The Weekly Mail *Continued*

not solve our problem. We also need the money to continue. One of the things that we are looking for is a serious injection of investment into the paper.

We are not talking about investment which would break up the sanctions in our country; obviously we are waiting for Mandela and other relatively credible sources to give us the lead on that. But we are looking for individuals in our own country to share in this dream, to keep *The Weekly Mail* on the cutting edge of democratization in our country.

Africa Report: You are talking of private investment. Do you foresee a state infusion of capital at some point?

Harber: No. We value our independence enormously. If there is state support for independent media, presumably that would have to come through a trust or some kind of neutral body. There is a lot of talk about building a Swedish-style subsidy system to encourage diversity in the media.

Africa Report: What are the paper's main sources of revenue now?

Harber: Individuals who have been politically sympathetic to what we've done and what we stand for have given us support over the years.

Africa Report: Putting aside the difficult sanctions issue, have there been interested external investors?

Harber: Yes, in particular some British people have given us support in that way. But we've often been disappointed by the level of support from many American companies for a free and independent media in South Africa.

Africa Report: Could you talk about the role and influence of the English-speaking press in the referendum in light of statements by both the National Party and the conservatives that English-speakers are going to be the pivotal segment in deciding the referendum?

Harber: Well, the English-speaking press overwhelmingly always supported the PFP over the NP and it didn't help them very much! It isn't a great advertisement for the power of media.

Seriously, a major factor on de Klerk's side clearly is that he overwhelmingly has the support of the media. The Conservative Party has far fewer resources to do battle in that way.

Mattera: And the English press has really pushed hard. There was a powerful editorial in *The Star*, which has the largest daily circulation, calling for a 'yes' vote. It has been running articles to that effect all the time, and so have many Afrikaans papers.

Harber: For us, the role has to be wider. It has to be to make sure that those who are not voting are also heard. At a time like this, that responsibility is an important one. It is also important to keep a watch on those who wish to disrupt things. The potential for an increase in violence around the referendum needs to be watched very closely.

Mattera: The role of the press is really to push people. Even the *Sowetan* newspaper, which is a white-owned paper for black people, has been pushing for a strong 'yes' vote. Not that the white people are reading that paper, but it's setting a state of mind, it's setting a tone: Lots of black kids have white friends and you know they might say, "Hey my friend, I hope you vote yes." ■

BUSINESS BRIEFS

ALGERIA

Algeria secured an untied loan worth $300 million from the Export-Import Bank of Japan in March, in support of the country's economic reforms. The agreement follows a loan worth $350 million extended to the country by the World Bank last June.

The Financial Times reported that the Export-Import Bank is expected to grant two additional loans in the near future. Both loans will be earmarked for projects being implemented by Sonatrach, the state-owned oil and gas company.

Algeria's debt currently stands at $23.4 billion.

INVESTMENT

The flamboyant British businessman Roland ("Tiny") Rowland cut his teeth in Africa since the 1950s, transforming the near-bankrupt London & Rhodesia Mining & Land Company into an $8.75 billion international trading conglomerate, Lonrho, all the while charming a variety of influential African politicians.

The huge trading company now has at least 700 subsidiaries throughout the world, but it is Africa where Rowland got his start and the continent remains Tiny's playground and Lonrho's prime profit producer, particularly through Ashanti Goldfields, a joint venture with the Ghanaian government, and two big platinum mines in South Africa.

Lonrho is an old-fashioned conglomerate; in fact, some would say maverick—it still has the aura of Tiny the tycoon's personal fiefdom. There are no logical links between companies and they have been bought and sold whenever the price was right.

In March, even though the price was definitely right ($306 million), the timing of one such sale stunned Lonrho stockholders and the financial markets. Rowland masterminded the politically sensitive sale of a one-third interest in Metropole Hotels to Libya's investment company just as Libya faced economic sanctions and asset seizures for its alleged role in the Pan Am bombing over Lockerbie in 1988.

"The deal was Mr. Rowland's personal achievement," said Lonrho's chairman, according to the *Financial Times*. He criticized the press for subjecting the company to a "persistent and misleading campaign of hysteria. Let the jackals bark, the caravan carries on."

Rowland told the *Daily Mail* that he had known Libya's leader, Col. Muammar Qaddafy, for 21 years. "He is my friend. I am absolutely satisfied that Qaddafy is not at the root of the terrorists."

The generous price for a minority stake in Metropole, a chain of hotels in Britain and Africa, went some way to reduce Lonrho's debt of about $1.8 billion. Profits have been slashed lately and the company is looking to sell off minority stakes in its other assets. But the fiercely loyal small shareholders had their image of Rowland as a financial wizard shaken even before the Libyan deal, as share prices have sunk to the lowest level in nine years. Before the March annual meeting, institutional investors, not so mesmerized by Tiny's charisma, were reportedly lobbying for the appointment of a high-powered managing director to help restructure the corporation, freeing Rowland to fly around Africa in his private jet and cultivate his many contacts. Many large shareholders reportedly have begun selling off their Lonrho stock.

One disgruntled investor told *The Independent on Sunday*, "With these deals, the company needs Mr. Rowland more and more, not less and less. It is not a nice situation for shareholders."

By April, Lonrho's crisis of confidence had deepened. With its stock prices plummeting, the company's biggest outside investor, Fidelity Management Research of Boston, said it was carefully considering the implications of the Libyan deal and had not precluded selling its 9.8 percent stake. The Libyan involvement raises the possibility that UN sanctions, which took effect April 15, could hit Lonrho itself.

According to the *Financial Times*, Rowland flew to Libya twice just before the sanctions deadline, apparently in an effort to reach a compromise over Qaddafy's refusal to hand over the Lockerbie suspects.

And there was more bad news for Lonrho shareholders: Its stockbroker, UBS Phillips & Drew, resigned, apparently miffed at not being briefed on the Libyan sale.

Tiny is now 74 and his African intimates from the days of independence, like Kenneth Kaunda, Milton Obote, and Gaafar Nimeiri, are either dead or out of power—or about to be out of power, like Kamuzu Banda and Daniel arap Moi. And ironically in Zimbabwe, the birthplace of Lonrho, Tiny has not been close to the government since he backed the wrong horse at independence, Joshua Nkomo.

SHIPPING

The executive body of the European Community fined a French shipping group $18.6 million for operating a cartel on trade routes between France and 11 West and central African countries, according to an article in *The Journal of Commerce*.

The privately held Bollore Group had been the cartel operator through a subsidiary and the arrangement involved 13 other shipping lines. The article reported that a number of concessions had been wrung from the group to restore competitiveness, including its withdrawal from three African trade conferences.

SOUTH AFRICA

European Community foreign ministers agreed to lift the EC's seven-year-old ban on oil sales to South Africa, at a meeting in Luxembourg in April. Commenting on the decision, South Africa's Pik Botha said, "Psychologically it means the doors are fully opened to South Africa to do business, to do trade and to move back into the world that was closed to us."

The EC decision was taken after white South Africans overwhelmingly confirmed their support for the negotiating process being undertaken by President F.W. de Klerk in a referendum held on March 17.

The only remaining EC sanctions on South Africa are a ban on the trade of weapons or military-related goods, and measures prohibiting military or nuclear cooperation. These are mandated by the United Nations Security Council.

The United States lifted its oil embargo against South Africa last year.

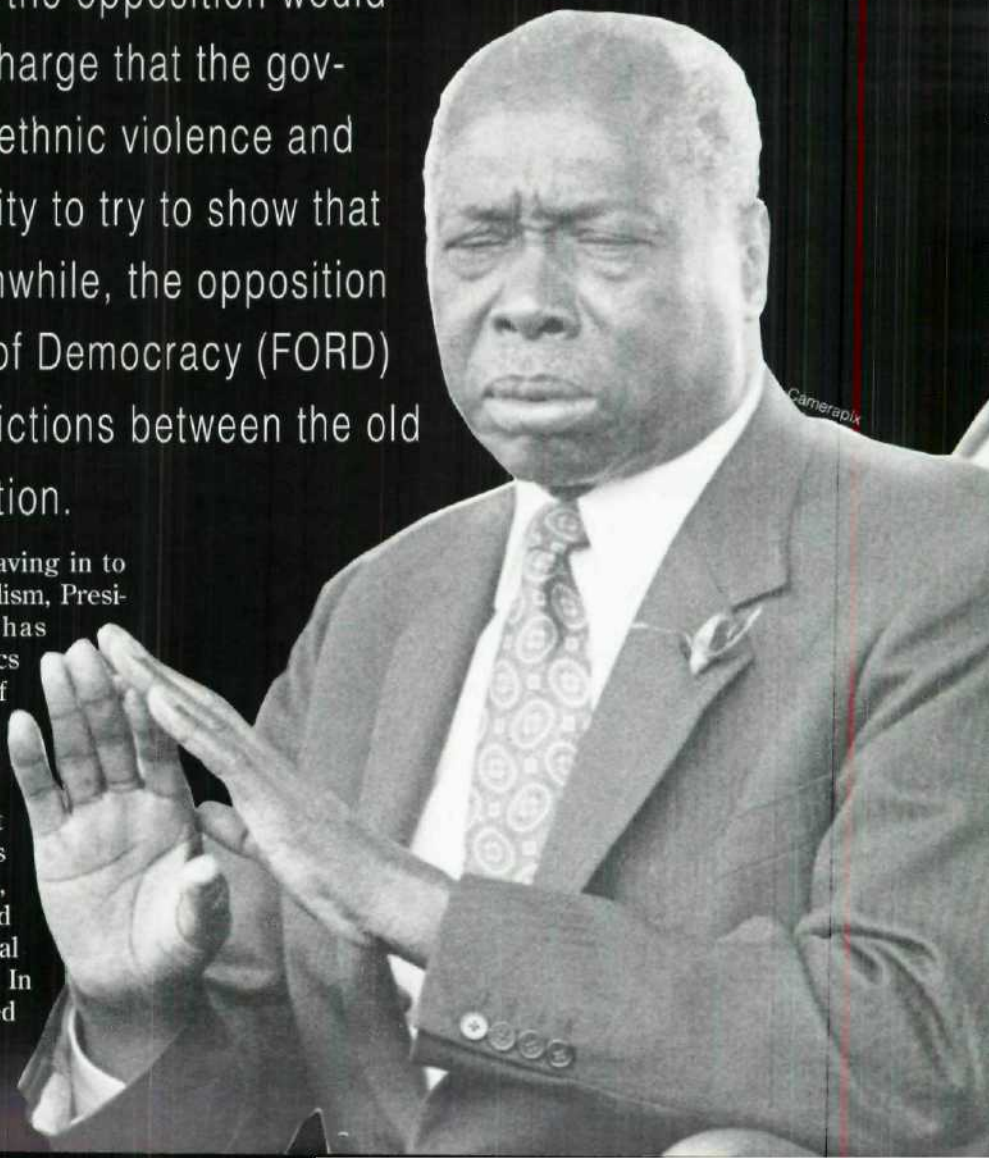
BY MAKAU WA MUTUA

Camerapix

FORD members rallying supporters

THE POLITICS OF DOOM

Pressured into opening Kenyan society to multi-party politics, President Daniel arap Moi has made it clear that he prefers going back to the status quo ante. With it all but assured that the opposition would win fair elections, critics charge that the government is now fomenting ethnic violence and suppressing political activity to try to show that pluralism won't work. Meanwhile, the opposition Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) is riven by its own contradictions between the old guard and the new generation.



Camerapix

Barely four months after caving in to demands for political pluralism, President Daniel arap Moi has encouraged, and most critics charge, orchestrated one of the worst spates of inter-communal violence that Kenya has seen since independence in 1963. More than two months of violent clashes in western Kenya have left scores dead and thousands homeless. In Nairobi, security forces have repeatedly attacked demonstrators, raising fears that the social fabric of the nation will soon come apart. In the meantime, the government has banned

all political rallies, temporarily arresting the march toward an openly elected government.

Since opposition political parties were legalized last December, the Kenya African National Union (Kanu) government has taken a series of actions designed to reverse the transition to a freely elected government. Massive defections from Kanu, most notably of Mwai Kibaki, a former vice president, and the growing popularity of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), have left little doubt that the defeat of the Kanu government is certain once free and fair elections are called.

To avoid this dire prospect, and to prolong his hold on power, Moi is determined to convince Kenyans and aid donors that opening up the political process to competition was a mistake. To the surprise of no one, Moi has repeatedly warned during public rallies and in interviews with news organizations that multi-party politics would lead to ethnic violence and national disintegration.

cal violence has taken on an ethnic expression. In February and March alone, over 60 people were killed and more than 5,000 left homeless when some members of the Kalenjin group, to which Moi belongs, attacked the Luo, Luhyia, and Kikuyu, whom tyey perceive as supporting FORD. Villages have been set on fire and schools and homes razed to the ground as these clashes appeared to spiral out of control.

Ostensibly, the clashes are spurred by disputes over land, with the Kalenjin charging that the other groups have encroached on their traditional lands. But many observers believe that the violence is not ethnic; it is politically instigated and orchestrated by the government, they say. According to Gibson Kamau Kuria, a prominent human rights lawyer who fled Kenya in 1990 following an intense government crackdown on its critics, "This violence, which is directed by the government, is supposed to demonstrate the unsuitability of the multiparty political system to Kenya."

Betty Press

To make good on these warnings, the Kanu government has denied the opposition registration of party branches at the district level, making it illegal for them to hold public meetings and carry out recruitment drives. In another sinister move, the government is "zoning" parts of the country—declaring certain "Kanu-only" areas—and physically assaulting opposition activists who dare travel there. The Rift Valley Province—the country's farm belt and Moi's home region—has been particularly inhospitable to opposition political parties. Senior government officials and Kanu leaders in the province have openly called on their supporters to beat up FORD activists.

In western Kenya and the Rift Valley Province, politi-

The government has moved to suppress independent political activity elsewhere. In March, security forces attacked unarmed civilians in Kisumu, Nyanza Province, a FORD stronghold, at bus stops, hospitals, and schools. The attack, which was entirely unprovoked, appeared to have been calculated to intimidate FORD supporters. On March 3, security forces viciously attacked women with batons, truncheons, and clubs in Nairobi's Uhuru Park. The women had been camped at the park since February 28, peacefully demanding the release of all political prisoners. Professor Wangari Maathai, the coordinator of the Green Belt Movement, an environmental advocacy group, was hospitalized after being sprayed with teargas. Since then, news of police violence against citizens has become commonplace.

On March 20, Moi banned all political rallies, citing

Makau wa Mutua, a lawyer, is projects director at the Harvard Law School Human Rights Program.

the spate of ethnic violence that has gripped western Kenya. In cancelling the rallies, Moi charged that FORD was behind the campaign of terror, carried out by saboteurs and guerrillas trained in Libya. FORD has repeatedly accused the government of fomenting the violence as a pretext for calling off multi-party elections. "I am not surprised by the government's use of the violence, or even the extent of the violence," says Kuria. "What surprises me is the lack of subtlety in the regime's use of naked terror to retain power. In its manipulation of ethnicity, the government is denying the very existence of a Kenyan nation which it needs to rule."

Other Kenyans agree. In a harsh and angrily worded pastoral letter, the usually moderate Catholic clergy delivered an unprecedented attack on Moi on March 22, blaming the violence on the government. The letter, which was read to congregations throughout the country, in effect withdrew from Moi any remaining support he might have retained among one of the country's most powerful establishments.

The action leaves the president without any significant social base and virtually takes away his ability to govern. In the pastoral letter, the Catholic bishops categorically dismissed government assertions that the violence in western Kenya, which has pitted the Kalenjin against the Luo, Luhyia, and Kikuyu, was driven by land disputes or ethnic rivalries. With equal vigor, the bishops also rejected the suggestion by the government that the violence was a product of the legalization of opposition political parties last December.

In a direct attack, the bishops argued that the violence is "part of a wider political strategy" by the government to discredit multi-party politics. They pointed out that the attacks were carried out by "well-armed bandits and arsonists" with orders "to inflict injuries only on particular ethnic groups." The bishops charge that the attackers are not local residents but have been "transported to the scenes from outside the area." The bishops concluded that it was "difficult for the government to exonerate itself from responsibility for these violent clashes" particularly because its security forces had not acted impartially.

The clergy also assailed what it referred to as "high-ranking politicians" for "declaring certain zones to be exclusively for the Kanu party." Many Kenyans concur with the conclusions drawn by the bishops, pointing out that the violence is a self-fulfilling prophecy for Moi. Willy Mutunga, the current vice-chairman of the Kenya Law Society and a former political detainee, noted, "Moi has fomented the violence to prove that political pluralism will create ethnic violence. He hopes that the opposition will retaliate so that he can get an excuse for declaring a state of emergency, and gain a new lease on his political life."

The ethnic violence, together with continued harassment of government opponents, comes as no surprise. By all indications, the government has no interest in effecting a speedy transfer of political power to an elected government. Although it is quite clear that it has been repudiated by a majority of Kenyans, the Kanu government has not bothered to propose a coherent, acceptable, and credible formula for transition. It has not even put forth a draft working agenda for a new political arrangement. Instead, its most senior officials are obsessed with the retention of power, creating the crisis in leadership which has led to a slow but sure decomposition of national institutions. Unfortunately, FORD, the primary opposition party, has failed to seize the political initiative to translate its popularity into a broad and comprehensive agenda for action.

To be sure, the government has made it extremely difficult for the opposition to organize by denying permits for public meetings, refusing registration of local offices as required by the Societies Act, physical attacks, killings, and intimidation of opposition activists, and most recently the banning of all political meetings. In their letter, the Catholic bishops decried the "lack of impartiality" in coverage by the government-controlled or -owned print and broadcast media. But while some senior leaders within FORD and other critics sympathetic to the party concede that these obstacles have hampered effective organization, they also point out that the party leadership does not have its priorities straight.

By all indications, the government has no interest in effecting a speedy transfer of political power to an elected government.

These critics argue that the direction of FORD has been hijacked by a group of old men who appear to be driven solely by the quest for power and personal glory. According to a source close to FORD, petty squabbling and narrow personal ambitions have paralyzed the party. The young and more idealistic of the party, drawn mostly from the legal profession, have been sidelined by the veteran politicians. In this paralysis, FORD has been unable to develop an integrated strategy to address the government's intransigence and to outline its vision for the country's future.

Since December 3, according to these critics, the veteran politicians have been preoccupied with plans to merely replace Kanu by recycling the political leadership. The obsession with power, coupled with what some see as elements of opportunism, has overlooked fundamental issues that must be addressed before elections are held. According to Maina Kiai, a research fellow at TransAfrica in Washington, D.C., "the opposition needs to identify its priorities clearly. The struggle is not about

replacing Moi with another dictator; it should rather be focused on restructuring institutions. First, the opposition needs to mobilize mass action to either force Moi out or to compel him to agree to a neutral transitional government." Looking to other African countries that have deposed dictators, Kiai adds that "a sovereign national conference is the best option to chart the country's future. The opposition can use its mass support to force these issues. But first, it must get its house in order."

Similar views are echoed by Peter Kareithi, a prominent Kenyan journalist. "Currently, there is a paralysis. FORD is not pushing Moi hard enough. This paralysis is partly a result of the inability of FORD to decide on its candidate for the presidency." Kareithi points out the competition between Kenneth Matiba, a former cabinet minister and a prominent opposition figure who is recovering in London following a stroke suffered while in detention last year, and Oginga Odinga, a former vice president and the interim chairman of FORD, has thrust the party into a crisis. "Both gentlemen should step aside and throw their weight behind a younger, more vigorous person, perhaps outside the FORD interim committee, if necessary." Kareithi notes that Odinga's advanced age and Matiba's poor health should be considered when FORD chooses its presidential candidate.

Gitobu Imanyara, the courageous editor of *The Nairobi Law Monthly* and a senior FORD leader himself, insists that the opposition must get back to the ideals that have brought the movement for democracy this far. He admits that FORD has placed too much emphasis on elections without working to create a climate to make them free and fair. "The opposition must insist on certain minimum conditions that must be met by the Moi government before elections are held. These include the establishment of an independent and impartial electoral commission, the registration of voters, and the presence of international election monitors," says Imanyara. Mutunga believes that the violence unleashed by the government "proves that the opposition has used the wrong strategies to remove Moi." He adds that they "should now press for a national convention and seize the initiative for political reform."

There are some recent indications that the opposition may be attempting to address these problems. On April 2, FORD called a fairly successful two-day national strike. The general strike, in which 60 percent of Nairobi's workforce stayed home, was called to put pressure on Moi to speed up the transition to an elected government. Among other things, the opposition called for the release of political prisoners, the establishment of an independent electoral commission, the speedy completion of an electoral register, and an early election. The government would like to delay elections as long as possible, most probably until February next year, in the hope that it would cancel them before then under the pretext of a worsening security situation. The strike was marred by incidents of violence as security forces shot at demonstrators, who stoned cars and buses to prevent commuters from going to work.

Problems within the opposition have arisen, many believe, because of the nature of the opposition movement in Kenya. During the 1980s, when the government became increasingly repressive, opposition to its policies was voiced by lone individuals. But by 1989, as calls for more open political systems began to surge throughout Africa, these disparate voices started coalescing into a nascent, middle-class protest movement led primarily by lawyers. By 1990, this movement of young professionals, veteran opposition politicians, sections of the clergy, and the alternative press had attained domestic and international legitimacy. Soon thereafter, the Kanu government, once prized by the West as a check on Soviet expansionism in the region, began to suffer diplomatic isolation as the Soviet bloc collapsed.

Although the young movement for change has managed to de-legitimize the Moi regime, it lacks ideological cohesion.

Although this young movement for change has managed to de-legitimize the Moi regime, it lacks ideological cohesion. The only thing its adherents agree upon is the necessity to remove Moi from office. Most older career politicians who have served in the government before see the struggle for democracy in purely personal terms. For them, it would be sufficient to depose Moi. Their younger colleagues, on the other hand, are a new species of African politicians whose rallying call has been human rights. This group is wedded to the establishment of a liberal democracy in Kenya, with its accompanying institutions of a free press and an independent judiciary. The conflict between these two visions partially explains the muddled thinking within FORD, critics charge.

Unfortunately, the direction of FORD, on which a majority of Kenyans have pinned their hopes, remains in the hands of those with a narrow political agenda. These contradictions also explain the inability of FORD to articulate its economic vision for the country. This political crisis has been compounded by skyrocketing unemployment and the scarcity of essential foodstuffs, which have become common in Nairobi and other urban areas. There is widespread fear that the state may collapse unless the opposition moves quickly to force the transition to a popular government. This is the challenge that FORD must address before the government instigates more violence and uses it as a pretext to ban political parties and impose martial law. As the Somali and Liberian experiences amply demonstrate, intransigent dictators would rather ruin a country than give up power. ❍

INTERVIEW

By Russell Geekie and Margaret A. Novicki

Fighter for Human Rights Gitobu Imanyara

Africa Report: What is the status of the process toward multi-party democracy in Kenya?

Imanyara: President Moi has made it known to the world that he introduced multi-partyism as a result of pressure from the international media, international human rights groups, and the nations that have been Kenya's economic supporters over the last 30 years. He has also made it clear that he doesn't believe it can work and all indications are that he is not going to facilitate the holding of a free and fair election to enable the introduction of a truly multi-party democracy in Kenya.

Africa Report: Is it his strategy to declare a state of emergency to postpone elections?

Imanyara: Yes, since the president announced the introduction of the multi-party system in Kenya, we have seen pockets of politically instigated violence in parts of Western province, where members of the president's own tribe, the Kalenjin, are allegedly chasing away the non-Kalenjins to Nyanza and Western provinces. We have evidence from people who live there that this violence is not instigated by the local people, but by armed groups who appear to be a special unit within the Kenyan police. People who have been living in these areas for many, many generations deny being responsible. Yet people continue to flee because they have been attacked. This always happens at night, never during the day. So it is quite clear that it is part of President Moi's strategy to create a situation of political instability so that he can declare a state of emergency and postpone the elections, or hold elections in an environment where he will emerge as the winner.

Africa Report: How united is the opposition movement in Kenya? Are they working toward common goals? Should there be unity under the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy [FORD], or should there be a multiplicity of political parties?

Imanyara: Kenya has been a one-party state for practically the whole period that we have been independent, for 28 years. It was only from 1966 to 1969 when we had an opposition party. So the opening up of the political climate is good in that it enables the people to form parties based on special interests. In fact, what we are seeing is that none of these political parties which have emerged are ethnic-based. They are all very national in outlook. Contrary to President Moi's predictions that there would be more than 50 opposition parties once he introduced multi-party politics, there are only three main political parties in Kenya—the ruling party, Kanu; the mainstream opposition party, FORD; and Mwai Kibaki's Democratic Party [DP]. The three parties draw their leadership from all parts of the country.

Over the past three months when political rallies were allowed, both the DP and FORD have been drawing very, very large crowds in all parts of the country. I think it is very healthy to have more than one political party. We are now seeing the development of a truly civil society where people with similar interests can form their own political parties to safeguard their interests and fight a common cause.

All opposition parties are united in their desire to see Moi's one-party government removed from power. I can see a situation where the opposition parties are going to fight the elections as a united

Russell Geekie

Gitobu Imanyara, courageous editor of* The Nairobi Law Monthly *and FORD's secretary for information, outlines the demands of the opposition movement before Kenya's first free and fair multi-party elections can be held and spells out the West's role in helping to foster democracy.

front against Kanu. Whether after the elections they can continue as one opposition party is another matter. My own view is that we ought to have more than two political parties; otherwise we can revert to a situation similar to that in Zambia where the opposition becomes the ruling party and the ruling party ceases to exist as a viable unit. A democratic society needs a strong opposition, it is a strong check and balance. What we are seeing now in Kenya is very healthy for the country's democratic future.

Africa Report: What has been the impact of the ban on political meetings on the opposition's efforts to get its message across?

Imanyara: The immediate result is going to unite the opposition parties even further because now they see that Kanu is trying to create an unfair advantage for itself. When President Moi came back from a visit to Austria and the United Kingdom, he warned that he is not going to allow the free press or more political rallies until the situation returns to "normal." Now, we do not know whether by normal, he means a return to one-party rule, or what exactly he is referring to. There have been violent incidents in parts of Western province, but the country has not seen any serious cases of ethnic violence and it is not clear what the president is talking about. But the immediate result has been to unite the opposition parties to fight against the new restrictions on the rights they have been demanding and for which many people have lost their lives and many are still in prison and facing trial in the courts.

Africa Report: What are the opposition's demands as to preconditions for holding elections?

Imanyara: The opposition parties are agreed on certain basic minimum conditions: one, an independent electoral commission. Without an independent electoral commission which enjoys the confidence of the people and whose membership is drawn from persons acceptable to all political parties, not only to supervise elections, but to register voters and update the electoral register, there cannot be a free and fair election.

Number two, the opposition parties have agreed on the need for a strong presence of international observers and monitors. We have seen situations in Zambia and Namibia where the international observers played a very crucial role. Number three, the parties agree that the president should not continue telling the public that the date of the Kenyan election is his "last secret weapon." In a situation where there have not been contested elections for three decades, it doesn't make sense to hide the date of the elections because the parties need time to prepare. They need to register voters, they need to publish their manifestos, and all these things can only be done when there is a specific date for the elections.

Right now, because of the culture of fear that has characterized Kenyan politics, a lot of citizens, although they support the opposition parties, are not free to come out and register because if they are businessmen, they fear losing their trading licenses. All of them are waiting for the dissolution of Parliament and for the announcement of an election date in order to publicly register and enroll as members of the opposition parties. Without a date being fixed, this is not happening and people are just waiting. In the meantime, President Moi and his party continue to enjoy an unfair advantage. So those are three minimum conditions of the opposition parties within Kenya.

The opposition based outside of Kenya is also demanding an interim government. I do not know if that is going to be possible because the Kenyan people are so fed up with Moi's government that they do not wish to give him the opportunity for legitimacy, because an interim government would have to deal with all opposition parties as equal. Kenyans see Moi as the cause of the current political and economic problems, and they want the earliest opportunity to remove him from office. Subject to these conditions that I have just stated, they are ready and willing to have an election as long as it is supervised by an independent electoral commission and then they can get the country back on a strong economic and political footing.

One of the first priorities after the election is a constitutional convention to redraw the Kenyan constitution to restore fundamental rights and safeguard against encroachments into these basic rights by any arm of the government.

Africa Report: What is your view of the role the outside world, and specifically the United States, has played in pushing for change in Kenya? What would you like to see the U.S. doing now?

Imanyara: Had it not been for the very, very strong and intense pressure on Moi from the Western nations, the World Bank, the IMF, and the international human rights groups, we would never have gotten this far. The American ambassador in Nairobi has been very outspoken, a pro-democracy activist. He is very popular in Kenya and he has really given the pro-democracy movement great impetus and encouragement. That has been matched to some extent by Congress, which over the last three or four years has linked further aid to Kenya on the democratic reform process. We have not seen as much support from the administration, and one hopes that the administration would be in tune with Congress, and with the ambassador in Nairobi because there is no doubt that both the United States and the UK have very great influence on Kenyan political developments: the U.S. because of a long-standing military training scheme for the air force and a base in Mombasa, and the UK in the training of the army. The U.S. also has very strong influence in the World Bank and IMF and in direct bilateral aid.

The U.S. should maintain the economic pressure, continue withholding aid. U.S. influence in the World Bank, for example, could be instrumental in getting countries like Japan, which is now Kenya's largest aid donor, to link their economic aid to Kenya to political liberalization and respect for human rights. There is a need for the U.S. and the governments that have any influence on Moi to act more in concert because that is the only way to support the Kenyan people in getting a peaceful transition from a very authoritarian, one-man, highly personalized system to a democratic culture. The momentum can only be maintained if the international community supports the efforts of the Kenyan people, particularly through FORD, which is spearheading this campaign for political pluralism in Kenya.

Africa Report: What sorts of things does the opposition require from the outside in helping to prepare for elections?

Imanyara: We shall definitely need a

lot of technical assistance, preparing the electorate for the first truly free and fair elections since independence. We will need assistance in the registration process, in preparation of ballot papers, in training the returning officers, in ensuring that the counting process is seen to be fair. We shall need assistance in getting the voters registered. People who have attained the voting age need ID cards to register as voters. I don't think the Kenyan government is in an economic position to issue these papers. So we need support to ensure that the electoral process is seen to be free and it cannot be free if the exercise is left to the government to implement. We need voting booths, we need a lot of paperwork, officials to train the election agents, a lot of technical assistance from those countries that have gone through this process on a regular basis or after a long period of authoritarian rule.

Africa Report: What is the impact of the deteriorating economy on the democratic process?

Imanyara: Kenya's economic problems are not caused by external factors. It is massive corruption, delays of foreign investors in remitting dividends out of the country, bureaucratic delays in getting permits for trading licenses. By and large, Kenya's economic problems are a result of governmental mismanagement of the economy. The external factors contribute only about 20 percent. Before the Kenyan economy can turn around, before we can start seeing an economic environment that is conducive to foreign investors and economic growth, there must be a complete overhaul of the treasury department, for example. We need to bring in accountability and transparency when decisions at the treasury are taken, decisions that involve which companies are allowed to invest in Kenya. We need an open climate before the Kenyan economy can start picking up. If we can create a conducive environment, then we can restore some confidence which can attract foreign investors into the country.

Africa Report: What is the timetable for democratic change?

Imanyara: Under the Kenyan constitution, the current term of Parliament ends in March next year, so there must be an election before then. But we all anticipate that the election will be some time this year because obviously Moi does not want to push the time up to the end where people would know the date of the election. But there is a lot that needs to be done. The electoral register needs to be updated. There are about 3.5 million Kenyans who have obtained the voting age since the last time there was a voter registration exercise who need to be registered. Under the law, we need a period for objections for people who have been left out of the registers, or who have been registered in the wrong areas to make appeals.

So we need a minimum period of four to five months before we can really be ready for an election both under the law and being realistic about the entire process. Once a new government is in place, it will take a minimum of two to three years before the economy begins to turn around. In view of the very drastic and painful economic decisions that have to be taken by whatever government is in power, I doubt that there can be any serious economic growth in less than two years.

Africa Report: What is the current status of press freedom in Kenya?

Imanyara: What we have seen since the introduction of multi-party politics is that the government's wrath appears to have turned on the press. The year began on a bad note when 30,000 copies of *Society* magazine were impounded by the police and a high court order was obtained the following day to legalize the continued impoundment. The case is still pending in the law courts, no decision has been taken. In addition to that, individual journalists have been harassed—journalists of *The Nation, The Standard, The Weekly Review*. They have been targets of the Kenyan police and the latest is that the senior editors of both *The Nation* and *The Standard* have been suspended. In March, the Kanu national executive committee chaired by Moi held that *The Nation* newspaper is "anti-government" and was being used by the opposition to undermine the government and the ruling party, according to the secretary-general of Kanu. *Nation* journalists were arrested and interrogated, then released. The managing editor of *The Nation* was held for two days before being released. The managing editor of *The Standard*, after his interrogation by the police, was subsequently sent on compulsory leave by his newspaper.

All these measures being directed at individual journalists and the press in general are meant to intimidate them, because the democratization process in Kenya has been spearheaded by the press. It is the press that has publicized some of the statements by opposition figures, so Kanu is very worried that a completely free press would undermine their chances of rigging the elections and getting back power. The foreign press has also been intimidated. This is something that has been going on for some time. The government always attacks the foreign correspondents because Nairobi has the largest number of them and whenever there is some adverse article in a foreign newspaper, Moi threatens to have them thrown out of the country.

Africa Report: Could you reflect on your experiences over the last two years as one of Kenya's most courageous democrats who helped to launch the democratization process?

Imanyara: Since I was last in the U.S. two years ago, I have been in and out of prison at least four times. This has been the longest period of freedom—three months. My passport was impounded and I was not able to travel out of the country during that time. I was severely beaten up by police during the period I was in detention this last time, resulting in serious illness which necessitated my being admitted to the national hospital. There, although I did get medical attention, they continued holding me in chains. I was chained to the bed the whole time I was in the hospital.

Generally, I have been a special target of President Moi. Whenever he has anything to say against the journalists, lawyers, or any pro-democracy activists, he has targeted all that on me and a few others, people like George Anyona, who until three weeks ago was in prison, and the leadership of the Law Society of Kenya. We have just been sacrificed. But I think we have seen real positive developments in Kenya over the last two years as a result of our persistence in calling for basic human rights. We have always used non-violent methods and always called for peaceful change and respect for the constitution, but these are seen by Moi as subversive activities and this is what has caused him to order my arrest and detention over the last three years.■

Wambui Otieno: An Indomitable Spirit

From age 17 when she served as a scout for the Mau-Mau freedom fighters, Wambui Otieno, 56, veteran Kenyan politician and defender of women's rights, says she has cheated death many times. Her latest brush with mortality came on February 19. A member of the steering committee and chairman of the status and role of women committee of the opposition Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), Otieno was leading a delegation to inaugurate a FORD office in Ngong, outside Nairobi, the parliamentary constituency of the Kenyan vice president, George Saitoti.

As she arrived within 100 yards of the FORD office with other FORD officials and supporters, her car was suddenly surrounded by vehicles, blocking her route. Stones rained down on her car and chaos ensued. Although local police were standing by, having been alerted in advance of the ceremony which was to take place, they did nothing to intervene as Otieno was pulled out of her car and beaten severely by young thugs of "Moi's private army."

"I saw I was going to die. They broke my arm with a rungu (wooden Maasai club)," she said as she lifted her right arm, still enclosed in a cast. "I was bleeding, hit in the head, on the ear, and all over my body. They hit me hard on my spine and I nearly lost consciousness. One came with a javelin and was about to stab me."

Fortunately for Otieno, as the javelin-wielder paused with weapon raised overhead to ask, "Are these the people? Should we finish them?", a policeman intervened. The attackers then fled to the marketplace, where they dispersed after beating market women and stealing their goods.

Wambui Otieno is no stranger to battle with the government of President Daniel arap Moi. Although she is a founding member of the Kenya African National Union (Kanu), the ruling party begun by Jomo Kenyatta in 1960, and the first woman to become a member of its executive committee, she has fought long and hard against what she perceives as the erosion of Kenya's democratic traditions under Moi's presidency. She has been a constant victim of harassment and intimidation as a consequence.

The 1985 election was the turning point, "when I decided I couldn't go on with Moi," said Otieno. "I told him there was no democracy." Although she continued her work as treasurer of the Forum 85 NGO Organizing Committee for the UN Decade for Women, she decided to resign her 25-year post as a member of Kanu's delegates conference, after her run for assistant secretary-general was stonewalled by President Moi.

But it was in 1986 when "Moi got a chance to hit me very hard, when my husband [S.M. Otieno, a prominent lawyer] died," she related. In a case that made headlines the world over as a test of women's rights, Mrs. Otieno, a Kikuyu, launched a suit against her husband's family over the right to bury his body. Otieno says that Moi provided the family, Luos from southwestern Kenya, with legal representation and funding to fight the case in court. After her husband's body lay in a Nairobi morgue for a year and a half, Otieno lost the case on appeal and her husband's body was buried in rural Nyalgunga—she refused to attend the funeral.

Undaunted, she built a memorial to him in the Ngong Hills, where she had planned to inter him originally, and where she has also dug her own grave. A plaque at the entrance to the monument reads: "I, Wambui Otieno, will be laid to rest outside this memorial of my late S.M. to guard his memory even in death."

A tenacious defender of the rights of Kenyan women, Otieno, who plans to contest the Ngong parliamentary seat against Vice President Saitoti in the next round of elections, has devoted her time over the past year to ensuring that FORD takes Kenyan women's rights into account in the emerging political process. She successfully organized women to veto an effort to create a women's wing within FORD. "I told them that is unacceptable. We are veteran politicians like you. We want to join FORD in the mainstream and we are not going to be marginalized."

"We have one problem," she says. "We have decided to stand for elections, but women in Africa from time immemorial have never been in charge of their finances. Most won't be able to pay for election expenses." Hence, part of her agenda during her recent visit to the United States was to seek donor agency and NGO support for women in the political process. Secondly, she is speaking out on behalf of FORD to create an awareness that "Moi is using donor money against us and that helps him to continue. A lot of pressure must be put on him to hold elections, to allow an independent electoral commission, and international observers."

Otieno says: "I wasted my youth fighting for the independence of Kenya, and that's what hurts me now. We are asking Western countries to help us by stopping giving Moi aid. We are suffering, but let us die because for freedom there must be casualties. Cowards die many times before their death, but the brave never taste of death. I will go on."

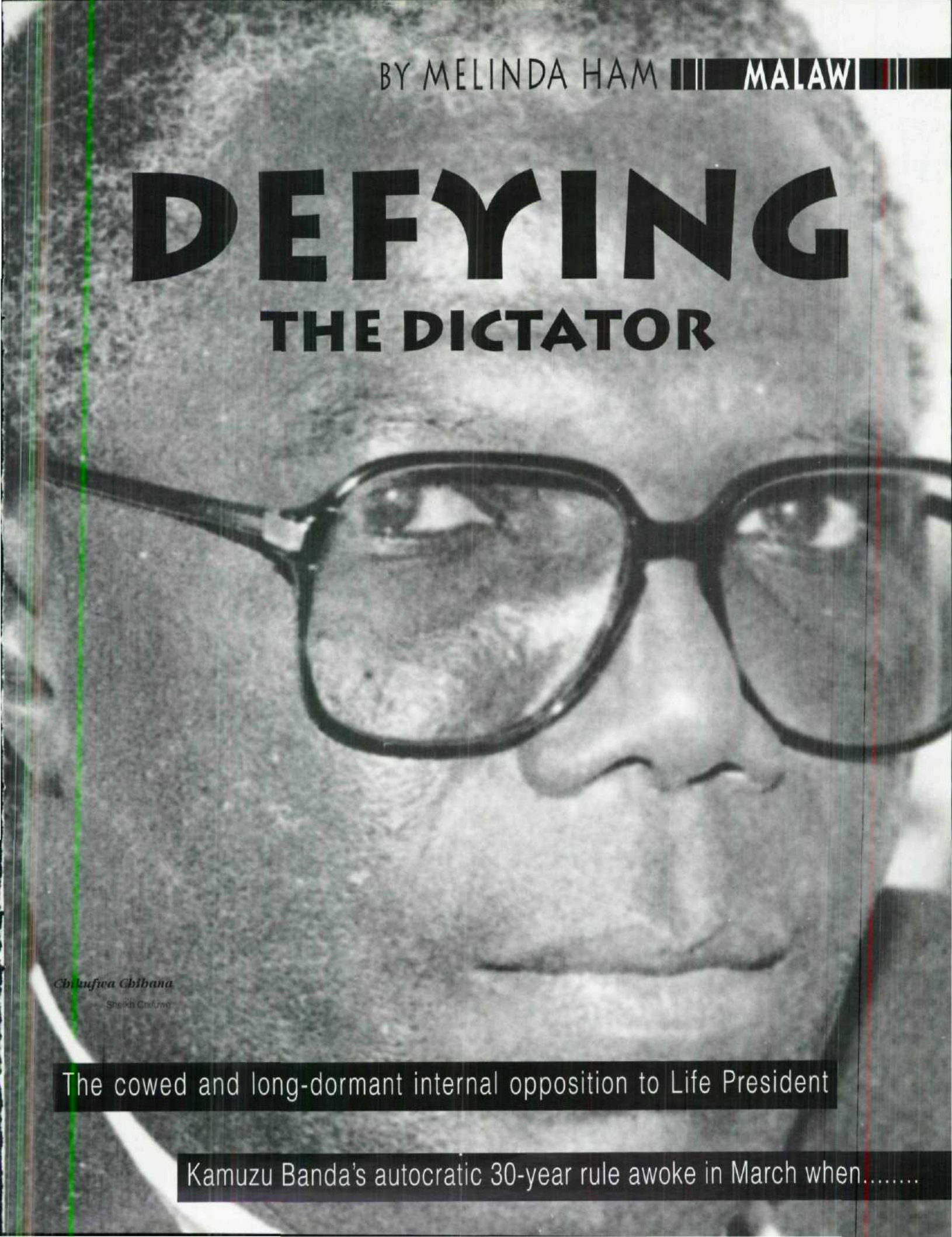
Indeed, a broken arm and battered body hasn't stopped Wambui Otieno, a women of indomitable spirit and iron conviction. ■

—Margaret A. Novicki

BY MELINDA HAM

MALAWI

DEFYING THE DICTATOR



Chakufwa Chihana
Sheikh Chifuwa

The cowed and long-dormant internal opposition to Life President

Kamuzu Banda's autocratic 30-year rule awoke in March when.....

Catholic bishops distributed a Lenten letter attacking the government and calling on Malawians to work for change. That sparked the first-ever anti-Banda demonstrations. Then, a prominent labor leader, Chikufwa Chihana, received a mandate from a meeting in Zambia of Malawian dissidents to return home and organize a national conference on democracy. He was arrested as he stepped off the plane.

One by one, over a dozen men stood up in the conference room, identifying themselves as "graduates" of Malawi's notorious prisons. Many had been detained without trial for years. Others had spent up to three decades living in exile. Remarkably, they still had the courage to "stand up and be counted" in public—even if only in Zambia.

The Lusaka meeting was the first of its kind, bringing together over 75 Malawians living outside and inside the country to discuss prospects for democracy in their nation. As the Zambian minister of legal affairs, Roger Chongwe, said in his opening address: "The political system in Malawi will have to open up...Malawi cannot be an island. She must coexist in a region which is quickly adapting to political changes."

Delegates at the meeting, who came from Britain, South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and from inside Malawi, formed an interim committee, not affiliated to any exiled political group, which will be guided and bound by the decisions made by a national political movement to be formed inside Malawi.

They gave a mandate to Chikufwa Chihana, a prominent Malawian labor leader who lives in the capital, Lilongwe, to go back after the meeting to form a democratic alliance and begin organizing the first-ever national conference on democracy inside the country.

Chihana is the secretary-general of the Southern African Trade Unions Coordinating Council (SATUCC), which represents 10 million workers in the region. He was also a founding member of the Malawi Congress Party, but went into exile in Kenya just before independence because he fell out with Hastings Kamuzu Banda—soon to become president. When he returned in 1971, he was detained without trial for seven years, five of them in solitary confinement, where he was kept most of the time naked and in leg irons. Prison wardens frequently beat him, hung him upside down, and threw water on him. The London-based human rights group, Amnesty International, adopted Chihana as a prisoner of conscience.

The interim committee also called for international donors to cut all but humanitarian aid for Malawi's 1 million Mozambican refugees and relief for the worst drought this century until specific demands are met. They also appealed to donors to make no new pledges when they meet with Malawian officials in Paris for a Consultative Group meeting in May.

The interim committee demands also included a practical demonstration by the Malawi government of its commitment to free speech and association by allowing the national pro-democracy conference to go ahead.

To this end, the delegates demanded that all political prisoners inside Malawian jails be released and all political exiles granted a general amnesty. Article four of the constitution should also be repealed so that other political parties could form.

One diplomat said that donors at the May Paris meeting would likely handle Malawi in the same way they did Kenya last year—stipulate that aid be linked to a vastly improved human rights record and democratic changes. Since Kenya's President Daniel arap Moi succumbed to international, but also organized domestic pressure, and announced his intention to allow a multi-party system in December last year, the donors seem to have had a major effect.

Labor leader Chihana argues that Malawi has a significantly more fragile economy than Kenya and if donors cut aid, "It would send the country into ruins and the aftermath would be absolute chaos."

Malawi has no mineral resources of any significance. Its economy is predominantly agriculture-based, with tobacco as its prime export earner. Most agricultural produce has been devastated this year by the regional drought. This is compounded by the continued influx of Mozambican refugees.

At the moment, there is no "out of the closet" organized opposition in Malawi. But Chihana was going to be the torch-bearer, rallying together such potentially progressive forces as the churches, students, academics, professionals, and businessmen.

But it was not to be. While at the meeting, the labor leader was extremely outspoken. He described Malawi as "one of the worst dictatorships in Africa" and the Malawi Congress Party—the sole legal party—as "the party of darkness and death." His remarks did not fall on deaf ears.

Lilongwe-based diplomats had warned Chihana that a warrant was out for his arrest immediately after he landed in Malawi. But the determined democrat was not to be

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cowed. Minutes after Chihana stepped off the plane at Kamuzu International Airport waving a speech he was about to read announcing the formation of a democratic alliance on Malawian soil, he was grabbed by security men. They shoved him into the back of a car waiting on the tarmac which sped away into Lilongwe city center escorted by four police cars.

Some shocked diplomats who watched the airport arrest with growing alarm quickly got into their cars and pursued the one carrying Chihana. It went directly to the SATUCC offices. Five Malawian SATUCC employees were arrested and the offices ransacked, while the diplomats were turned away at gunpoint.

Chihana was also taken to his house, which was searched and an unknown quantity of money confiscated—possibly to be used as evidence later that Chihana had foreign backers. Chihana's wife Christina had already been fired from her job as a senior lecturer at Kamuzu College and told to vacate the house. At the time of writing, Chihana was still being detained without trial at an unknown location.

Chihana's arrest triggered off an international reaction. The British and American embassies both registered official complaints to the Malawian government. The Americans urged the authorities to immediately release Chihana and allow him "freedom to express his political views, undertake political activity, and continue his trade union activities." The British foreign office said it held the Malawian government directly responsible for Chihana's safety.

Solidarity messages poured in from trade unions worldwide, while hundreds of Zambian university students marched peacefully from their campus five miles to the Malawi High Commission in downtown Lusaka shouting, "Free Chihana! Democracy for Malawi now!" and anti-Banda slogans.

Amnesty International again declared Chihana a prisoner of conscience because he had been detained for his non-violent political opposition to the Malawian government. Because Life President Banda announced in February that all returning political dissidents would be "meat for crocodiles," Amnesty also expressed deep concern that Chihana could face "extra-judicial execution" while in detention or soon after he is released.

Even though Chihana must now face the horrors of detention and torture, which he knows all too well, he has returned to a different Malawi, where the groundwork of resistance was already laid in March before he arrived. His detention could provide the final spark needed to ignite the whole process.

It all began on March 8, when seven Catholic bishops signed a Lenten letter which was read in churches throughout the country, and over 16,000 copies distributed. Many more copies were made and sent by fax all over the world.

The Lenten letter denounced the lack of education and health facilities in Malawi, and the "growing gap between the rich and the poor," and made an unprecedented call for fundamental freedoms of expression, speech, association, and the press.

"Nobody should ever have to suffer reprisals for honestly expressing and living up to their convictions, intellectual, religious, or political. We can only regret this is not always the case in our country...some people have paid dearly for their political opinions," the letter said.

The bishops also emphasized they could not "ignore or turn a blind eye to our people's experience of unfairness and injustice" and condemned expropriation of business and property and detention without trial.

"People will not be scandalized to hear these things. They know them. They will only be grateful that their true needs are recognized and that efforts are made to answer them," the letter stated.

The bishops urged Malawians to "work toward a change of climate" because they said participation in the life of a country was not only a right, but a "duty."

Only days before, Amnesty International published a report which alleged that many political prisoners in Malawi were kept in leg-irons and handcuffs in darkened cells and denied food. It described how 72-year-old prisoner of conscience Orton Chirwa was put in leg-irons and handcuffs and attached to an iron bar behind his knees in May last year. He was kept in that position for two days and denied toilet facilities.

After the publication and distribution of the Lenten letter, the seven bishops were called to meet the inspector-general of police and interrogated for eight hours before they were released. They were then reportedly placed under house arrest for four days at Archbishop James Chiona's house in Blantyre before they were finally allowed to return to their own homes.

According to the government newspaper, the *Malawi Daily Times*, President Banda accused the bishops of "double-crossing" him. The Malawi Congress Party condemned "the bishops' nefarious attempt to plant seeds of disunity among Malawians of all denominations." The letter was declared "seditious" and possession of it a criminal offense.

The treatment of the bishops provoked an international outcry. Catholic conferences around the world declared their solidarity with their Malawian counterparts and were joined by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Anglican Church in Britain. Within Malawi itself, other churches preached from the pulpit their shared sentiments with the Catholics.

On the following Monday, emboldened by the Lenten letter, University of Malawi students in the former colonial capital, Zomba, began singing songs such as *Tikufuna multi-party*—which means "We want multi-party" in the local Chichewa language—as they were leaving the town's Catholic cathedral. Four were arrested.

This sparked off a two-day clash between the police—dressed in riot gear—and students throwing stones and singing pro-democracy songs. Lilongwe-based diplomats said that more than 250 students took part in the anti-government demonstration—the first in 30 years.

On the second day, the university was officially closed. International aid officials claimed that at least 50 students were detained.

Then the demonstrations spread to the commercial capital of Blantyre and polytechnic students fought running battles with the police throughout the night. Several shops were allegedly stoned.

Violence was not limited to pro-democracy activists. Wielding axes, MCP Young Pioneers broke into the Montfort Fathers' printing press in Balaka, half-way between Blantyre and Lilongwe, which had printed the Lenten letter, smashed the press, and then set it on fire. Over $10,000 worth of equipment was destroyed.

The following week, the MCP orchestrated counter-demonstrations in seven towns across Malawi, condemning the Catholic bishops and their Lenten letter and showing their support for Banda and the MCP government. To the MCP's disappointment, the rallies were poorly attended, as most people continued with "business as usual."

Chihana's arrest and indefinite detention now raise many questions. Besides his personal security, the crucial problem is who will take over his role as prime organizer of the new democratic movement. Before Chihana left Malawi for Zambia, he said he was meeting regularly with a group of about 10 professionals including lawyers, teachers, and former politicians. Before he was detained, Chihana said with assurance that one of them would take over the reins, although this remains to be seen.

The role of the Malawian exiles once an internal movement is formed is also in question. Many politicized people within the country, including Chihana, have said they want to keep their distance and independence from the exiles.

Some delegates at the Lusaka conference were resentful that Chihana was forced on them as an interim leader. They had their own private agendas—fashioning themselves as the next president of Malawi. But despite these aspirations, none of those living in exile were willing to return home in Chihana's place.

Political analysts say that the external parties, such as the Lusaka-based United Front for Multi-party Democracy, the Dar es Salaam-based Congress for Second Republic, and the Socialist League of Malawi—none of which have proven internal support—will rapidly become irrelevant.

The external wing of the interim committee formed at the Lusaka conference regards itself as only a support group for the internal movement. For example, more than 10,000 Malawian exiles of Asian origin live in England and they will be providing the backbone of financial support to the internal wing, according to Ahmed Dassu, a delegate at the Lusaka conference.

Another question is how the new internal movement will reconcile regionalism, which has deep historical roots. Malawi is divided into three regions: north, central, and south. The country's ruling triad—Life President Banda, his official hostess Mama Cecilia Kadzamira, and her uncle John Tembo, the MCP treasurer-general—come from the central region.

Just months after independence from Britain in 1964, six cabinet ministers rebelled against Banda in the historic "cabinet crisis," harshly criticizing the new president for his already emerging authoritarian style. None of the ministers were from Banda's central region.

The president's response was to purge his cabinet of opponents and begin a three-decade campaign of "divide and rule," systematically discriminating against major ethnic groups in the northern and southern regions, to consolidate power.

The northern and southern regions were allocated significantly less development assistance and northerners were purged almost completely from the civil service and all government ministries, especially education, and sent back to their region. It is no coincidence that most of the exile groups are composed mostly of northern Malawians, a handful of southerners, and a negligible amount of those from the central region.

It will be a monumental achievement if the new movement can be credibly national in its composition, as well as representative of non-black Malawians such as Asians and whites. A lot depends on how much pressure Western donors put on Malawi at the key Consultative Group meeting in Paris.

Malawi stands almost completely isolated among its neighbors. Zambia's new democratically elected Movement for Multi-party Democracy government is unlikely to support a dictatorship next door. President Frederick Chiluba and Minister of Home Affairs Newstead Zimba, who were, respectively, former chairman and secretary-general of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, are thought to have close personal ties with Chihana. Chiluba was also formerly president of SATUCC, of which Chihana is still secretary-general.

President Joaquim Chissano's government in Mozambique harbors a deep grudge against the regime because Malawi was used as a transit point and a base for Renamo rebels. Relations with Tanzania have warmed somewhat, but there is a history of antagonism between the two countries and it is likely that Dar es Salaam would support change. Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe is the only leader in the region to keep warm personal relations with the Malawian president, but Mugabe is unlikely to find many colleagues in his government who would support Banda.

Even South Africa, Banda's ally when all others in the region shunned Pretoria, would appear to have abandoned Lilongwe. It no longer has the strategic importance it once had as a conduit for support to Renamo and as a base for keeping watch on liberation groups in the region. Its economic importance, as other countries such as Zambia develop stronger and more open economic links with South Africa, is substantially reduced.

Friends of the Malawian regime are now very few. Those who want change are many. They are likely to support the first signs of a credible opposition that emerges. The questions remain: When will it happen inside the country and how long will Malawi resist growing international pressure? ○

DROUGHT BY ANDREW MELDRUM

THE BIG SCORCHER

The worst drought of the 20th century is burning up southern Africa, exacerbating the plight of fragile economies. Hardest hit has been the region's staple food, maize, which has been devastated from coast to coast, requiring the import of 11 million tons of the crop and stretching severely strained transport networks. Some are now questioning the wisdom of being so dependent on a non-drought resistant food.

Jorgen Schytte/Unicef

Southern Africa's drought is a natural disaster of biblical proportions. It is the worst this century, scorching crops right across the continent from Angola on the west coast to Mozambique and Tanzania on the east.

The drought respects no boundaries. At a time when southern Africa is caught up in a tenuous peace process and difficult democratization efforts, the drought has weighed in heavily on political balances throughout the region.

In some cases, the effects of the drought are tipping the political scales in favor of change, such as in Malawi. In other countries, the drought is hindering the process of democratic reform, as in Zambia. The drought is threatening Angola's hard-won peace and is troubling Namibia's stability.

Of course, the biggest victim of the drought is maize. Fields of the failed crops stretch from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and the drought has called into question the suitability of maize as the region's staple grain. The insistent demands of hungry populations for maize meal have also forced leaders to question the political wisdom of remaining so dependent upon the crop.

Maize was introduced to Africa by the Portuguese who brought it from the Americas. It was widely promoted by colonial agriculturalists as a staple food and a lucrative export grain.

Only now, with the widespread crop failure and the region's need to import an estimated 11 million tons of maize, are experts and peasants alike considering indigenous and drought-resistant grains like sorghum and millet. Southern Africa's ports and road and rail networks are going to be severely strained to move efficiently such large amounts of maize and other foods. South Africa, importing 4.5 million tons of corn, has announced its ports will be full handling its own needs. That means Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi must rely on the notoriously inefficient ports of Mozambique and Tanzania for their maize imports.

Namibia lost 80 percent of its maize crop, forcing the Nujoma government to spend foreign currency for imports that it had planned to use on improving housing and education for its long-deprived majority. Lesotho expects to harvest just 45,000 tons of maize, compared to its normal 120,000 tons. That should scramble the already confused political situation there as the population braces for the expected skyrocketing prices.

Normally lush Malawi has only produced 700,000 tons of maize, half its ordinary yield. With 1.2 million extra mouths to feed—the number of Malawi's Mozambican refugees—the Banda regime is particularly susceptible to pressure for political reforms from nations donating food aid. Already the government responded to Scandinavian pressure to release some political prisoners, but now the political stakes are even higher.

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Maize plays a prominent role in Zambian politics, as well as in its diet. Kenneth Kaunda's government kept the country's urban population happy with low, state-subsidized maize prices. Zambia's maize was, comparatively, the cheapest in the region. But the subsidy became a heavy burden on the state budget and the low prices offered to producers gave farmers little incentive to grow maize.

When Kaunda tried to remove the subsidy and raise maize prices, in 1986 and again in 1990, food riots broke out. The June 1990 disturbances rocked Zambia nationwide and launched the democratization process that led to Kaunda's defeat at the polls.

The drought has made it even more difficult for new President Frederick Chiluba's government to carry out a tough economic structural adjustment program which includes the removal of subsidies. Now Kaunda, leader of the opposition, is trying to make political capital of the high food prices—a result of both Chiluba's economic policies and the drought. The drought has helped to hasten the end of Chiluba's political honeymoon.

In Angola, the drought is threatening to undermine the ceasefire agreement and progress toward national elections. About 100,000 army and rebel fighters, as stated in the peace accord, have gathered at designated camps to avoid disturbing the peace in the run-up to the national elections in September. But the drought has caused a maize shortage that is shoving hungry, armed soldiers out of the camps in search of something to eat. They could upset the plans to establish a new government.

Mozambique's war still rages on and the drought has proved to be fuel for even more banditry and violence. There is not enough food in the country, but plenty of arms and ammunition. Neither the Chissano government nor Renamo are able to effectively control their hungry troops. Armed bands from both sides are marauding the countryside in search of food. In Maputo, people refer to "their bandits," meaning Renamo's rebels, and to "our bandits," meaning the army's hungry thieves.

For years, southern Africa has been plagued by wars and misery, but generally enough rain has fallen for people to feed themselves. The promise of peace, democracy, and stability which appeared within the region's grasp last year has been made that much harder by the drought's scorching effects.

In Zimbabwe, the drought has become a major factor in the country's political equation. Many derisive comments and cynical jokes about the Mugabe government are heard while standing in the lengthy queues for corn meal, Zimbabwe's staple food, throughout the country.

Waiting to buy a 10-pound bag of maize meal in front of one Harare supermarket, a household servant sighs, "Everything is scarce these days. I have waited for sugar and cooking oil and now mealie meal [corn meal]," she said. "This drought is making things tough."

A talkative gardener standing behind her says it is not only the drought but also the government's economic structural adjustment program (ESAP) which is causing

problems. "Do you know what ESAP stands for? Ever Suffering African People," he said, causing wry chuckles throughout the line.

At another supermarket queue, the joke is that Robert Mugabe has a new title: The Emir of Queue-Wait. There are many more remarks in Shona, the language of 75 percent of Zimbabwe's 10.5 million people, nearly all of them with the Mugabe government as the butt of the joke.

A few years ago, such public criticism of the government was rare; now it is commonplace. Zimbabweans are making jokes, expressing worry and dissatisfaction, but it would be a mistake to construe that unhappiness as support for an immediate overthrow of the government.

"No, we aren't very happy about the current maize shortage, the drought, the economy, corruption," said Miriam Mandaza, a sales assistant in a Harare store. "But who would replace Mugabe? Everybody knows the alternatives are worse. Maybe by the next national elections [1995], we will have a better choice."

Some voters won't have to wait until 1995. Two parliamentary by-elections are being held in May in which five different parties and one independent are contesting the two seats. In early April in Bulawayo, Isabel Pasalk formed the Zimbabwe People's Democratic Party to protest the shortage of staples. So far, Zimbabwe's opposition parties have remained fragmented and insignificant, but they are an important political escape valve, allowing voters to vent opposition to the ruling party without having to resort to overturning the whole system.

In recent weeks, the drought has drastically increased the political problems confronting Robert Mugabe's government by creating a shortage of staple foods. There have been mad scrambles for scarce goods, melées, and mini-riots within supermarkets. To avoid such trouble, stores are unloading truckloads under cover of night and guards have been hired to keep orderly the sales of items in short supply.

Rural peasants would be happy to stand in queues. Many subsistence farmers have run short of maize and some are already scavenging for edible roots and berries. In Zimbabwe's poorest area along the Zambezi Valley, desperate people are surviving on a porridge of baobab roots and sand.

The drought has dried up the water supplies of Bulawayo, Mutare, Masvingo, and Gweru. Strict water rationing is in force in those cities. The low level of Lake Kariba means a reduction in the dam's power-generating capacity and a system of rotating power cuts was announced until the next rains fall in November.

Food queues, water rationing, and power cuts are all drought-caused hardships. Add to this the dramatically escalating prices for food, higher school fees, and hospital charges that are part of the government's structural adjustment program. Yet more trouble has cropped up in the form of strikes and go-slows.

The pile-up of problems is enough to give a throbbing headache to any political leader. If not handled skillfully, these troubles could threaten, even bring down a government. In typical Zimbabwean fashion, the country's combination of drought and economic problems is being bungled so that there is chaos and disorganization, but underneath there is enough planning and resources to pull the country—and the government—through. Mugabe responded to Zimbabwe's congestion of crises by taking two weeks' leave. He went to Ireland following the death in February of his wife, Sally. Mugabe stayed at the fabulous Irish estate of Tony O'Reilly, chairman of the American multinational food processor, H.J. Heinz. Heinz has a large investment in Zimbabwe and Mugabe and O'Reilly have met on numerous occasions.

But Mugabe was far too canny, even when grief-stricken, to allow Zimbabwe's political situation to unravel in his absence. He left Zimbabwe in the hands of his vice-presidents, Joshua Nkomo and Simon Muzenda, and his cabinet ministers. More importantly, he left an astutely drawn-up blueprint detailing how his ministers should deal with the drought. The savvy Mugabe did not trust the drought effort to any single person or team. He appointed eight cabinet ministers to head up the drought relief measures in their home provinces. The ministers can be relied upon to make sure their own provinces, their areas of political support, will get their fair share of emergency food assistance.

After the initial disorder and melées in the supermarket aisles, a more orderly system of queues has been established for maize, meal, bread, sugar, cooking oil, and other short items. Money also talks, and in Zimbabwe's thriving black market, township dwellers can buy the scarce items at prices double and triple the controlled prices in the supermarkets.

To ensure smooth delivery of the orders of maize imported from the United States, Zimbabwean Transport Minister Denis Norman made an unprecedented trip to Cape Town, South Africa, where he met with his South African counterpart, Piet Welgemoed. Shortly after the meeting, the first-ever between South African and Zimbabwean cabinet ministers, South Africa's government-owned railway company, Spoornet, announced it would bring 15,500 rail wagons out of mothballs to speed up regional deliveries of imported grain.

Zimbabwe is in a muddled state at the moment, but it is getting by. Robert Mugabe returned from his leave, but there are persistent rumors that the Zimbabwean president will step down from government. These do not appear to be well-founded, although even cabinet members are speculating over who will succeed Mugabe. It is much more likely that Mugabe will steer Zimbabwe through these drought and economic troubles.

Back in the commonplace supermarket queues, the latest rumor is that there will be shortages of salt and toilet paper. True or not, it has prompted a run on those items, making the rumor a self-fulfilling prophecy.

"Hmmph," grumbled an unhappy housewife grabbing an extra roll of toilet paper. "The only thing we don't have a shortage of these days is people." ○

MOZAMBIQUE

BY ANDREW MELDRUM

REFUGE FROM

Chimoio was once a sleepy, tropical town in central Mozambique whose population of 50,000 served the plantations of the surrounding fertile plains which produced maize, citrus, pineapples, mangoes, and tobacco. The pleasant little city was also a fueling stop for Rhodesians driving to Mozambique for a beach holiday.

Today, Chimoio's population has swelled to an estimated 700,000. The city's boom has not been caused by a growth in economic activity. Quite the opposite, it has been caused by desperation. Hundreds of thousands of Mozambican peasants have flocked to Chimoio as a haven from the country's gruelling war.

Chimoio is strategically situated midway on the 180-mile road and rail route which links landlocked Zimbabwe to Beira port, one of Mozambique's Indian Ocean harbors. For six years, the city has been protected from the war by Zimbabwean troops deployed to safeguard their country's lifeline to the sea.

For the past year, Mozambique's Renamo rebels have honored a ceasefire along the Beira transport route which includes Chimoio. Droves of rural Mozambicans have fled the war-ravaged hinterland for the safety of Chimoio, ringing the city with squatter camps.

"Every few months, we fly over the city in a helicopter to monitor the situation. Every time I am amazed to see how far out the settlements have stretched," said José Salemas, administrator for Redd Barna (Norwegian Save The Children). "Six hundred thousand, 700,000, 800,000 people are there. It just keeps multiplying."

Chimoio's city center may be safe, but Renamo is not far away. In the past few weeks, the rebels have staged a number of attacks on the refugee camps, stealing food,

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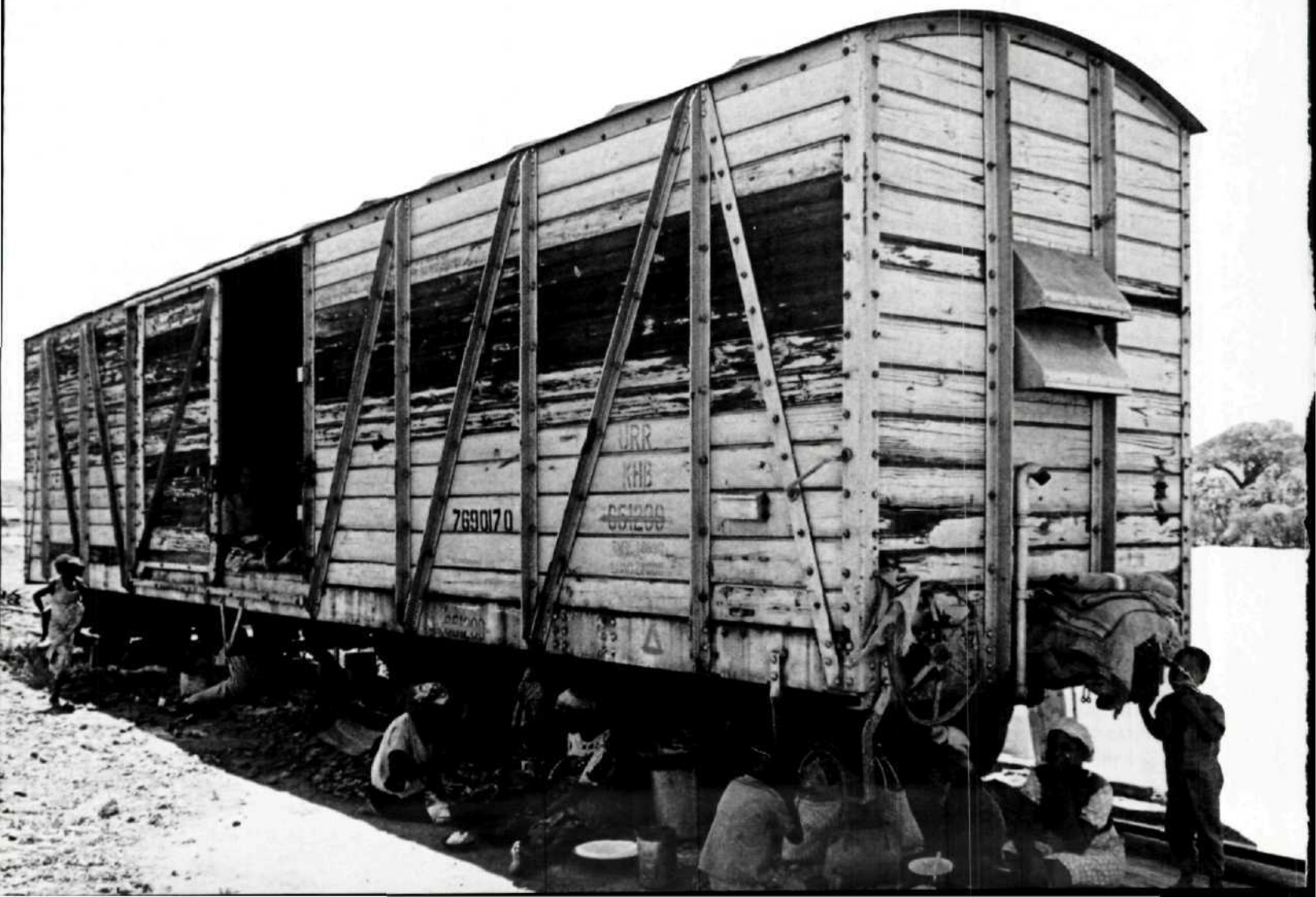

RENAMO

The little city of Chimoio, along the Beira Corridor, is now home to 700,000 refugees desperate for a haven from Mozambique's grueling civil war. Yet the peace negotiations grind on after two years, with the stumbling blocks Renamo's uncertainty about what it wants from a settlement and, it is alleged, its continuing re-supply from South Africa and other sources.

Joel Chiziane/AIM

clothes, and kidnapping young men to join their ranks. Terrified of Renamo's nighttime attacks, hundreds of those living in the outskirts hike into the city, carrying meager belongings on their heads, and sleep on grass mats in doorways and on the city's sidewalks.

Recently a Red Cross worker drove a couple miles beyond Chimoio's airport to find himself surrounded by about 50 Renamo rebels. Fearing for his life because of Renamo's vicious reputation, the aid worker was surprised to be asked by the band's leader what he thought of the peace talks between Renamo and the Mozambican government currently underway in Rome. The stunned aid worker carefully said that all Mozambique's people wanted peace.

A discussion followed in which the Renamo leader said his band wants peace, but they're not sure what is the best way to achieve it and so they were asking the opinions of others. The rebel leader said his men wanted Renamo to have a role to play once there is peace. The aid worker replied that the negotiations in Rome were concentrating on that point and he was sure an agreement could be reached to satisfy both Renamo and President Joaquim Chissano's Frelimo government. Still frightened, the international worker was waved on his way.

That encounter vividly illustrates the issues at stake in the Rome peace talks, and shows the difficulties in reaching a settlement. Certainly there is no disagreement that Mozambique badly needs a negotiated peace. The 16 years of war have taken more than 1 million lives, caused more than 1.5 million people to seek refuge in neighboring countries, and have displaced another 4 million people who are effectively refugees in their own country. Out of a total population of 15 million, there are very few Mozambicans, if any, who have not been directly affected by the war. This year's region-wide drought has scorched what little was remaining of Mozambique's agriculture, making the country even more dependent upon international assistance.

The Chissano government only controls its capital, Maputo, and urban provincial centers. Even those cities are subject to frequent attacks on their outlying areas. The nation's economy is in shreds. Misguided Marxist policies are partly to blame, but the war itself takes the major blame for Mozambique's distinction with the World Bank as the world's poorest country, with a GNP per capita of just $100.

After nearly two years, Mozambique's on-again, off-again peace negotiations are now in their 10th round in Rome. The only point clear from the Rome talks is that Renamo is not certain what it wants from a settlement.

"Renamo is for peace and we hope that this year we will achieve peace," said Maj. Francisco Majodo, speaking in Chimoio. He is Renamo's representative on the eight-nation team monitoring the ceasefire along the corridor to Beira. He could not describe what principles Renamo hoped to establish in the negotiations. He simply said his organization is searching for a settlement.

It is no wonder that Renamo has an ill-defined negotiating position, considering its history as a surrogate force for South Africa. The organization was established in 1976 by Ian Smith's Rhodesian government to counter Robert Mugabe's nationalist guerrillas and the Marxist Mozambican government that gave them shelter. One of Mugabe's principal bases was in Chimoio.

At Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the Rhodesians handed over the administration of Renamo to South Africa's military intelligence. The South Africans greatly stepped up support for Renamo, setting up training camps and airlifting massive amounts of weapons and ammunition into rebel camps. Renamo's vague anti-communist sentiments were backed up by brutal tactics against civilians including mass killings, mutilations, and the training of young boys as murderers.

Although South Africa states it has ended all assistance to Renamo, it is widely believed that the South African military is continuing to aid the rebels. In the

T. Driver

Left, refugees along the Beira Corridor

Above, Mozambique's President Chissano with Portuguese Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva

DONOR DEPENDENCY

There are 180 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Mozambique today, and without them, the plight of the people would be unthinkable. During the 1980s, when the number of NGOs soared from seven at the beginning of the decade, these groups provided emergency food relief, medical treatment, and the most fundamental of services in a country woefully unprepared for self-government when independence came in 1975.

"The problem is, when Frelimo came, it said politics is at the forefront, and the economy was put on the second level," says Armindo Guiliche, the Oxfam project director for Almada, a village 10 miles north of the Beira Corridor. "That's why we see what we see now. Agriculture is not working, there is no food for the people, and no schools. Instead of going ahead, our economy just stopped."

That's where the donor agencies stepped in. Mozambique "is one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world," writes Joseph Hanlon in his controversial book, *Who Calls the Shots?* "In 1988, foreign aid was equivalent to an incredible 70 percent of gross domestic product and it was receiving nearly $60 per capita in aid...because of their money, donors have so much power that they may act in more extreme ways than elsewhere."

Compared to the monolithic powerhouses—the World Bank and the IMF—NGOs are the little guys, the friendly village dispensers of food, money, training, and building materials. And indeed, the NGOs in Mozambique—95 percent of which get their financing from foreign governments—are almost all small, with budgets of under $1 million. Even so, they have virtually replaced local government structures, which have grown fragile to the point of collapse over the war years.

This has been the case of Redd Barna—the Norwegian Save The Children and one of the few big international NGOs whose headquarters is located in the field—the town of Chimoio—rather than the capital. "We were maneuvered, deliberately, I'd say, by some officials into assuming responsibility for a district that was cut off," says resident representative Ernst Schade. "So bit by bit, we found ourselves in the role of an alternative to local government."

"If there is peace tomorrow, the situation will be worse," says José Salemas, director of relief and rehabilitation for Redd Barna. "Because there will be free movement, the people who are still in the bush will come straight to the cities. The people in the urban areas will not go straight back to the rural areas—plus the repatriation [of more than 1 million refugees in Malawi and Zimbabwe], plus the [demobilized] soldiers with no money or supplies, plus the Renamo people in the same situation, plus the out-and-out criminals."

One clear picture of the future emerging from the discussions in Maputo is that of a greatly decentralized Mozambique. The result of that decentralization will be a management vacuum, as provincial governments struggle to meet their new responsibilities with empty coffers and skeleton staffs. In the ensuing chaos, NGOs will be in a position to flex their muscles more strongly than ever.

The abuses of power by certain NGOs were chronicled extensively in Hanlon's book, which takes an unremittingly hard line on non-governmental organizations. Hanlon charges that "the independence, self-importance, charity-consciousness, do-goodism, and amateurism of the NGOs have created innumerable problems for Mozambique. Perhaps the most blatant combination of arrogance, disdain, and incompetence is NGOs promising things they do not deliver. Mozambicans are supposed to be grateful for whatever they receive, and NGOs become quite angry if Mozambique complains of unfulfilled promises."

The other side of the equation is the fact that NGOs delivered to the people where the government, embroiled in war, couldn't or wouldn't. The dilemma

past few months, a number of defectors from Renamo have testified they received training in South African camps as late as January this year. Refugees from Mozambique's southern border with South Africa confirm there have been frequent flights of helicopters in the area, presumably carrying supplies to Renamo.

The southern border is Renamo's most active area. Western diplomats in Maputo privately agree that Renamo continues to get vital support from South Africa. Perhaps it is not President F.W. de Klerk's government, but a secret element within the South African military as well as extreme right-wing groups.

Embittered Portuguese colonialists who fled to South Africa when Mozambique became independent in 1975 are one source of support for the rebels. There are several hundred thousand of those Portuguese living in South Africa. The Portuguese who actively back the rebels are called "Renamo Brancas" (white Renamo).

The *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, published in Paris, has identified a number of right-wing religious groups with ties to Renamo, including the South African-based Frontline Fellowship, the Shekinah Ministries in Malawi, and the U.S.-based Food for Africa, World Relief Services, and Jimmy Swaggart Ministries.

The existence of South African and other external support for Renamo is permitting Renamo to continue

now has become whether that role can be effectively rewritten for the peace-time stage.

"The NGOs are going to move in. There will be a flagship fight among them. That's why we are keen to hear from the government what role the NGOs can play in the post-war reconstruction."

One obstacle to a new and productive partnership has been the tense relationship between the government and the international NGOs. "In spite of the government's acknowledgement of the contribution of the NGOs, the government's relationship with [them] remains rather complex and at times contradictory and ambiguous," says a mission report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) issued in December 1991. "Due to the evolution of the NGO movement and the internal political development of Mozambique, problems have become increasingly worse over the last few years."

The lack of clear government guidelines has meant that NGOs inadvertently sabotaged their own or each other's projects. "We were providing ox-drawn plows on a loan basis in Mozambique," recalls David Gallagher, a regional coordinator for Oxfam Canada. "The farmer paid us back in cash or commodities, which we put into a fund that was jointly administered by the small farmers association and Oxfam. We were halfway through that scheme when a big agency came in from Europe and started giving plows for nothing."

"That was partly the Mozambican [government's] fault," says Gallagher. "That country is so screwed up, with no control over foreign agencies. They can go in and do what they like."

The UNDP report highlights this weakness: "The lack of specific legislation regulating NGO activities, together with the lack of definition regarding relations between the international NGOs and the government (at central, provincial, and local levels) have been one of the causes of a greater number of problems."

Last year, however, the Mozambican government did enact one law aimed partly at NGOs, which imposed crippling customs duties on all imported goods except emergency relief. It is an open secret that some NGO officials imported vehicles, computers, or commodities duty-free and then sold them privately. But now all the organizations are being penalized, and many find themselves unwilling or unable to pay the customs duties.

The legislation has galvanized about 20 NGOs working along the Beira Corridor into launching an informal coalition whose primary goal is to win exemptions from the import duties. A secondary goal is to share news and views and look for ways to help one another and avoid duplication of efforts.

"The start of a post-war period is an ideal time for a government to define coordination policies vis-à-vis the NGOs," says Ernst Schade. "They [the government] have clear ideas of what they want, the problem is to choose priorities and get political support for them."

The UNDP report stresses the importance of NGOs in the next chapter of Mozambique's history. "The NGOs alone cannot solve Mozambique's development problems...However, should clear and unequivocal objectives be outlined for them, the NGO activity may serve as a catalyst and an example for other sectors of the Mozambique civil society and of the international community involved in the development process of Mozambique."

Until then, the refugees will continue to drift in from neighboring countries under repatriation programs and the internally displaced will travel from town to village chasing the rumors of food relief. There is a crying need for help for these people. What is emerging in the dawn of this long-awaited post-war era is the need for the helpers, both within and without the country, to put their own house in order before the Mozambicans can truly come home.

—Heather Hill
Harare, Zimbabwe

spreading violent destabilization throughout Mozambique and is slowing the Mozambican peace talks in Rome to a snail's pace.

Most troubling of all are the reports that Renamo is using chemical weapons to disable whole units of the government army. On January 16, a cloud of poison gas engulfed an army unit that had been fighting a Renamo band near the town of Macaene. Five Mozambican soldiers were killed, while many others choked and suffered burns in their lungs and on their skin. Residents of the area stated that Renamo had arrived with gas masks and "poison bullets," which they said they had gotten in South Africa.

International medics are still investigating the incident. The Chissano government had scheduled a press conference on March 13 to publicize its charges that chemical weapons had been supplied by South Africa, in contravention of all international regulations. But the conference was called off at the last minute. Apparently the Chissano government decided that such allegations might weaken de Klerk's campaign for a yes vote in the referendum.

Mozambique's foreign minister, Pascoal Mocumbi, is hopeful that with the success of the South African referendum, de Klerk will take steps to end South African support for Renamo, no matter where it comes from.

"The yes vote is a positive sign for peace in our country," said Mocumbi following de Klerk's victory. "The very forces against change in South Africa are the same ones supporting violence and destabilization in Mozambique."

Officially, the de Klerk government claims it no longer has anything to do with Renamo. But Mocumbi charges that "small and isolated" conservative groups within the South African military establishment remain Renamo's lifeline. He said it is incumbent on de Klerk to root out those cells of support for Renamo. The aid to Renamo is seen as the external side of the operations which, within South Africa, have fomented violence in the townships.

Since assuming the presidency of Mozambique in 1986, Joaquim Chissano has skillfully steered his government toward a negotiated settlement. In keeping with Africa's democratic trend and to win the support of the West, Chissano guided Mozambique away from Marxist rule to a pluralistic system. One-party rule has been abolished and Marxism rejected. A harsh structural adjustment program drawn up by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to promote a free market system is in force. Measures to encourage a free press and an independent judiciary have been introduced. Chissano has won support from the United States and Britain. As these changes all fit in with Renamo's crude anti-communism, hopes were high when peace talks with Renamo began in June 1990. Yet the only accomplishment of the Rome talks has been the limited ceasefire along the Beira and Limpopo transport corridors.

Essentially, Chissano has already met Renamo's demands for a multi-party democracy and free market economy, but the rebels still will not agree to a settlement. The problem for Renamo is how to get an agreement that will ensure it a prominent role in a peace-time government. Renamo's odious reputation for brutalizing the country's people means it will not win many votes in a national election.

The problem for Renamo is how to get an agreement that will ensure it a prominent role in a peace-time government.

Renamo's crucial campaigns are no longer on the battlefields, but rather to win over the support of more Mozambicans. Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama has already begun re-shaping his image, trying to mold himself into the profile of a nationalist leader, such as Angola's Jonas Savimbi. Dhlakama recently met a number of journalists and baldly denied that his rebels carried out many well-documented massacres of civilians.

Last year, Dhlakama toured Europe, where he was received by the Portuguese and Italian government leaders. Although the Pope refused to countenance a meeting with Dhlakama, such recognition is a major step forward for him. But the hardest battle for Dhlakama, and for Renamo, is not to garner international support but to win the trust of the Mozambican people.

In order to buy time to promote a "new Renamo," Dhlakama would like the ceasefire to include a long transition period of perhaps two years before elections. Renamo would then want to have administration over the large territories where it holds sway. Such a period of unelected power is what Dhlakama badly needs to win Renamo a more friendly and electable image.

Another sticking point is how electoral representation should be allocated. When Mozambique's first-ever multi-party elections are held, Renamo would like some sort of regional scheme that would assure it some representation from the sweeping areas it controls. Renamo would like the freshly elected Parliament to re-write the constitution.

While the Chissano government is opposed to many of Renamo's demands, it is losing the will to argue about principles while its administration is rapidly collapsing. What is desperately needed at the Rome talks is the forceful presence of big powers to push through an agreement. Italy and Mozambique's former colonial ruler, Portugal, are already attending the talks and it is hoped that the United States will take a more active role.

In the drought-parched fields surrounding Chimoio, hungry peasants are foraging edible roots. Both Renamo and the Frelimo army are also hungry. Both forces are largely ragged and undisciplined. Renamo has followed the refugees to their camps around the cities, hoping to grab food from them. Renegade army units with grumbling stomachs have hijacked trains of food aid in order to get food for themselves.

"There are far too many hungry people and far too many weapons in Mozambique," said a military adviser. "My biggest fear is that negotiations will be so drawn out that by the time a settlement is achieved, a situation of chaos and uncontrollable banditry will have overwhelmed the country. If that happens, then no ceasefire can help Mozambique, and a terrible spiral of violence like in Lebanon or Somalia will have taken over."

Today, Chimoio is a city surrounded by the war, full to bursting with a population of fearful and hungry refugees. Very few Mozambicans in Chimoio will argue for one side or the other in the negotiations—they just emphasize the urgent need for the war to end.

"I really don't care anymore about the government or Renamo," said a one-time Frelimo supporter in Chimoio. "While they argue about small points in Rome, we here in Mozambique are suffering and dying. I don't even care anymore what kind of government we have, just so long as we have peace." ○

Anders Nilsson/AIM

MOZAMBIQUE

BY RUTH ANSAH AYISI

DROUGHT AND DESPERATION

While the drought makes Mozambique even poorer, the negotiations to end the war between Renamo rebels and the Frelimo government drag on. In March, a protocol was signed on a future system of proportional representation and for elections to take place one year after a nationwide ceasefire—if and when the two sides can agree on a laying down of arms.

Elisa Nhangane, an elderly widow, thrust her whole body forward as she plunged a hoe into a massive lump of baked-dry soil. In contrast to the energy she was expending, the crops around her withered under the scorching mid-morning sun.

Despite Nhangane's determination, there seemed little hope of reviving her livelihood. What had been needed was rain, and that had not come.

"In previous years, I have had bumper harvests of maize, rice, garden vegetables, and bananas," said Nhangane. "But the only crops that have survived this year are sweet potatoes and cassava. Then last week, thieves came in the night and pulled them all up. So I'm left with nothing."

Other farmers in Marrecuene, a rural district in the southern province of Maputo, have turned to trading as a way of survival. Just a few minutes walk down a sandy road from the peace of Nhangane's farm, a bustling market can be found. It is full of people, but not of food. Most vendors, who used to engage in farming, are now trying to carve out a living by selling coal, firewood, beer and soft drinks, and small quantities of fish which they buy in bulk from markets in the capital, Maputo, some 30 miles away.


Sarah-Jane Poole

The drought, which experts fear could be the worst this century, has struck most of southern Africa. The outcome could be devastating for the region. Countries like Zimbabwe used to be able to export surplus maize, but now there are critical food shortages.

For Mozambique, the drought is even more cruel. The country is already reeling under the effects of 16 years of war between the government and the rebels of the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo). The conflict has cost the lives of a million people, and has caused half of the country's 16 million people to be dependent on international food aid for their survival. Now as if that is not enough, Mozambique, one of the world's poorest countries, has to battle against another enemy—drought.

The Mozambican government has appealed to the international community for additional emergency aid to prevent mass starvation. Estimates of total grain production in Mozambique for this year were about 400,000 tons or about 25 percent of total needs, said Cooperation Minister Jacinto Veloso at a recent press conference.

Rains started late throughout the southern and central region of the country, which delayed sowing by between one and two months. And then rainfall has been extremely irregular in six of Mozambique's 11 provinces.

Initial findings of the government and the United Nations estimate that the drought will mean an additional 1 million people will be dependent on food aid for their survival. Aid is needed desperately, said Veloso, "to avoid large numbers of deaths."

The authorities in the northern province of Tête and southern province of Gaza have declared a state of emergency. Last year 80,000 people, the majority of whom had been displaced by the war, received free food aid. This year, the drought could shoot the number up to 200,000. Rivers have dried up and livestock are dying. And temperatures have been unusually high, over 40 degrees centigrade.

To add to the problem, less than 50 percent of the food aid requested from the donors by the Mozambican authorities for the crop year 1991-92 had arrived in the country by mid-March. (The crop year runs from May 1 to April 30 the following year.) The donor community too has been worried about allegations of large quantities of food aid being stolen in some cases by the Mozambican armed forces before it reaches displaced people. Authorities have clamped down on such diversions and those found guilty are being dealt with in the courts.

Besides acute food shortages, the drought means that drinking water is drying up in many parts of the countryside. Reports have come through that 23 people died of thirst in the central province of Manica in March. And in the interior of the southern province of Inhambane, women have to walk the whole day just to fetch 20 liters of water for their families. They have to sleep over night before returning on the following day. Besides the time factor and effort involved of walking miles and miles under the burning sun with a tank of water on their heads, it often means a risky trek through areas where rebel attacks are frequent.

Greg Keast, project officer of water and sanitation for Unicef, visited districts in Inhambane where some families were resorting to drinking salty water. The drought has caused the salt levels in fresh water to be unusually high. "I drank some of it myself," said Keast. "It's almost like drinking sea water. It is too salty for any kind of irrigation.

Left, a Mozambican soldier

Below, a center for displaced people in the central province of Sofala


Joel Chiziane/AIM

Ruth Ansah Ayisi is a freelance journalist based in Maputo, Mozambique.

There's no plant that can take that sort of water. In fact it's too salty in most cases for cooking. It can only be used for drinking. And to drink salty water, that means you're not really quenching your thirst."

However, if it is lack of water or food or both, one key to effective assistance to the needy is peace. When adequate food aid does arrive, there is the mammoth task of transporting the goods throughout this vast, sparsely populated country where the security situation has deteriorated in the past year and infrastructure over the years has been torn apart.

Peace talks in Rome between the Mozambican government and Renamo have dragged on for over one and a half years. Three protocols have been signed, but the fighting on the ground has intensified. Much of Mozambique's once-rich agricultural lands are left untilled as millions flee closer to towns or escape to neighboring countries where they wile away the time mostly in refugee camps.

However, a breakthrough came in the tenth round of peace talks with the signing on March 12 of a protocol on the country's future electoral system—at a time when both sides had seemed unable to resolve their differences.

Some important decisions were taken. Among them, the two sides decided that Mozambique should opt for proportional representation, and that the country's first multi-party elections should take place within one year of the signing of a general ceasefire. The fact that proportional representation was conceded may mean that the constitution will have to be amended. It currently states that elections should be via the system of "majority vote."

Under proportional representation, each of Mozambique's 11 provinces will be taken as a multi-member constituency, and the number of seats given to each province will be decided according to its population. The voting age is 18 and only those who are registered will be able to participate. Registering eligible voters, however, in a country where war has wracked infrastructure and scattered the population, will be a monstrous task, plagued with logistical difficulties.

It was agreed that the presidential candidate must be proposed by at least 10,000 citizens of voting age, which again is in contradiction to the existing constitution which states 5,000. And the candidate must secure 50 percent of the votes before being elected.

Yet the crucial issue which remains is when a ceasefire will be signed. The head of the Mozambican government delegation in Rome, Transport Minister Armando Guebuza, recently put a damper on any optimism that the day was close. Just six days after the signing of the protocol, Guebuza warned, "Renamo seems not to have desisted from its intention to reach a solution by military means, through violence." He said there was still "no trust" between the two sides. Renamo's practice showed that "for them, defending the rights of Mozambicans means hacking off their ears, or stabbing through the stomach with bayonets."

The main obstacle for the next round of the talks, scheduled for the end of April, is Renamo's insistence that the priority of a future parliament must be to revise the existing constitution, a point which the government rejects as irrelevant. A new liberal constitution was ushered in just over one year ago.

Rebel leader Afonso Dhlakama is intransigent on this point, saying that this question must be resolved before military issues leading to a general ceasefire can be worked out. Such a hard line has made people suspicious that Renamo is stalling the talks on purpose either because it lacks confidence to face the electorate or it feels that it can win the war by force rather than negotiations.

> Mozambicans are weary. They are not interested in protocol-signing. They long for the day when the war will end.

Even after the constitutional question is thrashed out, the military issues are likely to be tough. How to integrate the two warring armies into one national army and how to demobilize the rest will be a delicate matter. Already, arms are floating out of control around the cities' suburbs. The crime rate has rocketed. How will people be persuaded to turn in their weapons? Also, many of the so-called Renamo soldiers are children who have been brought up in an environment of violence, learning to kill at young ages. The remaining agenda will be a battle in itself.

Mozambicans are weary. They are not so interested these days in protocol-signing. They long for the day when the conflict comes to an end. After hearing about the signing of the latest protocol, one young teacher just sighed. "It is as if we have to continue to sacrifice the lives of our children because of political issues that in most cases can be worked out after hostilities have ceased."

Nhangane, despite her problems, takes a positive line. "I feel confident that peace will come here. I have been following the talks on the radio. I know some day the war and drought will end." Maybe it is that very determination that things can only get better that keeps Nhangane going. Besides losing most of her crops to the drought, and the rest to thieves, she has also to face the threat of rebel attacks. "It's true I'm still managing to keep alive," she said. "In previous years, I was able to sleep at home, but this year the situation has become worse. I hear people saying that someone was killed just there or another kidnapped, so I began to be frightened and that is why now I sleep in the bush at night."

After the interview, Nhangane picked up her hoe again and relentlessly hacked away at the lump of earth. "I'm hoping that maybe I can grow some few vegetables here. I'm not sure. But it is worth trying." ○

INTERVIEW

By Margaret A. Novicki

A New Agenda for the OAU Salim Ahmed Salim

Margaret A. Novicki

The OAU Secretary-General outlines a new generation of activity for the continent's three-decade-old organization, addressing issues of economic integration, conflict resolution, and the management of political change.

Africa Report: The Organization of African Unity [OAU] concentrated much of its efforts on decolonization in years past. Given the global changes over the past few years and a new political landscape in Africa, what is the agenda for the OAU in the 1990s?

Salim: We are now entering the phase of the second liberation of the African continent. The first liberation phase concentrated on the political independence of our countries, and so the OAU's efforts for the last three decades were more or less focused on how to restore the dignity of the African people, which had been undermined severely as a result of colonization and racial bigotry. Now we have almost finished the phase of what I would call classical decolonization. The whole of Africa is now free, and we have one or two problems remaining: that of the Western Sahara, where I hope a referendum will take place, and the question of South Africa. There are great expectations that in the not too distant future, we will see the emergence of a democratic, non-racial, united South Africa. And so Africa will continue to use its resources and its solidarity to work in tandem with the international community to ensure the realization of that objective.

But the major preoccupation of our time now is how to work for the upliftment of the lot of our people, because as is commonly known, despite 30 years of independence, and despite progress in the social and health sectors, for example, we have a lot of problems on our continent. Therefore, the priorities of the moment will be to concentrate on socio-economic development: how to translate the objectives of inter-African cooperation into a more meaningful, practical dimension. Last year in Abuja, the heads of state signed the treaty for the establishment of the African economic community. We have already started discussing the specifics in terms of how to bring that about. The initial phase is to strengthen cooperation at the sub-regional level, whether it is Ecowas in West Africa, or the Preferential Trade Area and the Southern African Development Coordination Conference in southern Africa—these are going to be the pillars of the forthcoming African economic community. So that is the first priority: how to promote economic cooperation and realize the goal of African economic integration.

But it is not really possible to achieve meaningful economic progress and prosperity in our societies unless this is done in conditions of peace, stability, and tranquillity. Consequently, one of the major preoccupations of the organization must be to get more and more involved in the question of stability and security in our continent. This means, for example, getting involved in helping to resolve internal conflicts. This is again a new area, because in the past, internal conflicts were considered to be no-go, taboo areas for the OAU. But now it is accepted that we cannot behave like ostriches in Addis Ababa and let Somalia burn, let a situation of conflict prevail in Sudan, in Rwanda, and elsewhere and have the OAU keep quiet. It is now accepted by African leaders and desired by our people generally that the OAU has to be involved in that.

Secondly, we have to be involved in the whole question of the management of change. Africa is going through a very exciting period, a period of transition toward greater democratization, and we have to work to ensure that this transition takes place in conditions devoid as far as possible of turbulence, anarchy, and

chaos. But more importantly, we have to work to ensure that the question of democratic transformation takes root and becomes something of a permanent thing, not simply a response to pressures from outside, not simply because it is now fashionable to do so. We must see to it that democratic institutions and democratic foundations are created-which will ensure that our people are the ultimate ones who decide on the destiny of our continent.

Africa Report: The question of sovereignty has limited the OAU's ability to act in specific instances. How can you surmount the fact that countries are extremely sensitive about their sovereignty and often do not want interference in their "internal affairs"? Secondly, although there have been a number of economic groupings in Africa, countries find it difficult to sacrifice in order to unite for a greater good. How can economic union work continent-wide, when some of the smaller units haven't?

Salim: First, nobody's challenging the sovereignty of countries. It would be a wrong approach to start from the premise that by getting involved in an attempt to resolve a conflict, you are infringing on the sovereignty of a given country. In reality, it is the sovereign decisions of the African continent that have now made it possible for us to get involved with internal conflicts, because two years ago, the heads of state and government took a decision in Addis Ababa that Africa has to solve its own problems, that Africa has to address itself to the issue of conflict and try to do everything possible to end the conflicts which are bleeding our people and our resources.

Nobody can suggest to me that one can invoke sovereignty and argue against a collective decision to put an end to the misery, anarchy, chaos, and mayhem that, for example, is taking place in Somalia. After all, when the OAU was created, its very purpose was to serve the interests of our people, and what is more important than the sanctity of life itself?

So first, one can never invoke sovereignty to argue against fighting a situation which causes millions to lose their lives. But secondly, and happily, the African leaders now accept that the OAU must play an important role in conflict resolution. Third, I am actually inundated by requests in Addis Ababa for the OAU to do this here and that there by countries concerned. This is the dramatic shift that has taken place, whereas in the past, we were being criticized: "Why are you trying to interfere in this or that?" Now, we are getting different criticism from member-states and others inside and outside Africa: "What is the OAU doing about Somalia? What is it doing about Sudan? What is it doing about Rwanda, Liberia?"

Personally I think this is a very healthy criticism and a healthy development. So the situation has changed. But I would go farther. The world has changed because of the end of the Cold War and therefore with it, the competition or rivalry in the classical sense between the great powers. There is less and less interest in the legitimate concerns of Africa by the outside world, barring exceptions here and there. And so if the African countries themselves do not take the trouble to address themselves to the problems of our continent, if the OAU is seen to be indifferent to these problems, I am afraid that the process of marginalization of our continent will be complete. The only way to break out of this trend toward marginalizing our people and our continent is for African countries themselves, first and foremost, to assume our responsibilities and to ensure that through our collective action and our collective solidarity, we force ourselves on the international agenda.

"AFRICA HAS TO ADDRESS ITSELF TO THE ISSUE OF CONFLICT AND TRY TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO END THE CONFLICTS WHICH ARE BLEEDING OUR PEOPLE AND OUR RESOURCES."

The same thing applies regarding the question of economic cooperation. Let me not give you a false impression: We are still in considerable difficulties, there will still be the question of sovereignty, or what is perceived as national interests. But the history of the world as it is now evolving teaches us very clearly that we are moving toward larger entities. Powerful countries are working together, like those which formed the European Economic Community, almost all the former colonial powers of Africa, countries which individually are more developed in terms of science, technology, and capital than any combination of African countries. And yet these countries find it necessary to work together.

If the United States feels the urge to work together with Canada and Mexico in the context of a free trade area, if the ASEAN countries are working together, it would be ludicrous for African countries to go on any other path. So there is now greater recognition by our continent of the need to work together and though we will have problems, the goal and clarity of our objectives are there and all we have to do is to keep on pushing and build bridges brick by brick. It is not going to be easy, it is not going to be a dramatic transformation. After all, Rome was not built in a day, even though I don't believe we can afford the luxury of procrastination on this issue. But still with patience, with determination, with perseverance, we will overcome the hurdles.

Africa Report: Regarding OAU involvement in Africa's internal conflicts, does the OAU have specific mechanisms in mind to do so?

Salim: I am very clear in my own mind about what can be done, but we are now in the process of consultations, with member-states and within the secretariat and with other people with similar experiences, to see how best we can implement this new area of responsibility. For example, there is the question of enhancing the human capacity of the organization's secretariat to deal with the question of conflict. We have started to do that by reorganizing the general secretariat of the OAU. We now have a special division dealing with the question of conflict anticipation, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and conflict management. So we have to build on that division. We have to ensure that the people who are manning that division are properly equipped to do so.

Then there is the question of creating a mechanism—and I have discussed this in the last council of ministers meeting and the ministers agreed with me in principle—which would enable the secretary-general and the OAU to act swiftly and decisively in situations of conflict. Then there is the question of having some sort of political organ which can backstop the efforts of the general secretariat. The question of resources is very crucial: resources in terms of money, but also in terms of identifying the areas where, when the need arises, we can call for support. I see no reason why, for example, as the question of peace-making and peace-keeping becomes more and more an integral part of the OAU's role, it should not be possible to ask our armies in each African country to have a section, company, or battalion, depending on the size of that country's army, to be specifically trained in matters of peace-making and peace-keeping, so that in the event that we need something, we can make use of all these countries to help us.

But we will still need funds. Peacekeeping is a very expensive affair, as the United Nations realizes. So we have to think in terms of how we can get funds. It may be by creating a trust fund, or getting voluntary contributions—these are all ideas which have not yet been crystallized. *The only thing I can tell you is* that definitely we are proceeding ahead on examining the ways and means of having an appropriate mechanism for conflict resolution being done by the OAU.

Africa Report: The World Bank president said at the last OAU summit that what Africa needs first and foremost is good governance. What specifically can the OAU do to encourage the process of democratization, and how do member-states feel about the OAU playing a role in this?

Salim: There is a process of democratization taking place in the continent and we understand that the outside world has shown a lot of concern, but really the people who are responsible for change in African countries are the Africans themselves. No one, no matter how powerful, how strong, how well-intentioned, can actually have democracy created in any African society. It has to be the people of that society, taking into account their own social, cultural, and historical values. And I put it to you that the African people, by the very fact that they engaged for so long in a struggle for freedom, are democratic in nature. They yearn for democracy. The struggle for freedom was part of the struggle for democracy. So the struggle for democratization now is simply a logical extension of that struggle.

Now that the wind of democratization is sweeping through our continent, my concern—and I have expressed it during my talks in Washington with congressmen and administration officials—is that while the friends of Africa should support this process, the best and most constructive way of doing so is to support Africa in creating institutions for democracy, institutions which can guarantee that the question of democratization is not a whimsical thing, a passing phase. It does not depend on the likes and dislikes of a particular individual or government, but is something permanent.

> "THE AFRICAN PEOPLE, BY THE VERY FACT THAT THEY ENGAGED FOR SO LONG IN A STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM, ARE DEMOCRATIC IN NATURE. THEY YEARN FOR DEMOCRACY."

And it is in that context that the OAU is going to play a role. In other words, how can the OAU itself help in the process of change? By ensuring that this change takes place in a very orderly manner in an atmosphere free of turbulence, chaos, and anarchy, in a consensual manner. At the same time, we also hope to help in creating a climate devoid of intolerance—because where there is no tolerance, you cannot build democracy—to create a situation where our people understand that you can have political differences without being enemies, that you can belong to one political party and another person to another. These things take time, but I am saying that the process of democratization in Africa is going ahead, it is irreversible and unstoppable. What we must ensure is that this process is a genuine one, that the end product is really the creation of real democracy and real democracy can only be created through the creation of permanent institutions.

Africa Report: What is your view of South African President de Klerk's visit to Nigeria? As President Babangida is chairman of the OAU, does the visit represent a new philosophy toward South Africa within the OAU?

Salim: President de Klerk has gone to Nigeria at the invitation of President Babangida as the head of state of Nigeria. But also President Babangida is the current chairman of the OAU and naturally, his discussions with de Klerk provide a unique opportunity for the Nigerian head of state, who has served the OAU with total commitment and distinction, to discuss areas of concern to Africa, as far as the situation in South Africa is concerned. But to my knowledge, it does not in any way alter the basic position and premises of the OAU, namely: We are for change in South Africa and we are prepared to do everything possible to encourage the process of change, *but we are not prepared to* relax completely the type of pressures which are necessary to ensure that the process of change is not aborted. We have followed with interest the recent situation in South Africa. We have welcomed the outcome of the referendum, which has given de Klerk a mandate to negotiate and go ahead with the question of constitutional changes in the context of Codesa. We think this is encouraging. On the other hand, we believe that de Klerk should use the mandate that he got to ensure that the process of constitution-making is not in any way undermined and that the end product is the emergence of a democratic, non-racial, united South Africa. So this is the position.

There is the question of sanctions. Many of the sanctions have now been lifted, some unilaterally by individual countries, but some as the result of the conscious decision of the international community. The United Nations, the

Commonwealth, and the OAU, for example, are saying now that it doesn't make any sense to continue with people-to-people sanctions. We have said there is no problem as far as transportation, people visiting each other, these are areas which have been relaxed and I think rightly so. But there are certain areas which have to remain, for example, financial sanctions, the arms embargo. Even though I am quite conscious of the fact that they have been violated by people, they are important both for symbolic purposes and also as pressure so that change in South Africa is not at any point either undermined or aborted.

Africa Report: What will be the major issues before the June OAU summit in Senegal?

Salim: The follow-up to the question of economic integration. South Africa obviously will be a major issue because by that time we will have a clearer idea of what is going on there and what role the OAU should play in terms of helping in the emergence of a new South Africa. The question of conflicts will assume very great importance—the discussions on Liberia, Somalia, on the Horn of Africa—and the democratic changes and the impact of these changes in the world. Lastly, a whole reassessment by Africa on what is Africa's role in the context of the present world situation, how can we refuse this trend toward marginalization of our continent. Those are going to be some of the main features of the summit.

Africa Report: How do you answer the OAU's critics who say it has been very ineffectual as an organization, a talk-shop, a waste of Africa's scarce resources? Given that a number of countries have difficulty in meeting their financial commitments to the OAU, some have even suggested that the OAU disband. What would you point to as the failings and the accomplishments of the organization?

Salim: I would quote someone who said if we didn't have the OAU, we would have to invent it now. Very seriously, the OAU has had its shortcomings. I would not be the one to defend the organization for issues which are indefensible. I think the OAU has done extremely well in some areas, primarily in the field of decolonization, because that was an area where African leaders devoted their attention and provided support, logistical, political, and diplomatic, to the liberation struggle. I think it is no mean achievement that now Africa is free and we are only talking of the unfinished business of South Africa.

People have to take these things in their historical context. Twenty years ago, it was inconceivable to think in terms of an independent Zimbabwe, an independent Angola or Mozambique. I quarreled on more than one occasion at the United Nations with the gentleman who used to be the representative of Portugal and with the former foreign minister of Portugal who believed that Portugal extended up to Mozambique and Angola, that those countries were part of metropolitan Portugal. These are things which have happened in our lifetime. It is not something which we read from the histories of a hundred years ago. And so the fact that now we can laugh about them and we consider the whole thing to be so anachronistic is a measure of the success of the Organization of African Unity in galvanizing African support, in coordinating support and getting support from the world community.

"WE HAVE MADE MISTAKES. AFRICA FROM THE VERY BEGINNING SHOULD HAVE ADDRESSED ITSELF TO THE QUESTION OF CONFLICT. IT SHOULD HAVE NEVER ALLOWED INTERNAL CONFLICTS TO GO UNATTENDED."

The second area of importance is that despite all its failings and its difficulties, the OAU has been able to project what I would call an African identity, to solidify and enhance the Africanness of the African people, to feel together. Now this unity is sometimes artificial, but it is there. There is something called Africa and we can talk about it. Why do I say we would have to invent the OAU? Because really unless you have this togetherness of the African countries, which is best symbolized in the OAU, individual African countries would be of completely no consequence in the world. If the EEC countries think in terms of reinforcing Europe, which combination of countries in Africa can have an impact on the world scene? Not even what I would call Africa's great powers, Nigeria, Egypt, and potentially South Africa. Even they would be in no position to make a significant difference in the world arena. But collectively and working together, no one can simply ignore Africa.

We have made mistakes. Africa from the very beginning should have addressed itself to the question of conflict. It should have never allowed internal conflicts to go unattended. It should never have allowed the violation of human rights to be done with impunity. We had situations of massive killings in some cases, we have had characters who not only vilified our people and our continent, but got away with murder, and we kept quiet. These were some of the mistakes. We made the mistake of not putting into concrete action our own commitments in terms of economic cooperation. These are shortcomings, but now we are trying to overcome these shortcomings.

The fact that now people are talking in terms of taking the question of economic integration seriously, the fact that our leaders and our governments are now addressing themselves to the question of conflict resolution and conflict management—these are indicative of the significance that we attach to the question of change in our continent and I think this change will have its own impact on the OAU.

The OAU cannot be completely different from its member-states. After all, the OAU is a composite of 51 independent states. It is like the United Nations. It is an amalgam of all the countries. But I do not share the views of the cynics, of those who say the organization should be disbanded. In the real world, you accept the criticisms and see what can be done to overcome these criticisms. If we disbanded, who is going to speak for the continent? Which organization or which combination of countries can speak in the name of the 500 million or so Africans? ■

BY ANNE SHEPHERD

WAR OR PEACE?

Sarah-Jane Poole

Since 1960, 20 wars have been fought on the African continent, killing 7 million people, turning 5 million into refugees, and wreaking billions of dollars in destruction and havoc on struggling economies. With Africa's burgeoning democracy movement, there is some hope that in the 1990s, wars may become a thing of the past, but as conflicts drag on in some countries, there is also much uncertainty.

Barring the Gulf crisis and a few other trouble spots, the 1990s have brought a fresh whiff of peace across the globe.

Africa is no exception. Freed of the Cold War and South Africa's military tentacles, wars are winding down from Ethiopia to Angola. Elections in countries as diverse as Benin and Zambia have brought new hopes that the ballot box will replace the gun as the main conduit for change in the future.

Yet, over the last two years, coups have been experienced in Mali and Chad; strongmen are refusing to give up their grip in Togo and Zaire; the removal of dictators in Liberia and Somalia has led to virtual anarchy; peace talks in Mozambique drag on, while in Sudan they have not even started.

Anne Shepherd is a London-based journalist who has travelled widely in and written extensively on African economic and political issues.

The upshot, according to Olara Otunnu, former Ugandan foreign minister and president of the New York-based International Peace Academy, is that Africa finds itself between a state of "uncertainty and hope."

While the "wave of the future in Africa is simple, plain democracy," he told a recent seminar on "Conflict Resolution and Democratization in Africa," the question is how to achieve it against the backdrop of violence that exists on the continent.

According to figures compiled by the academy, 20 wars have been waged on the continent since 1960, killing 7 million people and creating 5 million refugees.

Although Africa accounts for a mere 2 percent of global military expenditure, and the figure has been falling as a result of the economic crisis, the continent still spends $14 billion a year on arms—equal to expenditures on education, and four times health spending. During the 1980s, Ethiopia alone spent $10 billion on arms imports from the Soviet Union.

More devastating than the hardware bill are the destruction and lost economic opportunities. Ethiopia, which could feed the continent, has become synonymous with famine. A 1988 UN study put the direct and indirect costs of 10 years war in southern Africa—principally Angola, Mozambique, and Namibia—at $60 billion.

The tide started shifting in the region with the defeat at Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, of the South African Defense

Force by combined Cuban and Angolan forces, coupled with the internal reforms of President F.W. de Klerk, which prompted a rethink of regional military adventurism.

That, along with the ending of the Cold War, paved the way for the 1988 U.S.- and Soviet-brokered peace accord, in which South Africa conceded to UN-supervised elections for Namibia, and withdrew 9,000 troops from southern Angola, in exchange for the withdrawal of 50,000 Cuban troops.

The deal delivered independence to Namibia, and removed the international dimension to Angola's conflict. This opened the door to direct negotiations between the ruling MPLA and U.S.-backed Unita rebels, brokered first by Zaire, and then Portugal, with U.S. and Soviet participation. Last year, the two sides agreed to a UN-monitored ceasefire, and elections this September.

South Africa has reduced its defense budget by 10 percent; Namibia has disarmed 25,000 former fighters, and Angola is demobilizing 150,000 men from both sides.

In the Horn of Africa, once a virtual playground of the superpowers, the spurning of former President Mengistu Haile Mariam by the Soviet Union paved the way for his ouster last year.

As testament to the ending of the Cold War, the U.S. brokered a peace deal for Ethiopia which involved allowing the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Force (EPRDF), led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front, to seize power in Addis Ababa, so long as it agreed to elections.

Representatives of the myriad of political factions in Ethiopia have been incorporated into a broad-based government with elections promised for later this year. Eritreans, who have fought a secessionist war since 1961, but now have the chance to opt for autonomy in a referendum, have laid down their arms. Transitional President Meles Zewani has turned his attention to the economy, and to molding 200,000 fighters into a smaller army.

Next door in Kenya, Western donors, relieved of the need to prop up an unpopular regime for "strategic" reasons, and in a watershed decision last December, announced a six-month suspension of aid, pending political reforms. Opposition parties have since been legalized, and elections promised, defusing, at least partially, mounting internal conflict.

Where leaders have been more responsive to the democratic fervor now sweeping the continent, Africa can claim its first examples of peaceful transfers of power.

At the beginning of 1990, only six out of Africa's 53 countries (Botswana, the Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Senegal) claimed multi-party systems, and only in one of these—Mauritius—had a ruling party ever been unseated in an election.

In February last year, the former Portuguese colony of Cape Verde made history when its Marxist founder-president, Aristides Pereira, handed over power to the pro-capitalist Carlos Veiga, following peaceful elections. That was followed by the ending, albeit grudgingly, of 19 years military rule in Benin, and 26 years of virtual one-man rule in Zambia through the ballot box.

Apart from Kenya, Angola, and Ethiopia, multi-party elections are scheduled to be held this year in Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, and Lesotho involving, in the latter three cases, a restoration of civilian rule. Similar moves are afoot in over half the continent.

Yet the coup era is far from over; several crises still linger, while others brew. According to William Gutteridge, director of the London-based Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, there is, in many cases, a "heightened level of military activity in African politics."

In Chad, a hotbed of factional fights fuelled by outside forces since 1965, Idriss Deby seized power from Hissène Habré in December 1990. But a counter-coup, and regrouping of forces loyal to Habré, has provided a pretext for an opposition witchhunt, and postponement of promised elections, which won him backing from France and the U.S., both former Habré fans.

Similarly in Mali, former President Moussa Traoré, resisting reforms, was overthrown last March by Lt.-Col. Amadou Toumani Touré who promised a return to civilian rule and political pluralism before January this year. But a Tuareg uprising, fanned by Libya, has led to an indefinite postponement of polls. [Editor's note: Elections were held in April.]

In Algeria, democracy has been put on trial with the seizing of power by a five-man Council of State, led by Mohamed Boudiaf, a month after the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won in multi-party elections. The West, whose phobia over communism has been replaced by jitters over Islamic fundamentalism, has remained markedly silent.

While the withdrawal of Western sympathy, coupled with mounting internal dissent has led other military rulers like Gnassingbé Eyadema in Togo and Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire to concede to reform, neither have given up power. Ironically, both countries are now in worse turmoil than before.

Both leaders cunningly appeared to step down by ceding power to opposition figures, only to pull the rug out from under their feet through a continued shadowy presence and control of the military. Two attempted coups in Togo have forced Prime Minister Joseph Kokou Koffigoh, once a respected opposition figure, into becoming a virtual army stooge. Zaire slid into virtual anarchy when troops raided and looted the country late last year.

In Liberia and Somalia, the jettisoning of military leaders Samuel Doe and Siad Barre by the U.S. paved the way for their overthrow by internal forces, but left a power vacuum which has also witnessed these two countries descend into despair.

In Liberia, the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), has helped to avoid complete ruin by setting up the Ecomog peace-keeping force which pro-

WHO WILL MAKE THE PEACE?

When the Organization of African Unity gathered for its annual Council of Ministers meeting in Addis Ababa this February, a fist fight broke out between security guards and different factions claiming to represent Somalia. The scene was as tragic as it was familiar, illustrating once more the seeming impotence of the regional organization in the face of the continent's mounting crises.

Internationally, the principle of regional organizations taking the first move in resolving conflicts is well recognized. The issue of interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states is a touchy one. Neighbors, the rationale goes, are less likely to prove offensive than foreigners. Since conflicts invariably spill over borders, they also have more at stake.

That has been clearly illustrated in Liberia, where the mayhem that followed Samuel Doe's overthrow threatened the lives of other West African nationals, and engulfed Sierra Leone, prompting Ecowas to mount a peace-keeping force.

The tendency, however, is still for Africans to look to outside mediators. Angola, for example, turned to the former colonial power, Portugal, and superpowers for mediation of its internal conflict, after different parties accused various countries in the African mediation group of taking sides. Mozambique similarly dropped Kenya and Zimbabwe as go-betweens, opting for Italy, with Portugal and the U.S. as observers.

Following the declining role of Moscow in global affairs, it was left to the U.S. to mediate the peace in Ethiopia. Based on experience in Liberia and Somalia, where the demise of despots left a vacuum filled by chaos, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen gambled on allowing a Marxist guerrilla force to take over.

Many in Ethiopia and Africa questioned the U.S.'s presumptuousness. Yet few presented alternatives, and the crowning irony was that the OAU, which is headquartered in Addis Ababa, seemed more concerned about whether or not it would have offices than about the future of Ethiopia.

Elsewhere, the United States and other Western countries have come under fire for seeming to leave African countries to their fate—in Togo, Zaire, and more recently, Somalia.

In the latter case, the United Nations has been bitterly accused of not mounting for Somalia the same kind of rescue package it did for Yugoslavia. The West, and the UN, make no secret of their preoccupation with the conflicts of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, but say that the ball is in Africa's court.

Asked in a recent interview with *The Washington Post* about the UN's role in Somalia, for example, the organization's new Egyptian secretary-general, Boutros Boutros Ghali, criticized the inaction of regional organizations, from which the UN takes its cue.

At the OAU Council of Ministers meeting, Ethiopia's new transitional president, Meles Zenawi—having assured the OAU of its home in Addis—urged the organization to take a more active role in conflict prevention and management. It may be an invitation worth considering. ■

—A.S.

claimed an interim president, Amos Sawyer, and has tried to contain the damage wrought by two rebel leaders, and former allies, Charles Taylor and Prince Johnson. However, Taylor's forces have now spilled into Sierra Leone, and are refusing to disarm for elections, once scheduled for mid-year.

Somalia, unique in Africa for its ethnic homogeneity, has witnessed the triumphant guerrilla forces of the United Somali Congress degenerate into clan fights which have left 30,000 dead and 1 million refugees in the space of weeks. Only now is the international community awakening to the horrors of this tragedy (see box).

A similar human tragedy plagues Mozambique. While the withdrawal of East bloc support for the government, and South African support for Renamo rebels has forced both to the conference table, the rebel group continues to play for time, as it weighs the advantages to itself of pillaging villagers versus contesting multi-party elections which it is sure to lose.

In Sudan, where the Sudanese People's Liberation Army/Movement has been fighting the government of Brig.-Gen. al-Beshir to increase the autonomy of the southern region, and repeal the Islamic shari'a law, efforts at peace mediation by Jimmy Carter, the U.S., and several other countries have been spurned.

Waiting in the wings to fan the crises that still bedevil Africa are arms dealers from the East and West, and now, South Africa.

Waiting in the wings to fan the crises that still bedevil Africa are arms dealers from the East and West, and most recently, South Africa. Faced with diminishing markets at home, these manufacturers are now looking for new clients in developing countries. Unless Africa can stem the demand, the hope that characterized a new decade will wither like a bloom in the desert. ○

Cameraplix

BY KARL MAIER | NIGERIA

BITING THE BULLET

Nigeria Information

Inflation is now taking a toll in Nigeria after the government floated the naira on March 5, part of its program to get the economy back on track. The next difficult steps, in a year in which the military is to turn over power to civilians now fighting an election campaign, are to cut massive budget deficits and restrict the money supply. With the tough economic outlook, the problems of rampant corruption and now, drug trafficking, are further clouding the picture.

André Astrow

President Ibrahim Babangida: Showing that his government has the political will to get economic reforms back on track

Hopping around pools of stagnant water to attend to customers at her stall in central Lagos, Morayo Yusuf said that in her 12 years as a market woman, she had never seen prices rise so fast.

"The buyers are not coming anymore, the quality of the goods is not good anymore, and the prices keep going up," said Mrs. Yusuf, 40, who sells plastic jugs, powdered milk, and other household provisions at the Sandgross market off Simpson Street. "We are being

pushed to the wall, and there is going to be trouble if this continues."

What kind of trouble there could be, Mrs. Yusuf did not specify, but tension in the markets is rising, as President Ibrahim Babangida's seven-year-old military government continues with its plan to restructure Nigeria's oil-dependent economy. While the government's structural adjustment program (SAP) has won acclaim from the International Monetary Fund and Western lenders and should help in negotiations this year to reschedule Nigeria's $30 billion foreign debt—Africa's biggest—it is hated in the urban markets.

Corruption has been a major drain on the economy, Nigerian and Western economists say, and has become institutionalized at all levels.

"Nigeria no good-o. Dey wan kill us," Mrs. Yusuf shouted, as nearby shoppers and merchants nodded in somber agreement. Several market women said they feared that if violence erupted, it would be worse than in 1989 when students and workers rioted against the SAP measures.

As a market woman, Mrs. Yusuf, a mother of three, is a special breed. Like her sisters throughout West Africa, she is powerfully built with a sharp tongue and opinions to match. Market women are the glue that hold together the economies of Nigeria, Ghana, and neighboring countries.

Nigeria's new inflationary spiral was touched off by the government's decision on March 5 to float the national currency, the naira. In the past month, prices of everything from staples, like cassava meal and milk, to radios and television sets have risen by between 50 and 80 percent.

To emphasize the point, Rachidat Etti, 38, a six-year veteran of the market, walked around picking up items for sale and giving their price histories. A tin of powdered milk has risen from 290 naira ($15) to 650 naira ($32.50), a 50-kilogram bag of rice from 450 to 650 naira, and a small bag of sugar from 4.50 to 9 naira. A plastic one-liter jerry can cost 1 naira 10 years ago and today it sells for 20 naira, or $1. "They [the government] must do something because there is no one here, there is no market anymore," Mrs. Etti said.

The official value of the naira itself has plummeted with the exchange rate moving from 10.5 naira to the dollar to 18.7. Some independent (legal) exchange houses will pay 20 naira for a U.S. dollar. While the government said it was seeking to strengthen its currency by narrowing the gap between official and unofficial exchange rates, the result has clearly been the opposite. The problem is that there are too many naira in circulation chasing too few dollars. The government has pledged to cut its massive budget deficits and restrict the money supply to ease pressure on the naira, but Nigerians' taste for imports and the foreign currency they need to purchase them remains unquenched.

Even Babangida seems confused. "Frankly, I have kept on asking my economists why it is that the economy of the country has not collapsed up until now. What is it that is keeping it up?" he said in an interview published on March 29 in the state-owned *Daily Times* newspaper. "Surely, it is not our knowledge, it is not our theories, it is not anything that we have read. I still have not found an answer."

Corruption has been a major drain on the economy, Nigerian and Western economists say. The Organised Private Sector group said in a report last year that corruption "has become institutionalized at all levels of government on industrial and business operations." World Bank figures suggest that up $80 billion in investment was wasted from 1970 to the late 1980s due to corruption and mismanagement.

That, together with the sharp fall in world oil prices after the boom of the 1970s, has forced down per capita income from $1,000 in 1980 to less than $300 today. Oil revenues, once at $20 billion, have plummeted to about $7-8 billion. With the current low prices on the world oil market and prospects that Iraq and Kuwait will soon increase production, the outlook is not bright.

The government has scored a major victory, however, with the country's first truly representative census, which was carried out last November and should greatly help development planning efforts. Results announced in March showed that Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has 88.5 million people, 20-30 million less than most previous estimates by UN agencies and the World Bank.

The effort was painstaking, involving at least $125 million and a half million census takers. The UN, Britain, Netherlands, and Japan all contributed to the exercise, and banks of computers to analyze the data were set up

Betty Press

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in seven areas throughout the country. Two of the keys to its success were the decision to register every home beforehand and to use sophisticated computer software, which could more easily detect attempts to cheat.

Three previous attempts since independence in 1960 to conduct a census have failed, as regional leaders submitted bloated head-counts in an effort to show their people were more numerous and thus entitled to what Nigerians call "a bigger share of the national cake."

A year after he came into office through a military coup in 1985, Babangida launched the SAP in an effort to restructure the economy by promoting non-oil exports and agricultural production while privatizing some state-owned companies and forcing others to operate on a more commercial basis. Government-run marketing boards for agricultural goods were abolished to allow farmers a better price for their produce. Production did increase.

The IMF and the World Bank, however, continued to press the government on two politically sensitive issues: the floating of the naira and the removal of the price subsidies on fuel, which at a cost of about 2.40 naira, 12 U.S. cents, per gallon, is among the cheapest in the world.

Diplomatic sources described the floating of the naira as a turning point in the government's attempt to revive the flagging economy just a year before the army is scheduled to hand over power to civilians after nine years of military rule. "The decision shows the government has the political will to get its structural adjustment program back on track," said one Western economic analyst. "They have bitten the whole bullet, and it will be very difficult for the civilians to reverse it."

The decision to float the naira came as a team of IMF economists was in Lagos to negotiate a new standby agreement. The old 15-month accord, signed in January 1990, lapsed last year after Nigeria missed targets on public spending, money supply, petrol price subsidies, and the exchange rate.

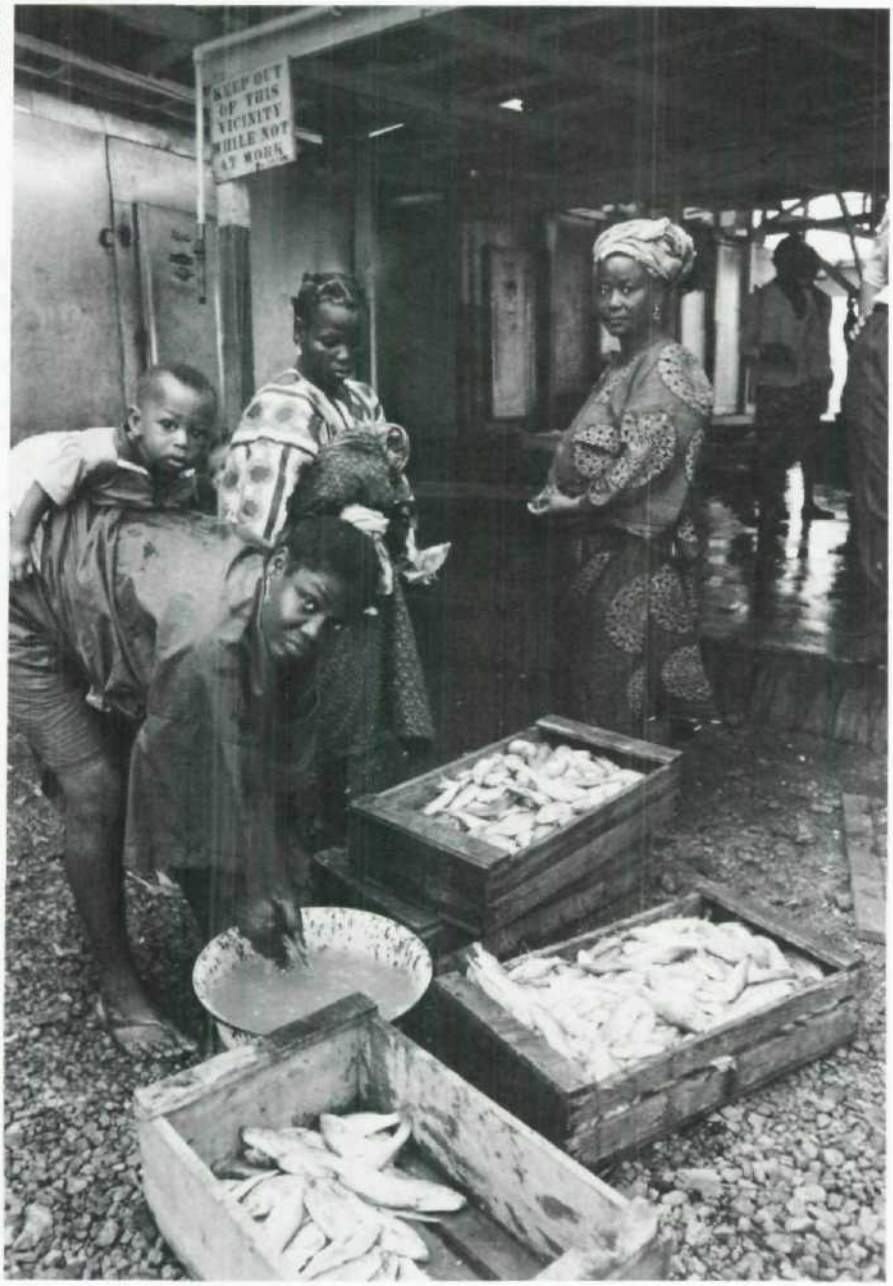
A new agreement giving the IMF stamp of approval is key to government hopes of obtaining favorable terms in forthcoming talks to reschedule part of Nigeria's $17.5 billion dollar public foreign debt with the Paris Club.

Nigerian officials have said they hope to obtain an agreement along the lines of the Trinidad terms, which could result in a major debt write-off. President Babangida said in his annual budget speech last January that Nigeria could spend only $2.28 billion this year on debt repayments compared to more than $5 billion in scheduled obligations. Nigeria's foreign debt is bigger than its entire gross national product.

The new official exchange rate is now close to the parallel rate obtained at the "bureaux de change," which since August 1989 have been licensed to trade in foreign currencies on the open market.

Since August 1991, Nigeria's 120-strong banking community had purchased an average of $50-

United Nations



Opposite page, voter registration in Enugu

Left, market women at Ijora Port in Lagos

60 million each week in foreign exchange from the Central Bank in a modified Dutch auction system, in which they effectively set the price at well below market rates.

But few issues are more politically explosive than devaluation among a populace which has seen living standards fall dramatically in the past decade. A strong naira is a major campaign theme of most politicians who have declared themselves candidates for presidential elections in December, a month before the hand-over to civilians.

Demands on government coffers have been especially heavy over the past two years, with the addition of nine new states to the 21 already in existence, a costly military peace-keeping role in civil war-torn Liberia, the transfer of the nation's capital from Lagos to Abuja, and big cost over-runs on controversial industrial projects such as the Ajaokuta steel complex.

Further, government officials point out that they have been forced to spend millions of dollars on the two legal political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC), and elections to ensure a smooth transition to civilian rule, now scheduled to occur in January 1993.

Most Western economists blame government overspending and heavy borrowing for sharp increases in the money supply and downward pressure on the naira. In the first half of last year alone, Central Bank figures show, the budget deficit reached 19.5 billion naira, or about $1.9 billion at the old exchange rate.

To compensate for the overspending, the government has used monetary policy to squeeze credit from the private sector to fund the public sector. Interest rates, which were capped at 21 percent, have been deregulated, and following the floating of the naira, inter-bank lending rates have soared to over 35 percent. That, together with the falling rate of the naira, has made it extremely difficult for domestic manufacturers to obtain money to invest. Thus, capacity utilization, already as low as 40 percent last year, is believed by most economists to be falling further.

Few issues are more politically explosive than devaluation among a populace which has seen living standards fall dramatically.

The hard economic times have pushed many Nigerians into illegal activities, such as fraud and drug trafficking, which have brought huge sums of money into the country. The effects of the drug money, Nigerian observers say, can be seen in areas like Allen Avenue in the northern Lagos suburb of Ikeja. Little more than a dirt track a decade ago, today Allen Avenue is a bustling road lined with boutiques, restaurants, and nightclubs. Its nickname is "Cocaine Alley."

Nigerian drug syndicates now rank second only to the Chinese as the leading importers of heroin into the United States, according to U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration officials, and account for one-third of all the heroin brought into North America. Nigerian traffickers have smeared the country's name, and Nigerians traveling abroad complain that they are routinely given a tough time at European, Asian, and U.S. airports.

Anti-drug experts say that at least six highly sophisticated drug trafficking syndicates operate in Nigeria, all based in the Lagos area. They obtain heroin mostly from Thailand and cocaine from Brazil and smuggle it into Europe and the U.S.

The favored method of smuggling is for couriers to consume 500 to 900 grams of heroin or cocaine in balloons or condoms, washed down with thick okra soup. Thus, Nigerian couriers have been dubbed "swallowers" in U.S. drug enforcement circles.

President Babangida has said that throughout the 1980s, 15,000 Nigerians had been arrested worldwide for drug trafficking. The trend appears to be worsening. While 27 West Africans, most of them Nigerian, were arrested in 1983 for carrying 7 kilograms of heroin into the U.S., by 1990 the figures had risen to 657 couriers with 240 kilos, according to Paul Higdon, the deputy assistant administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Nigeria's flagging reputation in the face of economic hard times partly explains the celebrity status given to Adebayo Aremu, a 30-year-old taxi driver who returned 21,000 naira ($1,050) left in his car by a market woman. Even though the sum represented 18 months' worth of wages, Aremu said, "There is nothing I am going to do with anybody else's money. The thought never crossed my mind."

After a story about his honesty appeared in *The Concord* paper, well-wishers sent him 4,000 naira, and the John F. Kennedy International School in Warri offered his one-year-old daughter a full scholarship to secondary school.

Soon, however, everything seemed to go wrong. The owner of the taxi forced him to pay for damage to the vehicle, which cost more than the 4,000 naira he had received, and then fired him. Aremu's second wife left him. "She said I have been a driver for 15 years and have never been able to get my own car. So when I had the opportunity, I just gave it away."

Aremu's disappointment deepened on March 7, when he was a guest at the Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria annual awards show in the capital, Abuja. He met President Babangida, who shook his hand and praised him for his honesty, but gave him no financial reward.

"The country will be honest if everyone sees it as a duty," he said. "But if there is no reward for being honest, people like me are seen as being stupid." Still, Aremu has no regrets. "If it happened again, I would look for the owner," he said. "It is not in my nature to steal." ❍

ETERNAL ENMITIES

In Nigeria's middle-belt region, the ethnic minorities of Tivs and Jukuns have lived side by side for hundreds of years, fearing and hating one another. Sporadically, their enmity breaks out into war as it did in October 1991. Since then, in continuing skirmishes, some 5,000 people have been killed, thousands more have fled for their lives, and dozens of villages have been burned to the ground.

When the boats of the Royal Niger Expedition reached the Benue river port of Ibi in 1854, the mission's leaders, Dr. W.B. Baikie and S.A. Crowther, asked a local man where the boundary was between the Tivs and the Jukuns, the two peoples living in the area of what is today Nigeria's remote central state of Taraba. The man, a Jukun, is said to have meshed together his 10 fingers to say that the two groups lived as one. If the man were alive today, he might well slam his two fists together.

Since the eve of Nigeria's independence from Britain in 1960, the Jukuns and the Tivs have fought a number of skirmishes, usually just before election time when the two sides attempt to use brute force instead of a fair vote to determine the outcome. A full-scale war has erupted since October 1991 in the run-up to gubernatorial primaries and elections contested by Nigeria's sole two legal political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). The pools were the first major electoral battles of President Ibrahim Babangida's tightly controlled transition program. Many observers believe that as many as 5,000 lives have been lost in the fighting, making it the worst outbreak of violence since the 1967-70 Biafran civil war.

Two peace efforts in January and February by Vice President Augustus Aikhomu failed to end the conflict, but did succeed in bringing together the spiritual leaders of the two peoples, the Jukuns' Aku Uka, and the Tor Tiv, nominal head of the 4-million strong Tivs, Nigeria's fifth biggest ethnic group.

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A high-powered delegation of traditional rulers from northern states, led by the Sultan of Sokoto, seat of the powerful Islamic Caliphate, launched its own diplomatic effort in March and declared that the end was in sight. The Sultan of Sokoto, Ibrahim Dasuki, described the Tiv-Jukun war as "this threat to our survival as one nation."

The conflict, centered at Wukari town and its surrounding areas, is a hit and run affair, with both sides armed with everything from bows and arrows to automatic rifles, and employing scorched earth tactics. For miles around Wukari, silence has fallen over dozens of farming villages which have been burned to the ground. Tens of thousands of refugees have fled to the neighboring state of Benue, where the majority of Tivs live, or to the town of Ibi on the shores of the Benue River.

Before the rains come in April, the Benue River retreats from its wide banks to become a bright blue stream snaking around islands of white, hot sand. The public transport across the river in the dry season is a wooden barge about 75 feet long and 10 feet wide powered by a 60 horsepower Suzuki outboard engine. As it plows along, listing heavily to the left under the weight of three cars, about 50 people, and several pigs and goats, the isolation of Taraba—one of nine of Nigeria's 30 states that are less than a year old—becomes clear.

By February, Ibi was full of Tiv refugees and horror stories about Jukun atrocities. Nearly everyone, including top local officials, knew someone who has been scarred by the conflict. Along the once heavily populated 25-mile road to Wukari, not a village was standing. No one was working the fields, and few cars and trucks made the run for fear of ambush.

The town of Wukari itself was eerily calm, except for the hundreds of heavily armed regular police and mobile police units patrolling in big trucks along the streets. Wukari had been largely saved from the war, except for a December 31 raid by Tiv guerrillas which left two people dead.

The view from Wukari, seat of the Aku Uka's palace, is completely opposite to that of Ibi. The horror stories are attributed solely to the Tivs, whom the Jukuns consider "settlers" and "strangers."

Neither side shows any sign of compromise. The Jukuns, citing somewhat shaky historical evidence, describe themselves as a peace-loving people who have occupied the Wukari area for the past 700 years. In fact, the old Jukun state, Kwararafa, was on the north side of the Benue in what is today Plateau state and had emerged as a feared military power by the second half of the 16th century. Jukun calvary armed with long spears pillaged across Hausaland, entered Kano and Katsina, and even threatened Borno. The Fulani Islamic jihad of the early 1800s appears

to have destroyed Kwararafa and sent the Jukun to Wukari. The paramount Jukun chiefs, the Aku Ukas, started their reign in Wukari in 1855, at least two centuries after Tiv immigrants, originally from modern-day Cameroon, had settled in the area.

As the Royal Niger Expedition discovered 138 years ago, the Tivs and the Jukuns lived together in relative peace until the British arrived. The colonial policy of "indirect rule," or administration through a pliant traditional ruler, promoted the Jukuns to a dominant position over the more numerous Tivs, a loosely organized farming people who live in isolated homesteads. The British ruled Wukari through the Aku Uka, and thus until independence, the Jukuns controlled the area. But in elections to the Federal House of Representatives in 1959, a year before the Union Jack was lowered for good in Nigeria, the Tivs formed an electoral alliance with another important community, the Hausas, to elect a Tiv man.

After the latest bout of fighting started in October 1991, a Jukun was elected local government council chairman for the first time.

Relations between the two communities have continued to sour. "Our problems with the Tivs have been on for a long time," the Aku Uka said in an interview at his palace, seated between two crude mortars which he said the Tiv fighters were using. "Before the advent of the colonial masters, the Tivs were under us, and even when the colonial masters came. But because of their large number, they developed a habit of not recognizing the legitimacy of the Aku."

The Tor Tiv, based in Benue state, sees it differently, accusing the Aku Uka of treating his people as second-class citizens. "Because of that single advantage which the Jukun people had through the colonial masters, they considered themselves as the indigenes of that place, while the Tiv people all along had been regarded as settlers, strangers, and squatters," he said at his palace in Gboko, about 80 miles southwest of Wukari. "There is fear in the minds of the Jukun that one day the Tiv people would dominate that place completely and they would be pushed to the corner."

The Tivs' land hunger is especially worrying to the Jukuns, who largely rely on fishing for their livelihood. Some Tiv leaders have charged that the current fighting is an attempt by Jukun elites to force the Tivs off the land so they can start up commercial farming enterprises.

The Tiv-Jukun confrontation is the worst example of disputes among ethnic groups in several parts of Nigeria's middle belt region, where minorities live side by side or near the country's three main peoples, the Ibo of the east, the Yoruba of the west, and the Hausa-Fulani in the north. On February 6, for example, at least 60 people died in clashes between Hausas and Katafs in Kaduna state, sparked by a decision of local authorities to transfer an important market, known as Zango Kataf, out of a Hausa area. As in Taraba, the Zango Kataf episode masked deeper conflicts over land and the Kataf claim that they are indigenous to the area and that the Hausas are settlers.

The effect of the Tiv-Jukun struggle could be seen at Bantaji, a village 25 miles east of Wukari and inhabited by neither Jukuns or Tivs but by Hausa-Fulani, Nigeria's biggest group. Bantaji, a sprawling settlement of 20,000 people, had avoided the war until early February when Tiv merchants, recently expelled from selling in a nearby Jukun village, asked if they could open stalls at the open-air market. Bantaji villagers, hoping the excellent Tiv farmers would improve the produce selection, agreed.

Armed Jukun guerrillas attacked the village, but were repulsed. In response, Banataji's residents set up a road block to check passing vehicles. That angered the police in Wukari since only official roadblocks were legal. Villagers said the police had warned their chief to dismantle the roadblock or face the consequences.

The consequences came on February 12, market day, when according to numerous witnesses, a combined force of Jukun men and four truckloads of Nigeria's notorious mobile police attacked, burning scores of homes, looting many others, and killing at least 31 people. Five days later, the ruins of the villages were still smouldering as a member of the chief's council sat in front of his destroyed home and accused the mobile police of carrying out the attack. "Most of the killing was done by the police because they were in the front," said Galadima Adamu Bantaji. Another young man said he saw mobile policemen shoot his father dead at his home. "We have buried 31 people, but we are still finding bodies," Adamu Bantaji said. "Most of the people fled into the bush, some with wounds to go and die there."

That same day, five members of the police were kidnapped. One escaped and the corpses of four others were later found in shallow graves. The mobile police units are a special force, but pay and discipline are low. They are commonly known in Nigeria as "kill and go," and after repeated reports of their involvement in extortion and extrajudicial killings across the country, the Babangida administration withdrew them from nighttime patrolling of the highways.

While some observers argued that some mobile police had been paid by the Jukuns to come to their aid, Tanko Muhammed, who as local government secretary is Ibi's third-ranking official, linked it to the civil war, when the Ibo people attempted to secede and establish the independent nation of Biafra. "The Tivs played a large role in the Federal forces in the war against Biafra, and the mobile police are mostly Ibos," he said. "So it is much easier for the Jukuns to buy the mobiles [police]."

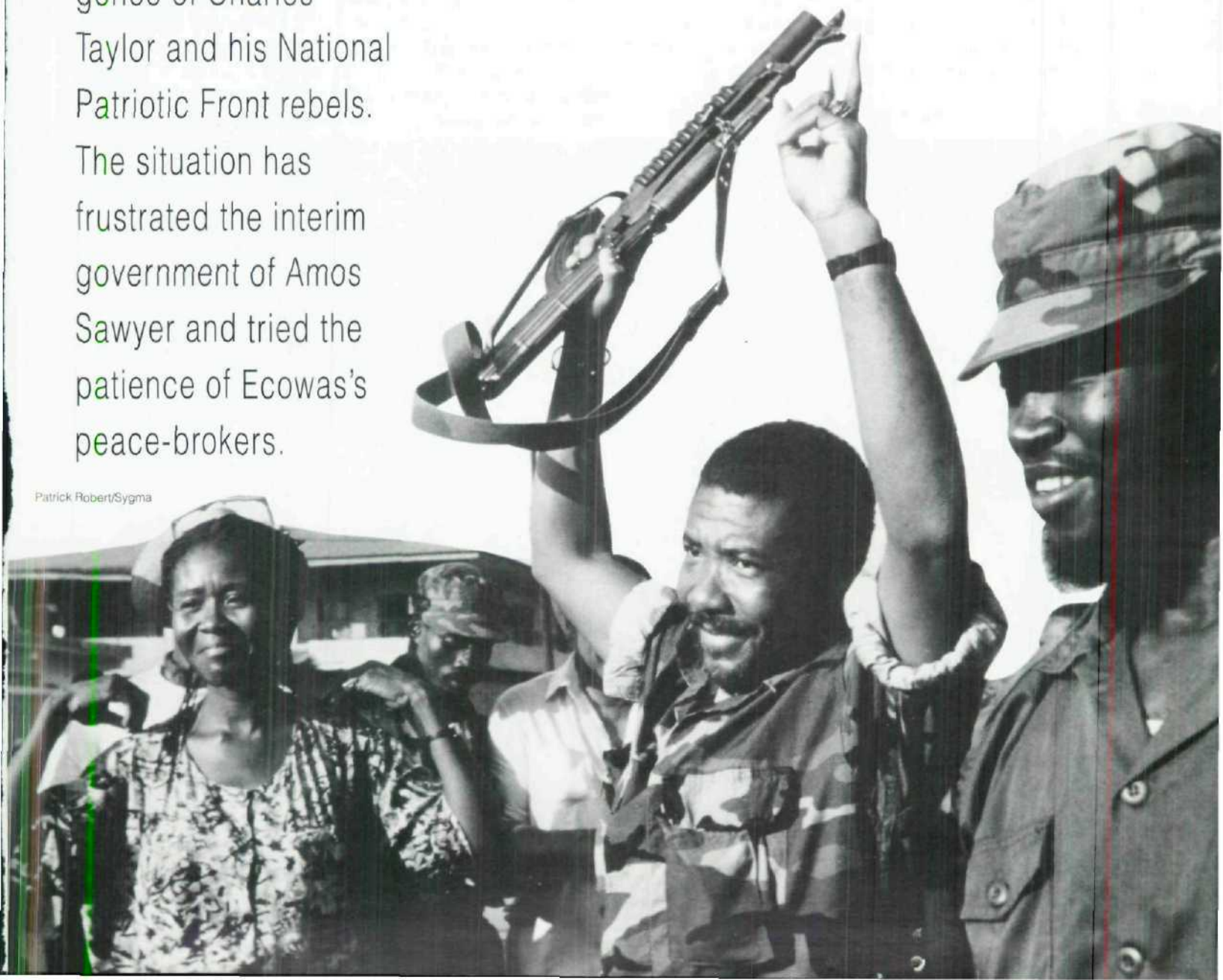
Muhammed and other officials have called on the Federal government to remove the mobile police and send in what they consider to be a neutral force, the army. That call was echoed on February 25 by the state police commissioner in neighboring Benue state, Sule Mohammed, when he admitted that the police had failed to quell the violence. Only a special force, like the National Guard, could do the job, he said.

Hopes for a solution are now pinned on the mission of the northern traditional rulers, who wield great influence in Nigeria. If they fail, the coming national legislative and presidential elections later this year could spark even greater violence and become a bad omen for relations between the myriad of ethnic groups across the middle belt region. ○

BY PETER DA COSTA

PEACE POSTPONED

Liberia is bogged down in stalemate. The carefully drawn Ecowas blueprint, to have culminated in April elections, has broken down, primarily due to the intransigence of Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front rebels. The situation has frustrated the interim government of Amos Sawyer and tried the patience of Ecowas's peace-brokers.



Patrick Robert/Sygma

Despair, something Liberia's citizens have known all too often, has begun to insinuate on the optimism of even the most stoic of West Africa's peace-brokers, whose best efforts at shepherding the civil war-torn nation toward a new beginning have fallen victim to the very stalemate they were designed to end.

Yamoussoukro IV, the blueprint for a free and fair election born after a tortuous, painful labor in Côte d'Ivoire's political capital last November, has been excruciatingly slow in execution, with the result that rumblings of discontent have become the order of the day—from elements within the 16-member Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) which spawned the peace plan, as well as the swelling ranks of jobless returnees driven homeward by refugee fatigue.

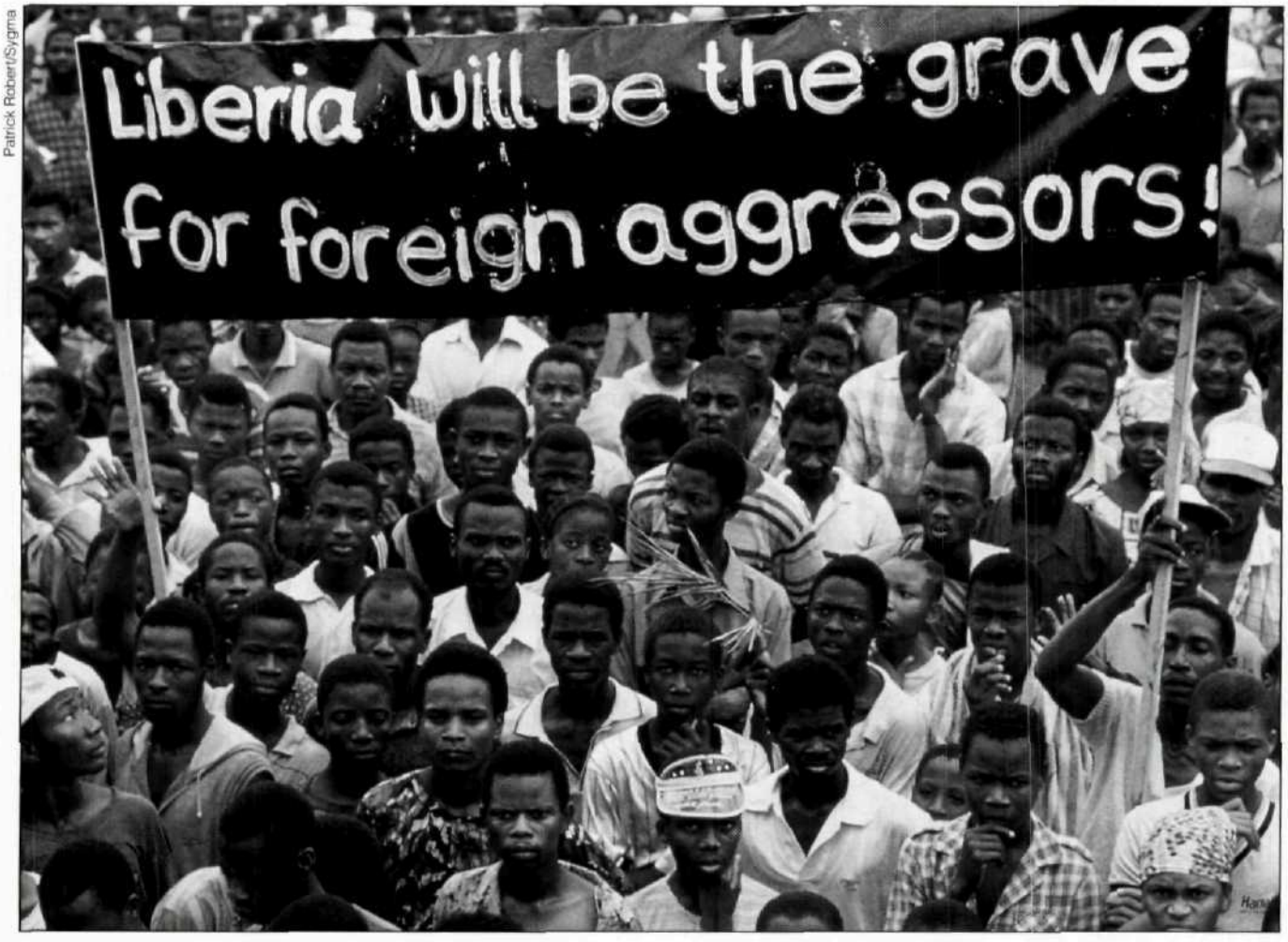
At Yamoussoukro, all the stops were pulled out by a Community desperate for a breakthrough in a mediation process that was stretching its meager resources and fragile political consensus to the very limit. Overwhelming peer pressure was concentrated on Charles Taylor, the main protagonist whose intransigence had ensured that 1990-91 was the year of stalemate.

Peter da Costa is a freelance journalist based in Banjul, the Gambia.

Since a November 1990 ceasefire ended the worst of brutality catalyzed by a December 1989 incursion aimed at unseating the 10-year dictatorship of Samuel Doe, Taylor's National Patriotic Front (NPFL) rebels, with control of 12 of Liberia's 13 counties, had brooked little compromise. Shunning the Ecowas peace plan, which counseled an interim government of national unity, Taylor had installed his own administration, declaring himself the country's sovereign ruler on the principle of territorial supremacy.

Given the odds, Yamoussoukro IV, when it came, was rightly viewed as a genuine breakthrough, Liberia's warring factions agreed to a 60-day timetable for the disarmament and encampment of their respective militias; Ecowas's peace-keeping arm, Ecomog, would guarantee security throughout the country; and sine qua non conditions for a process leading to the first free and fair election in Liberia's 145-year history (repatriation, resettlement, and voter registration) would be in place no later than six months from D-Day on November 15.

D-Day plus 60—the January 15 deadline for encampment—loomed and disappeared almost without event. The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) remained armed, albeit en-camped in the capital Monrovia, while the Independent National Patriotic Front (INPFL)—an NPFL splinter faction— maintained a menacing martial presence over inhabitants of Caldwell, a Monrovia suburb.



Patrick Robert/Sygma

Their early adherence to the plan notwithstanding, the AFL and INPFL remained in a state of preparedness for one reason: The 10,000-strong NPFL army was still armed to the teeth.

The 60-day window of opportunity did yield gains, however limited. On January 10, amid much fanfare, some roads—notably a highway leading from Monrovia to Taylor's seat at Gbarnga 125 miles north—were partially opened, with a significant reduction in the nightmarish rebel checkpoints that had served to inhibit free movement. Ecomog reconnaissance teams identified encampment sites in each county and even succeeded in billeting a light detachment of soldiers in the NPFL-held port of Buchanan.

This apart, Yamoussoukro IV has remained largely unimplemented. An Ecomog undertaking to create a buffer zone on Liberia's border with its northeastern neighbor, Sierra Leone, designed to prevent cross-border attacks, has so far remained on the drawing board.

An electoral commission and ad hoc supreme court—bodies which were due to start work after the initial implementation period—find themselves without a conducive operating environment, pieces of the topsy-turvy, upside-down jigsaw that is post-war Liberia. The International Negotiation Network (INN), part of the technical assistance package pledged at Yamoussoukro, has only tentatively embarked on the business of planning a poll.

Set against this is the phenomenon of spontaneous returnees—Liberians encouraged by the expectations raised by Yamoussoukro IV to make their way home from refugee camps in neighboring countries. Monrovia's Ecowas-installed interim government (IGNU) reported in February that the city's pre-war population of 450,000 had swelled to nearly a million. Aid organizations put the figure at 750,000.

Despite the uncontrolled influx, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is delaying a full repatriation program because it does not believe conditions are safe. If a spate of armed robberies and a February grenade attack in Monrovia—carried out despite the high profile of Ecomog—are anything to go by, UNHCR may be wise in its caution. "The security situation in Monrovia is worse now than it has been for a long time," lamented Gerard Van Dijk, operations director of the World Food Programme in Liberia. And in greater Liberia, aid workers and civilians alike report continued harassment by armed rebels.

While civilian safety fears are on the increase, it is Taylor's security concerns that have punctuated the Yamoussoukro IV go-slow, in the face of actual and perceived threats from Ulimo, a coalition of anti-Taylor forces bankrolled by Doe loyalists with the stated aim of "liberating Liberia from Charles Taylor." But if Ulimo's combined campaign of incursions and propaganda was designed to propel Taylor into compliance with Ecowas plans, it has had precisely the reverse effect.

Since entering the fray in March 1991, Ulimo has operated from bases in Sierra Leone (where it has often fought alongside regular army units) and Guinea. Having declared a suspension of hostilities after Yamoussoukro IV, the group has now announced it will invade NPFL areas and hand over captured territory to Ecomog—a prospect that causes peace-brokers to wince since the Ulimo variable is one they neither expected nor welcomed.

Citing the need to defend NPFL territory against attacks, Taylor's aides have raised the Ulimo issue at every meeting of the joint NPFL/Ecomog technical commission. NPFL paranoia has gone further, suggesting that Ulimo forces are being trained right under the peace-keepers' noses. Suspicion of Ecomog still persists after nine months of confidence-building work. Taylor finds it hard to forgive the Nigeria-led imposition of a ceasefire in late September 1990 that robbed him of the executive mansion—Doe's seat of government that would have ensured him the presidency.

After Yamoussoukro IV, Ecomog, little more than an anglophone clique, sought to become more representative of Ecowas as a whole. Now an 11,000-strong, seven-nation unit, the force has kept contingents likely to offend Taylor stationed in Monrovia while using the new Senegalese contingent (deemed more impartial by Taylor) to forge ahead with confidence-building and reconnaissance. This softly-softly approach has exposed the peace-keepers to allegations that they are colluding with the NPFL to prolong the stalemate for financial re-ward.

Taylor finds it hard to forgive the Nigeria-led imposition of a ceasefire in late September 1990 that robbed him of the executive mansion.

"Liberians are not grateful at all," spat an Ecomog officer when asked to comment on the allegation. "What people don't realize is that if we were given the order, we would clear [the NPFL] out just like that. Maybe we should just get out of Liberia and leave them to it." Even the force's diplomatic commanding officer is showing uncharacteristic, if understandable, signs of strain. In February, Maj.-Gen. Ishaya Bakut told a Monrovia newspaper that technical commission talks had broken down over the NPFL's insistence that its troops be deployed countrywide alongside Ecomog, an eventuality he said would contravene Yamoussoukro IV.

Back from briefing the Ecowas chairman, President Abdou Diouf of Senegal, on the impasse, Maj.-Gen. Bakut betrayed his frustration when he said tersely, "I have given the Ecowas leadership the pros and cons. It is left with them to design a solution and get back to me." Ecomog and the NPFL had differences in the interpretation

THE VIEW FROM FOGGY BOTTOM

The tempo of Liberia's fractured diplomatic battle for political legitimacy in Washington is heating up as Bush administration doubts about ineffectual regional accords have opened the way for talk of new methods to quiet the country's internal combustion.

State Department sources maintain any change in policy toward Liberia will be made in concert with regional leaders and say the administration continues to view the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) peace plan as the best hope of bridging the country's divide.

But diplomats frustrated by the results of regional mediation have privately questioned the motives of some governments' involvement in the conflict, leading to suggestions that rebel leader Charles Taylor is not the only one benefitting from perpetual delay.

Taylor's blessing remains crucial to any lasting deal, but repeated excuses about delaying the encampment of his rebels under the Ecowas intervention force, Ecomog, are clearly eroding much of the marginal goodwill he once enjoyed in Washington.

Taylor's claim that the disarmament accord negotiated in Yamoussoukro remains on track is "absurd," according to a senior State Department official who said agreeing to further talks in the Ivorian capital would be "playing into his stalling tactics."

Lester Hyman, Washington counsel for Taylor's Gbarnga government, said the disarmament process is moving forward, but admitted it is not in step with the Yamoussoukro timetable because Taylor wants to familiarize Ecomog with his territory and establish a common response to the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (Ulimo).

Ulimo's commitment to democracy, the timing of their first attacks, and misgivings about those behind the Sierra Leone-based movement are part of Washington's concern about other West African scores being settled on Liberian territory. But for now, the burden of pressure remains on Taylor.

"We have made a considerable investment of time and resources in Liberia without demonstrable progress toward Yamoussoukro IV," a State Department official said. "We must now consider a number of things we could have done but haven't yet."

Escalating anti-Taylor sentiments within the State Department suggest that formally recognizing Amos Sawyer's interim government (IGNU) would best counter continuing French and francophone African support for Taylor in the conference room and on the battlefield, while sending a signal to the Liberian people that Taylor has finally gone too far by alienating their traditional backer and most likely source of reconstruction aid.

Sawyer's deliberate manner has begun to earn him high marks for "trying to run a clean shop with little or nothing behind him," according to a State Department official who favors full recognition.

Despite sub-regional pressure to recognize Sawyer, senior U.S. officials fear the move might provide Taylor with the provocation for which they feel he searches to abandon the Ecowas plan altogether, claiming permanent sovereignty over the 12 of 13 counties he now occupies by portraying Sawyer as a traditional American stooge.

"Recognizing the government in Monrovia would say to Charles Taylor that all this pious talk about neutrality from Washington is hogwash," Lester Hyman said during an interview at the Georgetown offices of Sindler & Berlin, the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly's registered U.S. counsel.

Without regional condemnation of Taylor and an accompanying groundswell of support for Sawyer, the tactical benefits of recognizing the interim government remain dubious, according to a State Department source, because it is a card of marginal

of the Côte d'Ivoire accord, he added, implying that future technical meetings would stand a better chance of success if the rebel team backed down on this position.

The general perception is that Taylor is stalling the peace process for a number of reasons. Some analysts interpret his insistence on an April 1992 election while refusing to disarm as an indicator that the NPFL leader doesn't believe himself capable of winning an open contest. "He is using the gun philosophy to keep the people in his territory compliant," ventured one senior Monrovia official.

Others, citing recent claims by a high-ranking NPFL defector that Taylor and his inner circle had run a two-track strategy of keeping rank-and-file soldiers in the dark about the agreements signed at Yamoussoukro, paint a picture of Taylor as the prisoner of his own dream. The scenario is that having failed to gain absolute power, Taylor is worried that his men, the most trusted among them soldiers of fortune, may consider capitulation to Ecowas a betrayal.

A persistent theory which has strong credence is that the stalemate has provided senior NPFL officials with unprecedented get-rich-quick opportunities. IGNU President Dr. Amos Sawyer claimed in a recent interview that "...for all practical purposes Mr. Taylor is conducting a clearance sale of Liberia's resources." Sawyer

bureaucratic advantage that can be played only once and cannot be withdrawn if it ends up leading to a losing hand.

After repeated demands for a firm position from Washington, Sawyer now seems to agree. Given Taylor's volatility, IGNU's Washington counsel, Paul Reichler, said Sawyer no longer feels formal U.S. recognition is crucial to the success of his administration and is instead satisfied with de facto recognition or regular meetings with Ambassador Peter deVos.

"When the Bush administration formally requested that Liberia co-sponsor repealing the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism, they didn't go to Charles Taylor or Prince Johnson," Reichler said. "They went to Amos Sawyer."

Taylor was getting "a bad rap," Hyman said, "but the perception from Washington changed as he matured from a revolutionary leader to a political leader."

Since his rebels were denied the crowning legitimacy of taking the executive mansion, Taylor has campaigned extensively throughout his territory, dispensing largesse and warning of threats to Liberia's sovereignty when not busy with peace talks in neighboring capitals. NPRA radio broadcasts of Taylor worship and popular music can be heard in Monrovia.

The interim government mandate is to negotiate itself out of existence, according to Reichler, and Sawyer is accordingly ambivalent about responding to the volume of Taylor electioneering. But while supporting the rebel leader's right to contest the presidency, Reichler offered his own assessment of Taylor's chances.

"When you've killed someone's mother because she spoke another language, you can't win them over by playing nice music," he said.

"You can't have 12-year-old boys with guns running around the country and talk about elections," said Bismarck Kuyon, speaker of Monrovia's Interim Legislative Assembly (ILA) on an official visit to Washington. "The frustration of the Liberian people everywhere, behind Taylor lines or in the U.S., is over this gun business."

Kuyon, whose youngest brother is deputy speaker of the Gbarnga legislature, feels debates over foreign policy and elections must yield to the country's need to regain its sense of family before dwindling hopes for peace grow deeper.

"Maybe we in the interim government haven't done enough to bridge the gap of mistrust with Charles Taylor," he said promising that the ILA would continue trying to establish a dialogue among all warring factions. "This isn't a matter of diplomatic recognition, it's a matter of family."

Former Finance Minister Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf agrees that Liberia must first try to heal its emotional wounds and reconcile its internal divisions through a provisional government of genuine national unity before moving toward elections.

"It's just too early," she said. "If Charles Taylor by one means or the other gets himself elected or takes power, Liberia will have no peace because there will be two or three Ulimo's destabilizing the country."

Frustrated with the pace of disarmament and its eventual impact on elections, State Department sources say Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Senegal are also awakening to the need for something more to push Liberia toward peace.

While Washington politely threatens tougher action against those its perceives to be dragging their feet in Liberia, there seems little else it can do but support regional efforts to end the conflict and hope, in doing so, that the seeds of another are not sown. ■

—Scott Stearns
Washington, D.C.

alleged in February that Taylor was selling off the country's diamonds, timber, and other resources to European collaborators. "Who are the people bringing the coffee and cocoa to Monrovia that has not been sold across the border to Côte d'Ivoire?" he asked. "It's not the small farmers. It's the commanders."

IGNU frustration has sparked a number of initiatives. Monrovia's finance ministry has replaced the old Liberian five-dollar bill—claiming rebel hoarding of containerfuls of old notes was pushing inflation upward. They have imposed an embargo on petroleum and selected goods leaving the capital. Predictably, these measures have been replicated by the NPFL administration, resulting in a cold war between Monrovia and Gbarnga that has further impeded progress.

Sawyer's administration—recognized by the international community as Liberia's legitimate transitional government, yet powerless to enforce its edicts—had begun to balk at its invidious position. "We don't have control," conceded Sawyer. "But we don't desire control of Ecomog so much as we desire Ecomog to do its job." Talking tough, the political science professor is beginning to act tough, too.

As part of the new salvo of initiatives, Sawyer has revived the moribund Mano River Union, a sub-regional grouping whose other members are Sierra Leone and

Guinea, as a platform for revitalizing the flagging peace process—sending a clear signal to Ecowas that its efforts are falling short of the mark.

Sawyer's shuttle diplomacy has won promises from Libyan leader Col. Muammar Qaddafy and Burkinabè President Capt. Blaise Compaoré—both backers of the NPFL—that they will work toward a lasting peace in Liberia in line with sub-regional efforts. As a senior Liberian diplomat put it: "We went to Tripoli at Qaddafy's invitation and came out with more in two days than the whole of Ecowas has managed in two years of sending envoys to Libya."

Despite its evident displeasure at being strung along by the NPFL, the Ecomog high command must again employ patience.

The ball is now firmly back in the Ecowas court. The chairman of the U.S. joint chiefs of staff, Gen. Colin Powell, implied as much in February during a West African tour highlighted by head-to-head talks with Nigeria's Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, Sierra Leone's Gen. Joseph Momoh, and Ecomog's Maj.-Gen. Bakut. Speaking to journalists, Powell said the U.S. was anxious to see all Liberia's factions disarmed and encamped. He suggested a tightening of the diplomatic screws, an increase in pressure on Taylor.

Almost on cue, Babangida announced Nigeria's backing for another heads of state level summit on Liberia—precisely the vehicle for diplomatic peer pressure of the sort prescribed by Powell. Yamoussoukro is once again likely to be chosen as the venue for this latest pow-wow—in keeping with the idea that maintaining Côte d'Ivoire at the epicenter of peace efforts will hold together the hard-won, yet ever-fragile anglophone/francophone coalition.

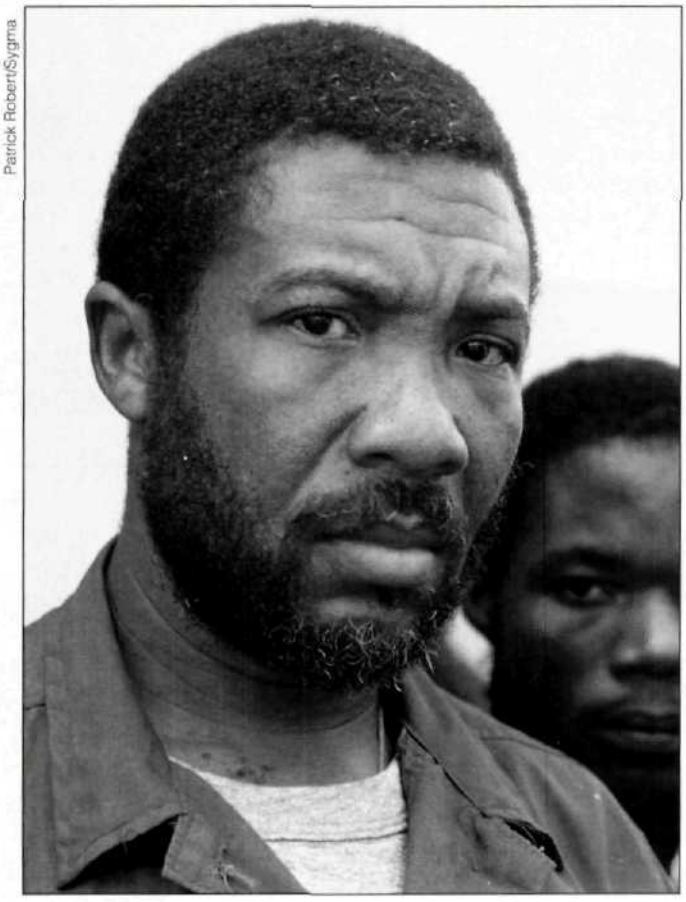
Ecowas chair Diouf is a strong proponent of regional economic integration—a reason he is keen to see the end of the Liberia problem. An initial dissenter from the Ecowas initiative until softened by U.S. inputs, Senegal now has as much at stake as any Community member. Its leader's year in the sub-regional hot seat, due to expire in June, will be judged more kindly should the pivotal issue of disarmament be settled before then.

In order to do this, the crisis summit will have to reduce the NPFL's margin for procrastination by comprehensively addressing Taylor's security concerns, be they genuine or concocted. Creating the Sierra Leone/Liberia buffer zone will be shifted up in priority—to allay NPFL fears of Ulimo attack and ease Sierra Leone's task of crushing an incursion into its southeastern region by suspected Taylor loyalists.

Despite its evident displeasure at being strung along by the NPFL, the Ecomog high command must again employ patience. It has no choice, since a mandate of imposition would not only renew the onslaught on civilians, but would overturn the limited gains of the past two years and upset the sub-regional balance, such as it is.

"We must redefine the concept of sovereignty so that the locus of sovereignty is seen to be the people," IGNU President Sawyer told *Africa Report* last November. There is a growing feeling that with military action an increasingly remote solution to the stalemate, the people themselves will take responsibility for their own enfranchisement.

Signs are that people power is beginning to regain its potency. On March 25, following the execution of six civilians by NPFL officers on suspicion of being Ulimo insurgents, the port city of Buchanan saw an unprecedented protest by 12,000 residents, who are reported to have called on Taylor to put an end to killings. The protest worked. Taylor arrested four senior commanders and promised courts-martial. According to Ecomog sources, the demonstration was so intense that an NPFL team due in Monrovia for a March 26 technical commission meeting failed to turn up. Instead, they drove to Buchanan to calm the civil unrest. ❍



Patrick Robert/Sygma

Charles Taylor: Is he worried that his men may consider capitulation to Ecowas a betrayal?

BY MARK HUBAND **CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Political reform in Côte d'Ivoire has been shelved for now after 12 opposition leaders were jailed in March, held responsible for a demonstration that turned violent. Their arrest and trial demonstrates the extent to which the country is still subject to the power accumulated over 30 years by 87-year-old President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, whose failure to lay the groundwork for the next political generation is at the root of the nation's anxiety over the future.

SILENCING THE OPPOSITION

The imprisonment in March of 12 opposition politicians in Côte d'Ivoire, including the leader of the main opposition party, has halted their attempts at reforming the country's delicate power structure. It has also exposed the weakness of the law in the face of massive presidential power even after two years of multi-party democracy.

A four-day trial, after which eight of the 20 accused were set free, followed a riot in the center of the capital, Abidjan, on February 18, which led to thousands of dollars worth of damage. Demonstrators had gathered for a legal march organized by the main opposition party, the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI). They were demanding that the government punish soldiers in accordance with the recommendations of an official inquiry into army brutality during the suppression of student militancy on Abidjan's Yopougon University residential campus in May 1991. President Félix Houphouët-Boigny rejected the report, saying punishment of the soldiers would split the army.

In explaining the government's refusal to act, Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara, in an interview, revealed the extent to which the maintenance of peace in one of West Africa's most stable countries relies on the law being subsumed by the exercise of presidential power.

Côte d'Ivoire President Félix Houphouët-Boigny

Camerapix

Referring to the murder last May of a pro-government student, Thierry Zebie,

who had infiltrated a now-banned students' union, the Federation of Ivorian Students and Pupils (Fesci), Ouattara said: "When Martial Ahipeaud and members of the bureau of Fesci killed Mr. Zebi, I asked the government lawyers to pursue them in court. This was in June, and a few weeks later, the president told me that he wanted the government to abandon this trial, because of peace and so forth.

"This is also what he did with Yopougon for the military. In the case of the students, they killed someone. It's true that things [the military did] were revolting. It's revolting for all of us. But the president is the only one who has that right by the constitution [not to pursue the case]. He decided in one case that we should not pursue someone who killed a student, and in the other case he decided he would not take sanctions against [the military] who were supposed to have brutalized students."

Opposition demands for action over the Yopougon report, after the murder charge against the anti-government students had been dropped, are seen by members of the ruling Democratic Party (PDCI) as a deliberate refusal by the opposition to abide by the constitutionally based, though largely unwritten, rules of presidential power, which have been woven over 32 years since independence from France in the interests of social cohesion.

Controversy still surrounds the actual events which led up to the violence, however. The march started without the normally heavy presence of the security forces, though police who were present were aware that some 200 marchers had arrived with violence in mind as they were armed with sticks and batons. So the question remains as to why the march was not halted or the troublemakers isolated.

"It would have been worse if the military had started to stop the march," Ouattara said, "because these people were ready for a fight, and I was happy that there were no deaths. If the police wanted to prevent it, the police would be in an illegal situation because they had the authorization to march...This government wants to respect the legal process. You cannot tell someone you have authorized them to march and then at a certain point say you cannot march...But from now on if we see someone coming with arms and saying he will march, we will just tell him to stop it," Ouattara said.

The evening before the march, Houphouët-Boigny signed an ordinance holding march organizers responsible for the conduct of their supporters. The timing of the signing, which took place in Paris and was not debated by the National Assembly, caused consternation, as it made it appear that the government was preparing for violence on the eve of the demonstration. Its own legal advisers said the ordinance was not credible, so the prosecution simply charged the opposition leaders with being co-sponsors of the violence.

French and Senegalese defense lawyers rubbished the court case from the beginning, saying it should be dropped before the country was regarded as a police state, as it was highly unjust that the opposition leaders should go to jail for crimes committed by thugs not even known to be members of the political parties which had organized the march. Laurent Gbagbo and his co-defendants denounced the trial as "political," and the process succeeded in giving the opposition a spotlight rarely accorded it in the state media. However, it also revealed the extent to which the country has retained a highly centralized power which provides the regime with all the trump cards in disputes of this kind—a situation which, far from being contained by the state, will more likely further intensify feelings against the party in power.

For the past year, since its disastrous defeat in the October 1990 presidential and legislative elections, and exasperated by its total exclusion from real power, the FPI had been attempting to unravel the political traditions which assured Houphouët-Boigny's victory and much of the country's social cohesion.

PDCI power relies on a balance having been struck between the president's Baoule ethnic group, the Senoufo of the party's secretary-general, Laurent Dona Fologo, the Malinké of the prime minister, and groups loyal to the former defense minister, Jean Konan Banny, and the president of the National Assembly, Henri Konan Bédié.

The PDCI dominates in the north and the center of the country, while the FPI has considerable influence in the south. In the run-up to elections in 1996, the FPI intends to try and sever the alliance between the north and the center, splitting the PDCI support, which it believes is based on propaganda rather than genuine loyalty. Ouattara levels the same accusation against the FPI, which has only nine deputies in the 168-seat National Assembly, two of whom are now in prison following the trial.

Now, due to the president's grip on power, it has become increasingly clear that the democratic blueprint for francophone Africa, drawn up by France and modelled on the developed world, is proving itself barely applicable as it founders on a social structure which deprives opposition parties of a role in the process of government.

Its exclusion from power has led the FPI to take an increasingly populist approach, which is seen as having partly led to the violence of February 18, as it has attracted supporters inclined to use violence. Meanwhile, the FPI leader, Laurent Gbagbo, who received a two-year jail sentence and a $900 fine, concentrates on criticizing the nepotism of the regime rather than elaborating beyond a general view of regionalism, an economic policy which will ease the plight of the economy's victims.

Gbagbo's position is partly explained by his view of Africa's new democracy: "Democracy is not established in Africa, because the reactionaries don't want to leave power," he said in an interview a few weeks before his imprisonment.

Three days before the opposition leaders' sentencing, the leaders of Fesci were sentenced to three years in

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prison. They were accused of organizing violent demonstrations in February 1992 and of reconstituting the union after it had been banned.

The imprisonment of the opposition leaders was condemned by the European Parliament, led by French Socialist members. On a visit to Abidjan, the U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Leonard Robinson, called for the prosecution of the soldiers implicated in the official inquiry into the violence at Yopougon in May 1991, whose actions had originally led to the February protest. Such foreign criticism, which has been unprecedented in its directness, has seriously undermined the until-now high reputation abroad of the Ouattara government, at a time when it is attempting to revive the country's economy by introducing sweeping reforms agreed upon with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Ouattara's hard line against the opposition leaders, which was taken in the absence of Houphouët-Boigny—on an extended visit to Europe when the violence occurred—is explained by his determination to follow through with the reforms.

"I explained to the opposition leaders that the reform program I am implementing needed social peace because the economic situation is difficult and, by itself, creates social tensions. We are still very open to dialogue. In fact, after the events, I received several opposition leaders. I told them that this was a very, very unhappy development, but the government had to react the way it did, that this is a country where the law should be respected by all, that once this is done, we transfer things to the courts and we will let the court process decide the final outcome. And now the outcome is known," he said.

However, Ouattara exposed the weakness of his legalistic position by acknowledging that real power—the power to pardon, the power to pursue or not pursue legal action—lay firmly in the hands of the president. This issue is becoming increasingly important, as the debate over 87-year-old Houphouët-Boigny's succession takes on a greater urgency. With the opposition silenced and jailed, and the ruling PDCI as stultifyingly undynamic as ever, the president appears to have refused to see beyond the short term. The failure to lay the groundwork for the next political generation, when the alliances he has formed over the past 30 years no longer have him as central arbiter, lies at the heart of national anxiety over the future.

The opposition leaders' trials were followed by numerous arrests of student activists over the succeeding weeks and the banning of all marches, marking the most vigorous crackdown against opposition activity since the introduction of multi-party politics in May 1990. Opposition activity has ceased to function throughout the country, with local party branches barely daring to make their presence felt in fear of reprisals by the security forces. Houphouët-Boigny remained in France, and Ouattara left the implementation of the tough stance to gendarmes and police who were accused by human rights leaders of using brutal methods in silencing the opposition. The toughness of the response also led to Gbagbo's imprisonment, drawing criticism from reformist political parties throughout West Africa, including those in Benin, Niger, and Zaire.

Leaders of Côte d'Ivoire's smaller opposition parties, who are largely ineffective, met Ouattara in early March and were told that the government's measures were not intended as a way of halting the process toward democratization, but were aimed at proving that politicians could not expect exemption from the law if they were implicated in violence. Ouattara argued that the opposition should have accepted the government's decision not to prosecute the soldiers implicated in the Yopougon report, just as the government had accepted that it would be inflammatory to prosecute the killers of the student, Thierry Zebie.

Both decisions not to pursue legal action had been taken by Houphouët-Boigny and were not initially supported by Ouattara, who preferred to see cases brought to court. Houphouët-Boigny was made aware by the violence of February 18 that the opposition was no longer abiding by the rules which have largely determined the conduct of presidential power since he became head of state at independence in 1960.

Ouattara, who has retained his reputation as a technocrat assigned to the process of economic reform rather than a politician with a solid basis of support, says openly that he has no desire to remain as prime minister beyond the 1995 election. His apparent confidence, based on the possibly short-term nature of his tenure, has led him to rebuke the opposition in a way which pays little heed to the requirements of a fledgling democracy. Moreover, his view reflects minimal concern for the pitfalls that multi-partyism has in store, the main one being the fear of ethnic conflict on party lines, which Houphouët-Boigny himself used for years as the reason for disallowing political opposition. Ouattara is perhaps overly blasé when he assesses the nature of opposition support:

"It's true that Gbagbo got nearly 19 percent of the votes in presidential elections in 1990. But I am sure that half of them voted against the system. The real opposition vote is not that much. And the fact that Gbagbo is in jail and nothing is happening I think is a clear illustration that he does not have the type of popular support that he feels he has.

"Maybe that's not [the case] in his region because, for the Africans, the notion of nation is still very recent. It could be that some people in his village or in his region think this is unfair. But otherwise we don't see a region where the FPI is very, very far ahead of the PDCI."

While Gbagbo is unlikely to become a martyr, the stage is now being set for this very lack of opposition support to polarize feelings about the regime—simply for or against, not based on party lines, but based on popular judgments about the way the government is behaving. It is from this process that Houphouët-Boigny's worst fears of gradual national disintegration could emerge. ❍

MAURITANIA

BY PETER DA COSTA

DEMOCRACY IN DOUBT

Military strongman Col. Maaouiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya won Mauritania's first-ever democratic presidential election after 28 years of one-party rule. But the opposition, which supports black rights in the complex Arab/African ethnic divide in the desert nation, charged election fraud and boycotted the subsequent legislative poll. It remains to be seen if Taya will recognize the importance of resolving the nation's ethnic crisis before its economic problems can be addressed.

Mauritania's leader, Col. Maaouiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, whose capitulation last year to internal as well as external pro-democracy pressures earned him the distinction of staging the first-ever multi-party election in an Arab-led state, can hardly be relishing the monumental task ahead.

Despite winning the presidential race outright in the first round on January 24, the nature of the military strongman's victory, far from serving as a basis for participatory nation-building, raised new doubts about the efficacy and practicability of bringing multi-partyism to a northwestern African desert nation few believed capable of holding elections by universal suffrage after 28 years of one-party rule.

Official results gave Taya 63 percent of the vote (he needed 51 percent to obviate the need for a second round), as compared to 34 percent polled by Ahmed Ould Daddah, his main rival and the candidate of the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF)—a coalition of opposition parties. Two other aspirants, one-time putsch leader Col. Moustapha Ould Saleck and Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Mah, former mayor of the capital Nouakchott, scrapped over the remaining 3 percent amid cries of "foul" from all camps.

Mauritania's complex ethnic divide, a function of its delicate geopolitical location as the bridge between black and Arab Africa, had always presaged a volatile landmark poll. Weeks before the casting of the first ballot, opposition leaders had accused Taya's Military Committee for National Salvation (CMSN) of taking illegal steps to ensure pre-eminence for Mauritanians of Arab stock who officially dominate the population of 2 million. Blacks—mainly of Fulani and Wollof ethnicity—insist they are the majority, and reject a 1977 census which put their proportion of the national total at one-third. Under the UDF umbrella, many complained electoral authorities had failed to issue them voting cards.

On election eve, Daddah warned that were he not returned, "the country will dissolve into civil war and instability." Blacks were no longer willing, he proclaimed, to brook a regime that had systematically and historically trampled on their human rights (slavery was only officially outlawed in 1980, but Africa Watch alleges it still exists unchecked).

Disturbances in the economic capital Nouadhibou on January 26 almost proved Daddah right, as security forces clashed with bitter UDF supporters at the coalition's headquarters, killing three and injuring scores more. The bloody confrontation was catalyzed by Daddah's contention that Taya had employed ballot fraud and intimidation to secure victory.

Demanding a fresh election, the UDF candidate exhorted his followers to remain mobilized and vigilant. Taya wasted no time in quelling the dissent. Security forces arrested 150 protesters and imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in both Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. An Interior Ministry statement blamed the violence on ele-

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ments it said had "exploited the atmosphere of freedom and tolerance in order...to disturb security and public order."

The military leader could hardly have hoped for a worse start to his transition from authoritarian to democrat. Cautious in their criticism, international election monitors blamed both Taya's Republican Democratic Social Party (PRDS) and the UDF for electoral irregularities. European Community observer Henri Saby voiced the widespread belief that cash-strapped countries like Mauritania could not be expected to guarantee completely fair polls.

Privately, Western diplomats agreed with opposition charges that government had inflated the number of eligible voters (officially put at 1.4 million). Some even speculated the PRDS had used its in-built advantage to register Tuareg nomads from neighboring Western Sahara and Mali.

If all this put a damper on Taya's march toward legitimacy, worse was to come with the legislative round on March 6—marred by a mass UDF boycott which resulted in a turnout of just over 30 percent. In the first round, the PRDS won 67 of the 79 seats up for grabs in the lower house of Parliament, with the remainder going to pro-Taya parties. On March 13, the PRDS completed the formality, ceding only one of the remaining 17 seats to an independent.

Asked why his coalition had boycotted part of an election whose very idea had bonded the country's fragmented opposition, UDF spokesman Bechir El Hassen told journalists the decision had been taken because Taya had ignored demands for electoral reform after the "massive fraud" of January 24. Announcing the UDF's intention to shun an April senatorial poll, Hassen said: "We cannot be part of another fraudulent election. The way we see it, the credibility of the PRDS is very low. Taya cannot possibly say he is democratically-elected since he does not have the mandate of the people."

Shrewd tactician though the 49-year-old Taya might be, he is now in a position few, even the most Houdini-like among political contortionists, would envy. Since helping his minor presidential opponent Ould Saleck to oust the civilian regime of Mokhtar Ould Daddah in 1978, the then Lt.-Col. Taya has been absorbed by the problems of the nation he now leads.

The period between 1978 and 1984, when Taya became supreme CMSN leader, was characterized by a bitter war with Morocco over the disputed territory of Western Sahara, a feud from which he extricated the near-bankrupt regime in the nick of time. Next, in a policy shift analysts say marked him as a progressive if somewhat autocratic helmsman, Taya instituted economic reforms aimed at attracting foreign donors.

Aware of the pulling-power Mokhtar still had with France (who granted Mauritania independence in 1960), Taya pardoned the exiled former head of state and appointed to office some of Mokhtar's supporters.

To his credit, Taya had experimented with democracy as early as December 1986, when—despite maintaining the ban on formal political parties—he allowed a variety of candidates to contest 426 seats on 13 municipal councils. This was followed by country-wide local government elections in the 32 districts (January 1988) and 164 rural communes (January 1989).

If Taya's tendencies toward reform went against the grain of Mauritania's militaristic trend, his regime's reaction to ethnic tensions—beginning in April 1986 with the distribution by black Mauritanians of an anti-oppression manifesto—cast the CMSN firmly in the repressive mold. Sidestepping the Arab root of the ethnic problem, the government cracked down on a wave of rioting by accelerating the introduction of shari'a law.

The 'in camera' trial in late 1987 of 51 Toucouleurs accused of plotting to overthrow the state sparked off protests, both from the Senegal-exiled paramilitary black opposition FLAM (Forces de Libération Africaine de Mauritanie) and from international pressure groups.

Arrests of some 600 supporters of the Iraq-funded Baath Arab Socialist organization, light-skinned Moors who had been a powerful lobby within the CMSN, were followed by the incarceration of 13 Baathist Taya opponents found guilty of working against Mauritanian interests by backing Morocco over the Western Sahara dispute.

But it was Taya's reaction to tensions over grazing rights on the banks of the Senegal River—which separates Mauritania from its southern neighbor—that showed just how deep-rooted his country's ethnic divide was. In the aftermath of the April 28 incident, marked by murders in both capitals and mass repatriation, tens of thousands of black Mauritanians fled to Senegal. In July, Amnesty International reported that black Mauritanians, regardless of their social status or army rank, had been stripped of their citizenship and deported to Senegal.

Detailing allegations of torture and genocide, Amnesty mobilized international pressure into calling for an inquiry. Ignoring the evidence based on testimonies, Nouakchott insisted those expelled were "foreigners." In April 1991, Amnesty went further, alleging that some 200 blacks (mainly military officers rounded up after a suspected Senegal-aided coup plot the previous November) had been tortured and extrajudicially executed.

Beset by the twin devils of internal strife and foreign ostracism—exacerbated by Mauritania's pro-Iraqi stance during the Gulf War—Taya turned to multi-partyism. Last year's July 12 national referendum secured a 97.9 "yes" vote for the newly drafted constitution. In the derestricted environment, newly sanctioned opposition elements argued that only 8 percent of those registered actually turned out.

The constitution allowed a six-year presidential term with no limit on the number of times a single leader could seek a mandate: a two-tier legislature made up of a five-year national assembly and a six-year senate; as well as constitutional, economic/social and Islamic councils. Parties based on ethnicity or religion remained banned.

Taya now controls the paper democracy of his creation less by dint of a superior agenda or election campaign than by default. The conventional wisdom is that the ruling party, which had hoped to at least preside over a credible, representative parliament, will slide into the old autocratic ways of the CMSN given its popularity among army hardliners—unless Taya can pull an effective power-sharing solution out of his trick bag.

But in many ways, the opposition coalition cannot remain blameless for the current impasse in which Mauritania finds itself. Analysts argue the UDF will have to undergo some searing soul-searching and tactical revision if it is to avoid six arid years in the extraparliamentary wilderness.

UDF coordinator Mohameden Ould Babbah admits the loose federation of opposition elements—ranging from far-left black Mauritanian parties such as FLAM to liberal Arab groups—must find a new strategy. On the eve of the legislative elections, Ould Babbah accepted an invitation to dine with President Taya but would not be seduced into dropping the UDF's non-participation stance.

However, the call to arms was not unanimously obeyed. UDF candidates Ahmed Killy and Mohamed Ould Amar defied the order and contested the legislative first round. "I shall remain in the opposition, but I believe the opposition should take every opportunity to play the electoral game," insisted Killy. He later rejoined the boycott.

One casualty of the UDF reforms may well be Ahmed Ould Daddah himself. A wealthy half-brother of former President Mokhtar, Ahmed, 47, secured the UDF candidature despite returning to Mauritania on the eve of the poll after eight years in European exile. His impeccable curriculum vitae—he is a former finance minister who is well-connected on the international banking circuit—made him the preferred candidate of Western diplomats (while earning him the scorn among nationalist elements who dubbed him "the West's whipping boy").

Ahmed's innovative ideas (among them a classic SAP plan to make the Mauritanian ouguiya convertible and win repayment concessions on the country $2.4 billion debt) boosted his selection. His sympathy for black Mauritania despite being an Arab won UDF support in Nouakchott and in the south. But UDF doubts over the propriety of the presidential poll notwithstanding, Ahmed is stigmatized by the mark of defeat. He may well form his own new party. In any event, pundits say Daddah secured the UDF nomination only because another Arab liberal, Hamdi Ould Moukness, turned it down.

Moukness believes the problem of Mauritania's blacks—both the Africans of the south and the Arabized "Harantines" that were used as foot soldiers of the 1990 repression—can only be solved in the Islamic spirit of fairness and reconciliation. He views Arabic, the official language, as "a language of separation" and supports the designation of Soninke, Pulaar, and Wollof as national languages.

Moukness, 58, a widely respected eminence grise who served as foreign minister under Mokhtar Ould Daddah, would undoubtedly bring legitimacy to the Taya government were he to accept the prime ministership he is widely tipped for. Taya's co-option of Moukness would send a signal to other liberals and pave the way for a possible consensus cabinet. So far, however, Moukness has shied away from the challenge.

Taya, whose old regime was riddled with incompetence, must, say analysts, bring in new blood. He must also replace some of the old retrogressive hardliners among his advisers with more reform-minded counsel. But above all, Taya must open a line of communication with the black Mauritanian leadership. One olive-branch many believe would catalyze national reconciliation would be for the PRDS government to comprehensively address the extrajudicial executions of 1990 and compensate the families of the victims.

In the new climate of donor conditionality, Taya cannot fail to see the benefit a resolution of Mauritania's ethnic problem would have on his country's flailing economy. Over a year after Iraq was defeated by the U.S.-led coalition, the country remains an international pariah for its pro-Saddam stance.

Since Mauritania's livestock and agriculture-based economy is subject to the ravages of drought, the mining industry—developed in the 1960s and 1970s—will be Taya's strongest foreign exchange crutch. Its continued productivity and expansion will, however, depend on how enthusiastically the World Bank and IMF two-step to his pluralistic tune.

Foreign investment and peace with its neighbors are prerequisites for economic recovery, and Taya is sure to consolidate on the rapprochement with Senegal in particular and sub-Saharan Africa in general. By virtue of its ethnic schizophrenia, Mauritania must also court the Arab world, and Nouakchott is due to host the five-member Union of the Arab Mahgreb summit in April.

In the final analysis, Taya has a hard slog ahead. FLAM and other black pressure groups may be part of the democratic process, but a lack of political will on the race question will soon send them scurrying back to their border bases and weapons.

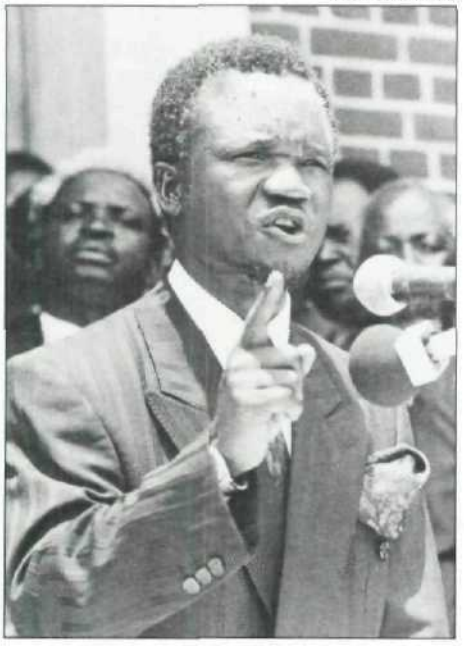
And despite the ban on religious parties, little can be done about fundamentalist cliques like the Oumma Party, ideologically close to the Islamic Salvation Front that catalyzed neighboring Algeria's about-face on multipartyism. Oumma veers toward the UDF, which pledged to legalize Islamic parties were it elected.

As militancy grows in multi-party Mauritania—be it from students or the rapidly expanding women's emancipation movement—the army may yet be of use to its former chief of staff, Taya. During his campaign, Taya implied he was the only candidate that could keep the military in check and prevent further coups. His newly emergent PRDS—and much of the population—will be praying he can deliver on his election promise. ○

BY MELINDA HAM

END OF THE HONEYMOON

Sarah-Jane Poole



The new government of President Frederick Chiluba is striving to implement economic reforms—a program put on hold by the Kaunda administration—and is managing with unprecedented aid pledges from donors. But the record drought and suspicions of politics-as-usual are threatening to postpone the necessary changes for at least another year.

Although the carnation on his lapel was drooping after the 10-hour flight, Finance Minister Emmanuel Kasonde was bubbling with energy and enthusiasm as he told a press conference at Lusaka airport that Zambia had won record pledges of $1.4 billion at the March Consultative Group meeting in Paris with Western donors.

The Paris meeting was the real test: to see if donors could match their words of praise and encouragement over the previous five months for the new, fledgling democracy of President Frederick Chiluba with pledges of hard cash.

Donors came close to satisfying Zambia's staggering demand of $1.7 billion, which included balance of payments support, project support, debt relief, and aid to import nearly a million tons of maize, to compensate for crop failure in the worst regional drought this century.

Since Chiluba and his Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) swept into power in last October's multi-party elections, the new government has made efforts—in spite of the drought—to implement a structural adjustment program which lay dormant under the previous Kaunda administration for more than a year.

Soon after taking office, the MMD government resuscitated relations with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and received broad support to continue a revised structural adjustment program.

Then in January, donors provided a bridging loan so that Zambia could repay the Bank its $51 million in arrears, thawing $78 million of frozen 1991 credits. Kenneth Kaunda's government had defaulted on payment of arrears to the Bank. As a consequence, aid had been sus-

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pended in September 1991. The new government also took the plunge and raised the price of maize meal by over 200 percent, almost completely removing the subsidy.

"We applaud the new government for courageously implementing very tough measures in their first few months in office and we will be keen to keep on funding them," one Lusaka-based diplomat said.

Most donors generally share these sentiments. Germany has decided to use Zambia as a model for its aid to the rest of the continent, while Japan is giving more aid to Zambia than to any other country in southern Africa. At the Paris meeting, the World Bank increased its 1992 allocation to Zambia by $100 million, bringing its contribution alone to $240 million.


Y. Lehmann//UN

A few donors caution that the new government may have set over-ambitious targets in its 1992 budget, such as aiming to cut inflation from 118 percent in 1991 to 45 percent by the end of 1992.

Finance Minister Kasonde has warned that the recent price rises of maize-meal are to "prepare" consumers for further increases once the imported grain comes into the country. Kasonde admits that the drought will "severely distort" the budget.

Nearly two-thirds of Zambia's maize harvest—the country's staple food—was scorched in January, just as crops were about to flower. Donors came up with only $65 million of the $300 million Zambia asked for, because Agriculture Minister Guy Scott says they were given too short notice to find more.

Scott optimistically says more aid is "in the pipeline" but for the moment, the government will have to "cut its coat to suit the cloth," and dip into funds earmarked for other areas because feeding the country's people is the government's top priority.

As one diplomat said: "We realize that in this food crisis situation, some of the expected economic reform measures may become unrealistic and have to be put off for another year. But the new government is trying and we will remain understanding."

The president and some cabinet ministers have attempted to promote their policy of "open government," touring the country to explain to voters the reasons behind the harsh economic reforms.

An advertisement on national television shows Chiluba in last year's election campaign asking voters whether they are ready to toil under the MMD. "There is no sweet without sweat," the ad reminds viewers.

But are voters satisfied with this rhetoric or are these just hollow words for hungry stomachs? Mildred Munthali, a resident of Mtendere, a very low-income suburb north of Lusaka, typifies many people's stoic attitude. "They [the MMD] have told us to wait for one year while they sort out all the problems left by UNIP [Kaunda's party]. We voted them in and we shall wait, because we trust them."

But Owen Sichone, a lecturer at the University of Zambia and chairman of the Social Democratic Party—the most vocal of the dozen small opposition parties with no seats in Parliament—is not prepared to wait: "To offer starving people relief in a year's time sounds rather sadistic," he says.

Sichone claims that the MMD has responded to the economic crisis in the same way Kaunda's UNIP did, "bombarding us with propaganda, with claims of falling inflation, crocodile tears at the plight of peasants, and promises of light at the end of the year-long tunnel."

Some unionized workers have also lost patience. Workers in banks, factories, the university, the national airline, the national railway, and local government councils have gone on strike, demanding a living wage to match the spiralling prices. In the first four months of the MMD government, there were 29 strikes and 5,120 working hours lost, according to Zambia Congress of Trade Unions Secretary-General Aleck Chirwe.

As one political analyst says: "The MMD has performed commendably economically, but politically they appear very confused. In-fighting and jostling for power at the ministerial level and minimal coherence at the grassroots has left the MMD in a weak position."

A presidentially appointed commission looking into the car crash of Vice President Levy Mwanawasa in December lifted the lid on a Pandora's box of petty jealousies, accusations, and counter-accusations among members of the MMD. Some witnesses claimed that Brig.-Gen. Godfrey Miyanda, the minister without portfolio, had plotted with Kaunda to assassinate Mwanawasa.


Margaret A. Novicki

Four Scotland Yard detectives assisted the commission in its investigations. They eventually cleared Miyanda, saying that there was no evidence to implicate him. The accident was caused by a reckless drunken driver, they said. The commission has yet to present President Chiluba with its final conclusions—but the MMD has already publicly revealed power struggles and tensions in its midst.

The political analyst adds: "Although the MMD aimed to create a 'new political culture of openness and accountability,' in their first months in power, many ministers have continued to follow the old UNIP culture of personal

aggrandizement, acting on their own volition, ignoring Parliament and the rule of law."

This was clearly illustrated in the deportation of over 500 "illegal" West African immigrants. The ministry of home affairs began a swoop on these foreigners in December. They were picked up from their homes, the street, and even pulled out of mosques and thrown into jails around the country.

No trials were held, but the government alleged that they were involved in illegal dealings in ivory, drugs, foodstuffs, gemstones, and stolen cars. The Senegalese government eventually came to its nationals' rescue in February and chartered a DC-10 plane to take them, their wives, and children to Dakar.

Simultaneously Issa Galedou, a Malian businessman, was arrested and threatened with deportation. Galedou had been deported several years earlier, but then allegedly allowed back into the country again by the Kaunda government on forged documents.

Approaching last year's election, Galedou decided to switch alliances to the emergent MMD, reportedly providing cars for its campaign and financial backing to certain politicians who have now become members of Parliament and even cabinet ministers.

When government officials attempted to deport him, Galedou determinedly resisted and claimed he would not leave the country until some cabinet ministers paid him over $740,000 which they owed. But two days later, he was quietly deported.

In reaction, all 25 opposition UNIP members of Parliament stormed out of the National Assembly, claiming that Galedou had been bribed in a government cover-up. One UNIP MP wanted to reveal a list of the ministers involved with the Malian. But debate on the issue was muzzled by the Speaker of the House, Robinson Nabulyato.

UNIP itself has also suffered under the new government. Soon after the MMD took office, it began to dismantle UNIP's privileges and assets by confiscating government cars and houses and freezing the bank accounts of UNIP politicians who had access to government funds.

Then, this first session of Parliament repealed the State Leaders Retirement Act, which was rushed through Parliament by the Kaunda government just before the elections, intended to "reward" former UNIP leaders with hefty retirement packages. Legal Affairs Minister Chongwe argued that it was immoral to spend millions of kwacha on a few former politicians while ordinary people were dying for lack of drugs in the hospitals.

Minister of Lands Dawson Lupunga also announced the seizure of the UNIP headquarters—a massive, unfinished 17-story building which had been under construction since the mid-1980s. Lupunga said because the building was built with government money and on government land, it rightfully belonged to the state. The government also took over Zambia National Holdings, a major source of UNIP's income, which controlled 15 companies.

But the new government's political performance has not gone unnoticed. Cabinet ministers such as Chongwe have spoken out, and MMD members who are unhappy with many of the government's actions have formed an internal lobby group. Women have also called for recognition of their rights.

> Critics say that during last year's election, the MMD complained bitterly about the constitution but, once in power, has done nothing to alter it.

Chongwe echoed many others in the government when he argued at a recent seminar that although during last year's election campaign, the MMD complained bitterly about the constitution, once in power, it has done nothing to alter it.

Chongwe said that the constitution passed under the previous one-party parliament should be rewritten because it consolidates too much power in the hands of the president. The legal affairs minister suggested that there could be a titular president with an executive prime minister who sits in Parliament.

The new lobby group, which calls itself the Caucus for National Unity, held a conference at the beginning of March and endorsed Chongwe's stand on the constitution, resolving that a commission should be appointed immediately to review it.

The caucus—which was made up predominantly of MMD members from southern and western Zambia —also resolved that the president should review his cabinet and other senior appointments to make sure there was equitable distribution of ethnic groups and women and men.

Not a single women was appointed to Chiluba's cabinet and the majority of appointments in key ministries such as defense, finance and commerce, and industry have all been from northern and copper belt provinces. The president argues that his appointments were on merit and not ethnicity or sex.

The caucus called for an extraordinary MMD convention before the end of May so that these and other problems could be openly discussed. But this has been resisted by most members of the government and even by Chiluba himself, who says it is unnecessary at this early stage.

While the new government has demonstrated its ability to clearly put economic reforms into practice, it still has to find its feet politically. It also has to live up to the many expectations of a new and vibrant democratic political culture. But most of those—nationally and internationally—who hold these expectations have accepted that a multi-party election is only the first step toward building a new democracy. ❍

BY PATRICK LAURENCE

COMPETITION

On the face of it, the whites-only referendum was a triumph for the pro-negotiation forces comprising President F.W. de Klerk's governing National Party, English-speaking whites, and the African National Congress. But there are sharp disagreements over the transition procedure, which will probably see intense political competition between the ANC and the National Party to win the hearts and minds of South Africans.

Jon Jones/Sygma

Jon Jones/Sygma

South Africa's March 17 referendum, in which the politically ascendant white minority voted overwhelmingly in favor of a negotiated settlement with the black majority, has set the scene for a fundamental political realignment.

The pro-negotiation coalition brought together political forces which have traditionally opposed one another: the dominant, modernizing leadership of Afrikanerdom, the English-speaking business establishment, and the central stream of African nationalism.

These forces were represented by President F.W. de Klerk's governing National Party, the Democratic Party—which has long had close links to the giant Anglo American Corporation and which is led by a former director of the corporation—and the African National Congress.

Chorusing in unison, they exhorted the more than 3 million white voters to cast their ballots in favor of negotiations. The only slightly discordant note came from the ANC. It prefaced its support for an affirmative vote with objections to the principle of a whites-only referendum.

Once pro-negotiation forces attained their decisive victory by winning more than 68 percent of the votes cast, the question pondered by political pundits was whether the trio of triumphant actors would be able and willing to extend their cooperation into a post-settlement South Africa.

The answer was not immediately apparent in the aftermath of the referendum. While the situation is not inauspicious for the emergence of a coalition of centrist forces which would marginalize radicals of the left and the right in the new South Africa, the formation of a tripartite centrist bloc, however, is not inevitable.

Whether the loose referendum alliance will solidify into a permanent formation, or end up as a historical footnote, depends on the outcome of two overlapping, but separate developments: the jostling for hegemony in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) between de Klerk's NP and Nelson Mandela's ANC, and a trial of strength between pragmatists and radicals within the ranks of the ANC and its two allies, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

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OR COALITION?

Within two weeks of the referendum, the NP and the ANC introduced two opposing sets of proposals at Codesa, outlining the way forward to a new non-racial order.

The differences between the proposals were wide enough to signal the end of the period of cozy cooperation between the NP and the ANC in the run-up to the establishment of Codesa last year and during the first few weeks of deliberations in Codesa's five working committees. They did not, however, preclude eventual compromise or, further down the line, a de facto coalition.

The NP proposals consist of two central ideas: establishment of a transitional constitution and a transitional parliament—for which the black majority could vote for the first time in South African history—and the formation of transitional committees to prepare the way for the transitional government.

The envisaged transitional government would consist of two houses: an assembly, elected by a non-racial electorate on the basis of proportional representation; and a regionally based senate, in which representation would be loaded in favor of minority parties. Referring to the senate's composition, Gerrit Viljoen, de Klerk's minister of constitutional affairs, used the phrase "disproportionate representation."

The NP proposed further that the new bicameral parliament should fulfil two functions. Apart from serving as a legislature for the transitional phase from the old to the new orders, it should function as a forum where a "final" constitution for South Africa would be debated and drafted. In a set of proposals presented at Codesa shortly after the referendum, Viljoen noted that decisions on the new constitution should by taken by consensus.

The NP proposals aroused the ire of the ANC, which rejected them in scathing terms. Much—but not all—of its criticism was directed at the notion of transitional councils, or, as they were later named, preparatory councils.

Noting that these councils would have advisory powers only, the ANC and its allies compared them to the Native Representative Council of 1936-1950, a purely advisory institution which was established during the era of trusteeship and segregation. It was rejected by most blacks as a "toy telephone" even before it was finally dissolved by apartheid supremo Hendrik Verwoerd in 1950.

The ANC, however, was hardly less caustic in its dismissal of the bicameral parliament. It asserted that the idea of a bicameral parliament serving as a constitution-making body was unique, particularly the idea that an upper house—in which delegates would be represented dispro-

Derek Hudson/Sygma

portionately—should have a veto. A first-year university student who made a similar proposal in an exam would fail, the ANC observed acidly.

The ANC's counter-proposals, introduced immediately before and after the referendum, consist of two phases as well.

In the first stage, an interim but super-executive council, made up of representatives at Codesa, would be established: Its role would be to oversee the activities of the de Klerk administration and the present Parliament from which blacks are excluded. The duration of phase one should be short, measured in months rather than years.

The primary task during phase one would be to prepare for the election of a constituent assembly by all South Africans. The purpose of the popularly elected constituent assembly, as its name implies, would be to draft a new constitution for South Africa.

The de Klerk administration rejected the ANC proposals as a "simple majoritarian system." Their starting point was the "winner-take-all" system, the administration argued. Since that was what the ANC hoped to achieve at the end of the negotiation process, the proposals amounted to an attempt to "leapfrog" the negotiating process, it concluded.

The ANC countered by pointing out that its proposals contain three checks against a majority party imposing its own constitution on the minority parties. They are: that the constituent assembly should be elected by proportional representation, a system which favors smaller minority parties; that the constitution would have to be acceptable to at least two-thirds of the representatives in the constituent assembly; and that the constitution should be drafted within the parameters of principles agreed to at Codesa, a "simple, majoritarian system."

The ANC's proposal is based in many respects on the Namibian model. In Namibia, the ANC observed pointedly, the model had worked well: Not only had the constitution been accepted unanimously but, as importantly, it led to an almost immediate cessation of the violence in Namibia.

These differences in approach between the NP and the ANC at Codesa are not, however, unbridgeable. They have one central point in common: The constitution-making body, whether it was labelled a transitional parliament or a constituent assembly, should be elected by popular vote. On that important point, the two sides had moved closer to one another.

Within three weeks of the March 17 referendum, de Klerk's NP took another important step. Having consolidated most whites behind it, the NP moved to start a major recruitment drive among the Coloured, Indian, and black communities. It planned to use de Klerk's personal popularity and prestige to garner support for the party in a series of spectacular forays into these communities by de Klerk himself.

The NP was poised to pick up Coloured and Indian support. According to surveys conducted by the Human Science Research Council, support for the NP stood at 54 and 52 percent respectively, against a mere 7 and 8 percent for the ANC. In the black community, however, support for the NP was low: 5 percent against 67 percent for the ANC.

The NP's campaign means that the pre-election phase, whether for a transitional parliament or a constituent assembly, will be characterized by intense political competition between the NP and the ANC (which has its own plans to consolidate its dominance in the black community and increase its support in the Coloured and Indian communities).

But the looming political competition does not exclude an eventual alliance between the NP—either in its present form or under a new name after possible amalgamation with the DP—and the ANC. By determining the relative strength of the two organizations in the newly elected parliament/constituent assembly, a political contest could decide the balance of power within the projected alliance.

Of greater importance than these political developments is the debate within the ANC over its commitment to nationalize the mines, the banks, and industry monopolies. The commitment, made in the Freedom Charter of 1955, is due for reconsideration at an ANC policy conference.

If the pragmatists pressing for a revision of existing policy win, the way would be open for some kind of alliance, however loose and informal, with the NP and big business. If the ideologues favoring socialism triumph, the chances of a major realignment would be reduced to minuscule proportions.

In the midst of maneuvering by the de Klerk administration and the ANC, realignment was emerging on the opposite flank as elements in South Africa's right wing position themselves to participate in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa after their decisive defeat in the referendum.

Carol Boshoff, son-in-law of former Prime Minister Verwoerd and leader of Afrikaner Volkswag (People's Guard), presented a written submission to Codesa arguing the case for a separate Afrikaner fatherland.

Another pointer to the turmoil in the right wing was the resignation of four city councillors in Germiston, on the eastern edge of Johannesburg, from Andries Treurnicht's Conservative Party (CP). "We will only attain our goals by going into Codesa," they said.

More important was the expulsion from the CP of Koos Botha, one of its 42 members of Parliament. He was expelled for publicly challenging the party line by advocating the need for a smaller Afrikaner fatherland. Botha's expulsion brought to a boil the simmering tensions in the CP. Like Koos van der Merwe, leader of the pro-negotiation faction in the CP, Botha argued that the time had come to negotiate with the ANC on the future.

Against that, however, the paramilitary Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, or Resistance Movement, openly boasted that it would physically resist a "take-over" by the African National Congress.

Even allowing for its proclivity for bombast and the crisis within its ranks over the sudden resignation of its gen-

eral secretary, Piet Rudolph, it could not be assumed that the AWB—as the neo-fascist organization is known—was merely indulging in idle boasting.

But the military capabilities of AWB roughnecks, with their grandiose uniforms and Boer-style commandos, are essentially limited. They might be able to plant a few bombs and terrorize civilians, but their ability to sustain a full-scale revolt—let alone seize power—is, at best, extremely dubious.

Unless the AWB's brown and black-shirted storm troopers can win the support of the security forces, or a significant section of them, its revolt will be short though perhaps ugly.

Until fairly recently, the police rather than the military were seen as the mostly likely source of support for an AWB-led counter-revolution against an ANC government or one in which the ANC formed an important component.

But that changed in the past year when police twice fired on AWB zealots: once last May when they shot and wounded two farmers who were part of a group of men threatening to evict blacks from disputed land in the western Transvaal; then again in August when AWB men tried to disrupt a meeting addressed by de Klerk in Ventersdorp.

The incidents changed South Africa's political landscape: They showed that the assumption that the police would not fire on their kith and kin, that they were more likely to turn their guns on their commanders, was false.

A subsequent development helped to reduce further the possibility of police support for an AWB revolt. With the appointment of Hernus Kriel as minister of law and order in place of Adriaan Vlok, civilian authority was firmly reasserted over the police.

The composition of the police force is, as observers pointed out, inimical to police support for a right wing. Of the 94,000 active policemen immediately after the referendum, 90 percent are black, Coloured, or Indian. Their loyalties lie with de Klerk or Mandela and they are unlikely to support a police-backed putsch.

The defense force is perhaps less loyal to de Klerk in the aftermath of the referendum. Some upper echelon officers were disgruntled with the way in which the defense force has been downgraded since de Klerk became president: There have been cuts—in real terms—in defense spending; military service was reduced from two years to one; and, critically, President P.W. Botha's national security management system, in which the military played a pivotal role in controlling the lives of South Africans, was dismantled.

Jan Breytenbach, a former commander of South Africa's special forces in Angola and Namibia, including the formidable and feared Battalion 32, reflected the dissatisfaction in sections of the officer corps. In a pre-referendum message to soldiers who fought in Angola and Namibia, he said: "You did not lose in Angola...You did not lose in Namibia. You were betrayed by politicians under foreign pressure."

In a clear reference to de Klerk's reform policies, Breytenbach pointedly noted that the same politicians might again be preparing to submit to "foreign pressure."

But these factors should not be over-stressed. Analysts of the defense force at the time of the referendum did not sustain the notion of it as an instrument for a right-wing coup. The defense force is not the last outpost of apartheid in South Africa. It took the lead in breaking down segregation in its ranks. The defense force, moreover, has been traditionally obedient to civilian authority.

Like the police, the defense force's composition militates against rebellion. Of the estimated 35,000 men who are now being trained as soldiers, less than half are white conscripts; the remainder are volunteer soldiers from the black communities.

The loyalty of neither the black volunteers nor the white conscripts—the majority of whom are likely to sympathize with de Klerk or leaders to the left of him—can be assumed by officers who might plan a coup to forestall a "black communist government" from taking power. ○

SOUTH AFRICA BY PHILIPPA GARSON

THE THIRD FORCE

Bullets whizz overhead. Groups of people throng the side streets a few hundred yards from the battleground, watching anxiously for falling bodies, for a house or shack to burst into flames, or for armored police vehicles to come thundering down the streets, firing birdshot and teargas.

An intense gun battle rages for days almost unabated between Inkatha-supporting hostel dwellers and residents led by "comrades" of the African National Congress in the slum-like township of Alexandra, South Africa's own little Beirut. Bordering Johannesburg's wealthy northern suburb of Sandton, densely populated Alexandra is overflowing with squatter camps, criminals, and the unemployed.

On a day like this, no one goes to work, and for once the jobless have something to do. Men and youths armed with pistols of every description, AK-47s, and petrol bombs are staked out behind shacks, firing with reckless energy at Inkatha warriors holed up in a couple of shacks 50 yards away.

The Zulu-speaking Inkatha supporters have gained control of the once-peaceful Madala men's hostel, once an integral part of the Alexandra community. Former occupants of Madala hostel tell how they were hounded out of their home in recent months to make way for Inkatha supporters "who the police bring there at night." And now the battle lines are drawn. The once remarkably organized, united community is at war. Peaceful Inkatha supporters have been forced to move into "Zululand"—a zone of a few streets which is now an Inkatha stronghold.

Non-aligned residents have fled their houses surrounding the hostel. Their possessions have been stolen, their shacks set alight by the Inkatha warriors who have moved into the area. Women and children huddle in refugee camps around the township while their men do battle.

One man with a gun in his pocket explains how he has to stay away from work to protect his house which, as luck will have it, is a few yards from the battle zone. He, like all the other residents, has not slept for days. Ask him why people are fighting and he'll tell you he doesn't know. All he knows is that Inkatha is trying to take over the township, street by street.

Scenes like this have become commonplace is South Africa's Reef townships. Gun battles, ambushes on taxis and crowded places, and attacks on train commuters have become a way of life over the past 18 months. Every now and again, as happened in Alexandra in March, a township literally erupts in an orgy of violence and death. Political violence claims more than 10 lives every day. Since the National Peace Accord was signed by the ANC, the Inkatha Freedom Party, and the government in September last year, violence has escalated

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rather than decreased and close to 1,500 people have died.

Is the ongoing war in Natal and the eruption of violence on the Reef a revival of ethnic warfare arrested by white settlement centuries ago? Or simply a political power struggle between the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party and the Xhosa-dominated African National Congress?

To deny the importance of these components in fueling the warfare would be short-sighted. Yet the overwhelming evidence of police partiality toward Inkatha, of the faceless nature of the violence—for the most part claiming random victims regardless of their political allegiance—and the escalation of violence at historic moments in the country's history, gives credibility to theories that the carnage is being fueled by the "third force," or a hidden hand. Coupled with this is mounting evidence of security force involvement in the violence by more and more "turned" vigilantes who are coming forward to tell their stories.

Government funding of Inkatha in the past is well-known. In July last year, *The Weekly Mail* newspaper broke the Inkathagate scandal, where a leaked police document confirmed what had long been suspected in many circles: The government was funding the conservative, Zulu-based organization.

In January this year, the same newspaper published lengthy interviews with an ex-Inkatha official, Mbongeni Khumalo, who decided to "come clean" about Inkatha's involvement with the police and South African Defense Force (SADF). He described Inkatha as no more than a "front" for the SADF and told how 200 Inkatha hit-men had been trained in the Caprivi Strip, Namibia, by the SADF's Department of Military Intelligence in 1986. These men, he said, were now being deployed to the Transvaal and Natal for hit squad activities. He recalled how Inkatha recruited youngsters from the Eastern Transvaal township of Wesselton and brought them to the homeland of KwaZulu, of which Chief Gatsha Buthelezi is chief minister, for training. He also remembered a funeral incident in August 1990, when members of the SADF-trained hit-squad led an ambush on an ANC funeral in Wesselton, then returned to their headquarters in the KwaZulu capital of Ulundi to boast about how they killed pallbearers and fired shots into the coffins abandoned by fleeing mourners.

> Violence rages in many of the township slums in the Reef and Natal, but is it ethnic warfare or a political struggle between the Inkatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress? Or could it instead be "domestication of low-intensity conflict" that Pretoria perpetrated in Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia?

The *Weekly Mail* investigation into third force attempts to fuel the violence came full circle when a few weeks later, renegade members of the vigilante Black Cat gang from Wesselton came forward to confirm some of Khumalo's allegations. One of the gangsters described how he and

Greg Marinovich/Sygma

about 20 other Black Cats were sent to Mkhuze, a well-hidden Inkatha camp in Natal's Lebombo mountains, in September 1990, where they received military training by the notorious members of the Inkatha hit-squads. The two gangsters told how they had been spurred on by local Inkatha leaders in Wesselton to attack members of the pro-ANC civic organization and generally create conflict in the township. They told how a Caprivi-trained hit-squad member, "Sugar," based himself at Wesselton to lead the gang.

Furthermore, the gangsters sketched a horrifying scenario of the direct involvement of certain white policemen stationed at the local police station in the adjoining Conservative Party-led white town of Ermelo. They told how these policemen had met frequently with gang leaders, instructed them to petrol bomb the offices of a local ANC-aligned lawyer, attack activists, destroy their houses and property with hand grenades and petrol bombs, and then rewarded them with alcohol, cigarettes, and even money. The Goldstone Commission, the standing commission of inquiry into political violence, set up as the judicial arm of the National Peace Accord, is currently hearing evidence on Khumalo's and the Black Cats' claims.

More Black Cats have since come forward with gruesome stories of their activities. They have also told how certain white policemen have met with them since their colleagues broke their silence to *The Weekly Mail*, to discuss their elimination.

The deputy chairman of the local Wesselton Inkatha Youth Brigade, "John," has boasted about his brazen participation in at least four murders this year—several of them in broad daylight and witnessed by many—of people whose" faces I did not like."

Yet today, he walks free and a "comrade" in jail for burglary faces four murder charges he says he knows nothing about. "If it was not for Captain Marais, we would long since have been in prison," says John.

"We never appeared in court, we were taken to the police station for a few hours only and the cases were closed. We knew when we were taken in we would be released. For the more simple cases, he would make us go to court because he knew we would be acquitted. If you go to Ermelo, they will tell you there that the Black Cats are never arrested."

The scenario in Wesselton, where a sudden, seemingly imported Inkatha presence strengthened by police backing transforms the township into a war-zone, is mirrored in many others, like Alexandra, Soweto, and the townships east of Johannesburg. But the million-dollar question is whether policemen like those from Wesselton, now compelled to testify before the Goldstone Commission, are acting on the orders of a government that has a vested interest in the violence or whether they are renegade right-wingers attempting to destabilize the townships to thwart progression toward an interim government.

The "pact" signed between the militant right-wing Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging and Inkatha's Transvaal branch days before the white referendum was a chilling warning of a possible open alliance between the two groups in the future, on the basis of the common goal of ethnic self-determination. Although Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi denied having authorized the meeting, an Inkatha central committee member, Musa Myeni, signed the pact.

AWB involvement in "faceless violence" was corroborated when two AWB members were found guilty on seven counts of murder last year after an ambush on a busload of black commuters near Durban in 1990.

Scores of people reported seeing armed white men with blackened faces taking part in the conflict in the Transvaal when it first broke out in July 1990. Now, however, the "blackened face" story is little more than an urban legend. Those who board trains or storm shebeens, firing random shots in an attempt to kill as many people as possible, are black, according to eyewitnesses. Countless unemployed criminals are ready and waiting to be harnessed for such purposes, but just who pays them has yet to be answered.

Progress at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa), negotiating the country's transition to democracy, has slowed down in recent weeks, even reached an impasse, with the government pulling the rug out from under the ANC and demanding a resolution to the problem of political violence before concrete moves toward a transitional government are made.

Two non-governmental organizations, the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (Case) and the Human Rights Commission (HRC), closely monitor the violence. On March 28, they put their material before the International Commission of Jurists visiting South Africa to assess the extent and underlying causes of the political violence.

After touring the trouble spots, the ICJ said in a preliminary report that the ANC had without doubt stepped up attacks against Inkatha since September last year. "[But] in the absence of effective enforce-

ment of the law, this is perhaps inevitable." After touring the hostels in the Transvaal, the ICJ team concluded they were being used as Inkatha barracks. "It is our view that Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi carries a heavy responsibility for the escalation of violence," the group said.

Both Case's deputy director, David Everett, and IIRC coordinator Safoura Sadek argue that the government and Inkatha benefit from the Transvaal violence which erupts at times when it most weakens the ANC and its allies and subsides at times when it would be most harmful to the government.

The violence, say Everett and Sadek, is effectively preventing the ANC from translating black support into organized membership. This is simply compounded by the ANC's inability to respond to calls by township residents for defense against the onslaught. Although the ANC has strengthened its defenses in both the Transvaal and Natal (members of its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, reportedly helped residents ward off Inkatha in Alexandra recently), disillusioned and fearful township dwellers no longer come out in open support of the ANC as they did after the organization was unbanned in February 1990.

Scores of residents in Alexandra said they were neither ANC nor Inkatha, but "ordinary people" caught in the crossfire. The ANC, which according to most polls commands about 70 percent of black support, has everything to lose from the violence.

Pome Nkosi, ANC representative in the strife-torn township of Thokoza, east of Johannesburg, describes the effect of the violence on political activity in his community. The third force, he says, is waging "a campaign so that people are gripped by fear and unable to participate in peace initiatives or politics. This is the desire of the third force. So people lose hope completely and so that organizations, like ours, which depend on mass action will not be vocal or come out in public. A free political climate is being killed and our organizations cannot work on the ground."

People are literally begging for peace, says Nkosi. "They have been driven to the point where they will take whatever is being handed down to them."

The violence tends to escalate dramatically in tandem with political events like the Pretoria Minute, signed in August last year, the National Peace Accord, signed in September last year, and the referendum in March.

Around these three periods, the violence has flared at unprecedented levels, casting an ominous shadow on negotiations. Yet during several of President F.W. de Klerk's anti-sanctions tours, the level of violence has dropped dramatically. Everett and Sadek describe this relationship between violence and the political calendar as "near-symbiotic," and as confirmation of its orchestrated origins. They view the violence as "the domestication of low intensity conflict that the South African government perpetrated in Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia."

By weakening ANC support, the government clearly benefits from the violence. And Inkatha, which according to most polls commands somewhere between 1 and 3 percent of black support, has, by virtue of the violence, been able to elevate its status as one of the "big three," along with the government and the ANC. The prevailing, and no doubt current perception, is that without the appeasement of Inkatha and its leader, Buthelezi, the country's unrest problems will never be solved.

Tripartite attempts to stem the conflict, embodied in the National Peace Accord, have on the face of it proven futile. The NPA made way for the setting up of peace structures at local, regional, and national levels, comprised of representatives of the ANC, IFP, and government, together with police, outside mediating bodies, and other interest groups. The fact that many structures in war-torn areas have been established is hopeful, says Democratic Party spokesman for law and order Peter Gastrow: "In many instances, people are communicating for the first time. But it doesn't mean that committees are ready to settle violence from the moment of creation. The structures are fragile to start with and there is a high level of mistrust."

Meanwhile, some see the peace bodies as incapable of dealing with orchestrated violence. Not only do they concern themselves with bickering between above-board political groups, but they do not have the mechanisms to investigate agent-provocateur activity or violence perpetrated by unknown people. While the NPA details a police code of conduct and makes provision for the setting up of special police investigating units at regional level, the usual complaints of "police investigating police" abound. Two other police watchdog bodies—a police board, an advisory body dealing with complaints against the police, and the appointment of police reporting officers or individuals whose sole task is to look into allegations against the police—were set up by the NPA. Neither structure is up and running yet.

The Goldstone Commission, the NPA's judicial arm, is at present bogged down with hearing evidence on more violence related issues than it can cope with.

And no amount of goodwill among representatives of the warring parties around the peace table will end the violence. Already, leaders of the ANC and Inkatha involved in peace initiatives have been the targets of third force attacks. Independent monitoring groups say at least 20 people have either been gunned down, assaulted, or their property destroyed since they became party to peace initiatives.

Director of Independent Mediation Services of South Africa Charles Nupen plays a crucial role in mediating peace meetings at every level and his organization teaches mediating skills to all parties involved. Says Nupen: "We have been unable to contain and address incidents of unexplained violence (by means of the NPA) and I doubt whether peace structures themselves can do this. At best, though, they can prevent violence from escalating as a result of these particular incidents." ○

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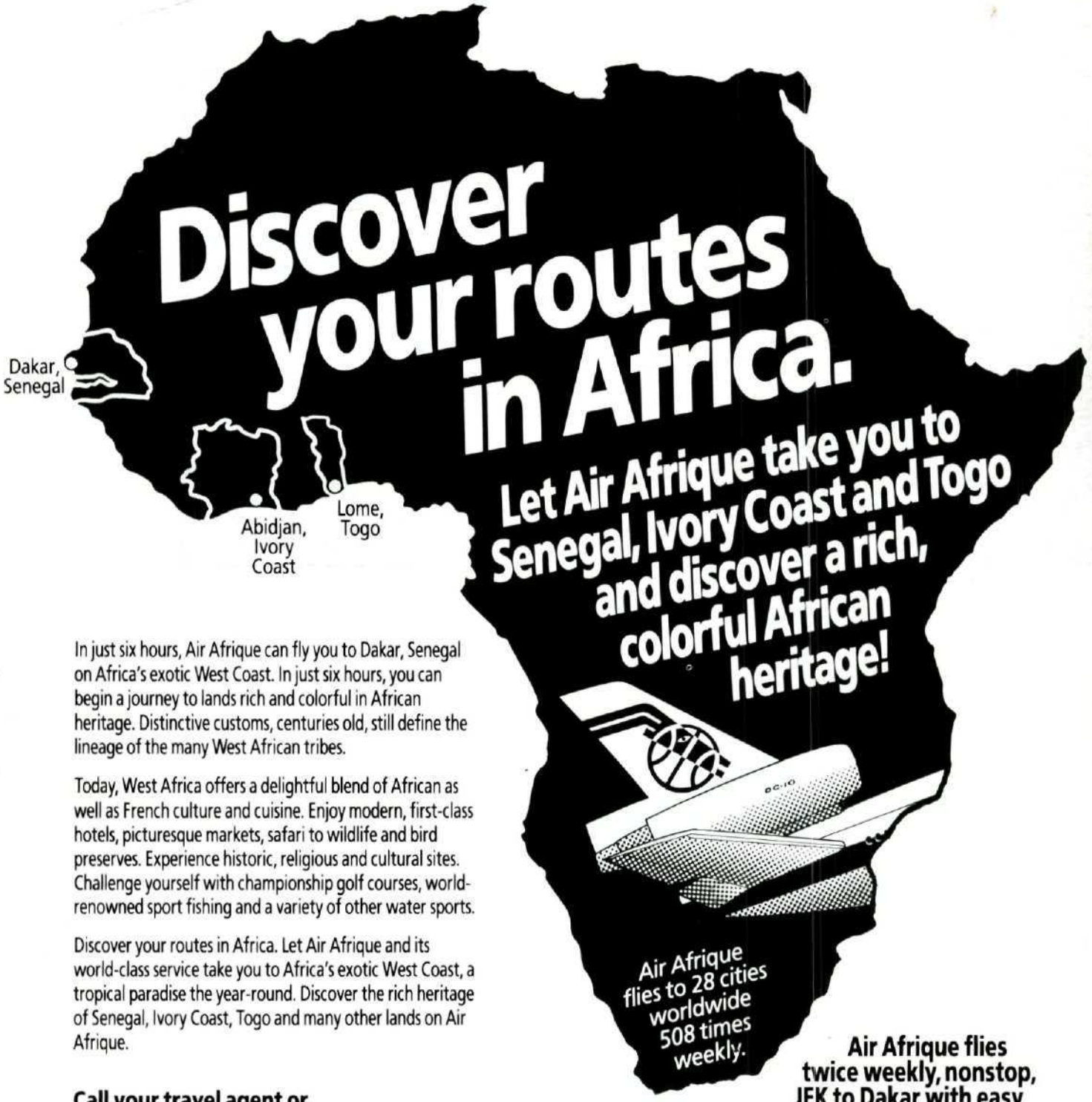

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