

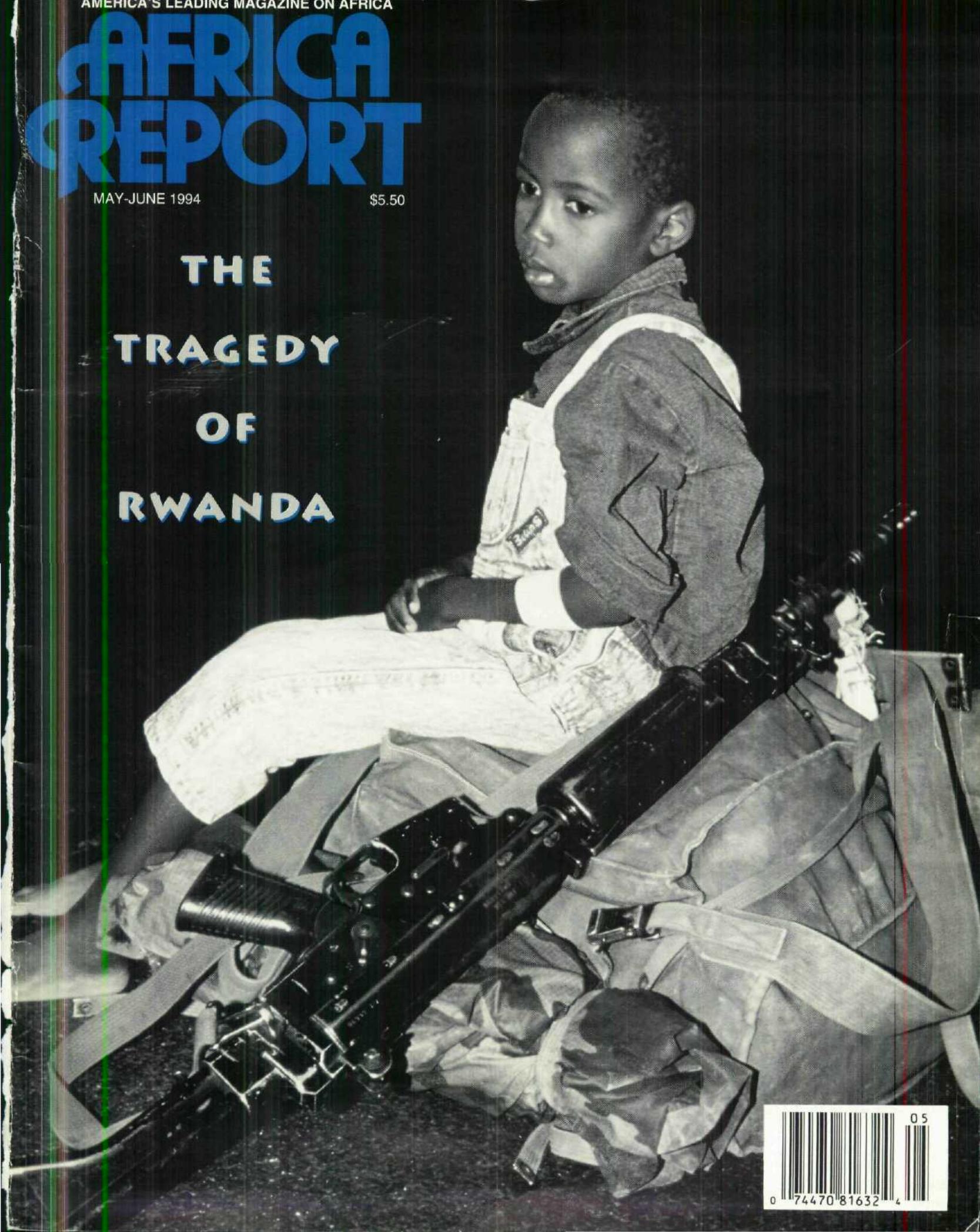
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AFRICA REPORT

MAY-JUNE 1994

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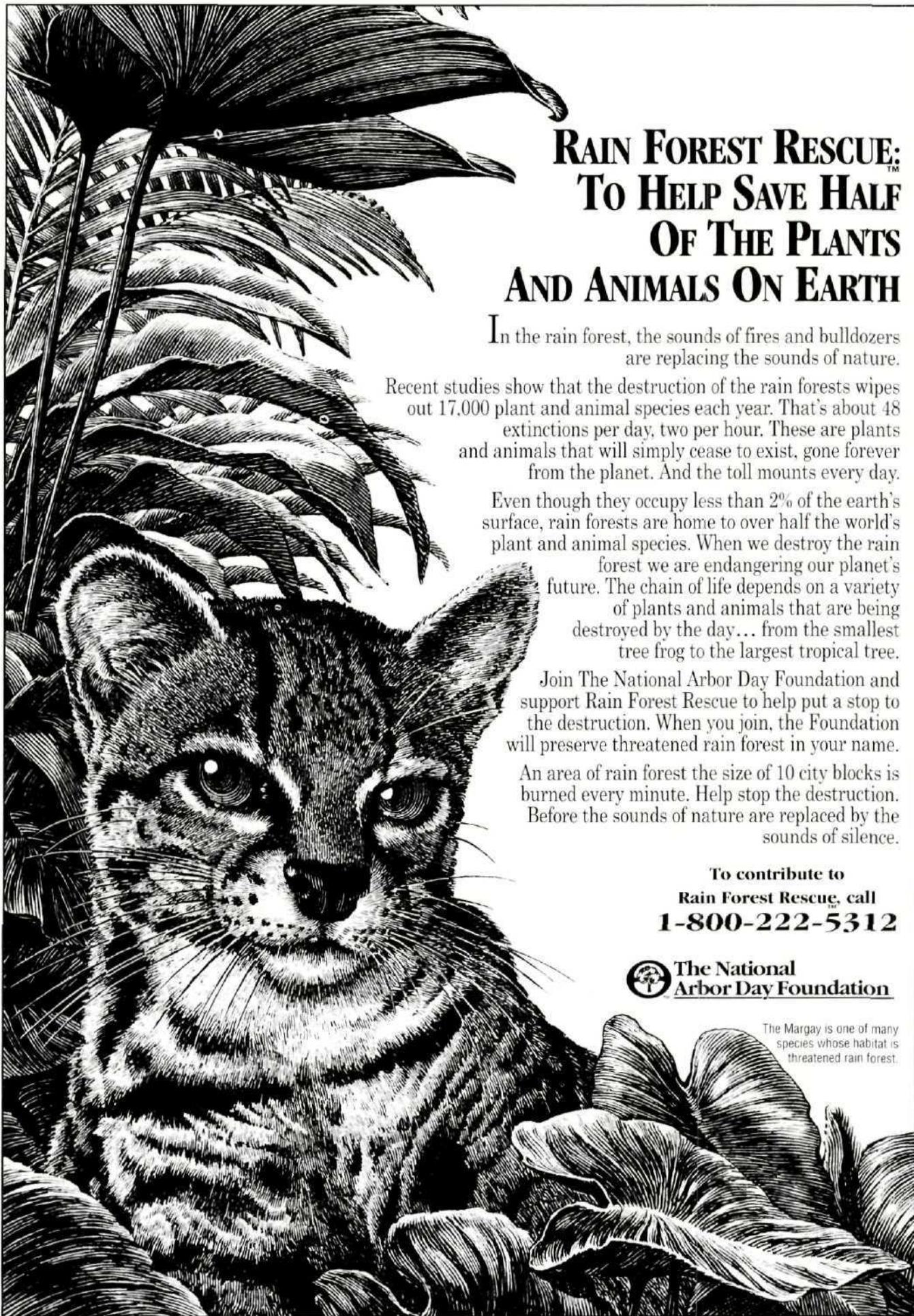
THE TRAGEDY OF RWANDA



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AFRICA REPORT

AMERICA'S
LEADING MAGAZINE
ON AFRICA

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African-American Institute

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The cover photograph of a Rwandan orphan in April was taken by D. Geeraert/Sygma.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

In an obvious attempt to discredit Mauritania, Janet Fleischman, who has never been to Mauritania, imported ethnic cleansing from Bosnia to Mauritania. There were many glaring inaccuracies in Ms. Fleischman's article on Mauritania entitled "Ethnic Cleansing" (January-February 1994). To begin with, Ms. Fleischman writes her depiction of the lives of black Mauritians based on two weeks of research in Senegal. Her allegations concerning what she refers to as "ethnic cleansing" are refuted not only by the government of Mauritania, but also by information contained in the recent edition of the U.S. Department of State's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" and the "World Refugee Report," another State Department publication submitted to the Congress for FY1993.

The thrust of her article and most of the events she described were to have taken place from 1989 to 1991. Since it is now 1994, prior to revisiting the past, a current view of the situation in Mauritania may have been more beneficial. The term "ethnic cleansing" suggests a willful and deliberate attempt to eliminate a race of people by the government of Mauritania, more specifically the "white Maur rulers." According to the Department of State "Country Reports" of 1993, "there were no reports of disappearances" in Mauritania, nor were there any reports of political prisoners.

Further evidence to refute this "ethnic cleansing" charge is offered by the 1993 "World Refugee Survey," published by the U.S. Committee for Refugees: "Mauritania has absorbed some 22,000 Senegalese who were deported to Mauritania during 1989. Most have become socially integrated and economically self-sufficient...local authorities have even offered to extend Mauritanian citizenship to them."

The Department of State's 1992 "World Refugee Report" gives this interpretation of the refugee situation: "During the year, the Mauritanian government oversaw the economic and social integration of the remaining refugees from Senegal, estimated to have numbered up to 20,000. As the Mauritanian government did not distinguish between refugees and the repatriates, *these persons were integrated on the same basis as the much more numerous Maur repatriates from Senegal.*" [Emphasis added.]

...How can any government be accused of ethnic cleansing when there are no disappearances, no political prisoners, and thousands of formerly displaced citizens as well as thousands of refugees living within its borders?

Another point which must be made is that Mauritania is not divided along racial lines; the distinction is sometimes made along ethnic and tribal lines. As the Department of State "Background Notes" of July 1992 indicate, "eighty percent of the populations are Moors of Arab-Berber descent." This dominant group, comprised of whites and blacks, speaks the same language and shares the same culture. The black minority comprises the Pulaar, Soninke, and Wolof ethnic groups. Each has distinct cultures and different dialects. Without exception, all Mauritians share the same religion. The difficulty Mauritania faces is attempting to find a commonality with respect to language and social and economic integration which will be acceptable to people with distinctly different heritages.

This article gives an accounting of expulsions, torture, and killing of black Mauritians and characterizes the period between 1989 and 1991 as a "campaign to eliminate black culture in Mauritania." There was no mention of the conflict which was raging during this time between Mauritania and Senegal, which caused both countries for the first time to question the identity of people within their borders. There was no mention of the Mauritanian citizens who were expelled from Senegal. According to the Department of State's "Country Reports" of 1992, "Approximately 200,000 Mauritanian Maurs expelled by the governments of Senegal and Mali in 1989-1990 have now been largely absorbed into Mauritania through government and private means." This figure constitutes 10 percent of the Mauritanian population.

...Mauritania does not deny that mistakes have been made in the past. When you have one of the largest population movements taking place within a few days, as was the case during the unfortunate conflict with Senegal, there were bound to have been violent incidents or mistakenly displaced people. But as always, all Mauritians living abroad are welcome to come back home...

...The good news is that Mauritania is rising about the problems of the past into an era of democracy, stability, and economic growth. A page has been turned in our history and a more educated and tolerant climate exists.

On July 20, 1991, the Mauritanian people adopted a constitution based upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. An amnesty was extended to all persons condemned prior to July 29, 1991 for crimes and misdemeanors against the security of the state, as well as for violations of the laws governing the press and

unauthorized meetings. There have been free presidential elections...and House and Senate elections in 1992. Sixteen political parties are now in existence and their views are covered in 30 new newspapers of various hues reflecting a broad range of political opinions. Laws allowing free trade unions have been enacted by the Parliament. The Parliament nominated a national ombudsman to be in charge of human rights...

When we discuss progress in Mauritania, it is important to note the number and positions of minorities in the government of Mauritania. The president of the Senate is a Pulaar which is one of the black ethnic groups labeled under this "ethnic cleansing" allegation...The minister of finance is a Pulaar as is the minister of justice...The minister secretary-general of the government and the minister of equipment and transportation are also from black minority groups in Mauritania. Mauritania is working toward achieving full ethnic participation, cooperation, and harmony.

...Perhaps the most heartening events which have transpired are in the area of regional cooperation. Mauritania has resumed diplomatic relations with Senegal. The border has been opened and daily air flights have been restored. Senegalese are returning to Mauritania and Mauritians to Senegal. The government of Mauritania has been actively involved in helping to facilitate an agreement between the Tuareg refugees from Mali and the Malian government. It has also supported the UN Referendum on the Western Sahara as it continues to house Sahrawi refugees. Bringing peace to its own borders and helping its neighbors restore peace are priorities for Mauritania.

...The government of Mauritania has opened its doors to individuals and organizations from all over the world. The International Committee of the Red Cross has visited our prisons, representatives from the EEC have monitored our electoral process, and members of the international community—from refugees to entrepreneurs—live among us. Journalists from many countries come to Mauritania. Scores of American Peace Corps volunteers work with Mauritians to help improve their standard of living, and their efforts are greatly appreciated. The government of Mauritania and the people of Mauritania welcome all organizations interested to visit.

As we strive to make our country strong and successful, we welcome the assistance of the international commun-

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UPDATE

IN THE NEWS

Malawi's Banda Survives Brain Surgery, But Elections?

After Malawians voted overwhelmingly in favor of a multi-party system in a referendum last June, opposition supporters jubilantly proclaimed the political demise of autocratic President Hastings Kamuzu Banda and his Malawi Congress Party (MCP). Their belief was understandable: The president himself had asked the nation to view the plebiscite as a vote for or against his rule.

But in the run-up to elections, the 90-something Banda—who refused to hand over power to an interim government as the opposition demanded—demonstrated that his considerable political survival skills are intact, even if his health remains in question.

Indeed, in October, Banda's political career appeared to be over when he was flown to South Africa for emergency brain surgery and power was transferred to a three-person presidential council. During the president's illness, it became clear that the MCP lacked another personality capable of uniting the party leadership and garnering national support. But Malawi's leader since independence in 1964 confounded doctors, political analysts, and the opposition by recovering well enough to be reinstated as the country's head of state and to stand as the MCP's presidential candidate in the May 17 elections.

The former sole legal party remains handicapped at the polls by its long history of oppressive rule, but observers say the party's election fortunes may be bolstered by opposition flaws and divisions.

The election playing field became official following a March 25 ceremony in Blantyre in which the country's five presidential candidates handed Malawi's electoral commission their nomination papers. Banda's main challengers in the contest were the chairman of the United Democratic Front

(UDF), Bakili Muluzi, and the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) leader, Chakufwa Chihana.

Muluzi was considered the front-runner in the race and his UDF was expected to win the most seats in the new 177-member Parliament, also being elected on May 17. The highly organized UDF, which has strong support in the populous south of the coun-

try, was the only opposition party challenging the MCP in every legislative race.

Three smaller parties, the United Front for Multi-party Democracy, the Congress for the Second Republic, and the Malawi Democratic Union, also pledged to work with the UDF in the general elections.

Continued on next page

The New South Africa's Choice



UNP/Sudhakaran

As anticipated, Nelson Mandela's African National Congress was the top vote-getter in South Africa's first election open to all races held April 26-29. In-depth coverage of the historic event will appear in Africa Report's July-August issue.



President Hastings Kamuzu Banda is a symbol of the MCP's repression

But the UDF was marked by a glaring flaw: Its leadership is comprised of former MCP officials. The UDF's vice president, Aleke Banda, was once head of the dreaded Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), the MCP's paramilitary group which remained active until it was squashed by Malawi's army in December. Muluzi himself was the MCP's secretary-general until 1982 and the UDF's publicity secretary was Banda's health minister until only three years ago.

That the UDF's leadership is "tainted" has been seized upon by the other principal opposition presidential candidate, Chihana. The trade unionist, who is one of the country's most prominent advocates of multi-party democracy and human rights, has referred to Muluzi's party as Malawi Congress Party "B." But Chihana's AFORD—which is contesting 162 parliamentary seats—has had difficulty translating its clean image into popular support outside its political power base in the north.

Tensions between the two main opposition parties were evident in early March on the National Consultative Council (NCC), the all-party group charged with drafting Malawi's new post-election constitution. Although work on the document was supposed to have been all but wrapped up in a constitutional conference the previous month, the council hotly debated a provision to disallow politicians with criminal records from standing in the elections.

The NCC legal committee and the constitutional conference had recommended that only crimes committed in the last seven years be covered by the provision. But, according to the British publication *South-scan*, AFORD had sought to include the rule without the seven-year qualification as a means to disqualify the popular Muluzi, who served a six-month prison term for stealing more than 25 years ago.

The UDF temporarily walked out of the NCC on March 12 to protest the debate. "This is wrong. There is no reason why such a rule should be built around an individual," the UDF's Banda said.

The bickering between the UDF and AFORD in the run-up to the elections offered a welcome respite for the MCP, which was once the sole target of the opposition. But the MCP has done little to convince voters that it is not the same party which oversaw three decades of human rights abuses in Malawi.

One way the party has sought to remake its image is by bringing prominent opposition figures into its fold. One of the more surprising and substantive acquisitions by the ruling party was Gwanda Chakuamba, who was named the MCP's secretary-general during Banda's illness. The appointment paved the way for Chakuamba to head the then-active presidential council. Prior to the appointment, Chakuamba had spent 13 years as a political prisoner and endorsed the UDF.

Now as Banda's running mate, Chakuamba was expected to draw votes away from the UDF in the south. However, voters may also remember Chakuamba for the time he spent as head of the MYP before his long detention.

In addition, a number of party officials associated with past repression also remain at the top of the MCP leadership, including the notorious John Tembo. Until last year, Tembo was considered Banda's likely successor and

had been called the behind-the-scenes ruler of Malawi over the last decade.

Perhaps the best illustration of how difficult it has been for the MCP to repackage itself is that the president—who is one of the most enduring symbols of the party's three decades of detaining, torturing, and allegedly killing political opponents—remains the party's figurehead.

At the same time, rallying behind Banda—who struggled in his public appearances in the run-up to the vote—fits in well with the MCP's apparent election strategy of fortifying its proven power base in the central region (the one area where the electorate voted yes to one-party rule), while the opposition splits the vote in the rest of the country.

And government critics contend that part of this strategy involves a sinister plot by the MCP to ensure that the opposition self-destructs.

In mid-March, opposition parties announced that they had uncovered a plot by the MCP to hire strategists from Kenya's ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (Kanu), to assist in "manipulating" the poll. The six "Kanu officers" reportedly posed as election monitors and were assigned to Chakuamba's office. The MCP "tacitly" admitted to the plot, according to the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation. But the Kenya News Agency reported that a Kanu party official said that Kanu was merely giving the MCP advice on how to win elections.

But fears that the MCP would orchestrate violence on the scale that Kanu is accused of fomenting in Kenya's Rift Valley and Western Province have not come to pass. One reason such a plot might fail is that the threat of intervention by Malawi's army—which has shown its support for the multi-party movement in the past—has kept potential aggressors at bay. Indeed, prior to the army crackdown on the MYP at the end of last year, there were increasing reports of violence and intimidation. Nonetheless, violent incidents continued to be reported and the MYP—most of whose members fled the country—was still considered a threat to security in the run-up to the vote.

Separate reports issued in April by Malawi's electoral commission and by the UN Joint International Observer Group reported incidents of intimi-

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CHAD/LIBYA

On April 4, Libya and Chad signed an agreement outlining the details of Libya's final withdrawal from the Aouzou Strip, apparently putting to rest a decades-old border dispute between the two nations. The agreement—which follows a February 3 International Court of Justice (ICJ) decision calling for the land to be returned to Chad—stipulated that the official handover of the strip would take place on May 1, but Libya was given until the end of May to complete the withdrawal of its troops and administration, according to a Radio Chad report.

The 45,000-square-mile Aouzou Strip—which purportedly contains deposits of oil, manganese, and uranium—had been occupied by Libya since 1973. Libya based its claim to the territory in northern Chad on an agreement made between France and Italy decades earlier. By 1983, Libya—along with Chadian forces opposed to the government—had extended its occupation far deeper into Chad, effectively controlling the half of the country which lies north of the 16th parallel. During intense fighting in 1986 and 1987, Chad—supported by French air power and U.S. military aid—recaptured most of its northern territory. And in August 1987, Chad took the town of Aouzou. This was followed by a ceasefire agreement. In 1989, the two countries signed an accord in Algiers which called for the dispute over the strip to be taken before the ICJ if a resolution was not reached after a year of bilateral negotiations.

Immediately following the World Court's February decision to award Chad the territory, Chadian officials claimed that Libyan troops were reinforcing their positions in Aouzou. And Chad's President Idriss Déby told Radio France International that his Libyan counterpart, Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi, threatened his life in a March 11 phone call regarding the dispute.

But Libya's Secretary for Foreign Affairs Said Mugber strongly denied accusations that Libya was stalling

POLITICAL POINTERS

its exit from the Aouzou Strip. "There is no question of renegeing [on the ICJ decision]," the minister said. "But we want to withdraw within the rules in such a way as to avoid future conflict, preserving the dignity of all parties," he added. During negotiations over the implementation of the ICJ decision in March, Libya's delegation said it was seeking provisions for the return of all prisoners of war as had been agreed in the 1989 Algiers agreement.

Radio Chad reported that the removal of Libya's troops would be supervised by a joint team of 25 Chadian and 25 Libyan officers. Following the May 30 deadline for Libya to be out of the strip, UN observers will inspect the operation and a final border line will be drawn with designated pathways for travel between the two countries.

CAMEROON/NIGERIA

While Libya and Chad were implementing the decision of the Hague-based International Court of Justice (ICJ) over their territorial dispute, the court promised to hear the case of another African border row involving Cameroon and Nigeria.

The four-month-old dispute over the Bakassi peninsula—which was brought to the attention of the ICJ by Cameroon—was expected to be heard by the court beginning in May, according to *Africa Confidential*.

In the meantime, bilateral, regional, and international attempts at diplomacy have had little success in defusing the conflict, which has already led to at least one major armed clash between the two countries.

The crisis started when Nigeria deployed some 1,000 troops to the swampy peninsula in the Gulf of Guinea beginning on December 31, allegedly to protect its nationals and other English-speakers living there who were harassed by Cameroonian gendarmes earlier in the month.

But diplomats say the real reason the Nigerians moved into the territory—which Cameroon appears to have a much stronger international legal claim to—is to eventually gain control of the oil fields off the peninsula's coast. The Bakassi is also rich in fish and natural gas.

Another factor which is said to be fueling the dispute is that it is a diversion from the severe economic crises and political problems the regimes of both Cameroon's President Paul Biya and Nigeria's head of state, Gen. Sani Abacha, are experiencing.

To date, the dispute has been marked mostly by tension and occasional skirmishes, but Cameroonian and Nigerian troops engaged in a fierce battle on February 18.

This was followed by a request by Cameroon to France for protection. The French responded by dispatching a minimal force—15 paratroopers and two helicopters—to Cameroon on February 27, but said its personnel would not be deployed in Bakassi itself. In addition, the subsequent docking of a French frigate in Douala and the former colonial power's military exercises with Nigeria's neighbor Benin were arguably aimed at sending the message that France would not stand by if the conflict escalated.

Nigeria's Foreign Minister Baba Gana Kingibe responded by accusing France of fueling the dispute. In addition, the foreign minister criticized France for encouraging Cameroon to "internationalize" the matter—by putting it before the UN Security Council and the ICJ—when Nigeria believed the two sides could peacefully resolve the dispute on their own.

But Biya has refused to take up Abacha's invitation to go to Nigeria to discuss the dispute, saying that he would not visit that country as long as its forces occupied Cameroonian land.

Efforts to bring the two leaders together in a third country by the Organization of African Unity chairman, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, and by Togo's President Gnassingbé Eyadéma have also yet to succeed.

AFRICAN OUTLOOK

INTERVIEW: GILCHRIST OLYMPIO, TOGOLESE OPPOSITION LEADER

On May 5, 1992, a motorcade carrying Togo's most popular opposition leader, Gilchrist Olympio, was ambushed by men with assault rifles in the country's northern Assoli prefecture. The attack—which was allegedly carried out by supporters of President Gnassingbé Eyadéma—reminded Togolese of the assassination of the opposition figure's father, President Sylvanus Olympio, in a 1963 military revolt led by then Sgt. Eyadéma. But the wounded son escaped the fate of his father, fleeing to Benin where bullets were removed from his bladder and left lung. He spent the next six months recovering at Val de Grâce Military Hospital in Paris.

The 58-year-old businessman has not set foot in Togo since, but remains Eyadéma's nemesis. When the president managed to exclude Olympio from the country's August 1993 presidential election, a successful opposition boycott of the poll cast a shadow over Eyadéma's victory.

Olympio's opposition grouping, the Union of Forces for Change (UFC), also boycotted two rounds of legislative elections held earlier this year, despite pressure from the international community to participate. But other opposition groups split with the UFC and challenged Eyadéma's Togolese People's Assembly (RPT) at the polls, eventually leading to the selection of opposition leader Edem Kodjo as the country's prime minister on April 21.

Olympio spoke to Africa Report about Togo's flawed attempts at democratization since Eyadéma seized back the powers a 1991 national conference had stripped from him, the role of the international community in resolving Togo's political impasse, and the state of the opposition.

Africa Report: The August 1993 presidential vote was supposed to be the country's first multi-party election since independence. Could you recount the events which led up to the vote and the opposition's decision to boycott it?

Olympio: In early 1993, France and Germany organized a roundtable conference—including all the parties in Togo—in the French town, Colmar. I was one of the three opposition representatives at the discussions. Eyadéma's people arrived at the talks, spent a few hours, and decided to walk out because they said they didn't have the mandate to discuss problems of security, especially involving the army, in public.

After that, opposition leaders and the French and Germans agreed that the next meeting should take place in another European town after France's elections.

Two months later, however, I was told to my surprise that opposition leaders had traveled to Burkina Faso for further discussions. I didn't know how this came about, why the venue was changed, or who was paying for the meetings. They said that [Burkina Faso's President Blaise] Compaoré had convened the talks. But I learned later on—from the Germans—that it was the French authorities who said that they preferred to handle things their way to settle matters quickly. So my party didn't go to the first Burkina meeting.



And for the second meeting, the Germans were told not to show up and the Americans did not go. In addition, Compaoré has a reputation of being Eyadéma's closest friend, both politically and personally. We did not want to go to a conference where Eyadéma would force decisions on us, so we decided not to go.

After the second, third, and fourth meetings, the Ouagadougou accord was signed. It gave all the powers that were taken from Eyadéma by the national conference back to him. He was placed exclusively in charge of security, allowed to form a government and to organize the elections. And the Supreme Court—which is packed with his people—was to interpret the election results.

Nonetheless, the French, German, and American ambassadors all talked in glowing terms about the Ouagadougou accord. They said, "Why don't you give it a chance?" We decided that if they promised that the elections would be fair, we would participate.

So I went to France's ministry of economic cooperation and spoke of my intention to become a candidate. They told me in no uncertain terms that this would be a very happy event—for historical as well as practical reasons.

The trouble started after I sent in my medical report in accordance with the electoral law. The report was prepared by two major hospitals in Paris, Val de Grâce and the American Hospital. Val de Grâce is where all of the senior military

and civilian personnel in francophone Africa go when they are sick.

But Eyadéma's Supreme Court said that my medical report was not done by Togolese doctors so it could not be received. I seriously considered going to Togo to be examined. Then they issued an international arrest warrant which said that Olympio was the brains behind an attack on Eyadéma's house in the military camp some three or four months earlier. This was a very strange accusation because Eyadéma's house is in the middle of the camp surrounded by 3,000 to 4,000 troops. How someone could have gotten into the camp, made it all the way to his bedroom, and lobbed a bomb under his bed puzzles me. Anyway, when I asked the French government how I could get around the warrant, they told me, "Don't take it seriously, just go." I said no, I could not take such a risk.

The American and Burkinabè ambassadors also took the position that security was a personal matter for all the candidates taking part in the elections. Eventually, a group of Togolese doctors met me in a small village on the Togo/Ghana border with Ghanaian soldiers present. The doctors confirmed all that the Paris doctors had said and took the results to the Supreme Court. But the court ruled that the examination results were received too late.

Yaovi Agboyibo [who leads the Action Committee for Renewal (CAR)] was the first opposition leader to say that if they are excluding some candidates from the race, then his party would also not participate.

Initially, Edem Kodjo [leader of the Togolese Union for Democracy (UTD)] stayed in the race. But less than 48 hours before the election, he too announced that he would boycott the vote.

So Eyadéma ran against two nonentities who claimed to be opposition people. Officially, 39 percent of the population voted and he got more than 96 percent of the vote. But from talking to churches and schoolmasters, on the contrary, only 10 percent of the electorate voted.

Africa Report: The Americans and Germans refused to observe the presidential election because they did not believe it could be free and fair, but France stayed on. Could you evaluate the performance of France's observers?

Olympio: There were two types of French observer teams, official and unofficial. Eyadéma invited his friends, including retired admirals and generals of the French army. But the head of the official team was the deputy speaker of the French assembly. He said he stayed on because he was there to observe and not to give an opinion. When I met him in Paris later, he said the whole thing was a masquerade. Both the delegations led by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and the Germans said the elections had no meaning.

How the consensus of opinion which came about after the election was reached is something that has baffled me. We were summoned in by the French, Germans, and even the Americans, and they all basically said, "What is done is done. Eyadéma is there, so he has to remain. The elections were not fair, but your chance now is to participate in the parliamentary elections."

Now we said supposing that we have lawmakers who are democratically elected—and this was by no means assured—how were we going to cohabit with a dictator with full powers to dissolve Parliament, appoint a prime minister, and, above all in practical terms, who still controlled the army and the police force?

We had a Parliament before, which came out of the national conference and we know what the fate of that was: Eyadéma had the Parliament surrounded by troops, who followed the MPs around with whips for 26 hours.

We wanted France, Germany, and the U.S. to help us to form a roundtable to get us out of the Haiti syndrome we remain in. From the national conference until now, we have had 4,500 people killed. There has been no commission of inquiry. There is arson, people's homes are set on fire. Some 350,000 of our citizens have fled the country, they are in camps in Ghana and Benin. These are problems we want to air and discuss at a roundtable conference with Eyadéma. When we finish, we want the French, Germans and Americans to guarantee the decisions that are made.

So these are the reasons that made us decide not to participate in the legislative elections. But then the opposition split when Agboyibo and Kodjo decided to participate.

Africa Report: What are your party's relations now with Kodjo's and Agboyibo's parties?

Olympio: Well, we talk to each other, but we do not view problems the same way. We [the UFC] don't think you can cohabit with Eyadéma. We think he must be forced to contest proper elections. If everybody was allowed to participate in elections—be they parliamentary or presidential—Eyadéma would win no more than 10 percent of the vote. It would be so clear to the international community, to our own people, and to the regional powers Ghana and Nigeria, that it would be extremely difficult for him to go back to his bad old ways. The way it is now, however—with a small part of the opposition taking part in the elections—we are stuck with a hung Parliament.

And since the opposition is in a weak position, they are going to allow Eyadéma to do all the bad things he's been doing, only this time legally.

Africa Report: The fundamental problem seems to be Eyadéma's control over the military. What can be done to divorce him from the army?

Olympio: At the national conference, we said the new constitution should be a liberal constitution with a separation of powers. And we said no military or security officer can stand for parliamentary or presidential elections without resigning. We don't want soldiers in Parliament, or in the White House.

But when Eyadéma seized Prime Minister Joseph Kokou Koffigoh's residence on December 3 [1991], he had Koffigoh really badly beaten up. Afterward, he said there was going to be a government of national unity, and the first decree he passed allowed the president—a general and head of the armed forces—to stand as a candidate.

Togo's army has 12,500 men for a population of 3.5 million. That is one soldier for every 300 people. Togo is the most militarized nation in Africa, outside of war zones such as Angola and Mozambique.

And it is a tribal army—70 percent are Kabyés, even though all the Kabyés living in their own region and in the diaspora make up only about 15 percent of Togo's population. It is also a praetorian army in that Eyadéma is the absolute boss. In addition, it is a family army in the sense that the main units are under his sons, brothers, and other relatives. So divorcing Eyadéma from the army is a difficult task.

Continued on next page

Interview *Continued*

One of the things that we achieved in Colmar was to get France—which was under a Socialist government at the time—and Germany to agree that the prelude to any democracy should be the containment of all the troops under international supervision.

There should also be the establishment of a republican force, not all drawn from one tribe, but taken from all over the country. Of course, this was never put into effect once France's Socialist government was voted out.

But the army remains the major problem. And unless that problem is solved, I think all these institutional changes are just skimming the top of the problem.

Africa Report: What role can the U.S. play to bring about substantive change in Togo?

Olympio: I have talked to a few congressmen, one or two senators, and the State Department, and there is really very little interest in Togo. They tell us that, internationally speaking, Togo falls under France's sphere of influence, "So why don't you talk to the French?"

But the problem is the unclear French policy toward the continent. At the La Baule conference, President François Mitterrand said there is going to be a premium for democracy in the francophone countries. Two years later, at the Franco-African summit meeting, he said there is no longer a premium for democracy, everybody should go at his own pace. And the new minister of cooperation, Michel Roussin, says the premium should be for efficiency and not for democracy. Of course Eyadéma is a very efficient dictator!

France's right-wing government is not sympathetic. So it looks more and more that the problem has to be solved locally. What does that mean? Civil war? That is a terrible thing to envisage.

What can the Americans do? Well, you know that when the big boys meet each other they talk a different language than when they meet with us. The Americans



Togo's President Gnassingbé Eyadéma

can bring the French to change their position a little bit and lobby the Germans to play more of an active role. Germans have been very encouraging, but they also say that they have no physical presence in the country and follow the French lead. So there should be a convergence of Western influences on the French to play a constructive leading role.

Africa Report: What about Togo's neighbors? What role can Ghana play?

Olympio: Eyadéma never accepted Ghana or Benin as mediators. Allowing Ghana and Benin to sit down at any roundtable conference should be a first step. Burkina should also be invited, and maybe Ecowas, and then the Western powers.

Ghana has to be part of any discussions because there are 250,000

Togolese refugees in that country. I've been to a lot of the camps and it's a terrible situation. Economic activity is practically dead in these villages on the border. You go to Benin, and you have the same problem.

Africa Report: Could you briefly outline your party's formula for pulling Togo out of its impasse?

Olympio: All shades of opinion in the country, including the opposition, need to sit at a roundtable conference—with a time limit. We ought to invite our neighbors, and the Germans, Americans, and French, to act as facilitators, and probably the United Nations. And we should address the heart of the problem: security. What do we do with this army? And when we come to an agreement, this should be guaranteed by our neighbors, as well as the Western powers.

Failing that, we think the situation will get worse with all the dangers of an explosion. We have a few signs already. For example, when you go to the refugee camps—contrary to what we had before—it is not just civilians anymore, there are a lot of soldiers and policemen and gendarmes there. They want to go home instead of living in refugee camps, given two bowls of rice a week with a little bit of cooking oil. That's where I think there is a potential for danger. ■

Malawi *Continued*

dation, violence, and bribery being carried out in an effort to influence the vote. Both reports named the MCP as the main violator of the electoral laws. The electoral commission said that it had collected evidence that the ruling party was stealing or illegally purchasing voter registration cards in at least nine of the country's 24 electoral districts. The opposition, however, was also accused of trans-

gressions, including being engaged in turf wars.

Another potential problem with the poll which worried observers was the possibility of voter apathy. Malawians, who were energized by the concrete prospect of voting a dictator out of power in last June's election, have shown less enthusiasm for an apparently unfocused opposition. Indeed, the electoral commission moved the voter registration deadline back two weeks to March 26 because so few Malawians had signed up to take part in the May

elections. (This was despite predictions that a flood of voters would come to register after the minimum voting age was lowered from 21 to 18.) By April, however, the commission estimated that 80 percent of those eligible to register had done so. The UN group described the figure as a "respectable" one, according to the *Financial Times*.

And following the excitement of South Africa's first free and fair elections on April 26-29, Malawians were indeed expected to be captivated by their own democratization exercise. ■

Three African Nations Compete in World Cup

Cameroon, Morocco, and Nigeria will compete in the 1994 World Cup to be held in June and July in cities across the United States, marking the first time that Africa will send more than two teams to the quadrennial soccer tournament.

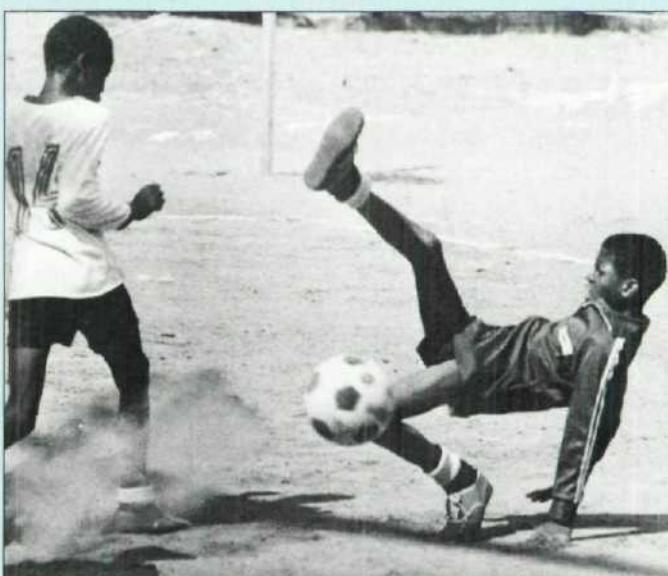
FIFA, the governing body of the world's most popular sport, granted Africa one of the European slots in the 24-nation competition following Cameroon's spectacular performance in the 1990 World Cup. In that tourney, Cameroon's Indomitable Lions beat the defending champions, Argentina, in the Cup's kickoff game before losing to England in a heartbreaking quarter-final match. An African team had never advanced that far in the tournament before.

Cameroon will face Brazil, Russia, and Sweden in the first round of this summer's Cup. But the Lions, who are making their third appearance in the tournament, have struggled of late and did not qualify for the 1994 Africa Cup of Nations. This may suit Cameroon's

style: Prior to the 1990 World Cup, the team was in apparent disarray and had a poor showing at the 12-nation African tournament.

The African team expected to advance the farthest in the U.S. is Nigeria's Super Green Eagles. The West African team—which will face off with Bulgaria, Greece, and Argentina in its first appearance

in the World Cup



Alfredo Muschetti/AM

African youths playing football. But when will the World Cup be played on their continent?

—won the 19th biennial Africa Cup of Nations final in Tunisia on April 10.

But the team Nigeria beat, Zambia, may be the inspiration for the African teams competing in this summer's tournament. In April 1993, Zambia

appeared on its way to qualifying for the 1994 World Cup when 18 of the team's athletes and two coaches died in a plane crash off the coast of Gabon. Despite the disaster, the team rallied in its subsequent World Cup qualifying matches—beating Morocco and coming up with a tie and a victory over Senegal—and needed only a tie in an October game against Morocco to make it into the Cup. But Zambia fell short, losing 1-0. Despite the disappointment, the team came back strong for this year's Africa Cup, not giving up a single goal until the final with Nigeria.

Morocco's victory against Zambia landed the North African squad in the World Cup for a third time. The team will compete with Belgium, Holland, and Saudi Arabia in its opening-round games.

Despite the excitement that African football has generated on the world stage, the continent has yet to host the World Cup. Morocco was rejected in bids to host the tournament in 1994 and 1998, but FIFA President João Havelange said, "I am convinced that by 2006 Africa will have its World Cup," according to *West Africa* magazine.

Africa is also the only continent that has never hosted the Olympic Games. But there is talk now that the 2004 summer Games will be held in either Cairo, Johannesburg, Durban, or Cape Town.

Gabon's State of Alert Lifted

On April 8, Gabon's government announced the lifting of the "state of alert" which had been in effect in the capital, Libreville, almost continuously for the last four months.

The emergency measures—which included a curfew—were first imposed to put down disturbances which broke out in the wake of the country's first multi-party presidential election on December 5. Incumbent President Omar Bongo was declared the winner of the poll, with 51.07 percent of the vote, on December 10, but the opposition, led by Paul Mba Abessole, refused to recognize the results and set up a parallel government.

Although the emergency measures were lifted on February 13, they were reimposed a week later when a general strike called for by labor unions allied with the opposition resulted in renewed violence, according to Agence France-Presse. Seven civilians and two soldiers were killed in the February violence, according to official figures. In retaliation for the disturbances, which the government blamed on Abessole, the presidential guard destroyed the only remaining opposition radio station, Radio Liberté, on February 22, and attacked Abessole's house the following day. The authorities also issued a warrant for Abessole's arrest.

In mid-March—with Abessole in Paris—Gabon's Prime Minister Casimir Oye Mba set about selecting ministers for a new "national unity" government, which he said should be formed after meetings with representatives of all the political groups in Gabon. "No, no, and no," Abessole told Radio France International from Paris when asked if he would join the government. "We do not expect anything from the government that is going to be formed...We are no longer bothered by what...Bongo and his armed gang are doing with the government," he said.

One of the first measures enacted by the new 38-member government—which did not include members of the opposition High Council of Resistance—was to roll back the emergency decrees, a major demand of the opposition. ■

ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe's reserve bank announced the introduction of a Z\$50 note on March 14. The largest Zimbabwean bill had been the Z\$20 note.

According to a Pan-African News Agency report, a deputy general manager of the bank, Paul Sigauke, said the new note was issued in response to inflation and increases in the take-home pay of Zimbabwean workers since independence. He said the daily wage in Zimbabwe had risen from Z\$13 in 1982 to Z\$36 today, while "the Z\$20 [note] cannot buy the same quantity of goods that it used to buy in 1982."

The reserve bank also said it planned to print a Z\$100 note "fairly soon," according to the Pan-African News Agency. In an interview on Zimbabwean television, Sigauke said the Z\$100 note would be introduced when average pay had reached Z\$50 per day.

Sigauke also said the bank was also considering taking Zimbabwe's one-cent coin out of circulation.

The Zimbabwean dollar was worth less than U.S.\$0.13 in April.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

On March 25, the Paris Club of creditor nations agreed to a plan to reduce Côte d'Ivoire's debt by roughly \$2.5 billion.

The debt reduction and rescheduling deal—which covers a portion of Côte d'Ivoire's official debt—was expected to lead to still further reductions in the country's \$17 billion external debt through future bilateral agreements.

Although Côte d'Ivoire is considered a middle-income country with a per capita gross national product of \$690, the debt restructuring plan was reportedly based on the favorable Trinidad terms normally reserved for the poorest nations. The Paris Club's decision to apply these terms comes in the wake of last January's 50 percent devaluation of the CFA franc.

CAR

Among the other debt relief plans announced by the Paris Club since the CFA devaluation was an agreement to write off half of the Central African

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Republic's official debt in April. The deal also lengthened the amount of time the country has to repay the remainder of its debt. Creditor countries agreed that the debt would be paid off over 23 years, including an initial six-year grace period, according to a *Journal of Commerce* report.

CAR's total external debt was almost \$900 million in 1991, 88 percent of which was official debt.

Sub-Saharan debt now stands at some \$180 billion, almost double what it was 10 years ago.

BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso has promised to fight female genital mutilation as part of its latest loan agreement with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the *Financial Times* reported in April.

The inclusion of the commitment in the poor West African country's medium-term economic strategy is seen as the latest sign that the lending institutions are prepared to more vigorously address social and cultural issues.

In mid-April, the Bank announced that it would "integrate gender issues into the mainstream of" its "strategy to alleviate poverty," according to the World Bank News. The new policy was outlined in a report, *Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development*, which the Bank's board adopted on April 14.

The IMF announced on March 28 that it approved a loan worth \$25 million to Burkina Faso under the lending institution's Enhanced Structural Adjustment Program (ESAF). The poorest nations are eligible for ESAF loans which carry an interest rate of 0.5 percent.

ZAMBIA

Zambians may not have been convinced by President Frederick Chiluba's efforts earlier this year to stamp out government corruption, but the international donor community has sent out a signal that it is impressed.

Western donors pledged an additional \$300 million in 1994 aid to Zambia at a World Bank-chaired meeting on the country in March.

The pledge brings to over \$1 billion the amount of aid pledged to the country for 1994. The initial \$800 million was promised in a December meeting of the donors' Consultative Group on Zambia, but the remainder was withheld pending action on charges of high-level corruption and involvement in drug trafficking by members of the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) government.

Chiluba responded by sacking Development Cooperation Minister Dean Mungomba and Health Minister Boniface Kawimbe, as well as police inspector-general Darius Kalebo. However, ministers linked to corruption by earlier government investigations were spared.

But donors have also pointed to the two-year-old MMD government's efforts to overhaul Zambia's ailing economy as the main reason for their support. Inflation was slashed from almost 284 percent at the beginning of 1993 to 10 percent by end of that year. In addition, Zambia has made great strides in liberalizing its once almost entirely state-controlled economy.

The U.S. pledged \$21 million in aid to Zambia for 1994, half of which was freed up during the consultative group meeting in March.

Roughly half of the \$1.1 billion pledged to Zambia for 1994 is for balance-of-payments support, while \$260 million will go to debt relief and \$285 million to development projects.

GATT

Some 125 nations gathered in Marrakesh, Morocco, on April 15 to sign the "Final Act" of the seven-year-old Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

But the signing of the new world trade liberalization agreement—which economists say will add between \$213 billion and \$274 billion a year to the world economy within 10 years of its taking effect in 1995—was viewed as a harbinger of increased tensions between rich and poor countries.

Developing nations argue that the trade rules are written to benefit the rich nations and argue against the imposition of Western values and policies.



Liz Gilbert/Sygma

SETTLING SCORES

Although Rwanda has been seized by ethnic conflict periodically over the last few decades, the roots of the current horror are as much political as ethnic, our correspondent reports. Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana, whose death precipitated the current slaughter, carried out a two-track policy...

...on the one hand, going along reluctantly with the United Nations-supervised peace process designed to bring power-sharing to the Tutsi-dominated rebels, the Rwanda Patriotic Front, and, on the other, arming extremist militias to ensure continued Hutu supremacy. Blame also rests with the UN Mission of Assistance to Rwanda, which was operating almost in a vacuum without real direction from headquarters in New York and unable to use force even to protect its Rwandan workers.

The radio broadcasts a clear message. The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), and by extension all Tutsis, are "cockroaches." They have infested Rwanda and must be eliminated.

This is Radio Télévision Libre Milles Collines (RTLM), or One Thousand Hills Free Radio, a well-known landmark in the center of Kigali. Set up by extremist supporters of the late President Juvénal Habyarimana, it broadcasts the message that the majority Hutus—Habyarimana's tribe—must rule, and the minority Tutsis are Rwanda's enemy. Opposition political parties, even those dominated by Hutus, are collaborators.

Although the president negotiated peace with the Tutsi-dominated RPF, culminating in the Arusha Peace Accords in August 1993, RTLM has continued to preach ethnic hatred. When the plane carrying the president crashed on April 6—probably brought down by a rocket launched from Kigali—the official government Radio Rwanda broadcast classical music and government appeals for calm, but

RTLM encouraged the violence which swept through the country.

Bands of thugs, carrying machetes and clubs studded with nails, prowl the suburbs of Kigali seeking out Tutsis, members of opposition political parties, and anyone with money or possessions worth stealing. The violence appears like a collective madness, an epidemic of terror. But while the attackers are clearly out of control, drunk on banana beer and crazed by killing, there is still a logic to the horror.

On April 12, RTLM broadcast that the International Committee of the Red Cross was saving the lives of Tutsis only. Under pressure, the statement was later retracted, but that did not stop thugs from slaughtering six wounded people in a Red Cross Land-Rover a few days later.

During the first few days after the president's death, wireless telephone conversations between Rwandan officials and army officers were intercepted. According to one source, several *bourgmestres*—civil servants in charge of the districts or *communes*—were heard giving instructions on where to find weapons caches and whom to target.

Convicts dressed in distinctive pink uniforms have been given the hideous task of burying the dead. They use mechanical diggers to excavate mass graves for the corpses piled in gardens and houses and strewn across the streets of Kigali. The Red Cross estimate of 100,000 dead may prove conservative, but it will never be known exactly how many died in Rwanda in April 1994.

The Formation of Militias

While the scale of the slaughter shocks even those familiar with the bloody evolution of Rwandan politics, the fact that it happened was predictable.

President Habyarimana controlled two political groupings: his original National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) and the Hutu-extremist Committee for the Defense of the Republic (CDR).

In 1992, two years after the Tutsi-dominated RPF launched the war with a cross-border attack from bases in Uganda, the MRND and the CDR founded militias, known as the Interahamwe ("Those Who Attack Together") and the Impuzamugambi ("Those Who Have the Same Goal"). The Impuzamugambi are often described as the CDR youth wing. The army supplied the militias with weapons such as grenades and AK-47 assault rifles, but they also use machetes, knives, clubs, and bows and arrows.

An international investigation into human rights abuses in Rwanda, conducted by Africa Watch and others in January 1993, concluded that by late 1992 these militias were the main killers of civilians. The report ("The Report of the International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda since October 1, 1990," March 1993) cited several incidents, including a massacre of more than 300 Tutsis and members of opposition parties in northwestern Rwanda in January 1993. After considerable international and national criticism, the activities of the militias abated, but they remained on standby. They were not to be idle for long.

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Arusha Accords

By 1993, the Rwandan armed forces had swollen from 5,000 to 30,000 members, while the RPF was thought to have a force of some 15,000. The Arusha Accords, which marked the end of the three-year-long civil war, provided

for both sides to demobilize, disarm, and re-form into a smaller, united national army. Six hundred RPF troops were escorted by UN guards from their base at Mulindi, in northern Rwanda, to the Parliament building in Kigali where they remained under UN protection. The accords had precise detail on the formation of a broad-based transitional government, which would retain Habyarimana as president, but give specified ministerial positions to members of the RPF and other political parties. Elections would be held within 22 months.

Habyarimana was not happy. He had introduced a multi-party system and installed a coalition government in April 1992, carefully juggling alliances so that his MRND retained control. But the RPF was in a different league. "The RPF had better negotiators at Arusha," said one African diplomat who played a key role in the talks. "They got a good deal, including key ministries such as the ministry of interior. Habyarimana's people weren't clever enough."

Habyarimana took advice from friends with considerable expertise in the tricky business of clinging onto power. He made a series of visits to President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and President Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo. He started to undermine the accords. The largest party in the country, the Democratic Republican Movement (MDR), founded by Rwanda's first president, Grégoire Kayabanda, had already split as the accords were signed. The president successfully split another party, the Liberal Party (PL), a mixed Hutu/Tutsi party which was leaning toward the RPF.

The tensions in Rwandan politics were exacerbated. Being a Hutu was not enough, you had to be a Hutu from the president's northwestern region. The traditional north-south divide between Hutus was as important as the tribal division. The president's supporters saw the interim prime minister, MDR politician Agathe Uwilingiyimana (a Tutsi) and the prime minister-designate, Faustin Twagiramungu (a Hutu), not as political rivals but as enemies.

The MRND was a signatory to the Arusha Accords, but the CDR rejected the agreement. This meant that Habyarimana could operate a two-track policy. On the one hand, he appeared to cooperate with international efforts to bring peace to Rwanda and introduce power-sharing with the RPF, but on the other, he could work outside the political system, through the CDR.

As the months went by and the political parties squab-

bled over the division of parliamentary seats and ministerial portfolios—something which was supposed to have been settled at Arusha—tensions rose. The installation of the broad-based transitional government, a cornerstone of the Arusha Accords, never happened.

The RPF participated in the prevarication, manipulating their allies in the hope of securing maximum influence in the new assembly. They used their radio station, Radio Muhabura, to encourage violence against the ruling clique. According to the UN Mission of Assistance to Rwanda (UNAMIR), both sides continued to distribute weapons to their civilian supporters.

Several times, Habyarimana called the UN secretary-general's representative to Rwanda, Jacques-Roger Booh Booh, and other diplomats to the swearing in of the new government, only to keep them waiting for a few hours and then announce that unfortunately further negotiations within the parties would be needed.

Political Murder and Violence

In October 1993, more than 300,000 mainly Hutu refugees fled to Rwanda in the wake of massacres in Burundi. The violence, spearheaded by Burundi's Tutsi army, fueled the fears of Rwandan Hutus who had been told by the government and RTLM that the RPF would behave in the same way should it ever take control in Kigali.

The refugees gathered in camps in the south of the country, and there were reports that Habyarimana was training some to fight for continued Hutu supremacy in Rwanda. The refugees were a burden on Rwanda's bankrupt economy. Already, some 900,000 Rwandans who had been displaced by the civil war and were living in camps north of Kigali were dependent on foreign aid. The rains failed at the end of 1993, and the government warned that about a million people would be affected by famine before the next harvest. The political impasse prevented ministers and civil servants from doing their jobs, and the

Above, the late President Juvenal Habyarimana
Below, Paul Kagame, head of the rebel army

work of organizing relief programs was passed to UN agencies and foreign non-governmental organizations.

On Monday, February 21, a political assassination set in motion renewed violence and the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambe militias took center stage again.

First, Félicien Gatabazi, leader of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), which was promoting compromise in the political negotiations, was killed by gunmen as he drove home from a politi-



Catherine Watson

cal meeting. The next day, in retaliation, supporters in Gatabazi's home town of Butare in southern Rwanda murdered Martin Bueyana, a senior CDR official.

In Kigali, the violence which followed was clearly organized. Armed CDR members assembled at a roundabout near the Meridien Hotel. Tutsis in the suburbs of Gikondo and Nyamirambo were targeted by CDR youth. Several hundred people were killed, no one went to work, Kigali was shut down. Three days later, it stopped as suddenly as it had started. The order went out—probably in part on RTLM and in part by word of mouth. Everyone went back to work, and the killing stopped.

It was a foretaste of the violence to come. Next time, either it would be impossible to stop the killing or those who organized it would no longer choose to exert control.

Who Killed Whom?

When Habyarimana's plane came down on April 6, rumors spread as rapidly as the news. The Presidential Guard refused to allow UN troops near the crash site to verify the story of a rocket attack. Although two explosions were clearly heard in Kigali just before the plane exploded into flames, it will probably never be possible to say for certain what caused the crash. In many ways, it no longer matters—most Rwandans believe that Habyarimana was killed, and it is their perception which shaped events.

The RPF denied responsibility, but cannot prove its innocence, while speculation continues that it could have been dissident Hutu elements within the army who shot down the plane.

The Presidential Guard, the army, the gendarmes, the Interahamwe, and the Impuzamugambi rapidly mounted road-blocks throughout Kigali and started to search for those they wanted to blame. Soldiers found the prime minister, Agathe Uwilingiyamana, hiding in a UN compound, dragged her out and slashed her to death with machetes. Three ministers were kidnapped and killed: Landoald Ndasingwa, the Tutsi faction leader of the Liberal Party; Fred Nzemenrambaho, a Hutu from the murdered Gatabazi's PSD; and Faustin Rucogoza, a Hutu from the MDR who as information minister had threatened to close down Radio Télévision Libre Milles Collines.

They hunted Faustin Twagiramungu, the prime minister-designate, but at the time of writing he is thought to have evaded capture and remains in hiding.

The RPF detachment in the Parliament building in Kigali fought the Presidential Guard, but their battles did not cause much death or damage. The slaughter carried out by the president's supporters was completely separate from the fighting. Even children were not spared—one woman arrived at Kigali's central hospital carrying a baby whose leg had been severed, while a doctor working for a UN agency was killed along with his seven children. Among the atrocities were attacks on nuns and priests and the bayoneting of wounded patients at the hospital.

The RPF announced that it was marching on Kigali, but in fact it filtered its troops through government lines and

did not take the territory between its base in Mulindi and the capital. The remnants of the government collapsed. An interim government, under the former speaker Théodore Sindikubwabo of the MDR, announced its formation on April 9, but four days later, as the RPF infiltrated Kigali, fled to Gitarama, 25 miles west of Kigali. Speaking to journalists, the interim prime minister, Jean Kambanda, said: "We still control the country and have the support of the population. We still adhere to the provisions of the Arusha Accords." These were hollow words: The Arusha Accords were no longer relevant, and the war had moved into a new and decisive phase.

Foreign Involvement

Rwanda has no strategic significance, no wealth, too many people, and not enough land. It is therefore of little interest to the world powers. However, Belgium, which imposed indirect colonial rule over Rwanda and Burundi under a League of Nations mandate after World War I, has retained influence. France, eager to preserve *la francophonie* in Africa and with an eye always on the potential wealth of neighboring Zaire, has also been involved.

In the eyes of the U.S. government and other donors, Rwanda before the war was a model of development efficiency. Every Rwandan citizen had to participate in collective labor on Saturdays. The system was harsh but effective—roads were built, trees planted. During the 1980s, the U.S. provided the Rwandan government with significant development aid and a small amount of military assistance. That continued during the war, despite the highly articulate and continued RPF lobby in the U.S., composed of Tutsi exiles from earlier pogroms. The U.S. was a significant participant in the Arusha peace talks, and lobbied for agreement to be implemented during the precarious early months of this year. It did not, however, pressure the government by withdrawing aid despite the fact that Rwanda's development activities had dwindled to nothing.

When the violence broke out this April 7, the U.S. government sent Marines to Burundi and whisked their nationals out of Rwanda by land convoy. They thus avoided any question of military intervention. France and Belgium, by contrast, sent paratroopers to Kigali. They had done the same in 1990, when the RPF first invaded.

In 1990, Belgium quickly withdrew its troops and gradually its support, and the Rwandan government began to accuse the former colonial power of siding with the RPF. When the UN formed its peace-keeping force in Rwanda after the Arusha Accords, the Rwandan government was deeply unhappy with the inclusion of 420 Belgian troops. The UN agreed to include them because the other forces which made up UNAMIR—primarily Ghanaian and Bangladeshi—were ill-equipped, while the Belgians had modern weapons and well-trained men.

France continued to support Habyarimana, who was a friend of President François Mitterrand's family. French paratroopers remained in Rwanda for several months in 1993, following an RPF attack that February, and France

was a major supplier of weapons to the Rwandan army during the war (see "Arming Rwanda: The Arms Trade and Human Rights Abuses in the Rwandan Civil War," January 1994, Human Rights Watch Arms Project). The nationalized French bank Crédit Lyonnais provided a \$6 million guarantee for the Rwandan army to buy arms from Egypt in March 1992. As recently as January 1994, UNAMIR was alerted to unconfirmed reports of small planes arriving in Kigali carrying weapons suspected to be French.

It is not surprising, therefore, that while the Rwandan army allowed the French elite force to land at Kigali airport two days after Habyarimana's plane crashed, they initially refused to grant the Belgians similar access.

The word went around Kigali that Belgian UNAMIR troops, in league with Prime Minister Uwilingiyimana, shot down the president's plane. There is not a shred of evidence of this, but that did not alter the story. The Presidential Guard killed 10 Belgian peace-keepers attempting to approach the crash site, and Belgians became the only foreigners to be targeted by violent gangs of thugs and soldiers.

Role of the UN

The UN had hoped that Rwanda would be the success to mitigate the failures of Somalia and Angola. The 2,500-strong UNAMIR force had a mandate to assist the Rwandan authorities and the RPF to implement the Arusha Accords. But success was dependent on both sides genuinely wanting to implement the agreement.

In the event, almost nothing went according to plan. In February and March, the UN secretary-general's special envoy to Rwanda, the Cameroonian former foreign minister Jacques-Roger Booh Booh, issued a series of press releases threatening to withdraw UNAMIR if the parties continued to prevaricate, but when the Security Council reviewed UNAMIR at the beginning of April, he recommended a renewal of the mandate.

UNAMIR was operating under constraints which rendered its task impossible. "A commander's ability to influence a mission is entirely dependent on knowing what's going on," one senior UNAMIR officer said. "But under our mandate we cannot create intelligence, we have to rely on gaining people's confidence." UNAMIR could not use the time-honored methods of inducements and the massaging of key contacts to get information. Maybe as a result, it appeared to have no plan when everything began to unravel.

There were more than 20 different nationalities in the UNAMIR force. They had no common language, and most spoke no French, the official language of Rwanda. "The problem is coordination," said a source close to the mission. "There are all these differences of culture and experience." By April, the Bangladeshis were still waiting for much of their equipment.

When the presidential plane crashed, UNAMIR forces did not breach the road-blocks, so they were excluded from the suburbs where the killing of civilians was taking place. The UNAMIR force commander, Gen. Romeo Dallaire of

Canada, is reported to have asked his seniors in New York for a change of mandate so he could use force, the only way of attempting to restore control in the anarchic city. This was apparently refused.

While the killings were in full spate, UNAMIR troops withdrew to barracks to await further orders. They came out on the streets later, but did little. One journalist reported seeing a woman dragged across the road and killed, while UNAMIR soldiers looked on. Asked why they did not intervene, they replied that it was not within their mandate.

UNAMIR failed to protect key politicians. When the prime minister fled to the UN Volunteers' compound, the UNVs called UNAMIR on the two-way radio. Dallaire himself eventually turned up, but not for three hours. By the time he came, the prime minister had been killed.

UNAMIR scarcely did anything in the evacuation of UN staff working for humanitarian agencies such as Unicef and UNHCR. This was left to the UN security officer, a flamboyant and immensely brave former French policeman, Jean François Faivre, who drove around town in an unarmed car, with one soldier, rescuing expatriate UN staff members from dangerous suburbs.

Dallaire also devoted his energies to trying to get the RPF and government forces to agree to a ceasefire. This ignored the fact that it was the slaughter of civilians rather than the renewal of the war which was the prime problem. It was, however, probably the only thing he could do without disobeying orders from the politicians and bureaucrats in New York who control UN peace-keeping missions. When Belgium announced the withdrawal of its contingent, UNAMIR's mission in Rwanda appeared to have collapsed.

The UN's main failure in Rwanda, however, may have been moral rather than military. Despite pleas from the heads of UN agencies in Kigali, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali refused to allow the evacuation of Rwandan staff working for UN agencies. Many of those staff were Tutsis and they may have been targets because they worked for humanitarian agencies and because they tended to be reasonably well off. At least six Rwandans working for Unicef were killed, and other agencies do not know what has happened to their employees.

As the killing of civilians and the civil war continue, the future of Rwanda looks bleak. Troops are not allowing many people to cross into Burundi, Tanzania, or Zaire, and there are reports of killings at the borders. The International Committee of the Red Cross is the only humanitarian organization still operating in Kigali. Chief ICRC delegate Philippe Gaillard described its activities as "a drop of humanity in an ocean of blood."

New negotiations between the RPF and the government will have to start, unless the RPF swiftly takes Kigali. Even this would not necessarily bring the war to an end, because most of the country remains in government hands. When the war ends, Rwanda's population will have been decimated and the divisions of ethnic and political hatred etched in people's minds more deeply than ever. ○

STATUS QUO

ANTE?

When the last American troops left Somalia on March 25 (photo), there were no sad good-byes from Mogadishu residents. For them, the 15 months of United Nations peace-keeping intervention had meant nothing—except uncertainty and violence. For the UN, top of the agenda now is the “reconciliation process.” The UN must seize this opportunity, our correspondent argues, to negotiate painstaking peace agreements among Somalia’s warring clans and factions, instead of opting for a quick fix and a rapid exit.





Patrick Robert/Sygma



On the morning of Friday, March 25, 1994, a small crowd of Western journalists and UN staff gathered on the tarmac at Mogadishu airport to bid farewell to the last of the U.S. forces in Somalia. Their departure, after more than 15 months of Operation Restore Hope,

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prompted dire predictions from Western diplomats and media that renewed fighting and rampant insecurity would again engulf the battered Horn of Africa nation.

But most Somalis either welcomed or were oblivious to the transition. The few who bothered to come to the airport were interested in termination benefits and compensation claims, not the potent symbolism of the made-for-TV airport ceremony. Residents of Mogadishu knew

only relief on March 25 when the afternoon skies cleared of the U.S. Cobra gunships that had thundered through their days and night for months.

Apart from newly bombed-out houses and fresh graves, there is little to show for the enormous international effort in Somalia. The United Nations troops who remain have adopted a posture of "non-confrontation": off the streets and hunkered down behind sandbags and barbed wire from which they rarely emerge.

Despite months of stormy debate, progress toward disarmament has been infinitesimal and some groups have actually begun to re-arm. Roads throughout southern Somalia are unsafe to travel and armed escorts are a sine qua non for Somalis and foreigners alike. Security conditions in many southern towns have again become so poor that aid agencies have withdrawn their international staff or been forced to shut down operations completely.

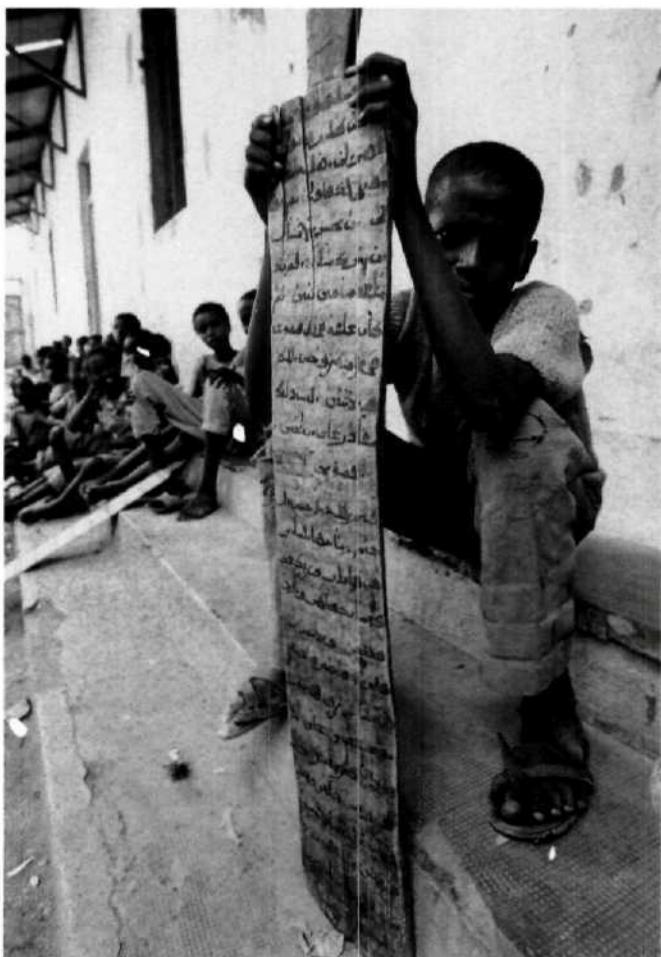
On the political front, a series of stillborn peace accords reached at Addis Ababa and Nairobi have produced nothing more than good intentions and impressive hotel bills. Plans for further talks in May on the formation of a government were foundering. For those who remember the days before foreign troops first arrived, it is as though nothing has changed: Somalia has come full circle.

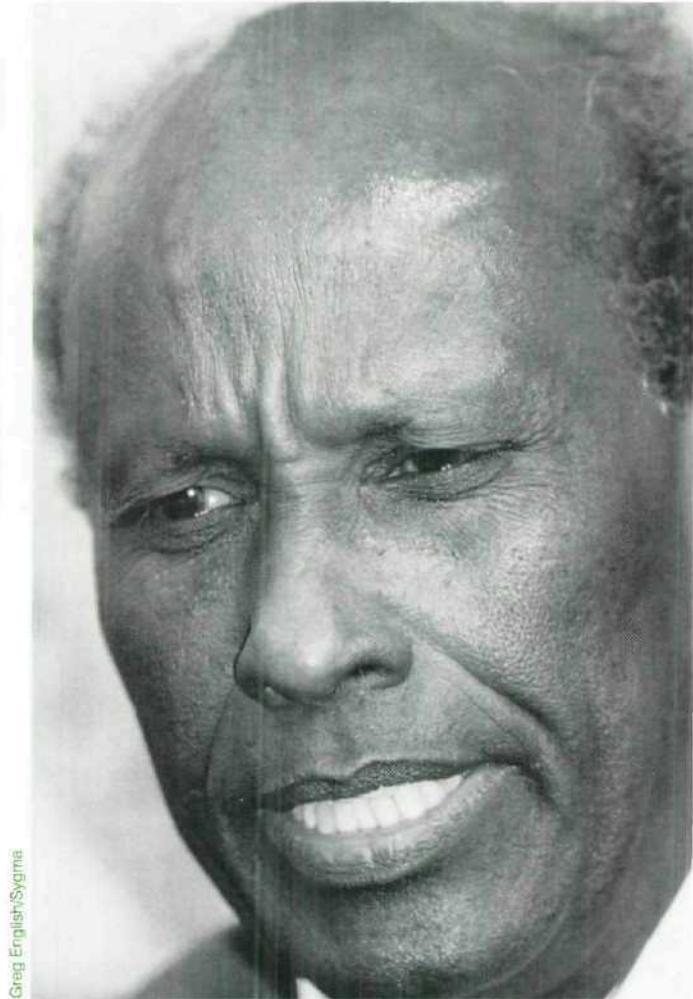
The failure of the UN and U.S. policy over the past year is good news for Somalia. The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) should now endeavor to turn back the clock to the days before the international shock-troops arrived, undoing a year of diplomatic blunders and senseless violence. The West's military disengagement from Somalia offers the country a new lease on life, while holding out to UNOSOM's new leadership an opportunity to correct the disastrous course plotted by its predecessors. UNOSOM, and Somalia's leaders, would be wrong not to seize it: The alternative is another disaster further down the road.

The present "reconciliation process"—essentially a series of meetings between major faction leaders ending in the formation of a government—is a dead end. Cozy discussions between such men will hardly produce the kind of government Somalia needs, since it will amount to little more than a sharing out of executive posts among the various leaders. History has shown this to be a zero-sum game with no winners: The carnage which followed two previous attempts to form governments in 1991 should serve to dampen the enthusiasm of UN diplomats seeking a quick fix in the same vein. The fact that more leaders representing more groups are involved than in 1991 doesn't make the prospects any better—it simply means more hungry mouths to feed from the same small plate. UNOSOM would do well to abandon this strategy in favor of one better adapted to Somali social and political realities, but to do so demands a deeper understanding of Somali affairs than UNOSOM has acquired to date or seems prepared to invest in future.

Even a cursory examination of the political process exposes the flaws in the current peace process. For a start, the absence of generalized conflict is making it difficult for certain faction leaders to sustain their claims to legitimacy among their clansmen. General Mohamed Farah Aidid, for one, faces potent opposition within the ranks of the Habar Gedir (a small sub-group of the southern Hawiye clan family). The assassination of many of his lieutenants by American forces on July 12 last year was just one blow to his leadership; another more dangerous challenge comes from within the Habar Gedir 'Ayr (Aidid is from the Sa'ad lineage), some of whom have been overtly hostile to Aidid's leadership for over a year. A group of Hawiye which includes several 'Ayr has recently tabled a political program quite different from that of Aidid's Somali National Alliance (SNA), and one that has far greater appeal to Aidid's enemies than anything the SNA has yet put forward.

Even within the SNA, Aidid can no longer count on the close support of former allies like the SSNM (Dir clan), and Col. Ahmed Omar Jees' branch of the SPM (Ogadeen clan). He is therefore deeply dependent upon his new ally in the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), Col. Abdillahi Yusuf, but Abdillahi's own support base among the Mijerteen of northeastern Somalia is itself tenuous. A former chairman of the SSDF, Abdillahi still poses a threat to the movement's current chairman,





Greg English/Syagma

Gen. Mohamed Abshir Muse. In May of last year, Abdillahi concluded a peace agreement with Aidid over the disputed town of Gaalka'yo, without the approval of either Abshir or the SSDF central committee. Though the accord successfully restored peace throughout most of the central regions, Abdillahi's blatant bid for the SSDF leadership is generating profound stresses within the movement. Many Mijerteen—particularly those of Gen. Abshir's own Isse Mahamud lineage (Abdillahi is of the Omar Mahamud)—are concerned by Col. Abdillahi's lack of consultation and alarmed by his sudden rapprochement with Aidid, whose forces have been exchanging fire with the SSDF since early 1991. An SSDF congress to resolve the confusion seems imminent, demanding suspension of the faction's participation in national talks until its internal feuds have been resolved.

Problems of legitimacy—who has the right to negotiate and what they can negotiate—are abundant throughout Somalia. The Kisimayo dispute is a case in point: Several of the Kisimayo area's clans are uneasy about agreement made on their behalf by leaders in

whom they have little confidence. The opposed SPM leaders, Gen. Aden Gabiyo and Colonel Omar Jees, are not even natives of Somalia and may not be able to find a real confluence of interest with local Ogadeeni leaders. Likewise, the SNF (Marehan) of Abudwaq share a similar sentiment about their leadership's commitment to a common front with the Mijerteen in Kisimayo, while they have only recently lost SSDF support for their own struggle against the SNA near Dhusamareb.

Resolution of such basic disputes over land and property is a far cry from the kind of horse-trading that goes on in Nairobi and Addis Ababa hotel rooms. Appointing a president, vice presidents, a prime minister, and various ministries (as faction leaders pledged to do on March 24 at their last Nairobi meeting) will only soothe the political—and personal—aspirations of a select clique. It is not a substitute for, nor a step in the direction of, the kind of painstaking peace agreements that need to be worked out between clans and between their associated factions. Nor will it do anything to alter the de facto partition of the country into zones effectively controlled by clan-based factions and their militia forces. In all likelihood, the disputes bound to result from the efforts of such a hypothetical national authority to impose itself on various regions (especially Somaliland) will only lead to an escalation of conflict. Viewed in this context, the UN's plans for a Somali government are simply an accident waiting to happen.

UNOSOM doesn't have to look far for an alternative: Most of the groundwork has already been laid by Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun. As special representative of

THE PROBLEMS OF WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE AND WHAT THEY CAN NEGOTIATE ARE ABUNDANT IN SOMALIA.

the UN secretary-general in 1992, Sahnoun was quick to identify regions falling under the effective control of a given faction. The northeast (SSDF) and the northwest (Somaliland) readily meet this definition, while civil war and international interference have retarded the emergence of similar structures in the south. Nevertheless, the idea of

some kind of loose, federal arrangement is beginning to gain currency among diverse groups of Somalis. Both the SSDF and SPM (Gabiyo faction) have long considered regional autonomy to be an integral part of their political platforms. A group of influential Hawiye leaders have recently tabled a similar proposal. When Sahnoun incorporated such ideas into a strategy for eventual reconciliation and reconstruction, he was simply recognizing a fact of post-war Somalia and he won the confidence and respect of many Somalis for doing so. UNOSOM's new leadership could benefit from his example.

Above, Gen. Mohamed
Farah Aidid

Left, boy with Koranic
prayer board at an
orphanage in Baidoa

Somalis on Their Own Terms

Operation Restore Hope seemed a noble and necessary gesture, but despite its undoubtedly achievements, history may well reveal that the dominant pressures leading to a new and unaccustomed "humanitarian" intervention role for the U.S. military had much to do with the internal politics of the U.S. presidency and the frustrations of captains of the aid industry and charities. Of the good intentions of the general public there can be no doubt, but African situations are often complex and their politics are not for the dilettante.

The U.S. and UN military were soon in over their heads in Somalia. That is not to blame them. When confronted by unexpected opposition, they responded as they were trained. Military spokesmen and the media then decided to demonize Mohamed Farah Aidid—as they had, in totally different circumstances, Saddam Hussein—with predictable results.

Aidid is a stern, patriotic, hard—even harsh and uncompromising—nationalist, but one who is self-confident and consistent. He has attempted to follow the mandate of those who chose him. He was not a suitable candidate to whom to suggest voluntary exile. This accounts for his popularity. No one was tempted by the absurd price on his head. Aidid's whole stance had come to appeal to the independent spirit of a proud people. And his appeal is wider: He has undoubtedly caught the imagination of the frustrated youth of an impoverished continent.

But his character and reputation also account for the enmity and fear felt by many Darod Somalis who were savagely persecuted by Aidid's militia. It is his opponents who have cynically encouraged the view that he is a terrorist and an international criminal with appropriate connections—charges

that have never been impartially examined or seriously substantiated. It remains to be seen how effective a number of gestures of reconciliation on the part of Aidid have been.

Foreign-based Somali intellectuals—perhaps forgetting the early careers of Eisenhower, Sadat, and a host of other significant world leaders—often assert that military experience is an impediment to civil leadership, especially if emphasis is to be placed on decentralized government. Young guerrilla leaders go even further and often demand the exclusion of all who have held public office during a period of dictatorship, but that is scarcely possible when it lasted for 21 years. However, even though no universally accepted figure is yet apparent—particularly since the secession of the north has ruled out significant Somali National Movement (SNM) leaders such as Ahmed Silanyo and Abdulrahman "Tur"—this issue must be left to time.

On several occasions, Aidid has protested foreign involvement in Somali affairs, which, however well-intentioned, has to date served to delay bringing the dictator and his main supporters to book. In his view, it has also hindered the re-establishment and regeneration of Somalia's own institutions and sovereignty. Aidid has therefore been obstructive and makes no secret of his wish to lead the nation. It may well be difficult for Westerners who have witnessed, with totally justified horror, TV images of frenzied Somalis dragging the bodies of supposed peace-keepers through the streets of Mogadishu to understand why Aidid was, for example, invited to give the keynote address to the Sixth Pan African Congress held in April 1994 in Kampala, Uganda. But in these days of disparity, famine, disease—not to mention Africa's absolutely crippling debt repayments—Aidid's defiance

The problem of when, and how, such regional authorities could be persuaded to establish a supra-national body may be the toughest nut to crack. Somaliland is unlikely to subscribe to any such arrangement in the near future, but most Isaak are not prepared to accept any southern influence in their affairs whatsoever; having fought against southern domination for 10 years, their determination defies doubt. Southerners, however, including the SNM's purported friend, Aidid, are unequivocal in their assertion that Somaliland must

remain part of Somalia. The issue of Somaliland threatens to be as violent and intractable as the conflict in the south, yet UNOSOM has been reluctant to come to terms with a problem so fraught with potential danger.

Assuming that UNOSOM actually wants to come to grips with Somalia's most explosive issues is in itself an act of faith. Most of UNOSOM's hugely bloated bureaucracy has nothing to do with Somalia at all: More has been spent on feathering the organization's 80-acre nest in the former U.S. embassy compound than in rehabilitating

NO TO MULTI-PARTY

Uganda's electorate has bucked the continent-wide trend to multi-party democracy, opting instead for President Yoweri Museveni's "no-party movement" system in elections for a constituent assembly. Museveni claims that the movement system is popular because Ugandans are fed up with political parties which have, in

The woman was old, but knew what she was doing. Dressed in a *busuti*, the traditional puff-sleeved dress of southern Uganda, she ticked her candidate's photo and posted the ballot into the black metal box.

"I don't want multi-parties because it brings out differences between us," she said afterwards. She said she knew who stood for President Yoweri Museveni's movement system and who stood for multi-parties because she had attended candidates' meetings.

The next woman, a shopkeeper, had also voted "movement." "Multi-parties are why our people have died," she said softly as she walked away from the polling station on a dirt path through the banana trees.

Held on March 28, Uganda's elections were only the second secret ballot and universal suffrage elections the country had seen since independence in October 1962. The other was the disputed election of December 1980, which brought Milton Obote and the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) to power for a second time.

The aim of the March elections was to directly elect 214 delegates to a 288-member constituent assembly. The others include 10 appointed by Museveni and 56 representing interest groups, including women, the army, the trade unions, the youth, and the disabled.

In addition, each political party which contested the 1980 election—UPC, which has traditionally been backed by Protestants; the Democratic Party (DP), which Catholics have traditionally supported; Museveni's former party, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM); and the Conservative Party (CP)—will be able to send two delegates.

The constituent assembly's role is to debate an already written draft constitution and promulgate a new one. This has been an aim of Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) since its days in the bush.

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"The old constitutions were controversial and could not be the basis for peace," said Maj. Kale Kayihura, a member of the 21-member constitutional commission. "We wanted to rethink the constitutional order, which has been in crisis since 1962. We believed that if we created a constitution based on national consensus, it would be a stronger foundation for stability."

A bush document, written in August 1981, six months after Museveni began his war against the Obote regime, explains the need for a new constitution based on "wide consultations with the public."

The NRM has come good on this. "The draft constitution has been written after an astounding and unparalleled rate of popular participation," said Anthony Reagan, an Australian constitutional lawyer who has been attached to the commission.

The constitutional commission itself was broadly representative of the spectrum of Ugandan political views. Set up in 1989, it contained not just NRM-ers but also members of UPC, DP, and other tendencies as well as people who support federalism and a return of the kingdoms.

"It took a while for the individual commissioners to learn that it couldn't be a vehicle for party interests," said one source close to the commission. "But once that was learned, they really sought the common view."

Over a four-year period, the commission visited all of Uganda's 800 or so subcounties, some of them up to three times, to hear the views of ordinary people. It also received 16,500 written memoranda, which were dutifully punched into computers and analyzed.

The constitutional commission maintains that the draft constitution is a distillation of these views and therefore represents a genuine consensus. For this reason, the constituent assembly statute makes it difficult to alter.

To change a clause of the draft, two-thirds of the delegates must vote against it. If between half and two-thirds

the past, helped exacerbate ethnic and religious strife. In the event, the draft constitution, if approved, will allow the ruling National Resistance Movement another five years of its system of government, which, observers say, is generally as democratic, if not more so, than many of its multi-party counterparts.

vote to change a clause, it is defined as a "contentious matter" and must go for a nationwide referendum, unless it is a "local issue."

The hottest issue in the constitution is the section on political systems. As it stands, the draft constitution says the NRM's no-party movement system of government should continue for another five years from the promulgation of the constitution in late 1994. After those five years, the question will be put to the electorate in a referendum.

During those five years, parties will be able to operate at least as freely as they have since 1986 when the NRM captured power—they certainly will be able to have headquarters, publish newspapers, and talk to the press. The draft constitution says new parties will be encouraged to form, so it seems membership drives will also be allowed.

It was the burning feelings of some Ugandans about the multi-party versus no-party movement model that turned the CA elections from a potentially sleepy and dull contest into an urgent one—and provided a good measure of how much support Museveni and the NRM enjoy after eight years in power.

Though the CA statute said that candidates could not use a political party, religion, or tribe as "a basis for their candidature," this part of the statute was not enforced. At the candidates' meetings nationwide, candidates proclaimed their support for the NRM, DP, or UPC.

"Effectively it has been a party election, with whether Uganda should return to multi-parties or stick to the movement system being the main issue before the electorate," said one foreign observer.

The result was unambiguous. NRM candidates won about 150 of the seats in the assembly. "It is unfolding pretty much as we expected, except in the north, but then we hadn't expected much in the north anyway," said a calm but pleased NRM political commissar, Jotham Tumwes-

gye, on the morning after the elections. "It will be almost impossible for multi-party activists to push through their agenda now."

Asked at a press conference at his farm in western Uganda why the NRM had performed so well, Museveni said it has "genuine massive support because of [its] achievements." He said the NRM had rebuilt the infrastructure, stabilized the currency, and created an environment in which consumer goods were widely available. Currently, Uganda's economy is the third fastest growing in Africa, after Mauritius and Botswana.

"There is also peace and harmony in the villages," said Museveni. "People are no longer at each other's throats over this Catholic and Protestant business."

Laughing, he went on to say: "The position of some of the political opportunists is childish. For someone to stand up and say Uganda is now worse than in Amin's time...Okay, it's an opinion, but it's an amazing opinion."

Museveni's analysis is that the peasants want the movement system because they know how Uganda's parties in the past fanned religious and ethnic strife of which they were the prime victims. He believes it is just a small vocal elite who benefited from the chaos of the past who want a return to parties.

"Remember that these UPCs, who are really criminals, controlled and plundered the whole country. Now they are reduced to working in a small enclave of Acholi and Lango in the center north," he said.

Even there, he said, they did not win without a fight and had to resort to spreading rumors that he and his government were foreigners from Rwanda, who also intended to sell off northerners' land. "Despite the poison they have been pouring there, you find it's still a battle."

NRM candidates did well in West Nile in the far northwest and in Karamoja in the far northeast. They won massively across the center, south, southeast, and west.

even of the world community itself was bound to draw such a response.

That is quite apart from the fact that the present UN secretary-general is not popular among Somalis. They, like all Africans, have long memories, and many recall his warm relations, when in charge of Egypt's ministry of foreign affairs, with the ousted Somali dictator. On a visit to Mogadishu in January 1993, the secretary-general was stoned by a mob and had to be rescued by U.S. forces. The precautions surrounding his second brief visit, during the period of the abortive ransomed manhunt for Aidid, even raised the question of who exactly was "fugitive."

On June 6, 1993, the Security Council passed Resolution 837, which blamed Aidid for the deaths of Pakistani peace-keepers but did not even mention Somali dead and injured. This was hurried though on the basis of one side's interpretation of the event. There was no impartial inquiry, which Aidid consistently called for in messages to the media and the OAU. In a letter addressed to former President Jimmy Carter, he even undertook to abide by its findings. All this was also racist in the eyes of many Africans.

Violence escalated wildly on both sides. The military odds were heavily against the Somalis and many innocent women, children, elders, and would-be peace-makers died or have been maimed for life. It is deplorable that supposed peace-keeping troops should suffer needlessly, but it is also true that sections of the Somali capital have been terrorized by low-flying helicopter gunships, and the most sophisticated instruments of modern warfare have been used indiscriminately. Even hospitals have been bombarded and hostages seized. The UN called for the trial, not of the dictator in comfortable exile [Mohamed Siad Barre], but of the soldier-diplomat chosen to remove him. President Clinton rightly called a halt to this confused episode.

But what happens now?

It is no accident that the efforts of the recent committee of East African presidents—particularly of Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and Daniel arap Moi of

Mogadishu's own battered infrastructure. UNOSOM's enormous civilian staff is dedicated to keeping this monstrous life-support system alive. Personnel, and outputs, intended to directly benefit Somalis are negligible. Few UNOSOM staff have any contact with the Somali community at all, and fewer still stay beyond their initial six-month or 12-month contract period, ensuring that the organization remains perpetually at the low end of the learning curve.

UNOSOM's political intervention in Somalia is equally self-serving. After so many setbacks, what the UN

Kenya—to create a climate for peace have in recent months promised more than heretofore. They know well that the history of independent Africa is replete with examples of the folly of foreigners attempting either to choose or to overthrow national leaders or to support unpopular ones.

What is needed remains what was needed when Barre was overthrown in 1991: help to the Somalis to negotiate a stable peace, to rebuild their own institutions within a decentralized governmental structure, and above all to choose their own leaders. Weapons, with the exception of equipment for the police, are not needed. There are too many already. Gunships have not helped, for the Somalis too can make war. Many even enjoy it. All are very conscious that Somalia and Somaliland are their countries. Their elders are proud and their young combative and fearless. But provided the Somali social structure holds, the elders can also display firmness and a considerable talent for making peace and promoting compromise.

Whatever one may feel about the UDI and "independence" of Somaliland—and Somalis differ—the fact is that without interference or significant help the northerners have already met, thanked the SNM militias, and retired them. Problems aplenty still abound, but they have restored a semblance of law and order, a civilian administration, and a basis for economic take-off. The south now needs a chance to follow suit, with help of course, but on its own terms.

In that process, the marginalization or otherwise of Mohamed Farah Aidid will take place, and the issue of national leadership be settled. It may not be painless, but it is a Somali responsibility and the world could well be surprised by the eventual outcome. Somalis do not perhaps forget, but the democratic roots of their culture allow scope for forgiveness.■

—Richard Greenfield
Chairman of the Council of Management
Africa Centre, London

bureaucracy needs from Somalia is a quick fix that will allow a rapid exit and a declaration of victory. The UN wants only to stick the signatures of the Somalia's warlords at the bottom of a tidy peace agreement, greased along with promises of fat bankrolls for reconstruction. That they are recreating the same corrupt donor-driven system that fueled Somalia's implosion in the first place is of little concern to the international bureaucrats. Since this is the only solution the UN can come up with, it seems that Somalia's misery is just beginning. ○

The defeat of the UPC was probably greatest in western Uganda. Former Obote ministers Yosani Kanyomozi, Adonia Tiberondwa, Edward Ruranguranga, and Patrick Rubaihayo lost in Bushenyi, Ntungamo, and Mbarara districts as did the speaker of the national assembly during Obote II, Francis Butagira. In Mukono, UPC strongman Rev. Kefa Sempangi lost to a little-known woman doctor who supports the NRM. And in Kabale town, Robert Kitariko, the secretary-general of the DP, was defeated by a large margin by the NRM minister of transport, Ruhakara Rugunda.

However, in Lira, the UPC's most vocal leader, Cecilia Ogwal, won a resounding victory over NRM candidate Sam Engola. And in Kilak county in Gulu, the prominent and dynamic minister of state for the north, Betty Bigombe, lost to a little-known multi-party proponent, James Atare.

Though the opposition played dirty in the center north, playing on the fears of poor peasants with untrue rumors about the NRM—Museveni is not Rwandan, nor are there plans to sell off northern land—the NRM has partly itself to blame for its poor showing there: The National Resistance Army (NRA) committed human rights abuses during the civil war. NRM/A cadres in the north have also often been weak. At the press conference, Museveni criticized them: "You find that problems that can be answered are not taken care of."

However, history and ethnicity also play a role. Previous governments were dominated by northern leaders, most of them Nilot. Museveni and most of his closest colleagues are from southern and western Bantu groups and the NRM is viewed as the government of "others" by many northerners.

Creating a new northern elite has been a slow process, and northerners who associate themselves with the NRM like Bigombe and Deputy Minister Charles Alai, who also lost, are often regarded as traitors locally. An exception may be Prime Minister George Cosmos Adyebo, who won his CA seat in the Lango district of Apac.

With a few exceptions—such as a grenade thrown at one NRM candidate's supporters in Mbale and violence between the supporters of two NRM candidates in Ntungamo district, a race in which the anti-Rwanda card was also used—the elections themselves were quiet. With no party or movement slogans, chants, regalia, and no marches or rallies, the opportunities were reduced for supporters of different candidates to clash.

Candidates met the electorate together at meetings supervised by local civil servants. Each had 20 minutes to speak, then answered questions for as long as they had stamina. These meetings greatly "reduced the cost of running and democratized the process," said one local political scientist.

Many members of the current parliament, the National Resistance Council, were lambasted by their constituencies at these meetings. Countrywide, incumbents were rejected.

The elections were a massive exercise: 7,180,514 registered voters, 14,636 polling stations, over 50 tons of ballot papers, and the entire electoral machinery to set up from scratch. The turnout of registered voters was a healthy 87 percent. There were about 200 international observers and over 10,000 local observers, the latter organized through the churches and other parts of civil society.

Though initially government personalities took advantage of their official vehicles—the most flagrant case being Minister of State for Defense Amama Mbabazi, who flew to his constituency in an army helicopter—this was banned five weeks before the elections, and the playing field gradually flattened.

The main hitches during the election were inadequate display of registers; inexperience of polling staff; lack of civic education; and "indelible" ink that easily washed off. Some monitors felt that illiterate, elderly, and disabled voters—who amount to as much as half the electorate in some rural areas—were taken advantage of by those who helped them vote.

Western embassies and international observers have said that the election was "a valid exercise and a positive step toward democracy in Uganda" and that it "reflected the will of the Ugandan people." Nor were the results seriously disputed.

Three weeks after the elections, only five candidates had petitioned the electoral commission, complaining of foul play. Several were NRM candidates. There is no evidence that the government tried to fix election results.

In northern Uganda, rather than being accused of shipping in soldiers to vote for NRM candidates, the government refused to allow soldiers from 16 voting areas to vote. The soldiers had suddenly been deployed away from the areas in which they had registered to deal with a flare-up of Joseph Kony's Lords Resistance Army.

The constituent assembly will probably begin to sit in May. It can sit for no longer than seven months, which means realistically that Uganda's presidential and legislative elections will not be held until 1995.

With Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, and Sudan in near collapse, and Kenya brimming with tension, international pressure on Museveni to adopt a multi-party system has greatly slackened. And some features of democracy are now greater in Uganda than in African multi-party states: The press is free and political human rights abuses are minimal now that the insurgencies are effectively over.

The constituent assembly now has an enormous draft constitution to debate and a lot of humdrum work to do. In his usual, unexcitable style, at the post-election press conference, what Museveni most wanted to talk about was poverty. "We have launched three movements," he said. "One to overthrow dictatorship, and one to consolidate power so that the dictators don't come back. The third is to optimize wealth in the rural areas."

His final word on the CA election was, "It's just an election, not a war." □

AIDS

BY JULIE FLINT

Ten years after AIDS was first recorded on the western shore of Lake Victoria, where Uganda and Tanzania meet, the epidemic is still sweeping through the population, increasingly taking a toll among the civil service and professional classes. Experts believe that, while accepting the unpalatable fact that a certain percentage of the population is going to die from AIDS, resources should be concentrated on prevention and control to prevent the disease from spreading.

Catharine Watson

What Have You Heard About AIDS?

What Does It Mean?

How Does It Harm Us?

Who Can Get It?

What Causes It?

How Can We Stop It?

What Can We Do For People Who Have It?

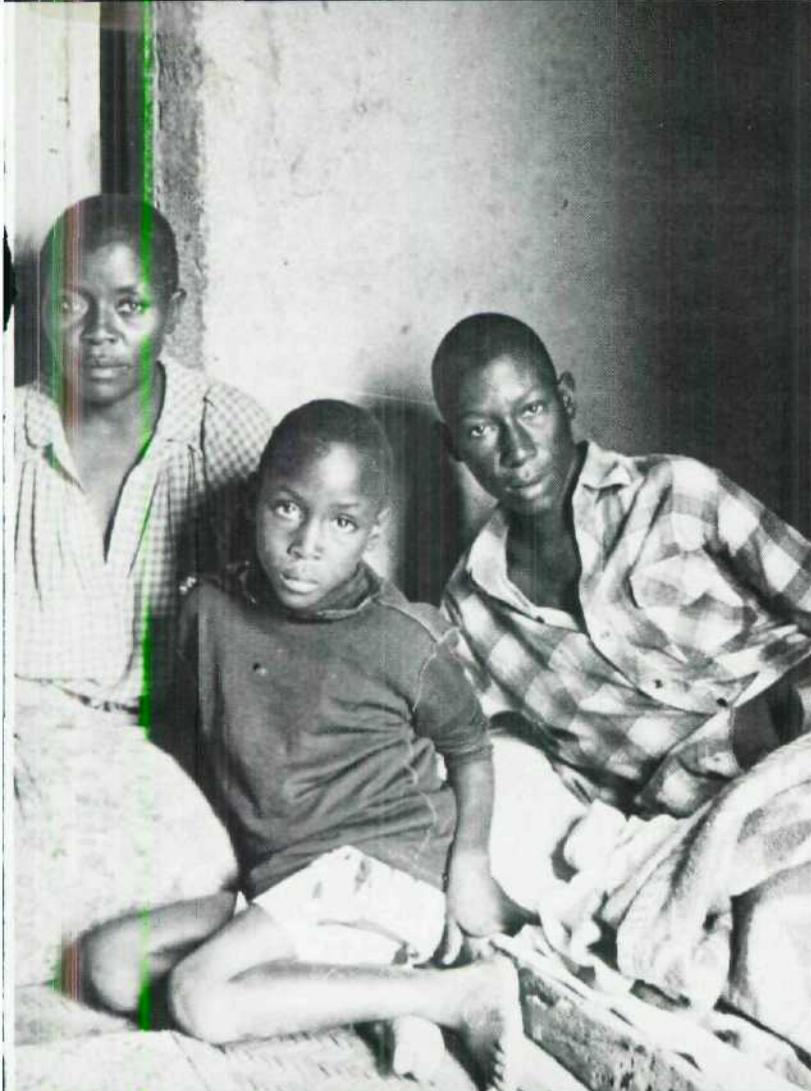
How Can It Be Cured?

What Does It Look Like?

Which Of Us Has It?



THE PLAGUE YEARS



Johnson Kyabandi, 42, has AIDS. Outside the small hut where he lies in the darkness, barely able to move or swallow, his widowed mother sits with her head in her hands, asking how she is going to survive when he is dead. She is rapidly losing her sight and soon will be unable to weave the rough mats that provide the family with its only income.

A short distance away, on the edge of this small clearing in the jungle, Johnson's 11-year-old son kicks his heel against a tree. "The boy is very affected," his father says. "Sometimes I am worse than I am now and he comes and sits where you are, without saying anything, and he starts crying."

The future is bleak for the old woman and motherless child. Johnson sold his only asset—his bicycle—long ago to buy sugar and soap, and his small plot of land produced little even when he was able to cultivate it. Neighbors can give moral but not material support: There are no jobs here, no shops, no school. Only AIDS, apparent in the empty huts and abandoned gardens all around.

"AIDS is incurable," says Gideon Makumbi, an 80-year-old grandfather. "It is like sweeping back the ocean using a broom. Once I had 25 children. Now I have five. I have to sit and watch them die until I die and it is over."

This is Kyankere—"the village of frogs"—in southern Uganda's Rakai district, heartland of the epidemic that Britain's *Sunday Times* has called "the plague that never was." There is nothing here but jungle and bananas from which two fiercely alcoholic brews are made. Even in early afternoon, the rough, overgrown track that passes for a road is filled with young men—and women—so drunk they can barely stand. This an economic war zone, caught in a vicious circle of poverty and sickness.

Across the border in Bukoba, capital of Tanzania's Kagera province, Dennis, a genial rogue of 51, is HIV-positive but is keeping it quiet for the sake of a bit of company. He separated from his first wife after she went to Kenya to work as a prostitute, but took her back when she returned. This, he says, is how he became infected.

Since his wife's death, he has scratched a living cleaning fish in a muddy, stinking inlet on the western bank of Lake Victoria. He helps his new girl out with scraps of fish when she is hungry—but has not told her he is sick.

It is a common enough story. A decade after AIDS was first recorded in this part of Africa, behavior does not appear to be changing significantly although AIDS awareness is high. "Adults have changed a little—they don't go to bars quite so much—but the young laugh when we talk to them," says Paschasia Rugumira, a Tanzanian nurse with World Vision. "Only educated people are giving sex education at home. Kids say AIDS is an adult disease."

A survey carried out by Médécins du Monde at Bukoba hospital this year found 19 percent of pregnant women infected. Statistics compiled by Dr. Japhet Killewo, head of

epidemiology at Dar es Salaam University, show that 24 percent of adults were HIV-positive at the last count.

Seen from here, claims that HIV is not lethal seem at best bizarre and at worst dangerous. Suggestions that heterosexual AIDS is largely a myth are denounced as "criminal." African voices tell you they are dying as never before, that medicines that once cured malaria, TB, and diarrhea no longer do; that sex is the cause of this sickness.

The night ferry from Bukoba docks at Mwanza on the southern shore of Lake Victoria in early morning, packed with young men trading bananas and sugar cane. The African Medical and Research Foundation, AMREF, fills the lavatories with bowls of condoms in the knowledge that 48 percent of Mwanza's bar-girls are infected and the morgue at Bugando Medical Center is overflowing.

"There are eight fridges and when you open them you find three bodies inside," says Arnoud Klokke, head of pathology. "The majority are AIDS patients. We put air conditioners into the freezer room a year ago so you could at least keep bodies there for one or two days without them deteriorating too fast. Twice a week, the municipality comes with a huge garbage truck to collect the bodies that are uncollected. Often you find that people don't have money for burials any more."

AIDS is changing even death in this part of Africa, where the first HIV-related fatalities were recorded a decade ago.

"Funerals used to go on for seven days," says Rugumira. "Now it's only three. Before, the whole village stopped work for two days. Now they only stop during the burial."

Across the border in Uganda, many families are bringing relatives home from the hospital just before they die, no longer able to afford the high transport cost of corpses. Bicycles with skeletal figures strapped to wooden seats above the back wheel are a common sight wherever there is a hospital or clinic. Funerals and memorials are frequently combined—as they never were before—and often less well-attended: Too many working days are being lost in mourning and travel is expensive.

In Kampala, so many civil servants are dying that the government is considering withholding funeral expenses.

"The government traditionally provides the coffin, transport, and cloth for the burial," says Mary Muduli, acting commissioner for expenditure. "Now it is not practical; the numbers get bigger and bigger every day. For the moment we are just trying to manage, ministry by ministry, the best way we can. This ministry is recommending that families should pay for funerals if they can."

At Kitovi hospital in southern Uganda's Masaka district, a counselor says people even cry less than they used to. "In three years, I've been to five burials on a staffer's compound," she says. "A sixth member of the family is now sick. Two of the dead were children. How many tears does one person have?"

Already 1.7 million Ugandans are infected in a population of 17 million and researchers say the epidemic has not yet peaked. The Virus Research Institute at Entebbe has

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found that HIV accounts for 50.5 percent of all adult deaths in a region where 5 percent of the population is infected. AIDS is the principal cause of adult death and the fifth cause of child death at Kampala's largest hospital, Mulago, where HIV infection often underlies the greatest pediatric killers—malaria, diarrhea, and tuberculosis.

In Tanzania, where HIV infection has brought a resurgence of once-controlled epidemics like TB, the ministry of health predicts that 2.4 million people will be infected by the year 2000. Child mortality, which decreased steadily for 20 years, is again increasing.

"AIDS in Africa is an epidemic of enormous magnitude comparable only with tuberculosis in England at the turn of the century," says Daan Mulder, head of the Virus Research Institute, which has shown that young people who are HIV-positive are 87 times more likely to die prematurely than those who are not. "In many urban areas, there is already a massive spread in adult populations outside high-risk groups."

As HIV infection extends into the general population, AIDS is placing new strains on economies already burdened by the structural adjustments demanded by the International Monetary Fund. Skilled workers who cannot be replaced are dying; meager resources are being diverted from development to relief; care is replacing prevention, at great expense.

"Government capacities are definitely being impacted on," says Muduli. "In one month, three senior economists have died in this ministry and I don't see how anyone expects us to replace them. There aren't too many well-trained people around here."

"A great number of our doctors have died," says Dr. Denis Tindyebwa, a pediatrician at Mulago hospital. "Nurses and midwives have died in great numbers."

Research by the AIDS Information Center in Kampala indicates that worse is to come. Despite vigorous safer-sex campaigning, some of the highest infection rates in the city are in the area of Makerere University, the capital's foremost recruiting ground.

There is similar attrition in Dar es Salaam. "We are losing a lot of people now, especially the chief executives," says Dr. Swal, head of Tanzania's National AIDS Control Program. "There is no sector that would say it hasn't been touched. Mention any ministry or parastatal corporation and they will tell you they have lost someone."

Although HIV infection is devastating many urban areas with wealthy, mobile populations, the epidemic varies in strength and in many rural areas is still relatively minor. Limiting the spread in those areas, where a majority of Africans live, is one of the main challenges facing governments today.

AMREF researchers believe the best line of attack lies in targeting high-risk groups that spread the virus. Others are concentrating on community development in the conviction that HIV is in large part a poverty disease, compounded by lack of education and the inability of women to negotiate sex.

The head of counseling at Kitovi hospital recently asked a group of young women to list all the reasons why they had sex. The main reason was "gifts"—school fees, clothing, even extra tutoring. Prostitutes regularly tell counselors they'd rather die of AIDS tomorrow than starve today.

Epidemiologists look on the bright side: If 10 percent of the population is infected, 90 percent is not. In the last decade, they say, agencies directed by the World Health Organization and national governments have implemented large-scale blood screening that covers roughly half of all donated blood. High-risk programs using peer educators have had some success among truck drivers and prostitutes and the stigma attached to AIDS is decreasing, thanks in large part to the extraordinary vigor of local African initiatives.

But AIDS control is still confined largely to health ministries; health structures are grossly inadequate; churches continue to campaign against condom use; soldiers rape with impunity.

Government officials, doctors, and aid workers refute charges that too much money is being spent on AIDS control and regret, bitterly, that these accusations coincide with signs of donor fatigue.

"A statement that HIV draws money from other diseases is a cheap, unqualified statement," says Mulder. "There's good evidence that the most cost-effective way of preventing the AIDS epidemic is to intervene as quickly as possible, while there is no spread into the general population."

"Any money you invest now in AIDS control is much better spent than 10 years ahead," agrees AMREF's Dr. Ulrich Laukamu-Josten. "There is a natural curve in this epidemic. It will reach a plateau. You can debate whether it will be 10, 20, or 30 percent, but it's never beyond 30 percent. As a donor you should say: This is an exceptional event, the number-one health problem. So for a period—five or 10 years—you concentrate on control, primarily prevention."

Social workers say children need more help—not less—and express grave fears for uninfected children who are not being cared for.

"The social welfare sector is so under-resourced it is not able to do very much," says Chris Roys, Save the Children's social work adviser in Rakai. "I'm worried about a generation of children growing up experiencing so much sickness and death; maybe lacking education and skills that would enable them to survive in a traditional way. But addressing these problems is almost a luxury. It's not just sex education they need to protect themselves. Their mental health as well is important."

The director of WHO's Global AIDS Program has pointed out that a basic HIV prevention program for 1990, for all developing countries, would have cost a 20th of Operation Desert Storm. But that was Kuwait—and this is Africa. And, says Arnoud Klokke, "there's no interest in Africa." □

|| TANZANIA || BY LOUISA TAYLOR

THE 30-YEAR ITCH

Betty Press



1994 marks the 30th anniversary of the marriage of Tanganyika and the off-shore island of Zanzibar as the United Republic of Tanzania. The union was a strategic move, but also a marriage of convenience. In the intervening decades, Zanzibaris have simmered in private over their perceived loss of sovereignty. But arrayed against disintegration of the union are powerful forces, including Tanzania's elder statesman, former President Julius Nyerere. The best compromise is probably reform of the original integration agreement, redefining the powers between the union and its constituent parts.

Muhammad Yussuf is in a philosophical mood. He's trying to explain why it wouldn't be the end of the world if the United Republic of Tanzania dissolved and its original components, Tanganyika and Zanzibar, re-emerged as autonomous states.

"Political union is a lot like marriage," says Yussuf, director of the Zanzibar liaison office in Dar es Salaam. "You think you can't possibly live without the other, but once you separate, you realize you're fine on your own, and maybe you even thrive. I believe we can survive without the union."

Just a few years ago, talk like that would have landed Yussuf in hot water with the country's leadership, but these days questions about the usefulness of the union are coming from all sides. Is Tanzania heading for divorce court, just as the united republic marks its 30th anniversary? If the events of the past year are anything to judge by, the answer could be yes.

Before 1964, Tanganyika and Zanzibar and its islands Unguja and Pemba were simply Indian Ocean neighbors and trading partners, with the Swahili language and people—and British colonial rule—in common. In the 19th century, Zanzibar was famous as a way-station for slave traders and explorers and later as the source of cloves and cinnamon. The sultan of Oman brought his court to Zanzibar in 1832 and his family ruled there, protected by the British, until the revolution sent them packing in January 1964.

The left-wing noises coming out of revolutionary Zanzibar made a

Zanzibari woman showing off her rice harvest

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lot of people nervous, including the Americans, who are said to have feared that the islands would become the Cuba of Africa. Then-President Julius Nyerere, who had led Tanganyika to independence three years earlier, quickly invited the new Zanzibar leader Abeid Karume to discuss unification.

Less than 100 days after the revolution, Nyerere and Karume signed the Articles of Union, forming two governments: one for the union—including the mainland—and one for Zanzibar. In its current form, the union government handles all mainland responsibilities plus foreign affairs, defense, communications, currency, and higher education for the whole country. Zanzibar has its own president and cabinet, House of Representatives, and bureaucracy, with control over domestic issues.

"The union was a strategic move, but it was also in the spirit of pan-Africanism," says Mwesiga Baregu, associate professor of political science at the University of Dar es Salaam and chief political adviser to the opposition party NCCR-Mageuzi. "The idea was we become independent, we unite, we fight back. It was real for us then, although in 1964 we didn't think it was possible to form a unitary state right away. Gradually the two entities were supposed to move closer, bringing together more ministries, institutions, bureaucracy."

It didn't quite happen that way. From the start, the arrangement irritated many and satisfied few—but everyone was aware that the union was not open for discussion. "It was considered treason" to question the union, says Yussuf. "The problems were always there, but no one dared to talk about them when Nyerere was in power. The former president of Zanzibar, Aboud Jumbe, questioned the union and party supremacy in 1984, but Nyerere

rejected it and our whole government had to resign."

What no one spoke of in public, they stewed over in private. Zanzibaris feared the proud islands would lose their sovereignty, and in many ways those fears came true. After Zanzibar's ruling Africa-Shirazi Party merged with the mainland's Tanganyika African Union (TANU) in 1977 to create the Party of the Revolution (Chama cha Mapinduzi or CCM), all major political moves—including the appointment of government leaders—had to be vetted by the CCM's National Executive Committee. The NEC, the most powerful body in the country, meets in the capital city, Dodoma, and is dominated by mainlanders.

"Zanzibar has become just another region, with all the decisions being made in Dodoma," says one Western diplomat familiar with the isle. "The Zanzibar government has no real power, just the illusion of power."

Zanzibar was relatively prosperous at the time of the union, earning \$9,000 per ton of cloves, the mainstay of the economy. When prices plummeted in the late 1970s, its prosperity took a beating. But many islanders blame their current economic woes on Nyerere's socialist policies, which took Zanzibar away from its roots as a trading center. They also blame the mainland for draining resources from the island, pointing to early years of the union when Zanzibar was wealthier than the mainland and even lent the union government large sums of money.

"We lost 30 years of development because of the union," grumbles one senior Zanzibari official. "We are very enterprising people and we could have been like Mauritius today if we had not lost our sovereignty and suffered such interference."

Mainlanders, meanwhile, accuse Zanzibar of getting a free ride from the union. Rumors fly of union government bail-outs for Zanzibar's bureaucracy and mainlanders love to talk about Zanzibar's outstanding debts to the union, particularly the notorious electricity bill. The isles' government owes the Tanzania Electrical Supply Company (Tanesco) more than \$2 million.

"We pay our bills but we default sometimes," admits Yussuf, adding that the government and Tanesco have agreed to a new repayment scheme. "The union government owes billions of dollars to international institutions and no one talks about that."

Another grudge against Zanzibaris is that they can come and go freely throughout the union and hold jobs in the union government, while mainlanders need a passport simply to enter the islands. Once there, they are barred from holding government jobs. Many Christian mainlanders also hold the view that Zanzibaris, 90 percent of whom are Muslim, have power in the union that is far beyond their numbers. Indignant stories making the rounds tell of Muslim cabinet ministers taking over office space to build prayer rooms and Zanzibaris plotting to turn the republic into an Islamic state.

But the numbers do not support the fear-mongers. Although Zanzibaris are overrepresented in the union Bunge (parliament), media reports have pointed out that

in President Ali Hassan Mwinyi's cabinet of 24 ministers, only eight are Muslims. Twenty of the 24 principal secretaries in the government are Christian, as are almost all of the country's district and regional commissioners.

"This is the irony behind all this," says Yussuf. "Everyone thinks Zanzibar and Muslims are taking over, but in fact it is the opposite."

When Mwinyi appointed a special commission on political reform in 1991, he included a directive to recommend constitutional reforms "for the purpose of preserving the nation and the union." The commission's surprisingly frank findings, released in early 1992, catalogued the grievances of both sides and recommended the formation of a third government, for Tanganyika, as the way to satisfy both sides and preserve the union. Although they followed the report's advice on allowing the formation of opposition parties, the CCM leadership decided to ignore the recommendations on the union, preferring to sit tight and hope the problem would go away.

The union issue didn't go away, it just waited for the right moment to explode. That came later in the year, with the scandal that erupted when it was revealed that Zanzibar had secretly joined the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The unilateral move, seized upon by the ravenous private press, clearly breached the union's secular constitution and division of powers. Mainland politicians were livid, conspiracy-theorists reinvigorated, and they all took advantage of the new climate of openness to express their outrage.

After first ignoring the scandal, Mwinyi then attempted to justify Zanzibar's move by suggesting that the union government might apply for OIC membership, too. This only fueled anti-Zanzibari feelings on the mainland and by the August 1993 session of the Bunge, a group of 55 mainland members felt bold enough to introduce a motion calling on Mwinyi to form a third government, the government of Tanganyika.

The CCM was clearly shaken by the unprecedented rebellion of the MPs, some of whom openly threatened to leave the party if the motion was blocked by government leaders. Mwinyi joined the trail of politicians traveling to Nyerere's village near Lake Victoria to seek the advice of the retired president; even the president of Zanzibar, Salmin Amour, met with Nyerere. To each, the man Tanzanians still call the "father of the nation" stood firm in his view that Zanzibar cannot be a member of the OIC and the constitutional status quo must be preserved. Within days, Amour broke his earlier vow that Zanzibar would never withdraw from the OIC, with the announcement that the isles were pulling out in order "to uphold the brotherhood and unity of the Tanzanian nation."

"We saw that we had to choose which came first, the union or the OIC," says Yussuf. "The union was priority number one for Zanzibar. We didn't want to give our enemies an excuse to wreck it."

But it wasn't enough to stop the Tanganyikans, as many mainlanders had started referring to themselves again.

Throughout the debate on the motion, several thousand people gathered on the lawns of the Bunge in Dar es Salaam to boo and cheer the politicians inside, with one vehemently pro-Tanganyikan activist waving the flag of the pre-union state.

"A Zanzibar member rose to oppose the motion and even the Speaker joined in to shout him down," says Baregu. "That in and of itself was wrong, and I said so. I almost got lynched."

In a dramatic move, Nyerere came to Dar es Salaam to address a closed meeting of CCM members of Parliament—the only kind there is. Reports of the meeting described the elder statesman's tearing into the country's leadership for its corruption, lack of vision, and failure to uphold the union constitution, while chastizing the pro-Tanganyikans for breaching party discipline and acting maliciously toward Zanzibar. Shocked at the open criticism of the president, many observers were predicting the fall of Mwinyi and his top leadership within days.

Although the Tanganyikans kept up the pressure, the government fought back and after days of furious backroom maneuvering, a diluted version of the motion passed unanimously. The new motion called on the government to solicit the views of the public on the formation of a third government, with a reporting deadline of 1995. At a special meeting a few months later, the CCM debated the motion again, a move many interpreted as an attempt to reassert party control over the rebel members. Nyerere argued vigorously for keeping the current structure or, if it must be changed, creating the single state it was meant to be in the first place.

Under strong pressure to show a united front, all the party could agree to was canvassing the views of CCM members before 1995, a process that began early this year but apparently without much enthusiasm. Party members at the grassroots are said to see the exercise as a diversion from more urgent issues, such as economic growth. Meanwhile, the two governments are quietly making their own efforts to find a solution.

"There are discussions going on between the prime minister's office and our chief minister," says Yussuf. "We have given them our ideas, they have presented theirs, and we are talking."

Just about the only thing all sides agree on is that the current arrangement isn't working; beyond that, the consensus disintegrates. For Nyerere and his supporters, a third government would be the stepping stone to total disintegration of the union. Their opponents, including Tan-



Many Zanzibaris blame their current economic woes on Nyerere's socialist policies, which took the island away from its roots as a trading center

ganyikan nationalists and the Zanzibar government, say it is the only way to salvage the union while satisfying aspirations on both sides.

"Our priorities are not necessarily mainland priorities. We are an island, with an island economy, mentality and culture," says Yussuf. "Each country should maintain its autonomy and then together come up with collective decisions with regard to union matters."

Thirty years after the fact, many Tanzanians see the United Republic as a sentimental creation based on Cold War worries and now-defunct ideals of pan-Africanism. But others believe the reasons for the union are as valid now as they were in 1964. As long as the islands are just off-shore, argues Baregu, Zanzibar will remain a strategic concern.

"What if we split, and whoever came into power in Zanzibar decided to hand the island back to Oman? If the pro-Tanganyikans are really interested in a strong mainland," says Baregu, "they'd have to annex the islands anyway."

For now, the union story is off the front pages but still simmering in the back rooms. Damaged but not demolished, Mwinyi's government survived the scandal; it is less clear what effect it had on the CCM. The divisions within the party could signal the lines along which it may split in the run-up to the first multi-party presidential elections in 1995: mainland reformers vs. hard-line old-guard. For all sides, the elections have become the deadline for reform.

"If the present structure is not changed, the union will break as soon as Mwinyi steps down," says a senior Zanzibar official.

"The pressure is coming from the mainland. They want him out. Some people just can't stand the thought of Zanzibaris in State House."

Baregu sees the Zanzibar issue as one of several best addressed in the form of a constitutional conference, something opposition parties have sought in vain for several years. "If we want to redefine powers between the union and its constituent parts, then we should do it now, with a new constitution that is consistent with all the political transformations taking place," says Baregu.

The union government has consistently rejected the idea of such a conference, just as for many years it stuck its head in the sand over union reform. But just in case anyone thinks their desire for reform is a bluff, Zanzibaris are making it clear they are prepared to go it alone.

"Zanzibar can definitely survive on its own," says Yussuf. "We need to cooperate, but we don't need each other to survive." ○



YOUNG TURKS

Almost a year and half after Kenya's first contested but compromised elections in nearly three decades, President Daniel arap Moi, the aging autocrat who has ruled the East African nation since 1978, has virtually failed the democratic challenge. In spite of the arrest, harassment, outright purchase, and blood-chilling slaughter of his opponents and their supporters, Moi has been unable to stem the mounting—albeit divided and largely disorganized—opposition to his single-party style politics. In the meantime, the young Turks, under the leadership of Paul Muite, the former vice-chair of the opposition FORD-Kenya, appear poised to recapture the initiative and agenda for democratization.

In mid-March, Paul Muite and Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, another prominent young Turk and FORD-Kenya member of Parliament from Nyanza province, publicly announced the registration of Mwangaza, a private foundation committed to political reform in the country. The foundation, which the young democrats seek to use as a mobilizational vehicle to accelerate the pace of change, signifies their disquiet with what many of them see as the political bankruptcy and narrow ethnic chauvinism of the three main opposition parties: Kenneth Matiba's FORD-

Asili, Mwai Kibaki's Democratic Party (DP), and Kijana Wamalwa's FORD-Kenya. In the view of the majority of Kenyans, the ruling party, Kanu, remains entrenched in its despotic state and unable to adjust to democratic governance despite the December 1992 elections in which opposition parties captured 88 of the 188 parliamentary seats.

True to form, the Kenyan government, through the Kanu-owned *Kenya Times*, has viciously attacked the foundation and accused Muite and others associated with it of "dependence on foreigners and Western tutelage." The charges are the hallmark of the Kanu government's attempts to stigmatize its opponents by painting them as unpatriotic. Such charges were a staple of Kenyan political life as Moi and Kanu strenuously resisted calls for political pluralism prior to December 1991. But their utterance this time is evidence of the government's paranoia that the opposition may soon find an organized, coherent, and systematic channel to direct political debate. The government has even charged, without offering evidence, that Mwangaza is a political party, an assertion flatly rejected by the foundation's organizers. If the public mood is any guide, many Kenyans would in fact welcome a truly national opposition party capable of uniting them against Kanu.

But not all of Kanu's fears are cynically misplaced. Mwangaza does intend to lead Kenya's growing civil soci-

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III KENYA III
BY MAKAU WA MUTUA

With three major political parties in opposition, all of them led by old-line politicians and characterized by ethnic chauvinism, the younger generation of Kenyan oppositionists has formed a private foundation for political reform. The leaders of the foundation, Mwangaza, although denying it is a political party, intend to level the playing field for the next multi-party elections, the 1992 poll, in their view, having been rendered less than free and fair because of the power of Kanu, the ruling party, to buy, coopt, and corrupt the splintered opposition.

VS. OLD GUARD

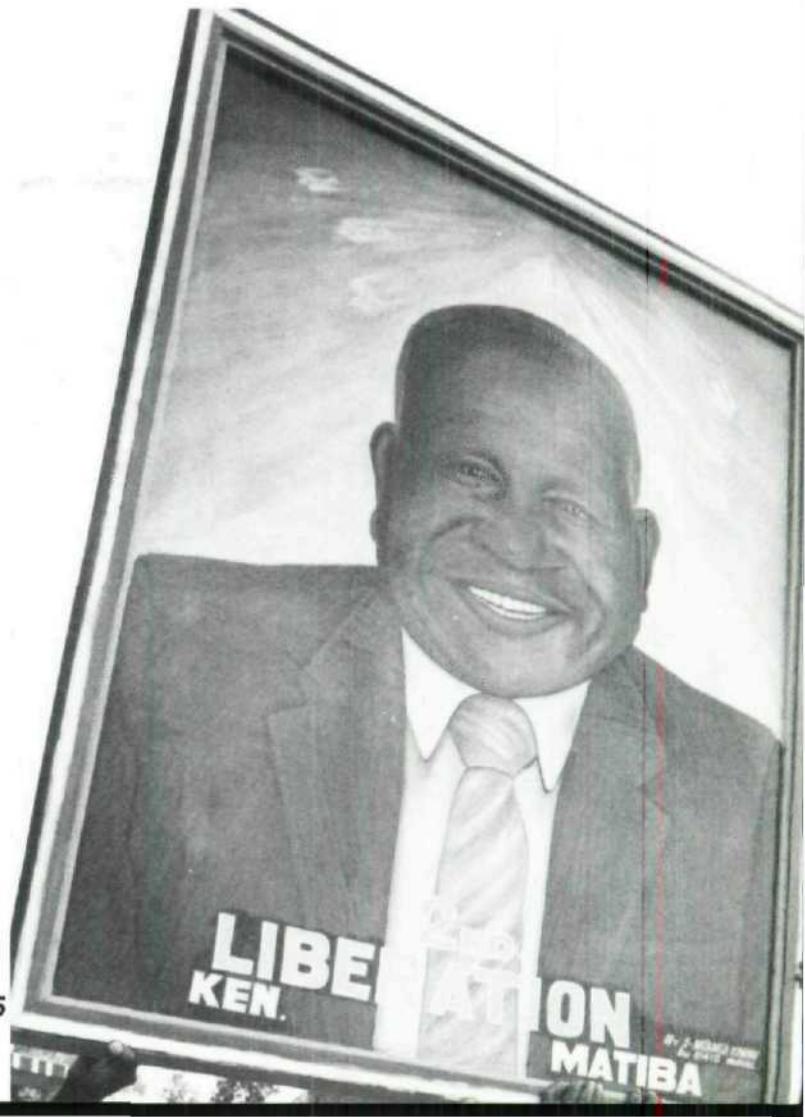
ety to more enlightened civic responsibility and awareness. According to Muite, who is said to be the foundation's senior leader, and the one man most Kenyans regard as presidential material, "the foundation will spearhead a campaign to bring about the realization—in Kenya and by the donor community—that free and fair elections in Kenya are an impossibility so long as the oppressive regime of laws which allowed Kanu to win in 1992 is not repealed." In the aftermath of the elections, many in the opposition have realized their mistake in competing on Kanu's terms. Since then, Kanu has refused to de-link itself from the state and has instead used its superior resources and levers of power to buy, coopt, and corrupt the opposition.

Mwangaza intends to avoid a repeat of 1992 by leveling the playing field and shattering Kanu's unfair advantage. Among other issues, it will focus on: the unfair distribution of population in the single-member constituencies; Kanu's monopoly of the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, the state-owned media; the Kanu-appointed and controlled electoral commission; issuance of identity cards to the youth in opposition strongholds; the despotic provincial government administrations; official corruption; government use of security forces to harass and

Left, Paul Muite with supporters at a rally

Right, 1993 campaign poster for Kenneth Matiba

Betty Press



kill opponents; and the democratization of governance, electoral, and state institutions, especially the executive.

Muite adds that "we [the opposition] should never have gone forward with the election in 1992 without resolving these issues, which enabled Kanu to win. We will not participate in the 1997 elections unless all these matters are fully addressed. Mwangaza will make sure of that."

The formation of Mwangaza comes after a year in which the opposition parties—led by the so-called "Big Three" old-style politicians Oginga Odinga, Matiba, and Kibaki—have floundered and become ineffectual due to ethnic differences and the narrow personal ambitions of their leaders. It was no secret that it was overwhelming greed for the presidency that pitted Matiba against Odinga and split the original FORD, allowing Moi's Kanu to manipulate and rig the electoral process to its commanding and unfair advantage. Since then, FORD-A, FORD-K, and DP have been reeling, fending off attempts by Kanu to dismantle them. Their leaders, trapped in their personal dreams, have failed to form a united front to pursue a common legislative agenda. Under the circumstances, Kanu has reverted to its one-party state conduct, rendering the multi-party Parliament nominal.

Perhaps the greatest threat to multi-party politics in Kenya has been the "purification" of opposition parties to single-ethnic or ethno-cultural vehicles for the political ambitions of "tribal barons." Although Matiba's FORD-Asili includes Martin Shikuku, the noisy Luhya oppositionist, there is little doubt that Matiba has used it to capture the Kikuyu of south-central Kenya. The DP, on the other hand, is Kibaki's tool for manipulating the Kikuyu of north-central Kenya with some support from the Akamba. But the greatest disappointment has been FORD-Kenya, once the hope of nationalists and enlightened Kenyans, although it drew its support predominantly from the Luo. Beginning in June 1993, non-Luo leaders within FORD-Kenya revealed that they were being sidelined by Oginga Odinga and Raila Odinga, his son.

These problems arose after Gitobu Imanyara, a Meru, and the party's secretary-general, accused Odinga of high-level corruption. To add fuel to the fire, Muite accused Odinga of "working too closely"—a euphemism for selling out—with Moi without the party's permission. Muite, a Kikuyu, and the party's first vice chairman, and Kiraitu Murungi, a Meru, and its secretary for human rights and democratization, resigned their party posts when Imanyara was expelled last October. With their departure, FORD-Kenya came under the complete domination of the Luo—through Odinga and his son, Raila—although Muite was replaced by Kijana Wamalwa, a Luhya, and Imanyara by Dr. Munyuwa Waiyaki, a Kikuyu in his twilight. Both Wamalwa, who is believed to be personally bankrolled by Raila Odinga, and Waiyaki were planted by the Odin-

gas to give FORD-Kenya the facade of a national outlook; few doubt their powerlessness.

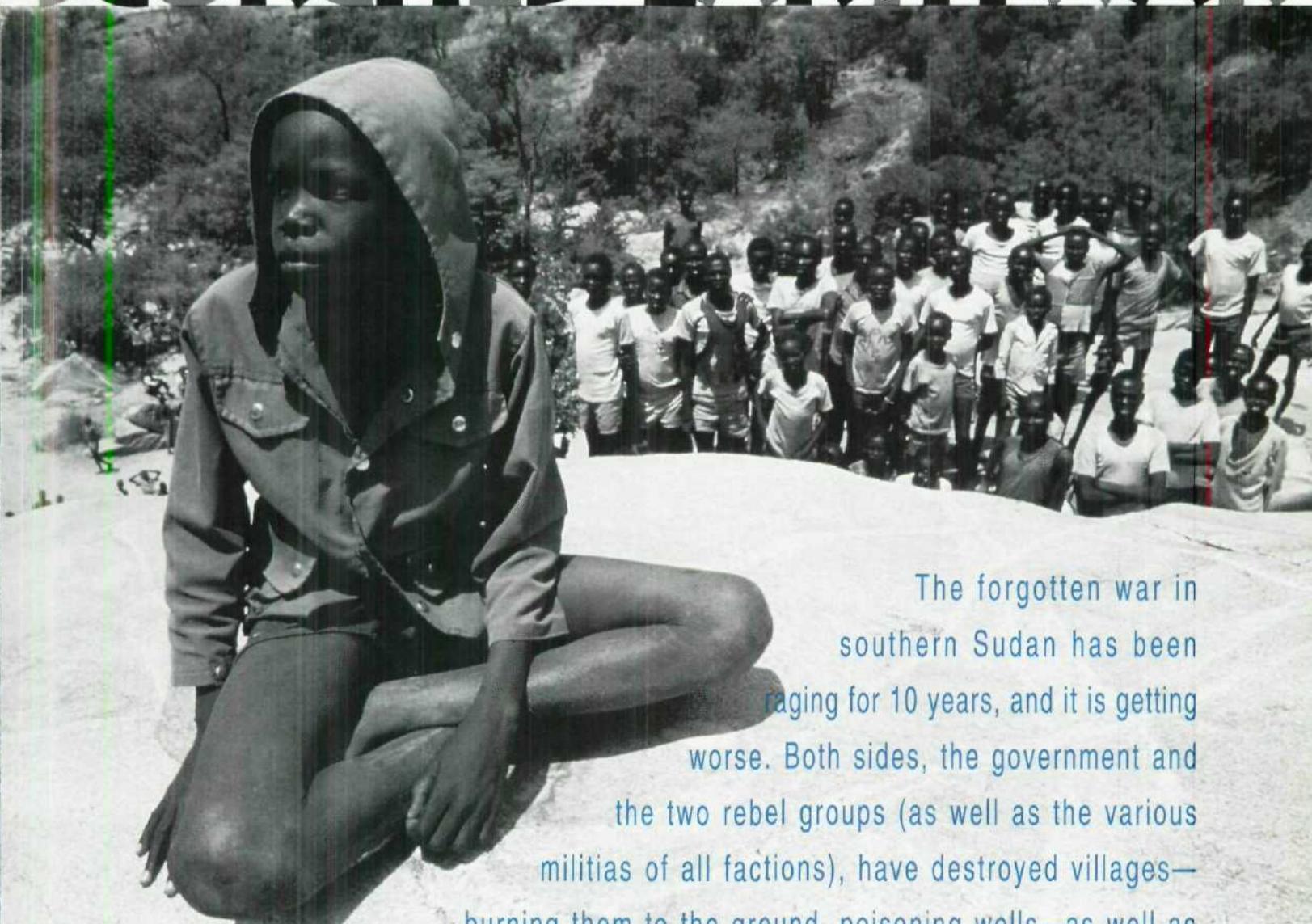
Once the independently powerful trio of Muite, Imanyara, and Murungi were ousted, the frail and aged Odinga came under Moi's spell; vowing cooperation with the government of the day, Odinga became Moi's ally. Nairobi was awash with rumors that the constitution would be amended to permit the appointment of Odinga as vice president (Odinga was vice president under Kenyatta), Moi's reward for his "delivery" of the Luo community. In the face of such improbable developments, the relationship between the three opposition parties hit an all-time low. Any avenues for cooperation by Kanu's opponents were blocked, a move seen by many as another master-stroke by Moi. Then, suddenly, the political landscape changed dramatically with the death on January 20 of Odinga, aged 82.

Among other things, Odinga's death ended his party's flirtation with Kanu; it put FORD-Kenya again on a war footing with Moi, who declared the "end" of cooperation with the Luo community. More importantly, Odinga's death signified a changing of the guard from old-style politics, anchored in the "tribe," to a more national outlook that eschews "tribalism," such as that advocated by the young Turks. Once Matiba, Kibaki, and Moi leave the political scene, the baton will most likely have been passed to another generation.

Unfortunately, Odinga's departure could not immediately overcome these difficulties. Although Wamalwa became FORD-Kenya's chair, it remained a Luo affair. Many believe that Wamalwa is a proxy for either Raila Odinga or James Orengo, another prominent Luo member of Parliament. Raila Odinga—believed to be completely consumed by presidential ambitions—will most likely attempt to orchestrate Orengo's marginalization. Anyang' Nyong'o, the party's other senior leader, is unlikely to seek control of FORD-K since he prefers a more national platform, a stature that the party cannot recapture at this stage. Other reports indicate that Bishop Okullu, an old-style politician-cum-clergyman, may attempt to take over the party with the help of the older generation. Few give him any chance of success.

Amid this political maneuvering, the Kanu government has taken advantage of the disorganized opposition to entrench itself as the superior political force. In several parliamentary by-elections—including one in western Kenya in early March—the government still showed that it could play hardball. After an election campaign marred by government misconduct and state-orchestrated violence, the Kanu candidate beat out FORD-Kenya, showing that little has changed. In the aftermath, an uncle of Anyang' Nyong'o was killed and his 80-year-old mother severely beaten up by government agents and supporters. Anyang' Nyong'o was himself held briefly on March 12 and threatened with sedition charges. It is this climate of terror and autocracy that Mwangaza intends to change to give democracy a chance. O

SCORCHED-EARTH WAR



The forgotten war in southern Sudan has been raging for 10 years, and it is getting worse. Both sides, the government and the two rebel groups (as well as the various militias of all factions), have destroyed villages—burning them to the ground, poisoning wells—as well as indiscriminately killing civilians and making tens of thousands of them refugees in their own land. The militant Islamic government has also added to the mix a campaign of high-altitude bombing against villages and displaced persons' camps and an apparent carte blanche for militias to grab any land they clear of its owners.

Judy Walgren

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frica's deadliest conflict is experiencing another upsurge in fighting, certain to add significantly to the 1.3 million people who have already perished in Sudan during the decade-long civil war. In the past year alone, thousands of people have been killed and large segments of the population have been indiscriminately stripped of their assets, rendering whole communities dependent on international humanitarian aid.

Villages more often than towns are targeted in low-profile, maximum destruction, scorched-earth sweeps. Houses are burned, livestock and food are stolen, women are raped, young men are killed or forcibly conscripted, and wells are poisoned. This pattern has been followed by all factions, which include the government, the main rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA-Mainstream), the splinter rebel group (SPLA-United), and militia groups armed and directed by all three factions. Since November 1993, the government has utilized aerial bombardment as one of its primary war tactics, and the targets have often been civilian.

During this same period, completely cut off from the spotlight of the international community, a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" has been stepped up in the Nuba mountains. Forced relocation, summary executions, mass internment, constant attacks on villages and towns, and slave-taking are all standards to which government forces and their proxy militias routinely adhere.

The Sudanese government launched its expected dry season offensive at the beginning of the year. Concurrent with a stepped-up bombardment campaign on southern targets, the government moved a large number of forces and supplies by rail and barge to Wau and Juba. From 6,000 to 10,000 government troops and members of the People's Defense Force (PDF) militias moved by train from Aweil to Wau. A flotilla of barges resupplied Terekeka, north of Juba. The objective was the final preparation for a two-front assault against SPLA targets on the borders of Zaire and Uganda.

As a result of high-altitude bombing, an estimated 100,000 people were displaced, many of them having already been on the run from their home areas. Maridi and Mundri were bombed in Western Equatoria in early February, as were Koboko and Atepi. A displaced persons camp was attacked during the first week of February, leading to the evacuation of all 47,000 residents. Two women and two children were killed during the attack, which was led by about 50 members of the Mandari militia allied with the government. As a result of the bombing and increased military engagements, southern Sudanese continued either to disperse further north or move south across the border into Uganda, swelling the number of refugees by mid-January to 176,000, according to the World Food Program.

John Prendergast is director of the Horn of Africa Project, Center of Concern, in Washington, D.C. Sam Bickel is a consulting social scientist.

On February 12, government troops launched an attack on Mundri, aided by the Mandari militia. Extensive looting took place, the social service infrastructure was destroyed, and 37,000 displaced people in the Kotobi camp were forced to move. Thousands more were displaced between Mundri and the Nile River. The government withdrew permission for humanitarian relief operations to both Maridi and Mundri.

The bombing campaign by the government subsided during the latter half of February, but resumed with a March 1 bombing of the center of Nimule, during which 10 bombs were dropped. Aswa displaced persons camp was also bombed at that time.

Fighting was occurring on three fronts in the Nuba Mountains, as well as along the road running parallel to the Aweil-Wau rail line. Small units were sent to Kadugli by the government. According to the *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, the units were "told to finish their cleaning-up operation in the Nuba Mountains, although it may turn out to be more difficult than originally anticipated since not even deporting the civilian population from the area has succeeded in undermining the strength of SPLA commander Yusef Kuwa."

Allegations are being made by Sudanese exiles and representatives of Nuba mountains Solidarity Abroad that the invading forces in the Nuba mountains were primarily PDF militias whose remuneration came in the form of looting. "These troops have been promised title to any land which they clear of its native owners," according to Bona Malwal, editor of *Sudan Democratic Gazette*. "The incentive for these troops to kill, loot, and enslave is therefore particularly high."

The humanitarian crisis throughout Sudan was further complicated by drought. James Oporio-Ekwaro of Christian Aid explained, "Some parts of the country have had their worst drought since the 1940s, and there is a real threat of famine in the north during 1994 as well as in the war zone of the south." The World Food Program estimates that Sudan will have a total food aid requirement in 1994 of 468,540 metric tons. Cereal prices in the north are rising quickly, some areas having seen 120 percent increases in the past 60 days.

On the diplomatic front, in early January the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD) brokered an agreement between the two factions on a three-point common agenda for coming peace talks with the government, including a ceasefire, the right of self-determination for the south and other marginalized areas, and a transitional period before permanent arrangements are finalized.

In mid-February, the United States decided to appoint a high-level special envoy to Sudan to assist peace efforts. The U.S. already had a special humanitarian representative for Sudan, Ambassador John Burroughs, whose mission is to support humanitarian diplomacy and help raise the level of assistance internationally to Sudan's victims of war.

Also in mid-February, two U.S. Congressmen, Frank

Wolf and Harry Johnston, issued a press release which called on the international community "to assist the people of southern Sudan and the Nuba mountains in defending their rights and dignity," lobbying the administration for military aid to the SPLA. This followed by four months efforts by Johnston and his House of Representatives subcommittee on Africa to mediate an agreement between SPLA rivals Riek Machar and John Garang in Washington. A Washington-based consortium of non-governmental organizations, the Coalition for Peace in the Horn of Africa, countered the call for military aid for the SPLA, urging instead redoubled support for the IGADD peace initiative and a series of multilateral sanctions involving arms, energy, foreign currency, multilateral aid, and multinational corporation investment in order to bring the combatants to the negotiating table. Symbolic of the growing importance of Sudan on the Clinton administration's agenda, Anthony Lake emerged from a National Security Council meeting during a demonstration being held outside the White House and met with Manute Bol, the professional basketball player from Sudan, and other demonstrators.

Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), the emergency humanitarian program for assistance to southern Sudan, conducted its annual assessment just before the government offensive began. Attention was focused on household food security, current food reserves, and the underlying resource base. A total of 67 sites were visited for two to five days by four to six-person teams comprising UN and NGO staff, and representatives of the warring parties' humanitarian arms. Information was collected through discussions with community leaders, civil and military authorities, and citizens. For the first time, household interviews were also conducted on a large scale: 1,454 were administered throughout the south, giving a detailed look at the war's impact on household resources and community demographics.

OLS estimates that between 4.3 and 4.6 million people reside in southern Sudan, of whom, 1 million live in government-held towns. Additional hundreds of thousands remain displaced in north Sudan and neighboring nations.

Within south Sudan, an estimated 600,000 persons are internally displaced, with the largest concentrations in Eastern Equatoria. It is known that actual displacement is higher, but that many who move join ethnic kin and never register with relief authorities.

Households reported that deaths exceeded births, leading to a -1.9 percent decline in population in the past year. This represents about 200,000 excess deaths in 1993 over the peacetime expectation. Communities in Western Upper Nile showed the greatest decline at -9.5 percent, followed by neighboring Jonglei Province, which contains the aptly named "Triangle of Death," encompassing Ayod, Kongor, and Waat. Nutritionally related deaths joined locally epidemic diseases, such as relapsing fever and kala azar as major mortality causes.

Southern Sudanese continued to cope as best they could amid war, hunger, and disease. Movement within and between regions was substantial: 14 percent of surveyed households had at least one person leave for hunger or security reasons. The continued willingness of local societies to help their kin and strangers was observed, as 12 percent of the households accepted people into the home despite frequent food problems of their own.

Despite the movement and mutual assistance, however, many households are finding it ever more difficult to remain intact and attain the size they feel necessary for food security. The average household contained 9.2 persons, but fell as low as 7.3 persons in Western Upper Nile. The percentage of female-headed households was 23, rising to 30 percent in acutely stressed areas and falling to 12 percent where there was food and war security. In general, a shortage of adult males was observed. Females outnumbered men by 58-42 percent among over-15-year-olds, reaching a 3:2 ratio in some places. The absent men are fighting, hiding, or migrating, but they leave behind weakened communities. As males are still an important economic focus in Sudanese households, an increasing number of women and children are at risk.

The assessment uncovered a range of problems affecting agricultural production. While direct war effects were important, the more critical problems were the indirect thinning of human manpower and basic inputs. In order of importance, they are:

- Human labor: A weakening of the human labor base through increasing food shortages, epidemic disease, lack of health care services, absence of marketed grains, and displacement of men was apparent everywhere; 64 percent of the households said labor shortages and/or hunger diminished or halted their cultivation.

- Seed and tool depletion: 44 percent of sampled households reported seed problems; 43 percent reported tool shortages. Seeds are in increasingly short supply, especially favored local varieties. Germination rates and yields are declining, as external supplies have collapsed, forcing the continual reuse of exhausted seeds from the harvest. Agricultural tools are generally worn to nothingness, and blacksmithing has largely ceased due to scrap iron shortages.

- Security disruptions: Fear, displacement, and over-crowding in camps and safe zones often prevent or highly limit cultivation; 18-22 percent of all households were security-affected in last year's crucial April-July planting season. These disruptions were particularly detrimental because those fleeing and hiding often ceased cultivation, compared to continuation at lower efficiency for those experiencing input and labor shortages.

Populations which were considered most at risk were found to be, in order of vulnerability: the displaced, returnees with no resources, residents of insecure zones, hosts of returnees and internally displaced, stockless households in pastoral societies, and female-headed and male-depleted households. ○

The Lost Boys of Southern Sudan

James Thon was 10 years old when he and 300 other boys left their villages and families in southern Sudan to begin their astonishing journey.

For six years, across hundreds of miles of parched land and brutal warfare, these boys have walked from one refugee camp to another, searching for sanctuary.

But the boys have become virtual nomads, bombed out of their villages and later forced to leave temporary havens because of violent clashes between the militant Islamic Sudanese government and the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Gen. Omar Hassan Bashir's government in Khartoum says the boys are recruits for the rebels, now in the 10th year of a guerrilla war. The SPLA says it has rounded up more than 12,000 boys from across southern Sudan, moving them among Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya.

The guerrillas say the children are not soldiers drafted into war but the future of southern Sudan: potential husbands, farmers, civil servants, and merchants who believe in the rebel cause and would make a nation of it.

Relief workers are divided on whether the boys are being groomed to fight. Some are reluctant to offer aid for fear of offending the government. Others say they cannot allow political considerations to prevent delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Whether soldiers or civilians, the boys are a testament to a heart-rending war that has killed tens of thousands, made a wasteland of much of Africa's largest country, and created 4.5 million refugees.

In 1987, James Thon began a 350-mile trek to reach the Ethiopian town of Cambela. It was a harsh journey, crossing deserts, steep mountains, and zones of conflict. Because the SPLA had a friend in Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, it built a camp for James and 12,000 other boys between the ages of 8 and 18 in Ethiopia.

The camp was run with military discipline by the SPLA and its civilian counterpart, the Sudanese Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, but James and other boys said it represented an opportunity to learn to read and write rather than fight.

"I was small when I left my family in Bor," said James, "but I understood what the SPLA was doing, so I went from Bor to Ethiopia. Before we left, we were lying idle in the village, doing nothing. We were

not safe. In the camp in Ethiopia, we had security and education."

James Lasori, 17, left his parents and three brothers in Kapoeta, southern Sudan. "I left in 1988 with the SPLA, and I joined the other boys gathered by the SPLA to go to Ethiopia," said the teenager, a member of the Toposa tribe. "My parents told me the SPLA is your government, and you must go to school. There was no school in the Kapoeta area at the time. I don't want to fight. I just want to go study."

The boys were forced to leave Ethiopia in 1991 when Col. Mengistu was overthrown.

The next leg of their journey stretched 400 miles, leading them back into southern Sudan, back across the mountains and desert and this time across the Sahel, a vast swamp infested with malarial mosquitoes.

Along the way, word arrived that there had been a massacre in James's hometown. Another rebel militia, rivals of the SPLA, seized Bor and slaughtered thousands, slashing the throats of men, women, and children.

Far away, the boys made a new camp in a Ugandan border town called Bargeri, where they stayed until February.

"The government bombed us Oct. 23, 1991, and Aug. 11, 1992. We heard that they were going to bomb us again in February so we left," said Kuol Atem Bol, the headmaster of the Bargeri camp school.

Bol joined the boys in 1991, leaving behind his wife and seven children at another refugee camp. He has not seen his family since.

When it came time to leave Bargeri, Bol said, 4,200 boys walked back to Sudan, heading for Natinga, 250 miles away. "We had to leave about 1,200 behind in camps along the way because they were too weak to keep up. I do not know how many of those boys survived."

Natinga is a village nestled in the foothills of a small mountain range in Sudan near the Kenyan border. The boys arrived in March with little more than the clothes on their backs.

"We have left all of our things behind: blackboards, books, pencils. The children couldn't even carry their books, they were so weak," Bol said. "Now we are teaching theoretically, without supplies."

The Natinga camp resembles other refugee centers in the Horn of Africa, where families uprooted by war and famine try to live normal lives under extraordinary circumstances. But at Natinga, there are no mothers washing clothes, no sisters grinding sorghum, no wives carrying firewood on their heads.

Instead, there are boys everywhere: slapping wet clothes on flat rocks, scooping water from a tiny trickle in the bottom of a dried river bed, sitting under ancient mango trees poring over their daily schoolwork.

"I think about my family often, and I do not know if my parents are alive or dead," said James Thon, now 16, pulling a bowl from a crude water hole. "I have heard about the Bor massacre. I am worried that my family has all been killed."

Many of the boys have no idea where their families have gone. Most of the 12 million people of southern Sudan have been displaced at least once by the war.

The daily routine in the camp does not waver. Church services begin at sunrise. The boys' voices float through the valley and echo off canyon walls as they sing hymns. Drums and stringed instruments made from empty cooking oil tins accompany the choir.

After church, the boys make a breakfast of mashed sorghum donated to the camp by Norwegian People's Aid. Food is a scarce commodity in the secluded village, and the children know what it is like to be hungry.

"We went for two months without food in May and June," said Bol. "Children will go to the forest to eat leaves when they are hungry. When it rains, no trucks can come with food because they cannot move in the mud."

"The children will have to eat one-half cup of sorghum a day until the next food arrives. It is just a matter of survival."

Each day centers on schoolwork. With minimal supplies—one book for every 20 boys—the teachers tutor their students in the basics: English, mathematics, and writing, sometimes scratching arithmetic problems in the dirt with twigs when paper runs out.

"In the future I would like to be a doctor even though I only have one hand," said Michael Ayen, an 18-year-old Dinka. "In 1986, the government came and bombed the outskirts of my village. I was only 9 years old when I lost my hand."

When strangers appear, the children do not ask for candy or money; they ask for pens and books.

Once a week, the boys, who represent 40 different ethnic groups living in the south, perform tribal dances for each other. The teachers say proudly that these performances encourage the children to learn

about their brothers from other backgrounds and help promote cultural awareness.

"I feel bad about the war, but I want to get an education first. Then I will fight the government politically, not physically," said James Thon.

Kamel Omar merely smiled when asked whether the rebels have asked him to fight. Elias Waya, the commander of the SPLA forces in Natinga, also smiled when asked whether he will use the boys to fight.

"The small boys here in Natinga cannot be without guards," he said. "They are the leaders of tomorrow, and we must make sure they get an education."

Still, one United Nations relief worker said her agency is leery about offering supplies to camps of minors under the SPLA's protection because it does not want to give the appearance of aiding the rebel movement.

Helge Rohn, the director of Norwegian People's Aid, has a different attitude. "We cannot let these boys starve just because the SPLA may skim some of the relief food off the top," Rohn said. "It would be a waste of time to even worry about it."

Recently, the Norwegian agency sent 60 tons of sorghum to the Natinga camp. The headmaster signed for 57 tons, but only 27 made it into the camp's stores.

"Who knows where the rest of the food went?" Rohn asked. "We will follow this up, but at least 27 tons made it to the little boys."

The future of the children is as uncertain as the future of southern Sudan.

The government launched major offensives against the rebels in August and September. Mediation efforts led by former President Jimmy Carter fell apart in October because, the Khartoum government contended, Carter had been working to repair relations between the feuding rebels.

Last September, the United States placed Sudan on its list of countries that sponsor terrorism, citing its support of such groups as Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Hamas, and its friendly relations with Iran. The Bashir government denies the charge.

Meanwhile, relief workers and the SPLA speculate that the government will continue to try to take the south. "It is not too late for the Americans to come and save our people," Bol said. "One-third of the population of southern Sudan has been wiped out. We have lost all."

"If there is any means of peace, by force or by agreements, it will be better. We cannot teach these boys without security, so first we need peace." ■

—Judy Walgren

Judy Walgren is a reporter for The Dallas Morning News.

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ASCENDANT

The master of manipulation, President Mobutu Sese Seko, is now probably at the height of his powers since he engineered the end of single-party rule in 1990. Since then nothing has changed, except for the coming and going of 10 governments under his presidency and the loss of Western support. But Mobutu continues, knowing that the opposition hasn't the power to fight a strongman who controls Zaire's military and finances.

A lie and a few dollars go a long way in lawless Zaire. But there is one constant truth here, and that is President Mobutu Sese Seko—devil to some, rabid dog to others, provider to a few, and human being to himself.

He has managed unlike any of the continent's other despots to manipulate his country's transition to democracy since the day he announced an end to single-party rule on April 24, 1990. Four years later, virtually nothing has changed on a deep enough level that would make any difference in the lives of Zairians, despite the rise and fall of 10 governments, the West's withdrawal of support for Mobutu, and a national conference on the country's future.

"The experience of the national conference here was an exhilarating experience and it was one in which you could see the Zairian population begin "to...take on the optimistic view that they really could construct their own future," said Peter Rosenblum, a lawyer with the International Human Rights Law Group, who travels often to Zaire. "It was as if Mobutu himself was withering away and becoming smaller and smaller because in the imagination of the Zairians, they were already past Mobutu and into the future."

Now, however, by manipulating the weaknesses of his opponents, Mobutu has empowered himself once again and is probably at his strongest since the democracy movement began on the continent in 1989. "My strength lies in that the people are behind me," Mobutu said recently over lunch at his palace in Gbadolite. "If they weren't, would I still be here?" He fails to note that the people have had little to fight him with. He still controls the Central Bank and the military.

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But the questions have to be asked: Would Zaire really have been better off if he had just stepped down, given the ease with which his opponents sell out and the propensity for lower-ranking soldiers to rampage? Does he really believe that the people are on his side? Given that their cries don't reach him over the state-controlled air waves and that he rarely ventures into Kinshasa or other parts of Zaire where he is unpopular, he probably does.

On that particular day in Gbadolite, life was probably looking pretty sweet from inside his salmon-colored dining room, where he could eat a meal prepared by the French chef he had just flown in, inhale the aroma of just-arrived bouquets arranged by a Spanish florist, and pose with family and friends before the Belgian photographer he had just summoned to document his latest palatial fete.

Sipping pink champagne and watching ice-skating on his dining room television, Mobutu expressed anger at his abandonment by the West. "When people tire of a dog and want to put it down, they always use the excuse that it has rabies," he said, referring to the drop in support for him after the end of the Cold War. The U.S. helped prop him up for years, using Zaire as a supply base for Angolan rebels fighting the Marxist government in Luanda.

To Mobutu, everyone sees opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi as the hero and Mobutu as the villain. It sounds a bit like the Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan drama, but Mobutu is too clever to have been caught like Harding was, though his soldiers might have looted the skating rink, ice and all. "I'm not the devil. Do I have horns? I'm a human being. I have control of my thoughts and faculties. I know what I want."

A Symbol of Repression

Before the outspoken Zairian Journalist Kalala-Mbenga Kalao was able to travel to Washington to receive the National Press Club's International Freedom of the Press Award in March, he was forced to endure one more round of the government harassment he has faced continually since last year.

On March 13, security forces picked up Kalao—who edits the political column in the semi-weekly *La Tempête des Tropiques*—as he attempted to cross the Congo River to Brazzaville, Congo, en route to the United States. He was held at the border for 18 hours, his possessions confiscated.

When Kalao was finally able to leave Zaire on March 14, the government turned its wrath on his wife, Sylvie Lumu-Nseya. She was reportedly detained the following day in the capital, Kinshasa, by the National Intelligence and Protection Service. Forty-eight hours later, she was released with no charges brought against her, bolstering claims that the detention was in retaliation for Kalao's criticism of the government.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) described the Kalaos' experience as a "symbol of the repression many journalists in Zaire face for defending press freedom and democratic ideals."

The government began to crack down on the

media in 1990, shortly after President Mobutu Sese Seko's promise of democratic reforms gave rise to dozens of independent newspapers and emboldened journalists working for the state-owned radio and television. Assaults on the media by forces loyal to Mobutu over the last three years have included bombings of opposition printing presses, beatings, and rapes of reporters.

In CPJ's recently released report *Attacks on the Press in 1993*, the group documented the arrest and detention of six journalists and the suspension of five independent newspapers in Zaire. But CPJ added that these were only a "fraction of the alarming number of attacks on the press" which took place in 1993.

One of the attacks CPJ documented was the 27-day detention of Kalao, which began in August after *La Tempête* published a series of articles he wrote based on his investigation into the composition of the Zairian Armed Forces (FAZ).

Kalao told *Africa Report* that investigative reporting was the specialty of the three-year-old newspaper. Sensational investigations often double and triple the newspaper's circulation of 8,000-10,000, he said.

Kalao—who already had a history of brief detentions—wrote the first article in the series under a pseudonym for fear of government retribution.

And in the 30 years that he has ruled Zaire, he has gotten what he's wanted. On the surface, things haven't looked so bad. Mobutu legalized opposition parties, liberalized the press, conceded to a national conference, and let it elect a prime minister, Tshisekedi, who happened to be his personal and political archrival. It's no wonder that when Mobutu looks back on these actions, he describes himself as a democrat. But the reality is that he has used the state's money to buy off many in the opposition, he retains control of the radio and television—which reach much further throughout Zaire than the anti-Mobutu newspapers in the capital, Kinshasa—and he has fired Tshisekedi.

Mobutu has acquired much of his wealth from Zaire's diamond trade and from Western businesses that find dealing with the government in Kinshasa more of a headache than their potential profit is worth. His fortune has been estimated at \$5 billion, but many busi-

nessmen and diplomats in Kinshasa think he has spent much of it. "My impression is that he doesn't have that much money anymore, that he has given most of it away," said one businessman. "A lot of the money has been used to pay off the opposition. He's playing chief all the time and he expects the state to give him the budget to do it."

In the past four years, 10 governments have attempted to rule Zaire under Mobutu. And now, the new reconstituted national conference, called the High Council of the Republic-Transitional Parliament, is attempting to choose another prime minister who will satisfy Mobutu and everyone else. But Tshisekedi still claims the title. Given the inability of the political class to come to agreement on even the simplest of issues, it is likely that Mobutu's staying in power during the past four years has helped avert an even worse political and economic crisis. But what is unclear is how much of the crisis has

When the article was published without significant government backlash, he wrote the subsequent two stories under his own name.

But the Mobutu regime was particularly irked by the third article on the army, which appeared in the August 21-24 issue of *La Tempête*. The story featured a list of every general in FAZ, their ethnic group, educational background, and qualifications. Kalao said his investigation concluded that "more than 70 percent of the generals are from the same ethnic group as Mobutu." As a result, he said, Mobutu controls the army. "The army is the only thing that guarantees Mobutu's grip on power. He uses them when he needs to. The army kills, rapes, steals, loots, and massacres," Kalao added.

The series of articles marked the first time that anyone had written about the composition of the armed forces, according to Kalao. "Mobutu himself didn't believe" that anyone would dare do it, he said. Kalao believes that the government decided to detain him because the series was ongoing.

On August 25, two military officials arrested the daring journalist outside his home. "I was housed in a cell with no light and no windows, I didn't shower for 27 days, I was naked and given nothing to eat," he said.

The detention prompted international organizations, including Amnesty International and CPJ, to organize a campaign to call for his release. "Had the international media not called attention to my case, I would have died," Kalao said.

Upon his release, Kalao was told not to write on politics or economics. When he tested the policy by writing an article, he was summoned before

Mobutu's Special Presidential Division of the armed forces. "They informed me that if I wanted to die, I should write about politics and economics. If not, I had to write about sports and music," he said.

The exceptional courage Kalao showed in writing about the armed forces earned him the prestigious International Press Club award, but it also ensured that he would be a prime target of the government. Between late September and his trip to the U.S. in March, Kalao was under "constant harassment" and had been forced to live in hiding, according to CPJ.

Nonetheless, Kalao spoke out emphatically against the Mobutu regime during his visit to the U.S. In an interview with *Africa Report*, he said there was no chance of success for a cohabitation government between Mobutu and opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, explaining that "good and evil cannot live together." As for the mediation efforts being undertaken by Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo at the time, Kalao said, "It shows you that even a man of God can be bought by Mobutu."

Kalao also made clear his belief that the U.S. has a responsibility—and the ability—to rid Zaire of Mobutu, which, for Kalao, is the only way out of the country's political deadlock and economic stagnation. "It is the U.S. that armed Mobutu, so they must disarm him. Mobutu is in power only because of the CIA. He is a CIA agent...Since they created Mobutu, they know very well how to take him apart...The day that they want him to leave, he'll leave." ■

—Russell Geekie

been created by Mobutu himself in the Machiavellian style he has mastered.

The unpredictable, anything-goes lifestyle of Zaire has a way of stripping things down to their bare essentials, of exposing everything in its rawest form. The mismanagement and corruption that have characterized the country for decades have slowly whittled away at the infrastructure and exposed a place that is less a country than a concept.

"In a lot of ways, Zaire is less accessible now than it has been in the past 100 years," said one Western diplomat, referring to the breakdown of road and river travel. "The idea of the country is still there," but Zaire, which borders nine other countries, hardly functions as a nation.

To understand how Zaire operates, it is helpful to look at one city, Mbuji-Mayi, in the province of East Kasai. More than anywhere else in Zaire, this city tells the story of the nation's villains and heroes, its demise and

potential. It's a city rich in diamonds—Zaire is the world's second-largest producer of industrial diamonds behind Australia—and poor in infrastructure. "Since I've been here, I've never seen a program by the government, neither from the (local) government or Kinshasa," said Kadiata Mukamba, president of the state-run diamond industry based there, known as MIBA. "This city is constructed by the people themselves."

There's no electricity, few paved roads, no state hospitals, and no telephones for the city's 1 million people. Yet, about \$15 million enters the city each week to feed the burgeoning diamond market, according to foreign diamond buyers. Mazal, a 36-year-old Zairian diamond dealer who earns about \$15,000 per month, routinely gives money to orphans, widows, and prisoners to help make up for the government's inadequacy. "If you enter the prison here in Mbuji-Mayi, you'll find people are on the verge of death, who are abandoned by everyone.

They sleep on the pavement; they don't even have a mat or clothes. One is obliged to think of them."

Mazal also gives food to refugees around Mbuji-Mayi who have fled political and ethnic unrest in Shaba province to the south. About 10,000 of them live at a refugee camp outside town, run by the French branch of the international aid group Doctors Without Borders. Most of the refugees, Kasaian in origin, have been driven out of professional jobs in Shaba by Mobutu loyalists and have become white-collar refugees who hardly

CORRUPTION AND MIS- MANAGEMENT HAVE SLOWLY WHITTLED AWAY AT THE INFRA- STRUCTURE AND EXPOSED A PLACE THAT IS LESS A COUNTRY THAN A CONCEPT.

to reject those notes, and since there are some who continue to keep them, the day will come when we say, 'no, the law must be executed even if it's by force,' said Governor Bashala Kantu wa Milandu. Troops have already been sent in to force the population to accept the new currency, the "new zaire," introduced by Birindwa last October as part of a disastrous effort at economic reform. On occasion, soldiers have killed black market money changers while seizing the old money and burning it in front of the local branch of the Bank of Zaire.

In January last year, Tshisekedi supporters rejected a higher denomination of the old currency after he was fired. Soldiers couldn't force merchants to accept the notes and so they rioted in Kinshasa and hundreds of people were killed, including the French ambassador. That was the third time soldiers have gone on the rampage in two years.

Despite the central government's foibles, people in Mbuji-Mayi blame the governor for their problems and the city's disrepair. They accuse him of bleeding the city of any diamond revenue it might have used to patch things up. "The current governor, he acquisitions what he wants of the merchandise," says MIBA's Mukamba. "We buy a lot of fuel and food from Zambia, Zimbabwe, or South Africa. These goods and fuel must pass by Shaba. Very often our products are stolen with the

approval of the regional authorities. There are days and weeks when (the employees) don't work because of that."

Other problems plague MIBA as well, slowing production to less than half of what it was only five years ago. Rats, snakes, and bats have infested the building where the diamonds are cleaned and sorted. Machinery constantly breaks down and spare parts are scarce. Safety precautions are often ignored. When about 50 illegal miners, or "clandestines" as they are known, were arrested on MIBA's property recently, they were jammed into a small, wet jail cell at the mine. A storm struck and knocked an electrical cable to the floor, instantly killing all of them. Many family members came not for their corpses, but for compensation.

Theft is also a big problem for the diamond industry. Only 30 percent of the gem-quality diamonds reach the end of the production line, said one well-placed employee. MIBA sells about \$4 million in diamonds per month, while private dealers sell more than that each week.

Private dealers say the governor routinely takes 10 percent of the price of any diamond they purchase over 20 carats. In the past year alone, four stones over 100 carats have been found in the area. Last year, a small group of peasants sold a stone worth \$6.5 million, nearly all of which they have already spent, Zairian dealers say. But the lure of such wealth and the motivation simply to make a living is eating away at the region's culture and traditions, aid workers and missionaries say. Many children have left their villages to mine and have given up on education. In the melting pot of Mbuji-Mayi, people are losing touch with their native languages, mixing French brought by the Belgian colonizers, and the traditional languages of Lingala and the local Tshiluba tongue. People have also discarded efforts at agriculture, farming almost entirely on a subsistence level in a region that missionaries say once produced corn for the entire country.

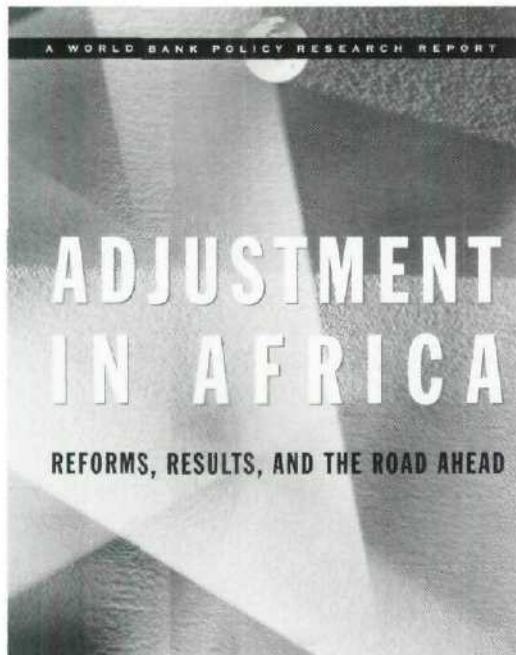
Many products are imported. But the government has stopped direct flights from abroad to Mbuji-Mayi, fearful that Kasaians were becoming too independent of their compatriots. The southern Kasaï region proclaimed itself the Independent Mining State of South Kasaï in 1960, but it lasted only until 1961.

"I think the government is very wary of making the two Kasaïs (east and west) too independent," said Greg Stephenson, director of the De Beers Central Selling Organization's office in Mbuji-Mayi. "They've got all the wealth (in the Kasaïs) already. The last thing they need is for Mbuji-Mayi to be completely self-sufficient."

Mobutu has depended on just that to hold Zaire together. In a country as big as this, without roads or adequate river transport, it would take a massive mobilization of force on foot to constitute a power-threatening popular revolt. As it is now, Mobutu's opponents in Kinshasa are too afraid of the military to march in protest down the main boulevard. O

THE POLITICS OF ECONOMICS

The World Bank's latest report on structural adjustment, not surprisingly, maintains that economic reform is essential for African countries to improve, or even turn around, their economic performance. In an evolutionary change, the Bank also now accepts that other factors are important to economic growth, namely, human capital, protection for the poor during



—which may be either too weak to implement necessary changes, or too authoritarian to risk the politically volatile implications of adjustment.

Africa's widespread economic crisis is now well into its second decade, and recovery continues to elude most of the region. According to World Bank data, in 1992 the region's gross domestic product grew at about 2 percent, only incrementally better than average of 1.7 percent registered during the disastrous years of 1981-1987. Nearly a quarter of sub-Saharan Africa's 46 countries registered negative growth rates in 1992, nearly a third saw declines in agriculture, and a dozen countries recorded losses in industry. Africa remains marginal to the global economy, as its exports reflect a dwindling share of world markets, commercial lenders continue to shun African borrowers, and private investors have been markedly unenthusiastic.

In 1992, foreign direct investment in Indonesia exceeded total investment in Africa south of the Sahara.

There is little dispute among African governments, citizens, foreign lenders, and aid donors that the situation remains critical. Deepening poverty, slow growth, sluggish production, and high debt continue to afflict most countries, despite a tripling of foreign aid during the 1980s. In recent years, the economic malaise has been compounded by rampant political instability, civil conflict, and collapsing states. Indeed, there is growing acknowledgment that the region's most intractable problems are essentially political in nature. Personalized, corrupt, and authoritarian rule contributed to economic decline in many countries during 1970s and 1980s, and the stubborn persistence of old elites, even in the face of democratic pressures, has thwarted efforts at economic recovery. These intertwined crises

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have prompted widespread contention about the requisites for change and the path to recovery.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as the "lenders of last resort" for indebted and cash-strapped African countries, have taken the lead in promoting economic reform on the continent. Their prescription for regeneration is by now so familiar that the average African bank clerk or civil servant can recite it by rote: impose financial discipline, reduce state intervention in markets, free up prices, and promote exports. Since the early 1980s, at least 30 African countries have adopted IMF stabilization policies or Bank-inspired structural adjustment programs. The multilateral financial institutions, supported by bilateral donors and commercial banks, continue to press for economic liberalization and budgetary restraint as the key to economic betterment. African governments, disheartened by lagging growth, scant foreign capital, and mounting debt, have criticized orthodox policies, waffled on implementation, and sometimes abandoned reform altogether.

The World Bank's newly-released study, "Adjustment in Africa: Reforms, Results, and the Road Ahead," is the latest installment in the heated debate among proponents and critics of orthodox reform. This extended report marshals a welter of evidence to demonstrate the necessity of structural adjustment programs in Africa, the viability of economic liberalization as a program for recovery, and the need to sustain (or resume) adjustment policies. As the leading follow-up to the Bank's controversial 1989 study, "Africa's Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s" (which drew a sharp retort from the UN Economic Commission for Africa), "Adjustment in Africa" attempts to verify the benefits of structural adjustment policies, and to measure the payoffs of liberalization.

The argument in "Adjustment in Africa" is simple and familiar: Structural adjustment works, if it is implemented conscientiously. Covering 29 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the study tracks their adherence to structural adjustment policies, and examines how economic management has affected performance. When international market conditions, war, and other "extraneous" factors are excluded, the authors conclude, economic policies clearly have a large impact on economic performance, and close adherence to orthodox policies yields significant economic benefits. Countries which consistently pursued currency devaluation, trade liberalization, and fiscal and monetary restraint were able to revive economies in decline and to accelerate growth. Reduced intervention in agriculture markets and better returns for farmers resulted in accelerated production and increased exports. Efforts at financial liberalization and privatization of state enterprises have been less successful, but interest rate reform and the shedding of deficit-producing government firms have also produced dividends. Moreover, successful adjustment has not worsened poverty or fostered environmental degradation.

The Bank distinguishes six countries (Ghana, Tanzania,

Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe) which reflected "large improvements" in economic policy during the 1980s. Another nine countries, including Uganda, Senegal, Madagascar, and Kenya, made "small improvements," while 10 countries, notably Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Zambia, and Cameroon, "deteriorated." The results? Countries with large improvements in economic policy achieved modest growth of GDP per capita (averaging 1.1 percent) between 1987 and 1991, while countries with small improvements declined slightly (0.1 percent), and those with deteriorating policies declined by an average of 2 percent during the same period.

Even more significant, according to the report, is the direction of change: Improving countries reversed or slowed negative growth rates, while deteriorating countries continued their downward slide. The report asserts that this general picture is echoed in most key areas of the economy. Countries which corrected their economic policies generally reduced deficits, boosted exports and production, and sustained savings and investment. Those with deteriorating macroeconomic management generally did worse in the course of the decade.

"Adjustment in Africa" is the strongest riposte to the Bank's critics to date. The study responds to objections over the design of previous adjustment studies, and takes pains to establish the "counterfactual": the likely course of African economies in the absence of adjustment. On this latter subject, the report is probably on its firmest ground. There is little gainsaying the fact that poor policies played a crucial role in Africa's worsening economic performance during the 1970s and 1980s, and the authors summarize compelling evidence to refute the contention that external conditions, especially terms of trade, could explain the region's sharp downturn. They also acknowledge the role of such important factors as infrastructure, human capital, and political stability in the process of economic growth. The study stresses the need to provide additional protection to the poor during the adjustment process, and the importance of providing environmentally sustainable forms of recovery.

These qualifications reflect a significant evolution in the Bank's approach to adjustment, a shift which has been evident since the sweeping 1989 policy statement, "Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth." The institution has distanced itself considerably from the 1981 Berg Report, which mainly castigated African governments for poor policies and placed excessive faith in the dynamism of unfettered markets. Belief in the market remains a benchmark of neoclassical approaches to reform, but 14 years of structural adjustment lending have induced a greater realism among Bank staff. It is now conceded publicly that structural adjustment must be more flexible in its design, more carefully phased in its implementation, and should be supported by strategically placed external aid and substantial debt relief. "Adjustment in Africa" also notes the importance of African "ownership" of reforms: Adjustment packages viewed as an

imposition by external lenders have proven to be politically unsustainable.

Will "Adjustment in Africa" placate the critics of adjustment? Not likely. As the "strong case" for the Bank's commitment to structural adjustment, this study provides lukewarm evidence of the efficacy or sustainability of orthodox reform. The case for adjustment is not aided by the report's method of presentation. When the reader looks beyond the neat bar graphs and vivid trend lines, a blurrier picture emerges. The numbers simply don't tell a consistent story. Six of 14 countries with "fair" or "adequate" policies in 1990-91 still registered negative growth rates at the end of the 1980s, while four of 11 "poor" or "very poor" adjusters had positive (though weak) growth.

Also, progress within countries and groups has been uneven. Many countries have devalued their currencies, raised prices for farmers, and liberalized trade. Fewer have privatized state corporations, maintained fiscal discipline, or implemented effective financial reform. These realities are reflected in shifting categories throughout the study, in which Tanzania had a "poor" macroeconomic policy in 1991, yet a "large improvement" in macroeconomic policies (just behind Ghana) for the 1980s.

The evidence of payoffs for adjustment is admittedly weak. The authors' caution that SAPs are a necessary but not sufficient path to recovery should be emblazoned on the cover, for the data clearly shows that adjustment may stabilize plummeting economies, without launching a dynamic trajectory of growth. The showcase country, Ghana, has gone from disastrous to anemic performance. The Ghanaian adjustment program, which the Rawlings government has sustained since 1983, has certainly achieved dramatic economic improvement, yet per capita GDP grew by only 1.3 percent on average from 1987-1991. Meanwhile, the country's external debt has doubled, debt service continues to absorb more than a quarter of export revenues, and Ghana continues to rely on large injections of external assistance for budget support and imports.

There are clearly areas where adjustment has not yielded dividends. Investment and savings have not grown in aggregate, though the study argues they have done better in adjusting countries than in non-adjusters. The evidence on industrial performance and agricultural growth is suggestive, but it is too patchy to be reliable. The study actually shows that agricultural performance was worse in countries with improving policies than in those with deteriorating policies.

The data on poverty is weakest, and it is here that the report is on spongy turf indeed. The language of the study is utterly equivocal on this point: Structural adjustment "in all likelihood" helped the poor, and "may have" reduced poverty in countries with high growth. This contention is based on the expected effects of changing prices (according to neoclassical theory), but there is a near absence of data on the fortunes of the African poor under adjustment. It is a crucial concern, for which we have no firm answer.

In the Bank's estimation, structural adjustment reforms

in Africa have not gotten very far. "Adjustment in Africa" observes that many policies in Africa have improved dramatically, yet Africa's reform efforts still lag behind adjustment in other developing regions. Africa's strongest adjuster, Ghana, is rated only "fair" in its overall economic policy. Several countries have abandoned programs (including Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, and Nigeria) at various times, while others have selectively implemented portions of the adjustment package. It is valid to ask whether a reform package which yields only a single lukewarm success story in 10 years is a viable prescription for recovery.

The problem of sustainability is generally soft-pedaled by the Bank, which tends to stress the "political will" of African governments and a better dialogue with donors as the key to better performance. However, governance remains the central obstacle to economic recovery in Africa, and this study takes only passing account of the political and institutional obstacles to effective change. Structural adjustment is politically volatile for most African governments. The removal of food and fuel subsidies, the retrenchment of public sector employees, the privatization of state enterprises, and the imposition of user fees on health and education services all face formidable opposition from powerful interest groups. Insecure leaders find it difficult to impose these measures on restive populations, especially as they confront growing political challenges. Authoritarian rulers in such countries as Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria resist the loss of valuable patronage resources, while also seeking to pacify demands for liberalization. New democratic governments such as Zambia are also vulnerable to corruption, favoritism, and poor economic management.

The implementation of reform is especially difficult in light of the weak capabilities of African governments. Administratively demanding policies such as privatization and financial reforms have seriously lagged behind discrete, centralized decisions on exchange rates, prices, or interest rates. Fragmented institutions, poor human resources, and inadequate infrastructure continue to undermine the effects of adjustment policies, especially the supply response of farmers and manufacturers to better prices and markets. Institution-building and political reform are far more complex dilemmas than the policy problems addressed by the Bank, but without a clearer effort to match reform strategies to existing capabilities, lenders, donors and African governments are likely to remain locked in a frustrating cycle of partial and ineffective reform.

The World Bank has not issued the last word in the debate over structural adjustment, though it has reinforced some important messages. The authors of "Adjustment in Africa" underscore the inevitability of sustained and rigorous economic reform. In an increasingly competitive and diverse global economy, African countries must take dramatic measures if they are to improve their growth prospects and reenter international markets. At the same time, the authors' omissions suggest the necessity of accounting for the politics of economic change. ○

interview

ESOM ALINTAH BY MARGARET A. NOVICKI



Margaret A. Novicki

Doing Business with Africa

Esom Alintah is a founding member and secretary-general of the African Business Roundtable, a group of 25 African business people dedicated to promoting inter-African trade and attracting foreign investment in the continent.

Chairman of the Fortune Group in Lagos, Nigeria, Alintah is a highly successful businessman in his own right,

but is also an ardent spokesman on behalf of the African continent and the commercial opportunities it holds.

In this interview, Alintah explains the background to the formation of the ABR and comments on the role of the African private sector in the continent's development. He also offers his views on the way out of Africa's current economic crisis.

Africa Report: What is the African Business Roundtable, what was the reasoning behind its formation, and what are its goals?

Alintah: The African Business Roundtable is made up of a group of businessmen, 25 of them, from all over Africa, who were brought together by the president of the African Development Bank, Babacar Ndiaye, in 1987 to articulate for the Bank an African private sector initiative. At the end of our deliberations, our report recommended many things, including the setting up of a merchant bank. That has now become a reality as the private sector development unit in the African Development Bank, into which \$200 million was put, has since then been financing the private sector, including joint ventures between Africans and foreigners. This bank does not demand any guarantees from government—it just deals with business people as they are and as their projects are. After that, in view of the fact that in the three years that we were together, we had been doing business with each other, we had formed friendships and partnerships, we decided to not disband and set up an organization that would continue and we called it the African Business Roundtable.

The main objectives of the African Business Roundtable are threefold: one, to promote inter-African trade because we believe that is the bedrock of Africa's prosperity or lack of it. As long as Africans don't trade and deal with each other, we will forever depend on imports and so forth. Secondly, we want to encourage foreign investors to come to Africa and we do that by carrying out one investment promotion trip per year in which every member of the Roundtable brings to a metropolitan country or any country we visit the portfolio of his country: what is available, what is lacking, and what can be done, including the businesses he is involved in. Then thirdly, we want to fight and if possible eradicate the perception that Africa is a place where we only have famine, civil strife, and a place where you lose money. So we say to them, "Here we are, we are successes in our countries despite the conditions there." These are the three main objectives of the African Business Roundtable.

Africa Report: What kind of response have you been getting from foreign private investors? Can you point to any concrete results that the African Business Roundtable has achieved in terms of attracting foreign investors?

Alintah: Yes. There are many indeed. There are construction jobs going on now in partnership with members of the Roundtable in Africa. There are banks or financial service companies. There is a pharmaceutical company being set up in Swaziland with American partners. There are Germans, French, and Americans who are involved in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Cameroon with members of the Roundtable in partnership. There are also people involved in partnership in Kenya. In Cameroon, there are French involved with one of our members in fishing. So there are concrete results.

Africa Report: What would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of the African private sector?

Alintah: The biggest weakness of the African private sector is, again, perception. Hitherto, we have had businessmen who were not very literate. Also we have had businessmen who were just businessmen simply because they had relations in government with whom they stole a lot of money and obviously that can't be the businessman you are looking for. But of late there are businessmen who can relate to you on the basis of the balance sheet and on the basis of their capacity to perform and on the basis of their ability to navigate the terrain and who also will ask you the same questions you ask them. Those are the ones who form durable partners.

Africa Report: What are the major impediments to developing a stronger private sector in Africa?

Alintah: Government is the first impediment, in that government professes that it wants to create enabling environments, but as they dismantle one kind of bureaucracy which is a disincentive, they set up another one or they allow the bureaucracy to privatize government. Secondly, sheer laziness on the part of the African and lack of information for him to be able to translate his entrepreneurial energy into a project which is financible. Thirdly, capital. Some countries have no idea of capital markets, let alone have them. And where you have them, the cost is so prohibitive that you have to be a magician to borrow money, pay it back, and make a profit. So these are the few constraints that one can think of immediately.

Africa Report: You have been very critical of structural adjustment programs as the answer to Africa's economic problems. What in your view is the solution to the continent's ongoing economic crisis?

Alintah: No, I did not say that structural adjustment is not the answer. Structural adjustment is the answer, is the only option, but the conditionalities for that structural adjustment are what I quarrel with, and secondly, the inability to set attainable objectives. In countries where they say the economy has improved so greatly, I don't find their citizens suffering any less than those who

failed. I don't. Maybe somebody does. Maybe the Ghanaians are enjoying a better quality of life than the Nigerians. I don't see that. So what is this success story? Where is the hard-core investment that has come in? Is it continual borrowing that makes a country a success? Because all it is is more money being pumped in as loans. What good is that to the future generations of this country? To be borrowing more money, to feel good that you are a success when first, your exports have not improved; two, your imports have increased; three, the investments have not come in, so the economy has not expanded except from loans that have been given to you. I am afraid that model must be looked at again because it has not delivered the goods.

Africa Report: What do you think is the best model?

Alintah: I think the best model is the one in which the government, the private sector—and when I say government, I mean a dedicated leadership. If leadership is not dedicated, it does not matter what you say or do. A leadership that is disciplined and prepared to allow its people to use its energies and reap the rewards of these energies. A dedicated leadership, a dedicated private sector—a partnership between them and the controlling agencies, the IMF or the World Bank. They should talk—a triologue if you want—and find the model most suited to a country.

Africa Report: Do you see that happening anywhere?

Alintah: I can see it happening indirectly because the World Bank and IMF believe that they don't make mistakes and governments believe that they don't make mistakes. But their failures will force them to allow the private sector to do certain things which will create a balance, and correct the failures. So that is why I say that it is happening indirectly.

Africa Report: If you compare the early 1980s in Ghana to today, there is a tremendous difference.

Alintah: Yes, but this is what beats me. What makes you think that without IMF or World Bank conditionalities, Ghana would not be a better place today if the Ghanaians themselves decided to correct their ills?

Africa Report: Without any inflows of external finance, they would have been able to do that?

Alintah: The inflow of external finance has helped them do it, but what problem does it create for them in the future? The repayment. And into what sectors are those inflows put? Are they put into sectors that will generate income and profit from which those loans will be paid or are they getting deeper and deeper into debt? Are we having a short-term euphoric flirtation with success when in fact we are just postponing for our grandchildren the problems which we can solve today?

Africa Report: How do we solve those problems today?

Alintah: How we solve those problems today is as I said. Ghana has its natural resources. Instead of borrowing money, it should allow its private sector to get into these natural resources with their foreign partners and exploit them and pay taxes and whatever and rebuild the country. But where government arrogates to itself the capacity to want to do everything, that is what you get. America owes in one year more than Africa has owed in all these years. Is anybody after America? Isn't it because the American private sector is so vibrant and that on any day, America can repay? What is it that makes it? Is it because the government of America is printing more money? No. It is because the American economy is strong and the American economy is strong because the private sector of America is strong.

Africa Report: There is a vibrant private sector—the informal sector—in Africa. What can be done to harness that energy, initiative, and creativity because it hasn't brought about development as yet?

Alintah: If you talk about the informal sector, it has given government the breathing space for people not to be on the streets killing each other because it has provided the goods, irrespective of restrictions, at prices that people can afford. So it is playing a role. Now it is up to government and the organized private sector to elevate the position of these people. And you do that simply by an act of fiat. You pay attention to market women, to small farmers, you privatize agricultural inputs and not continue to control fertilizer imports and other imports. But instead you use your bureaucracy in such a way that first the prices are too high; secondly, there is a delay in supplying fertilizer. Sometimes fertilizer is supplied after the planting season. Now what are you going to do with that? And so it lies down and goes rotten by the following year. If you allow these things into the private sector, the private sector is not so bereft. You will have small people dealing on the small level, micro people dealing at micro-level, medium-sized people doing medium-level, and big will do big-level. That's what you need and until you allow that, you're forever going to be saying how do we translate it into development? You translate it by paying attention to these sectors and removing the bureaucracies that stand in their way and getting yourself out of areas that you know you are not efficient in handling.

Africa Report: What is your prognosis for Africa's short-term economic future?

Alintah: Short term is going to be tough because Africans are starting to resist the imposition of policies which will not help them—and you can hear it in the voices of peo-

ple who are talking. I might be the one who bears the bad news, but it is coming out gently. They're phrasing it in rather elegant ways, but there is a resistance now even in government that says, "We've done what you said before. It didn't work. Let's try something different." My prognosis is that when that happens, there is going to be a short-term difficulty in understanding between Africans and the international community, but that will be resolved and the resolution will then bring everybody in and it will be a better program for growth that will come out.

Africa Report: What new areas does the African Business Roundtable plan to concentrate on?

Alintah: The AfriExim Bank is now a reality. It was over-subscribed and now has its headquarters in Cairo. The AfriExim Bank does the same thing as the American Exim Bank. It handles exports and imports among African countries, currency compatibility problems, acts as a clearing house, gives guarantees of payment, and acts as a confirming house for letters of credit instead of going to Paris or London or New York for it. We can now do it within Africa and save costs. Those things used to cost about 3 percent more. That is a reality today. The African Investment Bank is being studied now and we know the studies will be positive and we will set it up in the next 18 months to two years in Johannesburg to lend to medium, small, and micro-sized companies on the continent with a special preference to South Africa. We believe that we owe a duty to the people of South Africa to help them overcome this awesome difficulty of such a huge majority of people not knowing anything about the economics of their country. We want to get them into the mainstream. Also, we will be lending to small industries, medium-sized industries, and so forth in other parts of the continent. We also want to reduce the outflow of insurance premiums from the continent and so we want to set up an insurance corporation and have the headquarters in Nairobi.

Africa Report: What would you say to your average American investor who is reluctant to invest in Africa?

Alintah: Not all Americans are going to invest in Africa. The one says: "No way, I'm not going to Africa," I'm not going to bother to convince him or her. But the one who asks if it is possible to invest in Africa, I will say to them, yes it is. There is an organization called the African Business Roundtable which is in partnership with an organization in the United States called the Corporate Council for Africa. Through these two organizations, you can find data and information, you can find partnerships with integrated markets, and you can find the funds on the African side to help finance whatever you are thinking. Then it is up to you. ■

Margaret A. Novicki



RAWLINGS' BIGGEST CHALLENGE

When modern Ghana's worst-ever ethnic conflict broke out in the north in February, it was not entirely unexpected. For centuries, the Konkombas and other ethnic minorities have resented what they consider treatment as second-class citizens in a feudal relationship with majority groups. Violence...

...occasionally has flared up. But now, with the army slow off the mark to quell the disturbances, President Jerry Rawlings faces a challenge—how to produce a lasting peaceful solution among the antagonistic groups.

Nana Akuoku Sarpong was heckled, jeered, and finally thrown out of the building. As presidential adviser on chieftaincy affairs, he had said the unutterable that day in the Northern Regional House of Chiefs. He had told the gathering of ruling chiefs and their advisers to give the minority ethnic groups the paramountcy they had been asking for. He had implored them not to resort to arms and warned that if they refused, President Jerry Rawlings would do it anyway.

He left unceremoniously and the Dagomba, Nanumba, and Gonja rulers were pleased to see the back of him. Realizing that tension was mounting, the government sent delegations of peacemakers.

Following that December meeting, rumors spread of the ethnic groups arming themselves for war. With hindsight, critics say the security forces should have gone into the region at that time to prevent the ensuing conflagration.

Exactly three months after Sarpong's hapless speech, the Northern region of Ghana erupted in the bloodiest and most devastating ethnic conflict in the nation's modern history. More than 1,000 people were killed and about 200,000 were displaced—half of whom fled to neighboring Togo. Bitterness and deep division enveloped peoples who had intermarried, shared traditions, and shared land.

Asked the cause of this devastating conflict, the Northern regional minister, Col. Abdul Ibrahim (a Dagomba), said at a press conference that the war was caused by an argument in a market over a guinea fowl. A Nanumba man had argued with a Konkomba boy over the price of the bony fowl at a place called Nyakpayili. The Konkomba boy killed the Nanumba man and this became the signal for the war to begin.

"Kill one Konkomba man and Konkombas will kill 10 of yours," said Moses Mabengba, a member of Parliament and a Konkomba. He was suspended indefinitely

from the ruling National Democratic Congress party for saying it.

The killing spread throughout the vast Northern region. Dagomba youth mounted road-blocks looking for Konkombas to kill. The conflict threatened to spill southward into parts of the Volta and Brong-Ahafo regions. Far south in Accra, the Konkomba market was the scene of a grenade explosion. Luckily no one was hurt. A state of emergency was declared in the Northern region on February 10 and a military task force was sent in to keep the peace.

The Konkombas say they were not the aggressors in this war; rather, they were forced to defend themselves and they fought as is their custom—with ferocity and skill, effectively defeating the other tribes.

But others say a document had been circulated which suggested the Konkombas had met in Togo and planned the war. They were bent on striking one final blow against their centuries-old hosts—the Gonjas, Nanumbas, and Dagombas. And their goal was Dagomba land—the same parcel of land they had demanded in a petition to the president.

In June last year, the Konkomba subdvisional chief (known as the chief of Saboba) and the Konkomba Youth Association, a political organization, submitted a petition demanding the Saboba chief be promoted to paramount status and a separate traditional council known as Unkpakpabur be set up with Saboba as the district capital.

The petition was rejected on the ground that it had not been channeled through the proper authorities and its wording was too belligerent. The Konkombas were advised to reword their petition, making it sound less like an ultimatum, and channel it through the Ya-Na, the president of the Dagomba traditional council and head of the people whose land they wanted to appropriate.

The Konkombas must have read this as rejection and gave up the idea of peaceful negotiation. Spokesmen of the Konkomba Youth Association held a press conference in Accra saying there would be no peace in the north until Konkombas were granted a paramountcy and land.

The Konkomba fighting force—albeit traditional—is terrifying and impressive, according to officers of the Ghanaian army stationed in the Northern region. First a contingent of men on bicycles attacks the targeted village in the early hours of the morning. These bicycle warriors strike the thatched huts of their enemies with burning arrows, forcing the inhabitants to flee. The terrified victims are then shot with lethal poisoned arrows dipped in snake venom.

Then, a second formation of warriors appears—made up of children in the front row firing gunpowder as a decoy to draw and exhaust enemy fire. Fast behind the decoys follow armed men firing real bullets. Behind them come ululating women, cheering the men on. The women carry pick-axes to bury their dead and they are said to attack any cowards who try to turn back.

Ruby Ofori reports for the Voice of America, the BBC, and Radio Netherlands from Accra.

According to some reports, Konkombas were supported in the conflict by their kinsmen across the border in Togo. Cynics have said that Togolese President Gnassingbé Eyadéma would have been politically naive not to have had a hand in this conflict, given an earlier military attack against his residence which he claimed was inspired by the Ghanaian government.

The Northern region has not been entirely at peace over the past decade. There were at least four major battles between the ostensibly landless Konkombas and their powerful overlords—the Dagombas, the Nanumbas, and the Gonjas—who accuse the Konkombas of being blood-thirsty, land-grabbing settlers who took advantage of their hospitality.

For hundreds of years, Konkombas and the other minority ethnic groups lived as serfs of the Dagombas, Nanumbas, and Gonjas. Paying tributes to the chiefs of these tribes in return for use of the land, Konkombas claimed they had for years been humiliated and treated as second-class citizens in this feudal relationship. Each tribe claimed its people were the original inhabitants of the area.

Part of the conflict stems from the fact that power relations in the region have changed. Ask anyone in the north and they will tell you that the Gonjas, Nanumbas, and Dagombas are the aristocrats—strong on grandeur, tradition, and statecraft, but not very interested in serious farming.

The ascetic Konkombas, on the other hand, are devoted farmers. Always outsiders because they are prepared to travel to seek new lands to farm, it is said a Konkomba man's most treasured possession is his hoe—and his rifle.

While Konkombas grow much of the nation's yams, even employing laborers from the other tribes, technically and traditionally they were considered their serfs, a relationship born out of history and colonial rule. Not having a centralized chieftaincy system all those centuries ago, the Konkombas lived in clans headed by priests. Other tribes introduced the more efficient chieftaincy system and they accepted it. Then the British colonial masters consolidated this situation, putting the chiefly tribes in charge.

In Dagbon, the land of the Dagombas, Konkombas were eventually allowed a certain measure of self-rule—hence the existence of the Saboba chief. The Nanumbas and Gonjas, on the other hand, would not allow even that. Konkombas living in Nanumba and Gonja areas were directly ruled by Nanumba and Gonja chiefs. So among the reasons for the war was the refusal of the ruling tribes to share power.

Another cause was the failure of the government to deliver on promises made to the Konkombas during the presidential elections to reform the feudal system. The government could not fulfill that promise because it had assured the other tribes it would maintain the status quo.

The military task force managed to stop the Konkom-

bas from seizing Yendi, the traditional capital of the Dagombas. That seizure in African terms would have meant the formal defeat of the Dagomba people.

In Yendi, Dagombas, who are predominantly Muslim, lashed back at the Konkombas living in their midst and at the Catholic missionaries who teach Konkomba children. The Dagombas killed about 30 of their own people, mistaking them for Konkombas.

For their own safety, the army evacuated all Konkombas to a military base on the outskirts of the regional capital, Tamale. It was not safe for them to remain in Tamale or any other part of Dagbon unprotected.

But not every Dagomba was consumed by hatred and revenge against Konkombas. Some were being protected by their Dagomba friends or relatives. When *Africa Report* spoke to some Dagomba leaders in Tamale, the overwhelming feeling was one of humiliation, resentment, and fear. The reason was simple: The army had persuaded them to give up their arms while their victorious enemies, the Konkombas, remained in isolated bush hamlets still armed and still in war mode, they said.

The army claimed everything was "under control," but Konkomba attacks continued weeks after the military task force had gone in. The head of the task force, Brig. Henry Smith, admitted they had not sent men into the Konkomba areas in the bush. Later he would order all Konkomba warriors to surrender at designated points or face the wrath of the task force.

FOR CENTURIES, KONKOMBAS AND THE OTHER MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS LIVED AS SERFS OF THE DAGOMBAS, NANUMBAS, AND GONJAS.

By March, the situation was extremely confused. Konkombas at their base in Accra told this reporter their villages were under attack by the army in league with the other tribes. How could they disarm in light of this unfair situation?

Some commentators in the south accused the soldiers of cow-

ardice for not going into Konkomba hamlets to deal with them directly. But certainly the number of men on the ground was inadequate. The army could only stretch to the district capitals. They had just one plane, one helicopter, and a jet fighter commandeered from the military school to patrol a vast area. President Rawlings's proud boast that the Ghanaian army cost just 1 percent of Ghana's gross national product of \$5 billion was coming home to haunt him.

As one of his close aides said, the crisis in the north is Rawlings's biggest challenge ever. Its outcome could affect the next elections unless he can pull off a spectacular feat by bringing the warring factions together to talk about peace and a lasting solution. ○

Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ghana

BY MARGARET A. NOVICKI

Africa Report: In your aegis as a member of Parliament from Bimbila in northern Ghana, could you explain what led to the recent unrest in the region?

Chambas: The immediate cause of the problem was a petition sent by the Konkomba Youth Association to the National House of Chiefs making certain demands of the Dagomba ethnic group: one, a paramountcy for the Konkomba, and in it was reference to the Konkomba presence in the area before the Dagomba came and implicitly then a claim on the land. The proper body constitutionally to have received the petition should have been the Ya-Na, the paramount chief of the Dagomba, and the Dagomba Traditional Council. Then the next step would have been to move to the Regional House of Chiefs and then ultimately to the National House of Chiefs. All these things were bypassed and at that point, the Dagombas had a very harsh reaction—what was going on amounted to intimidation and trying to acquire land through an unlawful channel which was rejected as unacceptable.

At this point, the government realized that it could lead to an explosive situation because over the last decade, there had been a number of confrontations between the Konkomba and different ethnic groups in the same area. In 1981, there was a conflict between the Konkomba and the Nanumba, then in 1986 and 1989 between the Konkomba and the Bimoba. In 1990 and 1991, there were two separate incidents between the Konkomba and the Gonja. So when a petition was coming from the Konkomba, you had to try to address it or you could expect that violence might result.

So indeed, the president himself was seized of this matter, and he put together a committee comprising three members of the Council of State. Members of Parliament from the potential conflict area—including members from the Konkomba, Dagomba, Gonja, and Nanumba sides—and some other persons were charged with trying to defuse the situation and see if a compromise could not be found. This group visited the area, talked to the chiefs, the opinion leaders, the youth and went back a second time. It was in the process of going back for the third visit when all of a sudden the conflict exploded, with Konkombas attacking a number of villages initially in the Nanumba area, but then it extended to the Dagomba and the Gonja areas. A total of seven administrative districts in the eastern part of the Northern region have been affected by this conflict.

The pattern was one where a band of Konkombas went from one village to another and shot their way into the villages. Those who were strong enough to run away

escaped, and those who could not were just mowed down and the whole village was burned to ashes. The extent of the destruction and carnage has been mind-boggling.

Africa Report: What is the historical relationship between these various ethnic groups that would lead to such violence?

Chambas: What is probably not in dispute is that the some of the Konkomba were aboriginal people probably in the area of Saboba down to Yendi. Around the 1400s, the major ethnic groups moved in the area and the pattern of occupation at the time was conquest and imposition of rule of the dominant groups. Contact with European colonialists froze this wave of acquisition by conquest. So on the eve of colonial rule, in that area, the dominant ethnic groups were the Dagomba, the Nanumba, the Mamprusi, and the Gonja, who had been able to establish by conquest their dominance over the rest of the groups, particularly over the Konkomba, who were an acephalous society, in the sense of not having centralized authorities, chiefships. They lived in separate clans, each of which had a head clansman, but they never evolved an institution of chiefship.

Because of that, the groups which came were able to impose their rule over them, and to acquire along with that territory where they established various chiefships and traditional systems of rule. Borders did not take into account the various ethnic groups and quite often split them. So for instance, when the border region between Togo and Ghana was created, it ran across the Konkomba, just like it ran across the Chokosi and the Ewe in the south of Ghana. The bulk of the Konkomba remained on the Togo side, with a small minority in Ghana. In time, they began to accept the Dagomba chiefships, so that the Dagombas appointed Konkombas as chiefs in some of their major towns. A Konkomba was appointed chief in Saboba, a predominantly Konkomba town close to the Togo border. The recent demand was for this particular chief of Saboba to be elevated to paramountcy.

The Konkomba tend not to settle in big towns, with the exception of maybe Saboba, Wapuli, and Kpalba. They settle in dispersed patterns. Each clan congregates in small communities. There has also been a large influx of Togolese Konkombas into Ghana over the decade. I would attribute this to a number of reasons: one, that relatively, Ghana is more prosperous. Initially they would come as migrant workers. As our immigration rules were rather lax, they started to settle and when people found out how well their compatriots were doing, more and more came.

Another reason is that in northern Togo, there is a policy

of establishing game parks and forcefully evicting people from these game parks. Those who had an outlet such as the Konkomba who had kin in Ghana tended to move across our borders. You now find there's a large number of Konkomba across from Saboba, the northeast corner, down the whole eastern corridor of Northern region, into the northern parts of Volta region, into Brong-Ahafo and way into the Afram plains, where the Konkomba are the largest ethnic group there.

Especially in the Northern region, there has historically been friction between the Konkomba and the indigenous people over rights to land. The Konkomba have not accepted the fact of their tenancy in these parts of the country. Perhaps when they move into Volta and Brong-Ahafo regions, they are so culturally distinct that they can understand the claims of the indigenous people to their land. But in the Northern region because they are fairly close culturally, and have been living together with the dominant groups for a long time, they began to question the fact that the dominant groups have constitutional and legal title to the land, and so they have sought ways to redefine this relationship. In these various conflicts that I enumerated, you have seen a Konkomba attempt to get recognition or title to some of the land in that part of the country. The difficulty that it poses is that the constitution fully recognizes certain traditional authorities based on the status quo at the time of the emergence of the modern state of Ghana and all interests in land are vested in these traditional authorities in trust for their people. So any attempt to redefine will have to conform with these constitutional and legal requirements.

There has also been an international dimension to the Konkomba problem. There has been evidence of attempts both officially by the Togolese government and unofficially by the Konkomba element in Togo to organize themselves and their Ghanaian kith and kin. Initially it was to recruit them into what was then called the National Liberation Movement of Western Togo, to advocate secession from Ghana to join Togo and when that failed, the whole effort seemed to be redirected to assist them in their various "fights and struggles and demands" in Ghana. When the conflict broke out, the Konkomba were very well-armed, they had adequate supply of ammunition, so that there was definitely a clear pattern and planning behind the effort.

They used a combination of both guns and traditional bows and arrows, which are very sophisticated, very poisonous. Tragically, some of the more gruesome murders were children and women who had been killed by poisonous bows and arrows.

Africa Report: How much of the Northern region was affected and how many people died?

Chambas: The military task force that was put in place buried at least 1,000 people. How many were left in the bush is anyone's guess. So far, we have about 150,000 displaced persons whose villages have been gutted, just burned to the ground.

Africa Report: Given the inability of Konkombas to acquire land under the existing system, there seems to be no easy solution to this conflict and it's likely to recur.

Chambas: I am afraid we will have to find a permanent solution and it requires some fairly bold decisions, because if we don't solve it once and for all, given a very high propensity on the part of the Konkomba to resort to violence to advance their objectives, then every so often it will recur at tremendous loss to the country. The other groups will bear a grudge and want to retaliate because of the massive destruction and the loss of life that they have incurred. So we should be looking at ways to solve it and it might not necessarily be the legal way, because to pursue it legally, the Konkomba claim is very weak. But in spite of a weak legal claim, we have to acknowledge that this is a problem, so how do you address it.

My own thinking on it is that the Konkombas should be encouraged to move to the Saboba area and have a district created there for them within which they can have as many Konkomba chiefs as they want. That land can then, through government negotiations with the Dagomba, be properly acquired and ceded to the Konkomba. There is a lot of talk about an inferiority complex of the Konkomba and that may have some basis. If you are persecuted, if you are oppressed, maybe that is all a result of not having some place they can call their own in Ghana.

Africa Report: The Northern region historically and up until today is the most economically underdeveloped region in Ghana.

Chambas: That's the very tragic aspect of the conflict—that already the Northern region has to run to keep up with the rest of the country. Now you have this massive destruction, so many deaths, and it's going to cost the central government and international organizations and friendly countries so much money, not even to develop as such, but just for relief and rehabilitation.

Africa Report: Does this experience have relevance for other African countries or is this just an isolated incident?

Chambas: I would not say it is isolated. I think more and more we have to pay attention to these ethnic conflicts. It would seem that in the post-Cold War era, there has been an explosion in ethnic conflicts—in Europe, and in Africa. What is happening would suggest that there is a pattern emerging and governments would do well to focus on these problems and try to address them early enough to prevent their outbreak because some of them potentially could threaten the very survival of African states as we know them today.

Early warning mechanisms need to be developed, we need to set up research arms or institutions which would investigate various ethnic groups and help us to understand them better and particularly minority groups. We need to pick up early signals about frustrations, and demands and see how these can be addressed justly, but within the confines of the constitutional and legal framework of each country. ■

SHADES OF ALGERIA?

When pitched street battles took place in Dakar in February—six policemen were killed—a new factor suddenly emerged in Senegalese opposition politics: hitherto obscure fundamentalist Muslim sects. More than 130 Muslim brotherhood members were detained, joining six opposition leaders held in connection with the riots, among them Abdoulaye Wade, head of the Senegalese Democratic Party and a former presidential candidate. The Islamic sects are broadly conservative, receiving patronage from the government, and support the establishment. However, if radical Islam were to become a rallying call for the jobless youth in an increasingly volatile economy, the prospect of a Senegalese version of the Algerian scenario is not entirely absurd.

Apparently incapable of minimizing the negative publicity generated by an escalating confrontation with forces of the opposition, Senegal's crackdown on Moustarchidinia Wal Moustarchidati, a hitherto obscure Muslim group, may only succeed in stoking the fires of politically motivated Islamic dissent.

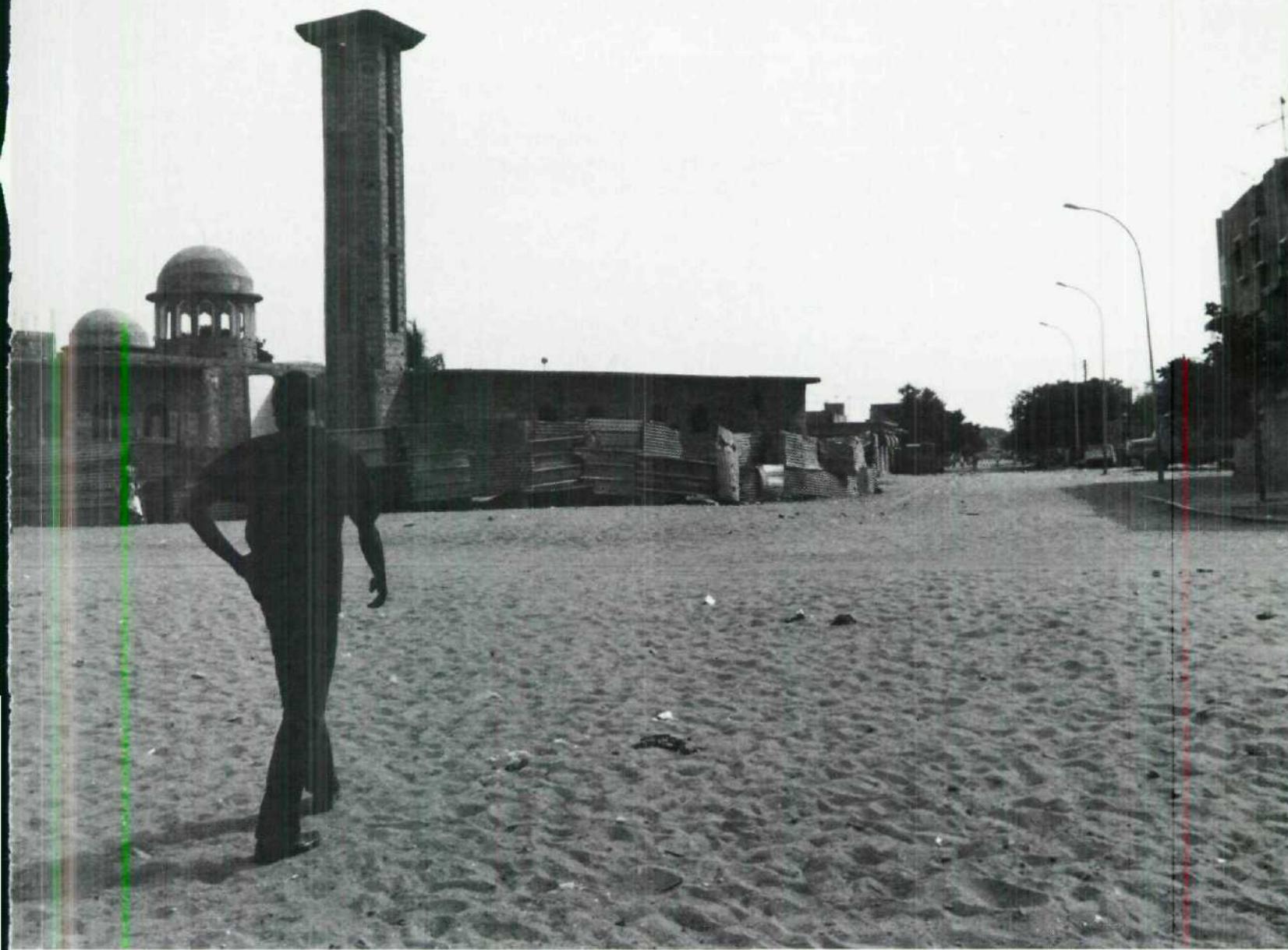
An offshoot of Tidianism, one of Senegal's two predominant Islamic brotherhoods, the Moustarchidines had historically been little more than a maverick *dahira*, or Koranic school, known more for their social work than for any opposition to President Abdou Diouf's ruling Socialist Party (PS). But February 16—the day six policemen were lynched by an angry mob of demonstrators during riots in the capital, Dakar—changed all that,

baptizing the Moustarchidines as the "enfants terribles" of Senegalese politics.

More than 130 sect members were picked up in the aftermath of the worst riots in recent Senegalese history, and charged with inciting violence and breaching state security. Acting on intelligence reports that suggested Moustarchidines involved in what was an illegal march had played a key role in orchestrating the violence, Diouf invoked a constitutional provision that outlaws overtly religious political groups in order to proscribe the movement.

At Rebeuss, the central prison, the Muslim detainees joined their spiritual leader, Moustapha Sy, in jail after fanning the flames of political opposition to Diouf during last year's heated election campaign. Sy, insisting he had evidence that senior government figures had staged the assassination of Constitutional Court number-two

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Kenneth Ross

Babacar Seye last May, was ruled to have been "spreading false and malicious rumors."

A full six weeks after the pitched street battles of February 16, Rebeuss could also boast among its most distinguished inmates Abdoulaye Wade, leader of the main opposition Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS), and a host of politicians. Ever a maze of complexities, Senegal's judiciary had previously charged Wade—runner-up in a February 1993 presidential poll he claimed the ruling PS had rigged—with complicity in Seye's murder but inexplicably failed to detain him.

Wade, a wealthy lawyer who—apart from a short stint as Diouf's minister of state in 1992—has spent a lifetime in vocal opposition to the Socialists, demanded that he and five other politicians being held in connection with the riots be formally charged or released. As the month-long Ramadan fast drew to a close, the six wrote a letter

to the authorities complaining of not being brought before a court since what they termed their "arbitrary unrest and imprisonment."

"Unable to accept this situation," the letter went on, "we urge you to indicate to us without delay the precise reasons for our detention. Failing that we will begin an indefinite hunger strike." After the rioting, Senegal's justice minister and attorney-general, Jacques Baudin, had issued a statement accusing the six of "threatening state security" and stripped them of parliamentary immunity, but had stopped short of arraigning them. Now he moved quickly to head off a hunger strike that would have dominated the headlines.

Wade, Landing Savane of the leftist And-Jeff/PADS party, PDS parliamentarian Pape Oumar Kane, ruling party defector Cheikh Tidiane Sy, and two other members of the five-party Coordination of Democratic Forces

CFD) were formally charged. Subsequent attempts by lawyers to secure their release on temporary bail were rejected and they remained in jail, together with other Wade loyalists held since Seye's murder last year.

Students at Dakar's Cheikh Anta Diop University staged a six-day hunger strike in support of the politicians that climaxed in a pitched battle with riot police. The protest was suspended only after pleas by Wade and his fellow detainees for the hunger strikers, some of them in critical condition, to end their vigil. Student leaders, however, reserved the right to resume the strike "if civil liberties continue to be flouted."

The pretrial detention of the six had led the U.S. Congress to petition Diouf in a letter dated March 3. "We are particularly concerned over the detention of several opposition leaders and academics in Senegal," read the letter, co-signed by the House Africa sub-committee chairman, Democrat Harry Johnston, and his Republican counterpart. "We have been informed that the extension of the detention period of these men falls outside Senegalese legal and constitutional boundaries."

A few days later, European parliamentarians (MEPs) passed a resolution condemning the detention of Wade, Savane, and Kane as "a flagrant violation of Article 50, paragraph 3, of the Senegalese Constitution." If the interventions of the U.S. Congress and MEPs led to the six being formally charged, they also raised the tempo in a debate that is exposing the Socialists, in power since the 1950s, to accusations that the ostensibly model multi-party system—bequeathed by Senegal's first leader, Leopold Sedar Senghor, to Abdou Diouf—is little more than window-dressing.

In their resolution, the MEPs demanded an independent inquiry into allegations of torture that have long dogged Senegal's security services. These came to a head during a 10-year war against armed separatists in the southern province of Casamance, with human rights activists alleging torture and extra-judicial execution of rebel suspects by army and paramilitary units.

The strange death of Koranic teacher Lamin Samb on February 19 has resurrected the torture issue. Samb, believed to have belonged to Moustarchidinia Wal Moustarchidati (literally translated from Arabic as "Men and Women Who Fight for the Truth"), was arrested on February 17, apparently in good health. Two days later he was taken by officers of the Directorate of Criminal Investigations to Dakar's main hospital in a coma, where he died.

Amnesty International said in a statement issued on February 23, "[Samb] may have died from internal injuries caused by torture during his detention." The human rights pressure group had earlier expressed concern at the alleged use of electric shocks on opposition PDS parliamentarian Mody Sy, detained in the aftermath of the Seye affair. On the heels of Samb's mysterious death, *Sud*, an independent Dakar newspaper, published first-hand accounts of former detainees, who described how they had been brutalized by electric shocks and

other forms of torture. The government has remained silent on the charges.

Reporting on the conditions under which the Moustarchidines were being held, the same paper published what it claimed was an official list of standard questions interrogators were directed to ask Islamist suspects. In addition to demanding the names of members serving in Senegal's armed forces, the questionnaire probes suspects for the movement's sources of funding and asks them if they have ever been trained militarily in Libya, Egypt, or Sudan. *Sud* claims state interrogators also routinely ask Moustarchidines: "Who did you vote for in 1993 and who gave you instructions to vote as you did?"

If accurate, the line of questioning is consistent with what analysts in Senegal describe as government fears of an increasing "Algerianization" of the political tension in a country where Islam has been anything but fundamentalist. The Tidianes and Mourides remain potent magnets for Senegal's predominantly Muslim 8 million residents. The sects have evolved Senegal-style as a unifying force melded with societal traditions and norms. Aware of their political power, followers have generally voted en masse on *ndiggal* (instruction) from their respective leaders—the Socialists have made cohabitation with the brotherhoods a pillar of domestic policy.

Senghor, albeit a Catholic, was a past-master at balancing the interests of the brotherhoods, employing patronage and diplomacy in such a way as to ensure loyalty to the PS. Diouf, a technocrat par excellence who was hand-picked to succeed Senghor in 1980, is not blessed with his doyen's mastery of the *marabouts*. One popular analysis has it that Diouf, who, while a student in France, wrote an academic paper condemning the role of Islam in modern politics, cares little for the religion, although he is nominally a Muslim.

Patronage of the brotherhoods has nevertheless steadily become more visible under Diouf. In 1992, U.S. Agency for International Development officials in Dakar reported that a large forest was allocated to the Mourides. This sect controls the lucrative charcoal trade, an activity that adds to depletion of the semi-desertified country's tree cover whose ban the authorities cannot effectively police. "Diouf needs the brotherhoods to survive," a leading Islamic affairs expert told *Africa Report*. "They are too powerful and he has to please them."

Some analysts are now arguing that Islam in Senegal is becoming overtly politicized, with younger *marabouts* such as Moustapha Sy prepared to defy their spiritual leaders. Professor Donal Cruise O'Brien identified a pattern of younger Mourides defying the *ndiggal* of their khalifa-general and voting for the opposition PDS in the elections of 1983. "By 1988 in the next elections," writes Cruise O'Brien, "PDS support had reached majority proportions, the party's slogan 'Sopi' ['change'] echoing within the Mouride brotherhood as well as across the national territory."

It is however generally accepted that the two leading brotherhoods remain broadly conservative, their respective leaders refraining from political utterances. Moustapha Sy, a young *marabout* using the platform of Islam to highlight a deteriorating socio-economic situation, is not believed to be backed by Abdul Aziz Sy, Sr., the khalifa-general of the Tidianes, who is his great-uncle. The Tidiane leader is known for his appeals for peace and reconciliation and is said to remain quietly pro-PS.

Tidianism is named after Sheikh Tidiane, an Algerian-born cleric who founded the Sufi brotherhood some 200 years ago. El Hajj Malick Sy, great-grandfather of the young radical Moustarchidine leader Moustapha, helped spread Tidianism throughout West Africa.

If a growing band of unemployed youth in Senegal see Moustarchidism as their salvation, their hero, Moustapha Sy, is viewed by many as an insignificant upstart. "If the khalifa-general of the Mourides or Tidianes had been arrested, it wouldn't take more than a few hours for the government of Senegal to fall," says an expert who runs a sub-regional Islamic NGO. "Moustapha Sy is in jail and nothing has happened."

The Moustarchidine movement, which claims hundreds of thousands of followers, is viewed as a political tool of Sheikh Tidiane Sy, Moustapha's father who—once a ruling party intimate—is pressuring for a return to prominence. A satirical article published in Dakar early in 1992 claimed that Sheikh Tidiane Sy misused his ownership of shares in Sococim, a national cement company, to acquire vast loans from state-owned banks on which he subsequently defaulted.

Prompted by donors into an aggressive debt recovery program, Diouf's government warned major debtors to pay up or face the consequences. It is this policy, the article claims turned Sheikh Tidiane Sy—Senegal's first ambassador to Egypt who subsequently fell out with his mentor, Leopold Senghor, and was jailed twice—against the Diouf regime.

Some well-informed sources insist Moustarchidinia Wal Moustarchidati can be subdued if a deal is struck between Diouf and Sheikh Tidiane. "The threat of radical Islamic militancy from the Moustarchidines is like a tap that can be turned on and turned off," commented one well-placed Dakar-based foreigner, who however warned that with the Sahelian country's economy in a volatile state, a perceived "Algerianization" was not entirely absurd. That the opposition has moved to capitalize on the January 12 halving of the CFA franc's value is clear—the February 16 riots mushroomed out of a CFD meeting to discuss Senegal's economic plight.

ADIOUF IS SEEN BY POLITICAL ANALYSTS AS INCREASINGLY ISOLATED FROM THE MAINSTREAM OF THE PS.

Diouf had long opposed a devaluation, citing fears of social unrest that have begun to be borne out. Although a subsequent reduction in the prices of essential commodities and a price freeze on others has dampened post-devaluation shocks, the UK-based Economist Intelligence Unit predicts 1994 prices in Senegal will be about 45 percent higher than in 1993. According to the Unit's latest publication: "The inherent economic conservatism of President Diouf's administration suggests that progress on economic reform will be slow and partial at best and that devaluation itself will consequently have a relatively modest impact on real growth."

To date, Senegal has benefited from soft loans to ease the pains of devaluation and—having agreed to an adjustment program with the International Monetary Fund—can look forward to further help from the Paris Club of debtors in servicing its \$4 billion external debt.

The conventional wisdom remains that the current regime lacks the political will to see through what will be a painful period of adjustment. In his third term as president, Diouf is seen by political analysts as increasingly isolated from the mainstream of the PS as a power struggle develops within the party. A clique of technocrats-turned-politicians, rather like the PS secretary-general himself, is said to be in the ascendancy, denying other lobby groups vital access to Diouf.

At a party conclave in February, insiders say the clique fought tooth and nail for their candidate, Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Ousman Tanor Dieng, to fill the yet-to-be created party number-two slot of deputy secretary. Tanor Dieng's path may yet be blocked by fellow Minister of State Djibo Ka, an ambitious strategist whose rapid rise through the party and cabinet is paralleled only by Diouf's own ascent. Ka, in charge of the interior ministry, is seen as the iron hand behind the ongoing campaign to stifle opponents of the government.

Pundits speculate that Ka would have little to gain and much to fear should Diouf, known to favor political compromise, tempt Abdoulaye Wade back into a coalition government, offering this as a reason for the crackdown against the CFD. Many now believe the government's foot-dragging over the detention of Wade, Savane, and others, and its reluctance to clear up the mystery over Babacar Seye's assassination, can only add fuel to the already tense situation.

"All the conditions are there for an escalation of this situation," one diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told *Africa Report*. "Unemployment is on the rise, the CFA franc has been devalued, and the political opposition is shouting louder that Diouf's government can't handle the economy any longer. Add to that radical Islam as a rallying call to the jobless youngsters, and you can see why people are talking about the Algeria scenario." Nonetheless, "Islam in Senegal is not of the brand we're seeing in the Maghreb countries and Iran." As such, it remains premature to conclude that fundamentalism has taken firm root south of the Sahara. ○

A DISARMING START

War-weary Liberians welcomed the beginning of the end of Liberia's bloody civil war as tens of thousands of fighters started to turn in their weapons in a process expected to lead to multi-party elections in September. Overseeing the settlement is a force of West African peace-keepers, a contingent that many believe was key in brokering the peace deal after many fits and starts. The Ecowas military component of 15,000 African soldiers enforced the UN embargo against rebel Charles Taylor and defeated him on the battlefield, a role that—should this peace process prove successful—might be used as a model for other regional conflicts.

After four years of civil war, Liberia's fighters began to disarm in February with the same fits and starts that have characterized the peace process since shortly after the war erupted.

Fighting between factions of the Ulimo rebel group delayed them from handing in their weapons. Rebel leader Charles Taylor complained about unfairness in the installation of the new transitional government and his fighters stopped flocking to disarmament camps. The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), who were among the first to give up their arms, changed their minds and decided to stay at home until the other factions matched their efforts nearly gun-for-gun.

It is in this discordant atmosphere that African peace-keepers, backed by about 360 UN military observers, are to disarm between 25,000 and 60,000 fighters—UN and aid workers' figures differ. To appease the combatants, the UN and aid groups have arranged for each combatant to receive food, clothes, tools, medical care, and career and psychological counseling.

Coinciding with the beginning of disarmament, a new transitional ruling council representing all the factions and a spectrum of ethnic groups has been inaugurated. A temporary national assembly has been installed as well.

However, political bickering among the factions has hindered the new government's ability to begin working. This particular

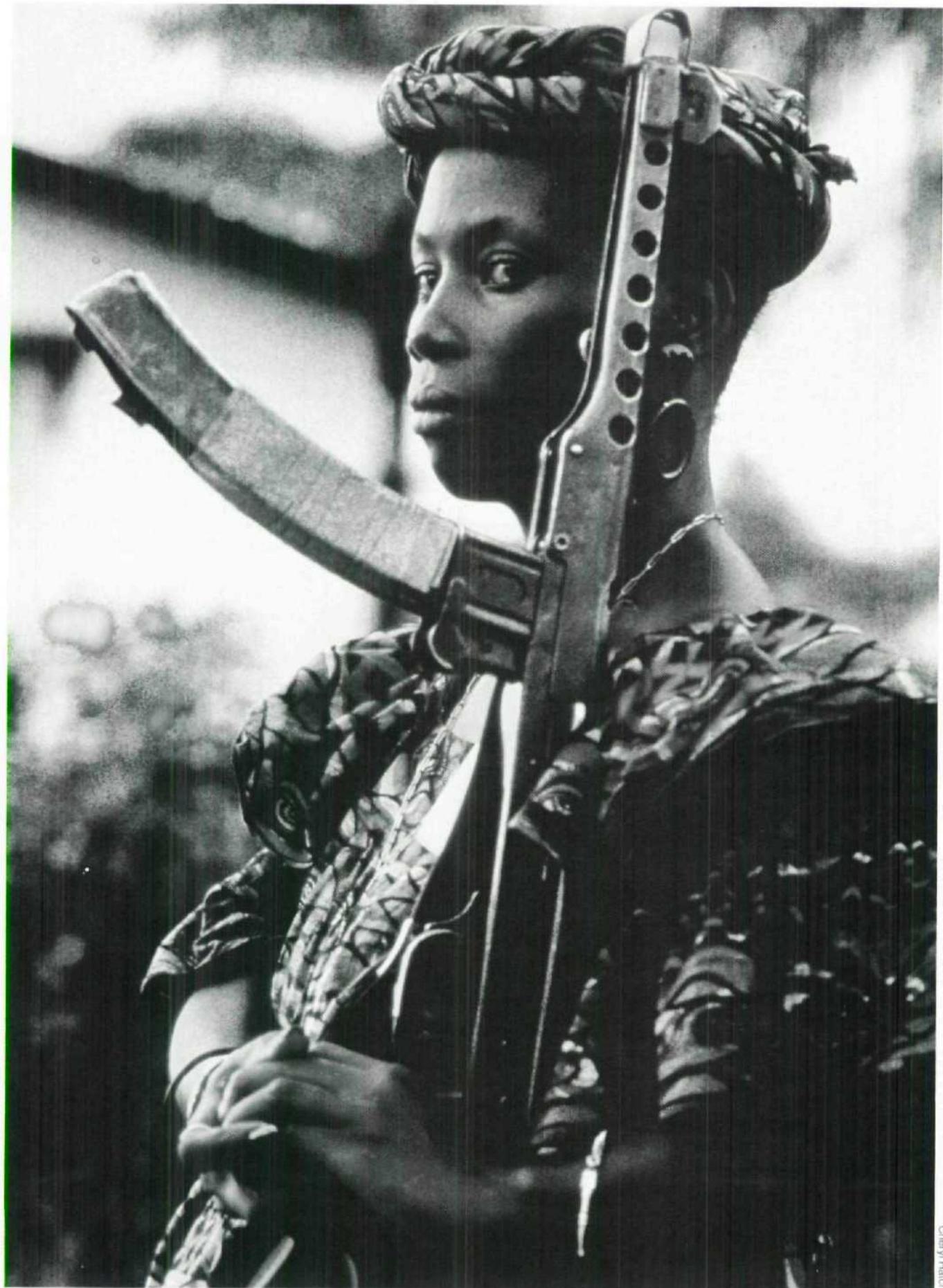
ly irritates Taylor, who is partly to blame, because he is eager to move from the battlefield to the political arena after failing twice in four years to seize the capital, Monrovia, by force.

He is trying to transform himself from rebel leader to politician to run in elections scheduled for September 7 and often sits around his mansion at his headquarters in Gbarnga listening to Handel's "Messiah" at full volume. Campaign bill-boards line the streets of Gbarnga and he says he will contribute nearly \$20 million from the sale of iron ore sitting in Buchanan to help organize the elections. However, diplomats say the iron ore isn't his to sell; it belongs to a private company.

"I can assure you that the Liberian people know what they want now to lead this nation," Taylor said from the office in his mansion. "And," he added in his characteristic immodest manner, "I think I'm the only one capable of bringing normality to Liberia following this very terrible civil war."

He actually contributed to the abnormality when he invaded Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire on Christmas Eve 1989 to overthrow the brutal military dictatorship of Samuel Doe. The war was punctuated by heinous massacres. Nearly 700 people were slaughtered in a Lutheran church in 1990 shortly before the arrival of African peace-keepers; about six others were shot and hacked to death in a refugee camp just before the signing of the peace accord last year. It has been a war largely fought by children like 16-year-old Lt. James Holden of Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

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Cheryl Tiegs

"That day when I joined, there was heavy shooting in our area in the town where I was living," he said while milling around a disarmament camp. "There was heavy shooting all over, so my mother and my father, we all run away. I told my mother then I was going to fight for my nation and if I die, I will die for my country." He said he doesn't know where his family is now, but he will look for them in the house they used to live in outside Monrovia. If it still exists, it has likely been looted and occupied by another family. Some people have been displaced four or more times by the war.

While Liberians make plans to find their families after a war that displaced more than half the population, James Zeiou, a refugee in the port city of Buchanan, has just suffered the shock of losing his. "I only have one now here with me," the 55-year-old man said, his voice breaking as he clutched the arm of his eight-year-old son, Enoch.

Zeiou was scanning the latest truck-load of refugees parked on a Catholic mission's soccer field. He was looking for his wife and three children who went missing previous week when rebels from the Liberian Peace Council, who are remnants of the AFL, attacked their town outside Buchanan. The new refugees climbed down from the truck, their eyes wide, searching for familiar faces among the hundreds of others who had gathered around the vehicle. Many were barefoot and some clutched their only remaining possession, a cooking pot, in their hands.

They were among more than 40,000 people who aid workers say have sought refuge in Buchanan since January because of fighting between the Peace Council and Taylor's NPFL. Fighting has also been reported between a splinter faction of Ulimo and a surrogate group of Taylor's army.

Many Liberians and Western donors consider this latest attempt at political settlement the last chance to avoid entrenched warfare after nearly a dozen peace conferences and several false starts at establishing a lasting trust among the factions since fighting erupted in 1989.

"If things deteriorate from here, then I think to get it back to this point could take years," said Paul McDermott, director of the Carter Center's office in Monrovia, which is helping to organize the elections. "There's not much left in that reservoir of goodwill out there for Liberia."

The United States has contributed more than \$920 million in humanitarian aid to Liberia since 1990 and recently added an additional \$30 million to fund the peace-keeping operation by the Economic Community of West African States, and for ceasefire and election monitoring. Freed American slaves settled Liberia early last century, making it an American pseudo-colony on a continent colonized by Europeans. The national anthem, "The Lone Star Forever," was played during the swearing-in ceremony of the new transitional government at the downtown pavilion under red, white, and blue streamers.

If the disarmament mission doesn't work, the peace-keepers and UN observers need to look south to Angola, where a failure to adequately disarm combatants before elections helped reignite civil war there, leading to an additional 100,000 deaths and a humanitarian disaster.

But a successful conclusion of Liberia's peace process could serve as an example for solving other conflicts around the

world where UN-dominated operations have foundered, observers say.

"If you look at all the dismal flops in Somalia, Angola, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere, it might be heartening to see some hope," said one diplomat, who asked not to be named.

Russia has already looked at the African peace-keeping model for ideas of how it might be able to solve the conflict in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, said Trevor Gordon-Somers, the Jamaican-born UN special envoy to Liberia who has been brokering the peace process with a stubborn determination that has won him few friends. Although the UN is backing the operation, it was the 15,000 African peace-keepers who enforced the UN embargo imposed against Taylor in November 1992 and defeated him on the battlefield under the leadership of a series of Nigerian generals.

The Nigerian-dominated regional force has survived on a shoestring budget. They have no air conditioning in the tropical climate, are meagerly paid, poorly fed, and have managed in great part by being absorbed into the Liberian culture. Many have left children behind, evident by the number of young mothers crying at the airport when troops rotate.

The soldiers came from some of Africa's poorest and most troubled countries, ones that could barely afford the estimated \$500 million or more that they have spent on the peace-keeping operation so far. The force was recently bolstered by troops from Tanzania and Uganda, largely to appease Taylor, who has refused to disarm to Nigerians.

The African peace-keepers have been able to step in where Western observers may have failed. For example, when a power struggle within the leadership of one of the factions appeared to be threatening disarmament, the peace-keepers and tribal elders came together to try to solve the conflict. "It shows that we cannot continue to depend on the UN if we are able to put the forces together within the sub-region," said Nigerian Maj.-General John Ineinger, the peace-keeping field commander. "There is more cohesiveness."

However, the effort by the peace-keepers hasn't been purely altruistic or gone unblemished. Nigeria, the sub-region's powerhouse, had long-standing ties with Taylor's nemesis, Doe, and Sierra Leone was eager to stop the war that had spilled over its border. In addition, many officers engaged in lucrative business ventures in Liberia, a country rich in timber, diamonds, rubber, and gold.

Regional troops also participated in the looting of Monrovia's suburbs in 1992, shipping home refrigerators, air conditioners, and other goods. Hospitals, aid convoys, and food warehouses were also bombed by Nigerian planes during the conflict, especially during peak enforcement of the UN embargo. But it was that embargo that was key in bringing about the recent peace, observers say, and its execution by the African peace-keepers is an example of how the UN can more effectively carry out its mandate without becoming too involved, as it has in Somalia. "We will stay here until elections," said Kenyan Maj.-Gen. Daniel Opande, the chief UN military observer in Liberia. "But come elections, the day after the installation of the government, I don't think we will stay here even one day longer that." ○

HARBORING THEIR PORT

When Namibia finally achieved independence from South Africa in 1990, one part of the puzzle remained unsolved—the deep-water port at Walvis Bay, which Pretoria insisted on keeping. But thanks in large part to pressure exerted on Pretoria by the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress, South Africa ceded its sovereignty over the enclave in March. Namibia has high hopes for Walvis Bay, having declared it a free trade zone, and foreseeing huge economic benefits.

Midnight on February 28 saw Namibia made whole again. The final piece in the jigsaw of independence, Walvis Bay, had until that hour flown the South African flag, but in the face of pressure from the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress in South Africa, and continual Namibian insistence, the vital port enclave was finally returned to Namibia.

Sam Nujoma, the Namibian president, was raised in Walvis Bay but had vowed never to return while it took its orders from Pretoria. But on the last day of February, breaking his promise by a few hours, Walvis Bay's favorite son came home, not as a visiting head of state, but as president. Nujoma certainly wasn't going to let the matter of a few hours spoil his enjoyment of returning, and who could quarrel with a man who had waited a lifetime for this triumphant moment.

Speaking at a press conference soon after his arrival, Nujoma indulged himself by recalling the last time he had been in Walvis Bay. In 1959, in a rather more low-

Mick Slatter



profile visit, Nujoma had sneaked into the enclave to set up a South West Africa People's Organization (Swapo) cell. Disguised as a preacher, his white shirt collar turned back to front and a Bible and hymn book tucked under his arm, he bluffed his way past the South African check points. Once inside, he found a promising spot in the railway workers' compound and began singing gospel songs to attract a crowd. He then delivered the gospel of Swapo: "Go forth and liberate this land." Sitting back in his chair having retold his little tale, Nujoma, not uncharacteristically, was all smiles.

Walvis Bay has always been an emotive issue for

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Namibians. When independence from South Africa was finally achieved in 1990, Pretoria chose to hang on to the harbor, the only deep-water port on the entire Namibian coast. Small matter that it was a good 600 miles from the South African mainland—it was of strategic importance and gave South Africa a potential stranglehold on Namibia, controlling its only real outlet to the sea and by extension the bulk of its international trade. For South Africa at the time, control was not an issue it was even prepared to discuss, and Namibia's demands for the port fell on deliberately deaf ears.

But it was events inside South Africa that turned the tide in Namibia's favor. Both the ANC and the PAC put pressure on the South African government, insisting on Walvis Bay's reintegration. By 1992, a refusal to discuss control had been replaced by joint administration; by March 1994, full Namibian control.

Namibia treated the reintegration of Walvis Bay as nothing less than a second independence. Celebrations had been planned all over the country, and in Walvis Bay itself, residents were preparing for a party of historic dimensions. For days before the official hand-over, convoys of overcrowded cars and buses from all over the country made their way to Walvis Bay. Nobody, it seemed, wanted to miss out on the party. Schools were requisitioned to house the arrivals, old friends called up, and rejected relatives revisited.

But the hospitality of the Walvis Bay residents was pushed to the limit. A few days before the hand-over, riot police had to be called to the Kuisebmond township to restore order, when a number of arrivals had tried to force themselves into one of the hostels for local workers. However, the fracas was defused quickly and soon forgotten.

Beauty contests (a Namibian preoccupation), soccer matches, and concerts with pop stars like Lucky Dube had been organized to entertain the revellers, but not everyone was in the mood for celebrating. A small fraction of the town's population, hidden away from the singing and parades, muttered darkly about the folly of the transfer. One man, Berthold Bahr, offered numerous yellowing and dusty photocopies of treaties which proved, at least to Bahr's satisfaction, that South Africa had no right to pass the port to Namibia. He was demanding a referendum (though only for the South African residents) and had written to the British government, and talked of taking his troubles to the United Nations. So had he and other South Africans been sold out by Pretoria? "Sold out, Sold out...We have been sent like cattle to the slaughter house," he fumed in a tirade that sounded shamelessly rehearsed. But whatever noise Bahr made, he cut a lonely figure in Walvis Bay, about to be washed away by a tide over which he had no control.

If Bahr was absent from the reintegration celebration held at the Kuisebmond stadium just outside town, so

too were President F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela. Both men had begged off, citing a heavy program of electioneering in South Africa. There were, however, willing replacements. President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana jetted in, as did Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe. And Namibia also provided its own stars for the ceremony. Miss Namibia and one-time Miss Universe Michelle McLean was paraded, as was Olympic gold medalist Frankie Fredricks, who came jogging into the packed stadium carrying a flaming torch, took a lap of honor, and at midnight lit an Olympic-style flame dubbed the "Unity Flame." Seconds later, the blue, white, and orange South African flag was lowered to the strains of "Die Stem," the South African national anthem. Then to a roar of approval, the Namibian colors were hoisted into the night sky.

Namibia has high hopes for Walvis Bay. The morning after the midnight ceremony, Nujoma symbolically unveiled a stone plaque declaring the area a free trade zone (FTZ). At present, the FTZ amounts to little more than that solitary block of stone, but the plan is that the zone will offer exemptions on customs and import duties. In addition, companies located in the FTZ would not be taxed on profits or other incomes. There are plans to build warehouses and improved accommodation, and to provide forwarding services. It is hoped that by providing such generous benefits, companies will be encouraged to locate in Walvis Bay and use the zone to manufacture and process raw materials which will then be re-exported, creating thousands of jobs for Namibians and acting as a catalyst for nationwide economic development. The return of the bay and 12 offshore islands (some with quite colorful names such as Roast Beef Island and Plum Pudding Island) will also automatically extend the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) which Namibia declared soon after independence to protect its valuable fish stocks from poachers. Certainly there are good reasons to be optimistic, and when the Trans-Caprivi and Trans-Kalahari highways are complete, the value of the port will be significantly enhanced.

But it's not Eldorado yet. Walvis Bay also brings new responsibilities, in particular providing for the 25,000 residents. Money will have to be diverted to social expenditure, especially workers' housing, which is widely believed to be of an unacceptably low standard. Such costs may even mean that in the short term, the port will cost Namibia more than it earns. But no matter. The Namibian government is confident that Walvis Bay will be a major economic asset for the nation. And if there are fears about the Swapo government's competence to run such an international port without any prior experience, one is reminded that similar fears were expressed in 1990, when Swapo came to power, about its ability to run the Namibian economy. Such fears now look alarmist and misplaced. And after, all Nujoma is not a complete stranger to Walvis Bay. ○

■ ■ ■ SOUTH AFRICA ■ ■ ■
BY PATRICK LAURENCE

LET'S HAVE A PEACEFUL AND DEMOCRATIC NEW YEAR.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN.

Sekunjalo Ke Nokota



NOW IS THE TIME



Before South Africa's elections in April, the irritant factors sorted themselves out: the capitulation of the Bophuthatswana and Ciskei homelands, the split of the Afrikaner nationalists, and, especially, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's last-minute decision to let his Inkatha Freedom Party fight in the polls and not over them. Although the "homelands"—vestiges of grand apartheid—were slated to expire when the new government was in place, two died in March, their governments deposed by Pretoria. The extreme Afrikaner right discovered that they were not the only people with guns and became even more isolated. And Buthelezi apparently realized that would be his fate, too, and jumped into the election.

March was a cruel month for the black allies of white conservatives in South Africa. It witnessed the political demise of two black leaders who were allied to the Afrikaner Volksfront and saw the third fighting for his political life.

But April proved to be the sweetest month of all for the rest of South Africa, when Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the third black leader, called off his boycott of the April 26-28 election, allowing his Inkatha Freedom Party to be included on the ballot.

The dramatic shift of the balance of power in favor of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress was summed up succinctly by veteran communist leader and senior ANC member, Joe Slovo, before Buthelezi, the leader of the KwaZulu homeland, agreed to take part. "Two down and one to go," he declared triumphantly.

The two down were the regimes of Lucas Mangope in Bophuthatswana and Oupa Gqozo in Ciskei. Next on the list, Slovo predicted, was Buthelezi's government in KwaZulu. All three of these polities, derisively referred to as "bantustans" by the ANC and its allies, had been members of the Freedom Alliance, a coalition of anti-ANC forces drawn from black as well as white ranks.

The fall of Mangope, Bophuthatswana's first and only president, signaled more than the end, politically speaking, of one man. It marked the end of the Freedom Alliance and, worse still from the conservative viewpoint, a split in the Afrikaner Volksfront or AVF. Until the collapse of Mangope's government in Bophuthatswana, the AVF was seen by many conservative whites as an immovable bulwark against which the ANC juggernaut was destined to dash itself to death.

The demise of Bophuthatswana—one of the last bastions of resistance to the reunification of South Africa—was sealed on March 15 when Mandela, the pre-eminent cham-

pion of a united and democratic South Africa, was given a hero's welcome at Bophuthatswana's independence stadium.

The huge stadium was built as a monument to Bophuthatswana's independence, but served as the venue for celebrations of its return to South Africa as part of the northwest province, one of nine regions in the new, post-apartheid political order.

March 15 was meant to be the date on which Bophuthatswana's parliament would meet to decide whether to accept reintegration into South Africa or to fight for its independence against insuperable odds, including the withdrawal of recognition by South Africa, the only country in the world to recognize the polity.

But, faced with implacable opposition from powerful political forces in South Africa and the populace in Bophuthatswana's capital of Mmabatho, the parliament never met.

The origins of Mangope's fall went back more than five years to 1988, when he was briefly toppled in a short-lived military coup led by Rocky Malebane-Metsing, now an ANC regional candidate for the northwest province. Mangope, who was taken captive by rebellious soldiers, was restored to power when South African security forces intervened to crush the revolt.

But the coup showed Mangope's lack of support. It was carried out by a small part of his army, the national guard. The rest of his security forces failed to intervene on his behalf, suggesting strongly that his regime lacked popular support, despite the huge majority which his Christian Democratic Party enjoyed in Bophuthatswana's parliament.

The immediate origins of his fall lay, however, in the strike by his civil servants for a 50 percent rise, the repayment of their pension contributions, and the reincorporation of Bophuthatswana into South Africa.

The strike resulted from suspicions by civil servants that their contributions might be embezzled by corrupt officials in what they saw—correctly as it turned out—as the dying

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days of Bophuthatswana. These fears were reinforced by anxiety that Mangope's government might use their pension money to offer inducements to the police and the army to remain loyal.

The strike spread in the week ending March 11 and was accompanied by rebellion in the streets of Mmabatho and the adjoining town of Mafikeng, especially outside the University of Bophuthatswana. Barricades were thrown across the streets. The rebellion was accompanied by attempts to win policemen and soldiers over to "the people."

Two political demands underlay the rebellion and, to a lesser extent, the strike: the reincorporation of Bophuthatswana into South Africa and the right to free political activity in the territory.

The situation came to a head on March 10 when students succeeded in winning over a part of the 600-strong police contingent in Mmabatho. The lapse of police control precipitated large-scale looting and joyous celebrations at the fall of Mangope's government. The celebrations were a few hours premature.

Mangope had one more card to play, a disastrous one from his perspective as it turned out. He invited commandos of the AVF into Mmabatho to help resist what he believed—with some justification—was a campaign by the ANC and its allies to overthrow his government.

But by inviting the AVF in, Mangope also opened the door to Eugene Terreblanche's neo-fascist Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), which, with the Conservative Party, is an important component of the AVF. The presence in Bophuthatswana on March 11 of uniformed, gun-toting members of the AWB further alienated Bophuthatswana's police and army from the Mangope government.

While the initial withdrawal of AWB commandos from Mmabatho was precipitated by orders from the AVF for them to pull out, the exodus was speeded up by Bophuthatswana police and soldiers. There were exchanges of fire between the retreating AWB commandos and Bophuthatswana's security forces.

The most serious occurred outside the Mafikeng police station. The last car in an AWB convoy was hit by a fusillade of bullets fired from police guns. Police opened fire after the AWB convoy shot at civilians who were jeering and throwing stones at the retreating men.

The last car in the convoy was hit. One of its AWB occupants was killed. Two of his companions were wounded and, lying on the side of road outside their car, signaled their surrender by putting their hands up. They were shot dead, executed by a Bophuthatswana policeman.

Events followed swiftly after that. South African soldiers and policemen were moved in to help restore order and on March 12, a delegation from the South African government and the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) formally told Mangope that he had been deposed. Tjaart Van der Walt, South Africa's ambassador to Bophuthatswana, and later, Job Mokgoro, a black intellectual, were appointed as co-administrators.

Mangope complained bitterly at a meeting of the Free-

dom Alliance on March 14 and stressed his determination to play a political role in future. In the dying moments of his government, he had registered the Northwest Christian Democratic Party for South Africa's election and vowed to campaign vigorously. Later, recognizing the formidable opposition he faced, he abandoned plans to fight for power in the northwest province in South Africa's April 26-28 election.

The ignominious retreat of right-wing commandos activated bitter recriminations between Constand Viljoen, a leader of the AVF, and Terreblanche, the AWB leader. They blamed one another for the fiasco. But the retreat did more than that. It fueled tensions within the AVF. The quarrel led to the resignation of Viljoen, who formed the Freedom Front as a parallel and rival organization to the AVF. Unlike the AVF, Viljoen's Freedom Front favored participation in the April election, believing that it could best advance the ideal of a separate Afrikaner state by securing a niche in the new parliament.

The fall of Mangope's Bophuthatswana was followed within a week by the collapse of Gqozo's government in Ciskei. Unlike Mangope, Gqozo did not try to resist. Fearing for his life, he relinquished power once it became clear that he had lost control of his police.

A rebellion within his police force began on March 22. It started with a sit-in in support of demands for an immediate payout of pension contributions at the police college in Bisho, Ciskei's capital. It took an uglier turn when the rebellious policemen took 15 officers hostage, including three brigadiers.

Faced with demands that he address the mutinous policemen, Gqozo capitulated. "I decided to call for the TEC's intervention because I feared that the situation would create

THE GRIM PROSPECTS OF A POST-APARTHEID ORDER OF IMPLACABLE OPPOSITIONISTS ENDED WITH BUTHELEZI'S ELECTION ENTRY.

all sorts of problems for everyone." Cyril Ramaphosa, secretary-general of the ANC, commented of Gqozo's abdication from power: "It is not out of kindness that he is stepping down."

Gqozo's fall was pre-saged in his decision last year to join the TEC and to agree to participate in the April election. These decisions cut across the stand taken by the then

Freedom Alliance: It was

opposed to participation in the TEC and the election until and unless its demands for a more definitely federal constitution for the new South Africa were met. Gqozo's act of de facto dissociation from the Freedom Alliance was forced on him by a threatened strike in Ciskei's civil service. His regime limped on for a few months until its final surrender on March 22.

That left Buthelezi's KwaZulu. But Buthelezi proved to be

tougher and more resilient than Mangope or Gqozo for two salient reasons. First, Buthelezi and his Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) had support, particularly in northern Natal. Second, Buthelezi won the backing of the Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelithini, on three critical issues: his rejection of the transitional constitution, drawn up at the multi-party negotiating council last year; his refusal to participate in elections under the constitution; and his demand—in view of the failure of the negotiators to offer a genuinely federal constitution—for the restoration of the pre-colonial Zulu kingdom.

The ANC, of course, opposed Buthelezi and the IFP on both these issues. But in opposing Buthelezi, the ANC found itself in conflict with the Zulu king. Many Zulus, confronted with a choice between the ANC and the king, chose the king. The most visible way in which they could signal their loyalty to Zwelithini was to join the IFP. Thus as the election approached, the IFP underwent a revival, particularly in northern Natal.

When Judge Johann Kriegler, chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission, went to the KwaZulu capital of Ulundi to try to persuade Buthelezi and the KwaZulu legislative assembly to cooperate, he was jeered. He later described his experience before the KwaZulu legislative assembly as one of "stage-managed humiliation."

The emergence of Zulu royalists—men and women who were fanatically loyal to Zwelithini and the cause of the Zulu monarchy—altered the political equation in the province of KwaZulu-Natal to the advantage of the IFP. One consequence was the intensification of political rivalry between the IFP and the ANC and a rise in the province of the death toll from political violence. According to the Human Rights Commission, the number of fatal casualties in March was 311, an increase of 73 percent over the February total.

In a bid to curb the violence, which threatened to make it impossible to hold free and fair elections in KwaZulu-Natal, President F.W. de Klerk, acting in concert with the TEC, declared a state of emergency in the province on March 31. Troop reinforcements were sent to the province and regulations were promulgated providing security forces with increased power, including the right to detain suspects for up to 30 days and to search premises without a warrant.

But hopes that the state of emergency would bring about an immediate and sharp reduction in violence were not realized. The death toll in the first week was 124, nearly 18 a day. Zulu royalists openly defied an emergency regulation forbidding the carrying of "traditional weapons" (sticks, spears, clubs, battle axes, and shields).

The tension in Natal spilled over into Johannesburg on March 28 when a march through the city by Zulu royalists led to shooting in the streets and the deaths of more than 50 people, most of them Zulu supporters of Zwelithini. In the worst episode, eight marchers were shot dead outside the ANC's national headquarters. The killing exacerbated acrimony between the IFP and the ANC.

The two sides blamed one another for the killings. Labeling the shooting a "massacre," the IFP insisted that the

marchers had been killed by the ANC snipers stationed on the roof of the ANC headquarters and at strategic positions on nearby buildings. The ANC insisted that its security guards had only opened fire after Zulu marchers attempted to attack the building. The ANC's case, however, was weakened by its refusal to allow policemen into its headquarters to search for, and conduct ballistic tests on, weapons which may have been used by the alleged snipers.

A summit meeting between de Klerk, Mandela, Zwelithini, and Buthelezi on April 8 ended in a stalemate. Mandela attempted to woo the Zulu king, and wean him from his perceived dependence on Buthelezi, by offering to guarantee the special status of the Zulu monarchy in post-election South Africa. While this strategy was not immediately successful, observers believed the king was gradually tempted by the ANC's offers, leaving Buthelezi even more isolated.

Zwelithini had previously been supportive of Buthelezi's demands for adjustments to the constitution to ensure that it was fully federal and for a postponement of April 26-28 election.

A high-powered mediation team, headed by a former U.S. secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, and a former British foreign secretary, Lord Carrington, attempted to bridge the seemingly unbreachable gap between the two sides, but left South Africa shortly after its arrival in the face of Buthelezi's intransigence.

The inability of the ANC and the IFP to agree on the terms of reference for mediation was the sticking point. The ANC wanted the mediators to stick to constitutional differences, arguing that changes could be made to the constitution after the election date. The IFP, however, was adamant that the election date should be one of the issues on the agenda for mediation. At the inconclusive summit meeting, the IFP made deferment of the election a condition for its participation. The ANC, however, refused to budge, labeling the election "sacrosanct."

The grim prospect facing South Africa that the post-apartheid order would face implacable opposition from resolute Zulu royalists and diehard Afrikaner nationalists changed to elation a week before the election with Buthelezi's surprise agreement on April 19 to call off his election boycott and allow his IFP to be included on the ballots for a new National Assembly and for provincial legislatures.

While the reasons for Buthelezi's turnaround remained speculative, it appeared that the prospect of his impending political oblivion—coupled with mediators' refusal to consider an election postponement—finally had an impact. The agreement, signed by F.W. de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, and Buthelezi, provided only a guarantee of the Zulu king's status as ceremonial monarch and a promise that after the elections foreign mediators would consider Inkatha's demands for greater autonomy in the Zulu province.

The eleventh hour agreement left the white racist diehards—and the black nationalist Azanian People's Organization—even further out on a limb, destined for political obscurity. ○

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR CONTINUED

ty. It is our desire that you learn firsthand about Mauritanians while in Mauritania.

—Mohamed Fall Ainina
Ambassador,
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of
Mauritania

To the Editor:

I read your article on Mauritania ("Ethnic Cleansing," by Janet Fleischman, January-February 1994) with great interest and despair. My interest stemmed from the fact that I have visited Mauritania on numerous occasions and was hopeful that the article would shed light on one of the least known and most misunderstood countries in Africa. My despair arose from the fact that the article was blatantly inaccurate and biased.

To assert that the Mauritanian government and armed forces have engaged in a campaign of ethnic cleansing on a scale with that which is occurring in the Balkans belies a complete and total distortion of the truth. In my conversations with Mauritanians, they readily concede that as an ethnically and culturally diverse country, they are not without the normal tensions and misunderstandings that diverse societies experience. In retrospect, the same can be asserted about the United States; yet we do not hear anyone claiming that there is ethnic cleansing taking place within the United States.

The article's sensational assertion that ethnic cleansing was occurring in Mauritania was an affront to the Mauritanian people and government because it was baseless and not grounded in fact. If you are making Mauritania analogous to the Balkans, then where are the death camps? Where have they laid siege to any population centers? Most importantly, where is the wholesale genocide?

The Mauritanian government and people are open and receptive to constructive criticism and responsible investigative journalism; however, I must refute the article for being sensational, unproven, and an irresponsible depiction of the country.

I am not "pollyannish" with respect to Mauritania and its problems. In fact, during my tenure in Congress, I was openly critical of inequities that I discerned within their political and social structure. Yes, Mauritania does have problems; but they are in no way analogous to the genocide associated with ethnic cleansing in the Balkans. I believe that "fair play" and responsible journalism dictate that we make every effort to assist the Mauritanian people in their struggle to overcome the poverty which is the linchpin of their dilemma. However, grossly inaccurate articles do not help Mauritania, they only exacerbate its problems!

It always intrigues me that writers who never visit a country seem to see

and know more than those who visit.

—Mervyn M. Dymally
Member of Congress (Ret.)

The author replies:

I have not been allocated sufficient space to respond point by point to the ambassador's letter; however, he has not responded to the issues I raised in my article. In fact, Ambassador Fall Ainina is engaging in an unproductive debate. The reality is that the Mauritanian government has refused to acknowledge responsibility for gross abuses of human rights or to allow any independent investigation. In June 1993, the government went even further to guarantee immunity for those responsible and to block any attempt at accountability for past abuses. It declared an amnesty covering all crimes committed by the armed forces and security forces between April 1989 and April 1992.

These actions make it clear that the Mauritanian authorities remain intent on hiding the truth about their human rights record. This attitude is directly relevant to the human rights situation today, because the security forces continue to operate with impunity, and the black ethnic groups continue to suffer repression. Ethnic tensions will continue to plague Mauritania until there is a meaningful effort to account for past abuses, and until the rule of law is respected by all Mauritanians.

Ambassador Fall Ainina expressed concern that my article does not provide sufficient context in the discussion of human rights abuses in Mauritania. Fortunately, on April 17, Human Rights Watch/Africa published a 170-page report entitled, "Mauritania's Campaign of Terror: State-Sponsored Repression of Black Africans," which discusses in detail the range of abuses. Ambassador Ainina will find that the expulsion of Moors from Senegal is also described; clearly, they too were victims. The report shows that the most egregious human rights violations—such as massacres, torture, and slavery—have been accompanied by more insidious forms of de facto discrimination against black Africans, aimed at ensuring their marginalization and depriving them of their fundamental human rights. The report also describes the democratization process since 1991, and credits the Mauritanian government with some improvements, especially in the area of press freedom.

Mervyn Dymally's assertion that my article on human rights abuses in Mauritania is "baseless and not grounded in fact" is a sad commentary about his knowledge of the persecution of the black ethnic groups in that country. Mr. Dymally's refusal to acknowledge these violations is not surprising: Since he left

Congress, he has become a registered lobbyist for the Mauritanian government, for an annual fee of \$120,000.

Mr. Dymally states that applying the term "ethnic cleansing" to Mauritania is a "complete and total distortion of the truth." Although "ethnic cleansing" is a relatively new phrase that emerged from the horrors of Bosnia-Herzegovina, it does not necessarily require "wholesale genocide" to accomplish its objectives, as Mr. Dymally concludes. It seems to me that campaigns carried out by Mauritanian security forces representing the Arab-Berber government, directed against the black ethnic groups on the basis of their race and ethnicity, do constitute an effort to "cleanse" the country of a distinct part of the population. Tens of thousands of black victims of these campaigns have been forcibly expelled from their country, and hundreds more have been tortured, raped, and killed. Entire villages along the Senegal River Valley have been emptied of their former inhabitants. It should be noted that Mauritania has a population of only 2.1 million, so the many thousands of black victims represent a relatively high proportion of the total population.

The situation in Mauritania in no way minimizes the tragedy of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as Mr. Dymally would have us believe. As a nongovernmental human rights organization, Human Rights Watch monitors violations all over the world; the severity of abuses in one country do not excuse them in another.

One final point in Mr. Dymally's letter must be addressed: He claims to be "intrigued" that people "who never visit a country seem to see and know more than those who visit." The government of Mauritania has never permitted Human Rights Watch/Africa to conduct a human rights investigation, despite repeated requests since 1989. Abusive governments cannot escape international scrutiny simply by denying access. Accordingly, we have sent three fact-finding missions to Senegal to interview Mauritanian refugees, and have conducted numerous other interviews with Mauritanians in France and the United States. Moreover, a delegation from two French human rights groups that visited Mauritania in January 1994 led to the arrest of one of the country's leading human rights activists, Cheikh Saad Bouh Kamara, who was held for four days without charge. His detention exerts a chilling effect on international organizations that seek to conduct independent human rights investigations in Mauritania, as well as on Mauritanian human rights activists monitoring conditions in their own country.

—Janet Fleischman
Washington Representative
Human Rights Watch/Africa

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