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Dear Subscriber:

After the May/June issue, the African-American Institute is suspending publication of Africa Report for the next three issues. The magazine, the Institute’s bi-monthly flagship publication and the only magazine on Africa published in the United States, has been subsidized through the Institute’s endowment at an average annual cost of $300,000 for the past several years. We will use the hiatus to assess future directions of the publication and to put it on a sounder, independent financial footing.

The hope of management is that Africa Report can begin publishing again in the Fall or Winter of 1995, pending the outcome of a concerted fundraising effort initiated in November 1994. Approaches are being made to a variety of foundations, corporations and non-governmental organizations involved in African affairs to seek interim support and lay the groundwork for a permanent financial solvency for the magazine. We assure you that all subscriptions will be honored and regret if this has caused you any inconvenience.

As we at AAI search for ways in which Africa Report can be saved, it occurs to us that those of you in the international community who have a commitment to Africa may want to partner with us in providing support or co-sponsoring an issue. If you would have an interest in exploring such a possibility, please fax or call Steve McDonald at the Institute so that we can discuss it: telephone (212) 949 5666, fax (212) 682 6174. Africa Report is an historic vehicle for independent, informed, and unbiased dialogue and information on Africa that must continue. We welcome your thoughts and constructive assistance.

Thank you for your understanding and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Vivian Lowery Derryck
President, AAI

Steve McDonald
Publisher, Africa Report
Benin's Opposition Charges President with Nepotism, Wins Polls

Political parties opposed to Benin's President Nicephore Soglo won a majority of the 83 seats contested in the March 28 election for an all-new legislature.

The failure of Soglo's Benin Renaissance (RB) party and its allies to win in the polls is viewed as an indication that the president will have an uphill struggle in his reelection bid next year. But the election results produced surprises—including the considerable success of former dictator Mathieu Kérékou's party—highlighting that it is too early to be writing off any of the top candidates for next year's presidential poll.

What is more, in mid-April, potential rifts in the opposition coalition could be seen as the different parties jostled over the formation of a new government. In all, 10 different opposition groups won seats in the new assembly, while the presidential coalition was comprised of seven parties. Some parties that are counted with the opposition were reportedly courted by the "Soglo alliance."

Indeed, coalitions have been integral to Benin's politics since the country's first post-independence multi-party elections in 1991. Soglo—who was credited with successfully implementing economic reforms while serving as prime minister during the country's transition to multi-party rule—won the 1991 presidential election in the second round by almost a 2-to-1 margin over Kérékou. The successful transition from military to democratic rule led diplomats to call Benin the model for Africa's newly democratizing states.

By June 1992, a pro-Soglo coalition had emerged as a majority in the National Assembly. But last October, 19 MPs left the alliance to protest what they said was Soglo's tendency to ignore the legislature in the decision-making process. The defections also protested Soglo's economic austerity measures.

Left with the support of only a quarter of the then 64-seat National Assembly, Soglo called for early elections in a bid to regain control of the legislature. In November, a new election law was approved which stipulated that the new assembly would have 83 seats.

For the opposition, the major issue in the run-up to the elections was the president's alleged nepotism. Soglo's critics pointed out that his brother-in-law, Désiré Vieyna, had remained the highest member of the cabinet since the president designated him minister of state with the defense portfolio in 1991. In addition, Soglo's son works in the president's office and his brother is an ambassador.

But the president's detractors were most vocal about the political ambitions of his wife, Rosine Soglo. Some observers said these attacks were due, at least in part, to her gender. Nonetheless, the first lady had formed the RB a year before her husband was appointed its leader in July 1994, ending his claim to be politically neutral. The critics accused Rosine—who was the top RB candidate in the political capital, Cotonou—of positioning herself to become the new assembly speaker. This would make her the second most powerful politician in Benin after the president.

The Soglos kicked off the election campaign on stage together at a March 12 rally in Cotonou. The president used the occasion to denounce groups he said were presenting themselves as part of a presidential movement which no longer existed.

While the parties hurled accusations at each other, the two weeks of campaigning went smoothly. One exception, however, was the claim by a candidate, Civil Service Minister Timothée Adamlin, that he was the target of an assassination attempt a few days before the elections. Radio France Internationale reported that Adamlin said the incident—in which a truck nearly hit him before running over supporters at a campaign rally—was carried out on behalf of Interior Minister Alabi Antoine Ghegan, who was a pro-Soglo candidate.

On election day, however, Benin's 2.5 million electorate flocked to the polls under mostly peaceful conditions to choose from among 2,500 candidates. At several voting sites, 90 percent of those registered to vote went to the polls, according to international election observers from the U.S.-based African-American Institute (AAI) and the African election monitoring organization, GERDDES.
Dear Readers,

It is with great sadness that the editorial team at Africa Report—myself, Joe Margolis, Russell Geelke, Allison Boyer, Zwelinzima M Timkulu, and Maria Hanzazi—and our many correspondents around the world bid you farewell with this issue. As you will see from page four, the African-American Institute has suspended publication of Africa Report and with its suspension, the staff has been laid off.

It's a tough time for Africa—a world that seems jaded by the ongoing tragedies that plague the continent, talk of major foreign aid cutbacks, a sense that Africa has disappeared totally from the radar screen now that the media has moved on from Rwanda and South Africa.

Over this past decade and a half, we endeavored to keep our spotlight, small though it was, focused on those issues of enduring importance to Africa and its development—beyond the headline-grabbing events that made it into the daily papers to the travails of a continent struggling to rid itself of post-colonial hangovers and forge its own future in a fairly hostile world climate.

I said in my message in our 40th anniversary issue (Sept-Oct 1994) that what was significant to me about Africa Report was that it gave Africa a voice. Well, our voice—one of the last in this country—sadly has been stilled for now. We thank you for your loyal readership and support over the years. Speaking for myself, I pledge that wherever my future leads, I will continue to give Africa a voice.

Margaret A. Novicki
Editor-in-Chief
But voters, many of whom began queuing for the elections at dawn, faced long delays and disorganization at the polls. Observers said that many polling stations did not open until after 11 am, two hours behind schedule. The large number of candidates contesting the assembly seats added to the delays. Voters had to pick up separate candidates' lists for all 31 parties before voting, a process which an election observer estimated took 10 minutes even at the better-run stations. Long waits reportedly led some voters to rip up their registration cards and leave the polls.

An AAI observer said that officials at a station in Atlantique province—where the worst irregularities were reported—turned away 200 people who were still on line at the end of the day. Local officials in Atlantique, which includes Cotonou, were accused of purposely withholding election materials to disrupt the vote. Some polling stations had no ballot papers, others ran out early in the day.

Two days after the vote, a spokesman for Benin's independent National Autonomous Electoral Commission (CENA)—which was formed despite Soglo's preference that the interior ministry organize and monitor the vote—said that most of the problems with the elections were due to the slow transport of materials and disorganization. But the spokesman, who was addressing a press conference, added, "In some regions, there were some irregularities," implying that some of the results could be annulled. Nonetheless, CENA said the elections were carried out under "generally satisfactory conditions."

International observers—who described Beninese as "politically mature" compared to voters in other countries in the region—credited the electorate for the poll's success, but also found that the possibility for wide-scale fraud existed in at least two of Benin's six provinces.

Delays in posting partial and final results fueled further accusations of fraud and vote-rigging by all sides. The first partial results, which gave a majority of the seats to the opposition, were not released until five days after the voting. CENA's final results, which gave the opposition over 50 seats, were contested in the courts by a number of parties.

Then, on April 17, the Constitutional Court—which was charged with validating the results—annulled 13 of the victories. Although the court's ruling cost the opposition eight seats to the five lost by the pro-Soglo parties, the decision left the president's opponents with a 43-seat majority in the new assembly. And the court verified the remaining 70 seats, allowing Parliament to open with a four-fifths quorum.

Fresh voting for the nine elections annulled in the Cotonou region and the four voided in the northern region of Parakou was to be held within 50 days of the court's ruling.

Among those who would stand again in the polls was the president's wife, whose victory in Cotonou was invalidated by the court's decision. She was favored to win the seat again, but observers say her controversial candidacy could cost the president in his reelection bid.

Still others say that because the first lady has little hope of becoming assembly speaker without a presidential majority in Parliament, her husband's reelection fortunes are looking brighter. The thinking is that the president is generally popular, but Beninese would not reelect him if a member of his family was already the second most powerful politician in the country. An indication of Soglo's support is that his RB won the most seats (16 after the court ruling) of any single party in the elections, even though the RB coalition remains a minority in Parliament.

Also judging from the elections results, Soglo's main rival could be Assembly Speaker Adrien Hounbédji. As the top vote-getter among the opposition, his Democratic Renewal Party (PRD) won 15 seats, 10 more than it held since the 1991 elections. In addition, the PRD stood to win back two seats that were taken away by the Constitutional Court decision. In mid-April, many observers anticipated that Hounbédji would again be named speaker by the new Parliament.

Prior to the elections, Albert Tévoédjre's party was considered on a par with the PRD as a main opposition party. But Tévoédjre's party won only three seats. Tévoédjre, who was the third-place finisher in the 1991 presidential elections with more than 16 percent of the vote, is still considered a serious contender for the 1996 poll.

The big surprise of the elections, Kérékou's Action Front for Renewal and Development (FARD)-Alafia's third place finisher at the polls, certainly had observers rethinking Benin's political playing field. FARD-Alafia now has seven parliamentary seats after holding none in the old assembly.

But the party's success is hardly seen as a harbinger for Kérékou's return to power. Perhaps more than any other party, the FARD-Alafia vote was ethnically based. It will be extremely difficult for the former dictator to expand this into the national support needed to win the presidential election to be held by March 1996.

In the meantime, despite the irregularities in Benin's legislative elections, diplomats still view the country as one of the best examples of a functioning democracy in Africa. They point out that the problems with the polls were, after all, settled by the Constitutional Court without the political violence that has followed elections elsewhere on the continent.
EQUATORIAL GUINEA

On April 24, a military court sentenced Equatorial Guinea's main opposition leader, Severo Moto Nsá, to 28 years in prison for conspiring to overthrow the government. The sentence came less than a month before the country was to hold its first multi-party municipal elections and was widely believed to be politically motivated.

Moto's party, the Equatorial Guinea Progress Party (PPGE), backed away from an earlier pledge to boycott the elections if its leader were not released in the hope that he would be pardoned by President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasago. Efforts to secure a pardon for Moto and other opposition politicians and military officers convicted for conspiring against the head of state were spearheaded by Spain, the former colonial power in Equatorial Guinea.

On April 25, Spanish radio stations and Radio France Internationale reported that Equatorial Guinea and Spain were secretly negotiating Moto's release in Paris. The reports were denied by Equatorial Guinea's government in an April 25 communiqué issued through its embassy in Madrid which attacked the press for promoting “misinformation, manipulation, and sensationalism.” But in Equatorial Guinea's capital, Malabo, Spain's ambassador and other diplomats continued to push for Moto's release.

The trial is the latest in a string of episodes in which the government has accused the opposition, along with soldiers, of planning to seize power. "The authorities have never presented evidence of the existence of such plots," Amnesty International said in a February 28 statement. Amnesty reported that opposition members had faced harassment, repeated short-term arrests, and torture since Equatorial Guinea adopted the multi-party system in 1992.

The arrests of those who would eventually be implicated in the alleged coup plot began on January 26 when the PPGE's Tomás Eló was picked up in Malabo. He was reportedly tortured at the police station, before being taken to prison.

Shortly afterwards, Moto was placed under house arrest. Beginning on February 26, PPGE members were barred from visiting him, according to Amnesty.

In the meantime, the party's secretary-general, Agapito Ona Nguema, was arrested on February 17. Nine days later, he publicly implicated Moto, along with the U.S. and Spain, of planning to overthrow the regime. Both the U.S. and Spain have been at odds with the Obiang regime over its human rights and democratization record. A number of military officers were also arrested in connection with the alleged plot.

But before facing that charge, Moto and Eló were both found guilty of separate corruption charges in a March 2-6 trial, which Amnesty called "unfair." Moto was also found guilty of insulting the head of state and was given a two-and-a-half-year prison term as well as a $50,000 fine. Following the trial, the two opposition leaders were held incommunicado in Blackbeach prison in the capital, according to Amnesty.

By mid-April, Moto was officially charged with crimes of treason and conspiracy to be heard in a military court. In the days before the trial, Spain's King Juan Carlos spoke personally with Obiang about Moto, amid fears that the death penalty could be imposed.

In the end, Moto received the long prison term, but the state prosecutor fell short in his demand that the opposition leader be banned from politics for life, and that the PPGE itself be banned (although the court recommended that the government ban the PPGE).

In addition, the prosecutor was unable to convince the military court to sentence two of the accused officers to death. The sentences the defendants received were harsh, reportedly ranging from 12 to 30 years of prison, but held open the possibility for a presidential pardon.

With Moto still in jail at the end of April, Spain continued to threaten not to recognize the polls unless the opposition leader was released. Implicit in the threat was that Spain would once again suspend aid to Equatorial Guinea.

But Obiang's ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) has thumbed its nose at domestic and international pressure to suspend elections before. Two years ago, when Equatorial Guinea held its first multi-party legislative elections since independence, Spain and the U.S. refused to send election observers to protest the poor preparation for the polls. But despite that and a boycott of the polls by the main opposition parties, Obiang went ahead with the elections anyway.

The result was that the PDGE won 68 of the 80 seats contested. Following that poll, the main opposition parties formed the Joint Opposition Platform (POC). The POC parties were still interested in standing in the municipal elections at the beginning of May.

SENEGAL

Senegal's main opposition leader, Abdoulaye Wade, and his Democratic Party of Senegal (PSD) are back in government. Following a series of discussions with President Abdou Diouf, Wade was appointed minister of state in the presidency on March 16.

Other PSD members appointed to Prime Minister Habib Thiam's reshuffled cabinet included Wade aides Idrissa Seck and Ousmane Ngom. Seck was named commerce, cottage industry, and industrialization minister and Ngom became minister of public health and social action. In addition, the PSD's Pape Ousmane Sakh is the new minister of economy, finance, and planning.

Senegal's last attempt at cohabitation government began in April 1991. Wade and the other three PSD members of the "national unity government" resigned from the council of ministers in October 1992, claiming that they were excluded from the decision-making process.

Last year, Wade was imprisoned for five months in connection with the May 1993 killing of the former vice-chairman of the constitutional council, Babacar Seye, and for his alleged role in February 1994 anti-government riots in which six policemen died.

But in a March interview with Radio France Internationale, Wade said that he could put aside "little problems like prison and other annoyances" to help govern Senegal.
When Hutu extremists began a systematic campaign to exterminate Tutsis in Rwanda last year, prominent journalists were among the first targeted for execution. At least 14 Rwandan reporters and editors were murdered as part of the efforts to preempt opposition to the genocide, according to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists' (CPJ) latest annual survey of attacks on the media.

The executions of both Tutsi and Hutu journalists were the most extreme examples of assaults on the press in sub-Saharan Africa last year. Indeed, the CPJ report, *Attacks on the Press in 1994: A Worldwide Survey,* notes that press freedom has taken root in parts of the continent. But overall, CPJ found that journalists across Africa continue to face considerable harassment and dangers in the line of duty, even as governments profess to espouse the multi-party system and freedom of expression.

The methods sub-Saharan African governments use to muzzle the media have evolved along with the political landscape. Journalists accustomed to facing more heavy-handed tactics are increasingly harassed by governments through the courts. But the traditional barometers of press freedom publicized by CPJ—the killing and imprisonment of journalists—remain worrisome in Africa.

Of the 72 journalists the organization confirmed killed in the line of duty around the world last year, 24 were slain in sub-Saharan Africa. (Twenty other journalists were confirmed murdered for their profession in North Africa.) The actual number of journalists killed was probably higher, however, as CPJ only counts cases in which a definite link is established between a crime and the victim's profession.

The majority of the slain journalists in Africa last year were direct political targets, not merely victims of the violence they were covering. In addition to the 14 journalists murdered in Rwanda (where scores of politicians, human rights workers, and high-profile moderates were also early targets in the genocide), CPJ confirmed three other cases in which journalists were killed for political reasons in 1994. A journalist with Burundi's national radio and television was killed by soldiers after receiving death threats for reporting on government corruption. In Zaire, two journalists from the opposition newspapers were murdered in separate incidents.

Seven journalists slain in Africa last year were confirmed killed "on assignment in battle zones," according to CPJ. These included three in Somalia, one in Angola, and another in Rwanda. The other two were killed covering township violence in South Africa—which CPJ cited along with Namibia and Botswana as countries where press freedom has taken hold.

Not included on CPJ's "killed list," but still under investigation, is the case of a radio journalist in Madagascar who is believed to have been killed last year for reporting on illicit sapphire trading. And the organization is researching five additional murder cases in Rwanda in which it believes the victims were specifically targeted because of their profession. (At least 30 other journalists were among the 500,000 to 1 million Rwandans killed in the genocide simply because of their ethnicity.)

Compared to the sobering statistics on journalists killed in Africa last year, sub-Saharan Africa's contribution to CPJ's list of imprisoned journalists might appear encouraging: Of the 177 journalists who remained in prison around the world at the end of last year, seven were in sub-Saharan African countries—six in Ethiopia and one in Togo. But the list—which is compiled to apply pressure on governments to release the imprisoned journalists—does not count the scores of journalists in Africa who were jailed and then released. In Ethiopia alone, some 38 journalists were detained at some point in 1994.

Ethiopia's transitional government—dominated by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)—began its crackdown on the independent press in 1993, reversing the increase in press freedom that followed the overthrow of Mengistu Haile Mariam's dictatorship, according to the CPJ report. In the meantime, the EPRDF has been accused of orchestrating the elections process to maintain its grip on power.

Zaire and Nigeria—states that have put the democratization process on the shelf—were among the other African nations where the state of press freedom worsened last year.

CPJ also cited both Zambia and Kenya—which held national multi-party elections in 1991 and 1992 respectively—for using "draconian penal codes" to curtail freedom of expression. More journalists were taken to court in Kenya in 1994 than in any previous year.

Libel suits and restrictive press statutes were also the weapons of choice for West African governments. In Cameroon, the government used the same laws which allowed for the creation of an independent press—the 1990 "laws on freedom"—to suspend, censure, and seize newspapers and magazines, according to CPJ.

In Gabon, the sole remaining non-government-controlled radio station—owned by the main opposition party, the National Rally of Lumberjacks—was destroyed by government forces in February 1994. Private radio stations also came under attack in Mali.

While CPJ says press freedom is taking hold in much of southern Africa, Zimbabwe's only independent daily news source, the *Daily Gazette,* closed on Christmas day. The paper shut down for financial reasons, but this may have been the result of subtle government harassment. According to the London *Guardian,* one factor in the popular opposition paper's inability to win over important advertisers was that businesses feared losing government contracts if they supported the *Gazette.* The loss of the newspaper, known for its reporting on government corruption, was worrying in light of Zimbabwe's April elections.

While the trend in Africa may be that journalists are facing less violence and more court dates, the beginning of 1995 brought with it a reminder that Africa remains a sometimes deadly workplace for editors and reporters. In January, Angola's leading independent journalist, Ricardo de Mello, was assassinated. As editor of the newsletter *ImparcialFax,* de Mello had reported on government corruption and received several death threats.
ALGERIA SETS THE PACE FOR PRESS ATTACKS IN NORTH AFRICA

Algeria was the most dangerous country in the world for journalists last year, according to CPJ. Attacks on the Press in 1994 listed 19 editors and reporters who were assassinated in Algeria as a result of their profession.

And as the three-year-old struggle between militant Islamic fundamentalists and the Algerian government escalates, 1995 looks to be an even worse year. Between January and mid-April, CPJ reports that nine journalists were murdered in Algeria.

Although the Armed Islamic Group and other fundamentalist factions fighting the military regime are responsible for most of the attacks on journalists in Algeria, the government has also cracked down on the media. According to the CPJ report, the government has essentially banned independent coverage of the conflict. On security matters, government press restrictions leave journalists with the choice of either running government bulletins on the conflict or printing nothing. If journalists print the government’s version of events, they are open to attacks by fundamentalists. In the last two months of 1994, CPJ reported, the government suspended six publications for flouting the security restrictions.

Elsewhere in North Africa, conflicts between governments and Islamic fundamentalists have also contributed to an erosion of press freedom. In Egypt, where journalists are prosecuted in military courts, the government introduced what CPJ described as “draconian” legislation aimed at silencing pro-Islamist newspapers. A television cameraman was killed in September when the Islamic Group attacked a convoy of Egyptian police and Unicef employees.

In Tunisia, where the local independent press has essentially been silenced for years, CPJ reported that the

Continued on page 11

AT&T Enters the Race to Wire Africa

AT&T Submarine Systems Inc.’s plan to install a telecommunications network for Africa will help the continent move from “an aid-based to a trade-based economy,” said the corporation’s president, William B. Carter, in testimony presented in March to congressional subcommittees on Africa and trade.

The company said the $1.9 billion project, dubbed Africa One (for Africa Optical Network), came in response to a 1993 appeal by the UN agency responsible for international telecommunications policy, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), to bridge the technological gap between Africa and the rest of the world. In its initial phase, the project would link 41 coastal countries and islands of Africa, plus Saudi Arabia and Italy, to 21,000 miles of undersea fiber-optic cable forming a ring around the continent. Each coastal country would be able to connect to the network by extending cable from the ring to their facilities onshore. Landlocked countries would eventually be linked to the cable ring network via satellite and existing microwave and fiber-optic connections.

AT&T has proposed that the African network operator, Regional Satellite Organization for Africa (RASCOM), in cooperation with participating national telecommunications authorities, manage the new network for the continent. The telecommunications authorities which invest in the project will earn a return on the network’s regional traffic.

AT&T is seeking U.S. government support for the implementation of Africa One. Possible financing sources include the Trade and Development Agency, Ex-Port-Import Bank, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

Financing for the shore-to-sea links are to be the responsibility of each participating country. While AT&T suggests that African governments seek funding from the World Bank and African Development Bank, it is hoped that both foreign and African private concerns will invest in the project.

At present, the majority of Africa’s post and telecommunications organizations are still state-owned. For the most part, revenues from these services are diverted into other sectors of the economy, rather than being reinvested in developing telecommunications structures.

According to the ITU’s 1993 World Telecommunications Development Report, although approximately 12 percent of the world population lives in Africa, the continent has only 2 percent of the world’s telephone lines. On average, each African spends less than a minute per year on the telephone. Although local calls are relatively inexpensive, country-to-country calls in most cases must be routed through Europe. Installation costs in most African countries are among the highest in the world.

AT&T, which hopes to have laid the underwater cable ring by the end of 1999, is not alone in its bid to “wire” Africa. France’s state-owned company Alcatel has already proposed the creation of a fiber-optic network primarily for francophone countries. The company plans to lay 9,000 miles of cable under the Mediterranean Sea to Casablanca, Morocco, and along Africa’s west coast to Cape Town, South Africa. In all, 16 African countries would be connected to the cable. The main aim of the project is to improve communications between airports in French-speaking Africa.

The U.S. company NYNEX has also put forward a project called FLAG, which would link the African continent via a cable running from the UK to Japan.

The latest scramble for Africa? The installation of state-of-the-art telecommunications systems will certainly serve the purposes of multinational companies eager to move in on Africa, but the benefits to the average African are less obvious. “Developing telecommunications services in Africa is only one part of a larger development process,” says Duncan Pruett of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which has been involved in information and computer networking projects in developing countries. “We have to welcome the fact that people are interested in connecting Africa. But we also have to be realistic about whether it’s going to happen.”
Carol Bellamy, the Peace Corps director and former New York City politician, was named executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) on April 10, succeeding the late James P. Grant.

The appointment of Bellamy by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali followed a pitched campaign by the European Union (EU) to have one of its candidates named to the post.

Unicef's executive director has been an American since the organization was formed in 1946—a result of the U.S. being the largest single contributor to the organization's budget.

But the EU argued that one of its candidates should be chosen because collectively its members contribute more than half of Unicef's almost $1 billion annual budget, while the U.S. pitches in roughly 25 percent. And in per capita terms, individual EU countries' contributions are considerably greater than those of the U.S., diplomats said.

The EU began aggressively lobbying the secretary-general to select one of its candidates almost immediately after Grant's resignation on January 23. Grant, who was diagnosed with cancer in May 1993, died five days after his resignation.

The leading EU candidate was Elizabeth Rehm, a former defense minister of Finland who was narrowly defeated in that country's presidential election last year. She eventually gained the full support of 13 of the 15 EU members. Diplomats said Boutros-Ghali favored her candidacy. Belgium backed a member of the Belgian and EU parliaments, Anne-Marie Lizin, for the job. Britain also stood behind one of its nationals, Unicef's deputy director of over a decade, Richard Jolly. He served as acting Unicef head following Grant's resignation.

The Clinton administration originally submitted the name of only one candidate, William H. Foege, to the secretary-general. An epidemiologist and former director of the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Foege is known for his role in the world fight against polio and smallpox. But the nominee lacked at least one important quality: He was not a woman.

Indeed, the secretary-general, who has promised to fill high-level positions at the UN with women, made it known early on that he was determined to do so in filling the Unicef post.

The U.S. administration finally got the message in March when it backed away from its initial enthusiastic support for Foege. On March 20, the U.S. forwarded the secretary-general a new list of candidates for the post, which included Bellamy's name.

Boutros-Ghali's decision to select an American was also probably influenced by the 104th U.S. Congress's threats to cut U.S. funding to the UN.

Following the announcement that Bellamy would get the post, France's mission to the UN issued a statement which said, "We thought it was time for a European to be head of the organization, so France is disappointed."

But to a number of diplomats, it did not matter whether Boutros-Ghali chose an American or a European because the entire selection process highlighted the UN's preoccupation with patronage. The appointment had at least as much to do with U.S. funding and political muscle as it did with the candidate's qualifications.

In the meantime, the 53-year-old Bellamy has big shoes to fill. Grant, who was 72 when he died, is revered for his 14-year tenure as Unicef chief. Under his leadership in the 1980s, Unicef launched the Child Survival and Development Revolution, which focused on providing the developing world with simple, low-cost, and practical methods for child welfare such as immunizations, oral rehydration, and breast feeding. The program has saved the lives of an estimated 25 million children, according to Unicef.

Grant, who was respected for his tireless campaigning for Unicef's causes, referred to the plight of the millions of children caught in poverty as "the silent emergency."

One of the milestones of his career was the 1990 World Summit for Children. The 27 specific health and welfare goals set for children at the summit were incorporated into the national plans of more than 100 countries, according to Unicef. Setting attainable goals for children's welfare was a trademark of Grant's career.

Despite his illness, Grant met with more than 40 world leaders to champion Unicef's causes in the year before his death.

Boutros-Ghali said of Grant, "Very few men ever have the opportunity to do as much good in the world as James Grant; and very few have ever grasped that opportunity with such complete and dedicated commitment. He will be remembered...as one of the greatest international public servants of his generation."

Despite Grant's shining record and Unicef's reputation as one of the most effective UN organs, the child development organization has been plagued by low morale and poor audits and management reviews. Recently, Unicef has also been rocked by financial scandals. In February, Unicef suspended 10 employees at its Nairobi headquarters for misusing funds. Three of them were fired on March 21.

But it is in addressing Unicef's financial troubles that Bellamy may prove to be most effective. Prior to her appointment to head the Peace Corps by the Clinton administration in 1993, she was a managing director in the public finance division of Bear, Stearns and Co.

Bellamy, who was well-received when she addressed Unicef's New York staff in April, was set to take up her post officially on May 1.

There are Unicef health and education projects in over 130 countries.
Nujoma Consolidates Power on Eve of Namibia’s Fifth Birthday

"Our country has undergone a remarkable political transformation in these five short years," President Sam Nujoma said after his inauguration for a second term of office on March 21, the five-year anniversary of the country's independence from South Africa.

But for the opposition, the "political transformation" was not necessarily cause for celebration. The main opposition party, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), claimed that fraud helped Nujoma's South West Africa People's Organization (Swapo) win a two-thirds parliamentary majority in December's elections. Political analysts questioned the justification for the opposition's March appeal to the Windhoek High Court to overrule elections results, but remained concerned about Swapo's overwhelming control of Parliament.

Analysts were also concerned that a new cabinet—unveiled on the eve of the president's inauguration—consolidated more power in Nujoma's hands. Already commander-in-chief of the defense forces and head of security, the president took on the new home affairs portfolio in charge of police, immigration control, and passports. (The home affairs ministry of the previous government also oversaw prisons and correctional services, which is now the responsibility of a new ministry.)

The president said he would only keep the police portfolio "for the next year or so" to combat the recent increase in crime in Namibia. "The honeymoon of violence must end," Nujoma said, a comment directed at the armed gangs operating in Namibia's townships.

But critics say the president is taking on more work than he can handle. And if Nujoma fails to curb the crime rate, The Namibian newspaper said, it could hurt his reputation and risk his career.

Some of the changes in the cabinet reshuffle also puzzled observers. One surprise was that the former home affairs minister, Hifikepunye Pohamba, was named the minister of fisheries and marine resources, a post which had lost prestige in recent years. Pohamba had been seen by political analysts as Nujoma's likely successor.

The former fishing minister, Helmut Angula, was named the minister of finance. The finance ministry now includes the technical side of the National Planning Commission, making it one of the most powerful in the cabinet.

Nujoma also surprised analysts and donors by appointing newcomer Sarah Kuugongelwa—who is in her 20s and relatively unknown—as director-general of the National Planning Commission, replacing the highly regarded Zed Ngavirue.

Not included in the new government are two popular Swapo officials, former Minister of Environment and Tourism Nico Bessinger and former Attorney-General Harmut Ruppel.

Aside from dissatisfaction with some of the cabinet changes, Nujoma was criticized for increasing the cabinet's size from 18 to 20 ministries at a time when government is supposed to be down-sizing. On top of making two posts out of the former home affairs ministry, Nujoma split into two the ministry of education and culture. And the president activated the post of deputy prime minister, as well as adding a number of advisers to the offices of the prime minister and president.

In the weeks leading up to the cabinet reshuffle and inauguration, the DTA stepped up its dispute over the results of last year's legislative elections. Analysts say the opposition waited so long to mount the challenge because of the enthusiastic endorsement international observers gave to the polls in December. The results, which were declared free and fair by European and Commonwealth observers, gave Swapo 53 of the 72 parliamentary seats with almost 73 percent of the vote. The DTA took 15 seats.

Shortly after the results were announced, Nujoma—who was reelected with over 76 percent of the vote—hinted that he might seek changes in the constitution, "a document that always has to be amended in the interest of the people." Nujoma added, however, that he would hold a referendum before changing the law of the land, which is considered one of the most democratic constitutions in Africa.

But members of the opposition—who claim the whole election was fraudulent—say Nujoma plans to use Swapo's two-thirds parliamentary majority to change the law to allow himself to run for a third term in office.

Following failed talks with the government, the DTA brought its argument that there should be an independent audit of the ballot boxes in four constituencies in the north to the Windhoek High Court on March 7.

All parties agreed that the number of ballot papers cast exceeded the number of registered voters in the four constituencies in Ovamboland. But Prime Minister Hage Geingob (who remained in his post following the cabinet reshuffle) said in a March 6 press conference that the error was purely administrative and due to a system which allows voters to cast ballots outside their home regions. "The DTA has made an issue of an administrative error, and if it had access to arms, like [Angola's Jonas] Savimbi, who knows if it would not have plunged the country into civil war. We feel such an approach only undermines our evolving democracy," the prime minister said. He added that Swapo would gladly contest the seats again if the High Court ruled it necessary.

The DTA spokesman, John De Waal, remained committed to carrying out the court action, however. "I am certain that the investigation will make a difference on the outcome of the election. It may even prevent Swapo from getting the two-thirds majority," he said.

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government cracked down on the foreign media in 1994. A BBC correspondent was expelled from the country. Other foreign reporters were harassed and a number of French publications were banned.

But the fact that there were almost no attacks on the press in Libya was not necessarily good news. "There were almost no independent journalists there to get into trouble," CPJ's director of research, Avner Gidron, told Africa Report.
WEST AFRICA

Côte d'Ivoire's stock exchange will soon be expanded to serve seven West African nations, an official from Abidjan's bourse announced in March.

The exchange's operations director, Roman Yao, said he outlined plans for the West African bourse with a recent British trade mission, according to a report in the Financial Times.

The bourse—which Yao said would become regional in April 1996—is to include Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo, Senegal, Benin, and Mali. All seven nations are members of the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa.

SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa's latest effort to attract foreign investment, the country scrapped its dual currency system on March 10. The two-tier exchange rate—which was designed under the apartheid regime to prevent sudden large capital outflows—was replaced by a single, free-floating rand.

The government plans to gradually relax other exchange controls, but it was the dual currency system which imposed the greatest official impediment to foreign investment.

Under the controversial system, the commercial rand was the currency used for conventional balance-of-payments transactions. It was also the currency South Africans and tourists used on a day-to-day basis. In order for foreigners to invest in the country, however, they were required to buy financial rands (finrands), which traded at a variable discount to the commercial rand. As a result, non-residents bought South African assets at a lower price than local investors. Foreigners were also allowed to buy and sell stocks and bonds to each other at the discount rate. But to disinvest, foreigners were given the less attractive commercial rate, thereby discouraging them from selling off assets when perceived risks were high or because of pressure from the international anti-apartheid movement. The system also insulated the currency from disinvestments by maintaining the separate pool of finrands.

South Africa first introduced a two-tier exchange rate system in 1979. The discounted "security rand"—as the predecessor to the finrand was known—was used for direct foreign investment. At the same time, the commercial rand was floated. The security rand was abolished in 1983.

But the rand lost more than half its value between early 1984 and mid-1985, the result of capital flight caused by the worsening political situation. Then, in July and August 1985, a number of foreign banks refused to reschedule South Africa's short-term debt.

The South African government responded by closing its dual currency system on March 10. The two-tier exchange rate—which was designed under the apartheid regime to prevent sudden large capital outflows—was replaced by a single, free-floating rand.

The decision to scrap the financial rand was welcomed by South Africa's main political parties. "The return of South Africa to a normalized currency is long overdue. The IFP has consistently called on the relevant authorities to abolish the financial rand," an Inkatha Freedom Party MP, Hennie Bekker, said. He added that South Africa would have to weather "several onslaughts on our new single currency," according to the South African Press Association.

But the unified rand withstood its first test on March 13, the first day it was traded (currency markets had already closed when the change was announced the previous Friday evening). Despite fears that there would be a speculative run on the rand, the currency performed strongly, closing at under 3.62 to the dollar in Johannesburg.

ALGERIA

Despite the worsening security situation in Algeria, the government managed to secure a $500-million-a-year credit agreement with the IMF in March. The IMF's approval of the three-year extended credit facility—which was expected to be followed by debt rescheduling by the Paris Club of creditor nations—was seen as a blow to efforts aimed at tying aid to government peace efforts.

Algeria's efforts to reschedule $4.5 billion worth of commercial debt hit a snag in mid-April, however. Despite agreeing on the general terms of a deal, Algeria's central bank and the London Club of commercial lenders came away without a signed agreement after a week of talks in Paris, according to the Financial Times.
A Little Breathing Space

By MERCEDES SAYAGUES

Six months of fragile peace in Angola have made a difference. People are again picking up their everyday lives, cut short by sieges, starvation, constant shelling, and forced conscription. Now, traffic between cities and countryside is being reestablished and, at long last, food is coming in from the farms to city markets. Aid agencies are beginning to scale down their allotments of free food, and Angolans are anticipating the arrival of the 28,000 United Nations peace-keepers.
popped in to see Commandante Simão, who led the resistance and takeover of Cuito by government forces, and he provided me the most endearing image of three weeks spent in Angola in March. On the verandah of his headquarters, surrounded by soldiers in camouflage, Simão, also in battle dress, was holding his six-month-old baby girl, and looking relaxed, just a routine afternoon in Cuito, in Angola's central highlands, these days.

It was a very different commandante than the one I had met for the first time in October 1993, during the first lull after nine months of a bloody siege. He was a gaunt, exhausted man, tense from danger and responsibility. Unita's fighters were less than 100 yards from the house. The city was reduced to rubble. Some 25,000-30,000 people had died. Cuito's survivors walked around in a daze, stalked by hunger and disease.

Today, children play on the streets with toy cars made of scrap metal and a soccer tournament takes place. The first quarter of 1995—three months of an uneasy truce, of a fragile agreement that has seen the scaling down, but not the absence of hostilities between the government and Unita—has allowed ordinary Angolans some breathing space. Since January, many have known the small miracle of living through another day without constant shelling, forced conscription, or gnawing hunger.

Yes, according to human rights monitors, it is likely that ammunition is making its way to Unita through Zaire from the Hutu refugee camps in Goma, and yes, in the thick of night, unmarked trucks unload unmarked crates onto unmarked plain white aircraft at Luanda airport. The hawks on both sides are eager to continue war, to push for a definitive victory (the government), or at least a better deal than Lusaka (Unita).

But out in the provinces crops are growing, people are taking produce to the markets, children are vaccinated, and schools have reopened. Small mercies, but so essential.

At the Médecins Sans Frontières hospital in Cuito, a couple brings in a six-year-old child with cerebral malaria. They have walked for two days through mined fields. At the end of their desperate trek, there is the certainty of medical care. This, and their burning hope, kept them walking gingerly along deadly footpaths, the feverish child, already comatose, bundled on the back.

It is not yet peace, but it may be a beginning. Or it could go sour. There is a saying among journalists: “You never know in Angola.” The situation is volatile, the mood swings every week. When talking to foreign correspondents, aid workers, or diplomats, the pendulum swings from cautious hope to cautious despair—except for the ever-optimistic UN special representative, Alioune Blondin Beye, who must convince the world and the Security Council that Angola can give UN peace-keeping a good name again, after the Somalia and Rwanda fiascoes. It used to be that the specter of Angola hung over Mozambique—now Mozambique's success looms over Angola. Can it happen here?

The top brass of the UN Verification Mission (Unavem), General Chris Caruba, can be seen frowning one week, when he returns from Uige, or exulting hopefully the following week, after overseeing a successful disengagement in Bela Vista, in Bie province. Slowly but consistently, Unavem deploys its
branches, grass, and zinc sheet. Dummy soldiers and mines help them keep vigil. Once posted, soldiers are seldom resupplied. When the white UN land cruisers go by, the soldiers ask for cigarettes and food—and they look hungry.

Free circulation of people and goods, as established in the Lusaka protocol peace accord, does not exist, bel it because of mined roads, destroyed bridges, or Unita and government checkpoints. From Cuito, you can travel about 48 miles to the east, 24 to the west and 12 to the south. Moxico has the most restricted traffic. Travel outside Luena, even for Unavem, was limited to about 11 miles in February.

More than bandits, the greatest danger is landmines. While in Luena, better to stay on the farm. Along one main entry road, rows of antipersonnel mines lie among the grass, 20 inches from the road where children run and play on their way to the river. Refugees returning from Zambia also use this road and stop by the river for dining and washing up before entering the city.

Cuito has the highest concentration of amputees in the world. In November 1994, when the British NGO Halo Trust began de-mining, it was considered the most dangerous city in the world. Their veterans of Afghanistan and Mozambique had never seen anything as bad, not only for mines but also for unexploded ordnance. Schoolchildren played around rockets and grenades. A farmer planting maize discovered a dump with 50 unexploded mortars: The shrapnel could have rained over nearby schoolgrounds and houses.

From four explosions a day in November, Cuito is now down to some four accidents a week. Before, mine victims were mostly people looking for food, firewood, or water; now most are women and men digging to cultivate land. But nobody is safe, anywhere. On March 26 at the crowded market, two local employees of an Irish NGO stepped on a landmine. One lost both legs and died.

Yet, slowly but relentlessly, traffic between city and countryside is being reestablished. In March, the World Food Program sent a food convoy to Waco Kungo, the first in three years, and was planning to open the road to N’dalatando on April 19. Swedrelief and WFP have built temporary bridges, while Norwegian-trained Angolan sappers have de-mined two bridge heads on the Luanda-Malange road.

More importantly, food is coming from the countryside into city markets. In Cuito, in November last year, the market’s offerings were pitiful. By February, a trickle of mangos, guavas, potatoes, corn, eggs, dried fish, and chickens appeared. By mid-March, the supply was boosted by long lines of women and a few men who trickle into Cuito from quilombos (villages) on all sides, bringing firewood, beans, even freshly made straw baskets.

The populares (villagers) complain that, at the checkpoints, soldiers from both sides steal part or all their goods. At the market in Cumhinga, peasants from Andulo say they walk at night to escape controls. One farmer complains that a 50-kilo bag of beans was taken for him at a government checkpoint. Another has a 20-kilo bag of coffee beans to deliver to a buyer in Cuito but doesn’t dare bring it. He will wait until it is safer, maybe when the blue helmets come, he sighs. Meanwhile, the prospective buyer daydreams about freshly ground coffee and drinks cappi (grass) tea.

Great hopes are pinned on the arrival of thousands of blue helmets, with their paraphernalia of choppers and cars to take them everywhere. The lessons of Bosnia and Somalia are not lost, however: If both sides do not really want peace, not even 28,000 peace-keepers can stop the fighting.

While the leaders debate war, people are making peace, or at least picking up the pieces of a previous life. That basket weaving has started in the quilombos is an encouraging sign. The same goes for a group of amputees converting scrap metal from car wrecks into mouse traps on a sidewalk in Cuito. Angolan tinsmiths are great at recycling metal from the junk—tanks, tractors, pickups used for election monitoring—that litters the country.

On another level of the economy, a trader in Cuito is scheming to buy now-abundant beans in the countryside, to send to Benguela and exchange for salt and soap to sell in Cuito. It is a complex scheme because he has to secure enough space on the erratic, weekly flights of TAAG, the national airline.

This is a major obstacle to economic revival. Air remains the main means of transport in Angola. It is ridiculously cheap, at less than $3 for a fare from Cuito to Luanda, a one-hour flight, but out of reach for the majority of the people. Travel by TAAG is also unreliable: Long queues, delays, and cancellations are the norm.

Many people in Cuito would rebuild their houses, but construction materials are scarce or expensive, since they come by plane from Luanda or Lobito. Meanwhile, they do as much as they can by recycling material looted by populares from the part of town that remained in Unita hands. When an NGO needs a door or a window frame, word gets around and, from the depths of the quilombos, the needed piece emerges. At a price. The sound that characterizes Cuito these days is that of hammers, of people fixing the roofs against the rains.
For it has been raining all over Angola, even in the drought-prone south, except for Cuando Cubango. Even the arid hills around Benguela and the dusty plains around Luanda and Caxito are now green. The maize is tall, the pumpkins fat, the pineapples juicy and sweet. Malnutrition rates are going down in Malange and N’dalatando, but are still very bad in Cubal and Saurimo.

It has rained too much around Benguela, where the swollen Katumbela river has flooded fields, destroyed crops, and stranded villages that can only be reached by canoe. Cunene and Namibia had floods, and the maize crop is a write-off in Cuando Cubango because of heavy rains in February. But in the rest of the country, the rains have been a blessing. The harvest should be good, though small, because the area planted was reduced due to fighting at the time of planting, in October and November, especially in Huambo province, the country’s breadbasket.

Nevertheless, it will be a far larger crop than in 1994, and humanitarian agencies are taking this into account. Expecting an improved supply of cereals and cassava, the World Food Program is reducing its daily maize ration from 400 to 300 grams in the first semester of 1995 and to 200 grams in the second, while maintaining the fat and protein contents in its oil and beans rations. WFP has also made drastic cuts in the number of beneficiaries. The idea is to wean Angolans from free food-aid dependency and to target aid to the truly needy and to food-for-work schemes.

The cuts have not been popular. In Luena, where Save the Children was commissioned in December 1994 by WFP to trim about 40,000 beneficiaries from the relief rolls (some had been receiving free food for three years), the move ended with SCF being expelled from the city by its governor in March and several SCF staff physically roughed up, accused of supporting Unita. It took a high-level mission by Beye, humanitarian top man Manuel Aranda da Silva, and the American ambassador, Edmund de laRumette, to solve the impasse. In a highly militarized and violent city like Luena, where shots punctuate the eerily quiet night, that there would be less free food available was bound to anger some.

Although conditions for the displaced in either camps or cities range from dismal to awful, not many are going home. At the Boa Esperanca camp in Caxito, 30 miles north of Luanda, several communities displaced from 102 miles to the north were adamant that they would not return until sure there is peace and no mines. If security holds, aid workers expect an increase in population returns after the harvest in April/May.

Although the fears of the displaced are reasonable, they can play up to government’s interest in keeping the displaced together, under government control, and in need of food aid.

Political activity is also picking up. In a rare move, President José Eduardo dos Santos visited the Josina Machel hospital in Luanda. Since he didn’t grant any interviews afterwards, it is not known what effects that gallery of horrors had on him.

Meanwhile, others are jumping into the vacuum. In war-torn Cuito, the Angolan Forum—founded by Unita dissidents—opened an office in a half-destroyed building, capitalizing on the goodwill earned by their members during the siege. On a balmy Saturday afternoon at the end of March, a small group of supporters rallied to sing and clap enthusiastically. A lot more people, however, were attending the first motorbike rally in three years. That ordinary Angolans should be skeptical about peace cannot be surprising; that many are hopeful is. Yet history shows that wars come to an end when one or more sides realize that the military, economic, and human cost is too high to be paid. With oil revenues mortgaged until 1997 at least and a billowing foreign debt, the government may well realize that it can win militarily but not economically. Having suffered major military setbacks, a drop in diamond revenues, a loss of fighting morale, and internal party convulsions, Unita is licking its wounds.

More importantly, the people of Angola are exhausted. 30 years of war, with the two last ones the most vicious, have left them devoid of coping resources. Neither side can realistically expect ordinary Angolans to make more sacrifices, to continue losing limbs, loved ones, property, and livelihoods. Social and economic life risks being ruptured to the point of no return. That’s why, in these few months of a fragile ceasefire, just one normal day after another is something of a blessing.
observers into the hinterland, where they will be more effective in monitoring hostilities and ceasefire violations. Unavem now has placed its observers in Andulo, Unita's headquarters, north of Huambo. Outposting has its risks. A Unavem base in Chongoi, in Benguela province, was attacked on March 25 allegedly by unidentified "armed men." In the most serious incident since Unita shot down a Unavem helicopter at Quibaxe on February 13.

These "armed men" are fast becoming Angola's major danger, after landmines. In March, along the Benguela-Cubal road, four staff members of the German NGO Cap Anamur were shot and killed, among them one recently arrived young German expat. These deaths made international news because an NGO was the target, but such killings are becoming frequent along that road, and more widespread.

And who are these "armed men"? Well, take a guess. A hungry—or angry—soldier by day makes a bandit at night. Living conditions in far-flung military outposts are bad. Some 15 miles west of Luena or a mere 12 east of Cuito, ragged government soldiers wearing flip-flops, some of them barely teenagers suffering from stunted growth, are left to fend for themselves. Their outposts are made of
The Maimin

Landmines are cheap and effective, but insidious, weapons of war. More than 30 million of them dot the landscape of Africa. Landmines are designed not to kill but to maim, and they stay hidden in the ground long after their

By ANDREW MELDRUM

During his military service in the war between Somalia and Ethiopia, Ashebir Girmay stepped on a landmine which blew off both his left leg and the fingers of his left hand.

"When the accident first occurred, I walked around for a few minutes without feeling anything," Girmay vividly recalls. "Then, because I felt that my leg dragged behind, I looked down and saw only a bone dangling. Then I felt pain so sharp that I fainted."

Despite his agony, Girmay was lucky because he was taken to a hospital for emergency treatment. "The healing of my leg took three operations because the bone was shattered," explains Girmay. "Immediately after the amputation I felt phantom pain, particularly at the stump, but over the years it has decreased to almost nothing."

Girmay's tragic meeting with a landmine took place 25 years ago, in 1970, but the lasting effect of his amputation and disfigurement still haunt him. Today, Ashebir Girmay is married with three children and he has become a highly skilled physiotherapist working at the Debre Zeit center in Somalia where he helps others injured by landmines. Yet despite his impressive accomplishments, he admits moments of despair. "Sometimes when I face bad things in my life because of my disabilities, I feel inferior."

Today landmines are killing and maiming Africans at an ever-increasing pace. Africa is the continent worst affected by landmines, plagued by a third of the 100 million mines that litter the world. Africa's estimated 30 million landmines are strewn in at least 18 countries. Angola leads, with nearly 10 million mines, followed by Mozambique with as many as 2 million and Somalia with 1 million, Ethiopia.

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Machines

original purpose is over, waiting to mutilate innocent civilians. Everyone agrees that landmines should be outlawed, but only three African countries have signed the 1980 Weapons Convention limiting their use.

Eritrea, and Sudan have severe mine problems, while Liberia, Libya, and Rwanda have smaller scale problems.

Sadly the main victims are not soldiers, like Girmay. In many African countries, over one-third of all landmine casualties are women and children. Landmines are indiscriminate weapons that respect no ceasefire or peace accord.

Although Mozambique's deadly civil war has been over for more than two years, landmines continue to kill and maim at a rate of nearly 50 casualties per month. Isabel Nunes, a teenage girl searching for firewood in Mozambique's Zambezia province, treads on an anti-personnel landmine and loses both her legs above the knees.

In Angola, a young boy running through a field outside the embattled city of Cuito sets off a small mine which blows off his foot. He is airlifted to the main government hospital in Luanda, but there are no painkillers or antibiotics available. As he lies groaning in pain on the hospital floor, family members desperately try to buy the needed medicines in Luanda's black market.

Angola's 10 million landmines are scattered throughout the country, particularly in fertile agricultural areas, along strategic roads, bridges, and footpaths. Towns and villages are completely surrounded by mines. Farming, transport, and other essential economic activities are blocked by the mines and no significant de-mining can be carried out until Angola achieves a stable peace.

Already the mines have exacted a horrific price in Angola, where one in every 470 people is an amputee—the world's highest percentage of amputees per capita. In comparison, Uganda has one amputee per 1,100 people, Somalia one per 1,650, and Mozambique one per 1,862.

The cost of landmines is not just in human misery—they also exact a terrible toll on the economies
of African countries. Fifteen years after Zimbabwe won independence, an estimated 1 million acres of rich agricultural land along the eastern border with Mozambique cannot be cultivated because of landmines. As with virtually all mine fields, there are no comprehensive records of where the mines have been placed. And because many of the mines have been in place for nearly 20 years on hillsides and slopes, during the rainy season many have shifted in the mud to new positions.

In Cuito Cuanavale, in southern Angola, records show the locations of 80,000 mines but it is known that 330,000 were sown around the city. The locations of the rest are unknown.

"Landmines are an incredibly effective weapon," says Mercedes Sayagues, a former World Food Program information officer who dealt with deliveries in war-torn southern Africa. "In Mozambique we found that a single landmine had kept a strategic stretch of road closed for more than 10 years. That single landmine kept thousands of people cut off from the rest of the world and prevented any food deliveries reaching them by road from within Mozambique. WFP had to truck food aid all the way up to Malawi and then back into Mozambique. It was very expensive and a single $5 dollar landmine did that."

Sayagues said she abhors the violence she sees that has been caused by landmines, but she can understand why mines are used so frequently in Africa. A guerrilla group can boost its strength tremendously by using lots of cheap landmines, says Sayagues. "The mines can cut off large swathes of territory from the government army. The mines can also prevent farming, causing significant economic loss to the government and also causing a distressed rural population that will rely upon the government for assistance. These awful little mines can create a lot of very big problems."

Unfortunately these big problems remain to plague the country long after the conflict between government and rebels is over. It is very hard to effectively de-mine the vast tracts of roads, paths, fields and numerous villages, barracks, schools, and clinics that have been mined in Mozambique and Angola, for instance. It is estimated that a mine costs just $3 to $7 to produce and put in place, while it costs a staggering $1,000 to remove.

Anti-personnel mines are designed to maim their victims, not to kill them. This is not because of any respect for life, but because a seriously injured victim is more costly to an army than a dead soldier, according to Alex Vines, author of Landmines in Mozambique.

"Let's say a patrol is going out in the field to search for rebels. If a soldier is killed, then he is dead and the patrol moves on," says Vines, a researcher for Human Rights Watch/Africa. "But if a soldier has a foot or a leg blown off, then the patrol must get medical assistance. The army must then use medics, doctors, nurses, and much equipment and medical supplies to care for the injured soldier. An amputation is far more costly than a death in terms of money, in terms of manpower and even, I believe, in terms of morale. It is for that reason that most anti-personnel landmines are not designed to kill their victims, but to blow off a foot, a hand, or a leg."

The injuries do not stop at the limbs, however. Doctors experienced with landmine accidents report that frequently the exploding shrapnel from a mine also causes serious damage to the genitals, stomachs, chests, and faces of its victims.

"For anyone treating war-wounded people, the mine injuries are the most terrible, causing much worse wounds than firearms," says Dr. Asa Molde, a surgeon for the International Committee of the Red Cross. "Landmines cause injuries that consume a lot of operation time because the patients will need many operations, and they need blood, many changes of dressings, a bed, and nursing care for a long time. These injuries drain resources and tie up the medical staff and facilities for a long time. The perversive thing is that this is exactly what the people planting the mines want. A wounded soldier is a much bigger burden to existing medical facilities than a dead one and also depresses the morale of fellow soldiers."

"Not only the patients suffer, all those taking care of the wounded, like friends, relatives, and medical staff are affected by the sorrow, anxiety, and a feeling of helplessness," says Dr. Molde. "You expect soldiers to be injured during fighting, but to have civilians like women, children, and old people hit is not acceptable, especially under international humanitarian law."

"When the war is finished, other weapons are withdrawn, but the anti-personnel mines will stay for years and years to come. They will mutilate innocent people. But the problem is that the manufacturers and the exporters of mines, as well as the governments and forces that decide to use mines, never see the terrible effects. They do not have to pay the terrible costs of the landmines."

Africans generally agree that landmines are a scourge across the continent but the explosive devices are such cheap and effective weapons that they continue to spread across Africa like deadly weeds. How can they be stopped?
That was the question posed at a conference on landmines held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in March by the International Committee of the Red Cross. It was not just attended by international aid groups and human rights activists. In a careful attempt to get the real decision-makers involved in attempts to control the spread of landmines, the Red Cross succeeded in getting participation of government and military delegations from 13 southern African countries. Red Cross organizers said their aim was to encourage more African governments to sign the International Weapons Convention to limit the use of mines.

South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu opened the conference with an impassioned plea for a total ban on the production and use of landmines.

"Imagine to be a parent of a child who has lost a limb to a landmine. Imagine kissing that poor child in bed every night and imagine how frustrated, how powerless, you would feel," said Nobel laureate Tutu. "Anti-personnel landmines are not just a crime perpetrated against people, they are a sin. Why has the world been so silent about these obscenities? Most governments respond to public pressure, but most of Africa's victims of landmines are rural people who don't have access to the international media. They are marginalized victims who are neither heard nor seen."

Tutu urged the participants at the conference to "condemn the use of landmines and to call for a complete ban on all use of anti-personnel landmines."

Then controversy over reports that Zimbabwe produces landmines nearly engulfed the conference. Human rights representatives grilled Zimbabwe over reports that it and two other African countries—South Africa and Egypt—produce anti-personnel mines. In February 1995, the government-owned Zimbabwe Defense Industries opened a new munitions factory which produces ammunition, mortars, and other explosives. Activists charge the new factory also produces landmines. Zimbabwean officials denied the volatility situation by conceding they had produced landmines in the 1980s and then in the same breath announced that all future production of anti-personnel landmines had been stopped. Zimbabwe's Attorney-General Patrick Chinamasa said the government was taking a "keen interest" in the conference and was considering signing the 1980 Weapons Convention.

"I'm pleased that Zimbabwe has announced such a clear-cut decision not to carry out any further production of any anti-personnel landmines," said Alex Vines of Human Rights Watch. "We want to hold them to that pledge. Our aim is to stigmatize the use of anti-personnel mines the way that chemical warfare is now regarded as out of bounds."

South Africa recently announced that it would indefinitely stop the export of anti-personnel landmines.

Only three African countries—Benin, Niger, and Tunisia—are among the 44 countries that have signed the weapons convention limiting the use of landmines. "We hope this conference will encourage more African countries to sign the convention so they can participate in its revision in Vienna in September," said ICRC official Nicholas Sommer.

As part of its African campaign, the ICRC held landmine conferences in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Both conferences were designed to encourage more African governments to sign the international convention to limit the use of anti-personnel landmines. The Red Cross conferences were also backed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The Harare conference was addressed by William Godwin Nhara, OAU coordinator for conflict prevention.

"The OAU would like to seize this opportunity to encourage states to comply with the measures in place for the regulation of the use of mines," said Nhara, who added that the OAU urges its member-states "who have not yet ratified or adhered to the international convention to urgently examine or re-examine the possibility of doing so soon."

Other members of the ICRC diplomatically encouraged the African participants to press their governments to sign the convention. They pointed out that there was a worldwide meeting in Vienna in September 1995 to review the convention on landmines and any new ideas by African countries on how to stem the proliferation of landmines would be very welcome. But signing the convention is required in order to take part in the Vienna conference.

As it stands now, the Weapons Convention is very weak. It only applies to wars between two countries and does not make any mention of internal armed conflicts, which is where most recent mine use has occurred. The convention assigns no clear responsibility for the removal of mines. It does not prohibit the use of non-detectable mines. Most damaging of all, the convention does not have any effective implementation or monitoring mechanism.

As weak as the anti-mine convention is, only three African countries have seen fit to sign it. And despite the concerted and diplomatic efforts of the Red Cross, no new African countries have yet come forward to sign the convention.

"I hope and I dream that our continent will be rid of anti-personnel landmines," said Archbishop Tutu at the Harare conference. "I know a total ban on such mines is impractical. But why can't we dream? Why don't we African countries act to end these abominations across our continent? It is disgraceful that only three African countries have signed the Weapons Convention. We, as Africans, should all be ashamed."
Somalia has no central government—instead it has a variety of overlapping and fluid local authorities ranging from militias, to clan elders (in photo), to Mafia-like rackets, to fundamentalist mosques. The challenge for the international community, the authors argue, is to learn to work constructively with these localized authorities rather than against them, because slowly Somalis themselves will build their country's institutions.

It is chaotic, but not chaos. It is a society without a state, but not, as is so often reported, "anarchy." Somalia today is a mosaic of fluid, highly localized polities—some based on traditional authority, others reflecting hybrid arrangements—that are stepping in to fill the vacuum created by the prolonged collapse of the state, performing many of the most essential functions of day-to-day governance.

The ascendance of these local polities—in villages, urban neighborhoods, and the pastoral range—may only be a transient feature of the Somali landscape until a central state authority is revived. But it is much more likely that they are a glimpse of the future of governance in Somalia. With all indicators suggesting that efforts to re-establish a central Somali state will continue to meet with frustration, what we call "Somalia" will remain for the foreseeable future this collection of diverse and overlapping grassroots polities that collectively add up to something less than a conventional state.

The challenge to the international community—non-governmental organizations, multilateral donors, states, and the UN—is to learn to work constructively with these localized polities rather than against them. This will not be easy. Many international organizations are designed to interact with...
might be better served by the creation and recognition of some central authority which co-exists with, rather than challenges, the Mafia-based economy from which these merchants profit. The need to reduce insecurity and to keep major roads and ports open for commerce has created the impetus among merchants in Mogadishu to create a "peace committee," which provides for multi-clan control over the seaport and airport. Also, the future potential for aid to or through a national government is one of the most important centralizing political forces in Somalia.

Weakening Alliances

Decentralizing forces have largely crippled the Somali factions, which the UN had hoped would cobble together a cross-clan alliance undergirding an eventual national authority. Throughout 1994 and early 1995, the UN assisted factional leaders whose stars appeared to be on the rise as part of its government-formation exercise. The most prominent initiative included numerous peace conferences and informal talks aimed at brokering an axis between General Hersi Morgan, General Aidid, and Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf. UNOSOM felt these three could militarily control territory covering much of southern and central Somalia. The UN's subsequent failure was largely due to the fact that none of the political factions, including the Somali National Alliance headed by General Aidid, was sufficiently broad-based and authoritative to deliver on national reconciliation agreements. Instead, all of the factions faced serious erosion in their power bases, a trend that only worsened as UNOSOM withdrew, depriving the Mogadishu-based factions of millions of dollars of contracts which had supported their patronage system during the previous two years.

The factions are now in a state of political crisis, some ripped apart by internal discord and others disappearing altogether except in name. To illustrate, the SNA failed in November 1994 to pull together agreement on a national interim government after a fractious political conference. By mid-1994, the SNA represented only a small percentage of the Somali population, making it impossible to declare an interim government. Since then, the Habr Gedr Ayr sub-clan broke ranks with the SNA, and Aidid's financial backer, Osman Ato, has pursued an independent agenda which produced at least one round of armed confrontation between their respective militias (reputedly when Ato's forces prevented Aidid's militia from staging an attack on the airport while U.S. forces were present). Ato and a number of other influential Habr Gedr figures participate in the Mogadishu peace committee that is working to maintain joint management of the city's port and airport. This group appears to be in control of the political process in Mogadishu. They are openly critical of Aidid, and while they have no intention of completely marginalizing him, he has a dwindling base of support and perhaps only a modest role to play in future Somali politics.

If the peace committee is successful in establishing a Benadir regional authority (to be led by Ali Ugas), this would transfer still more authority away from the factions and into alternative hands. Deprived of direct regional authority, Aidid and other factional figures like him would only be left with national-level political arenas. The departure of UNOSOM also robs him of a convenient political instrument for fomenting anti-UN sentiments; his confrontations with the UN earned him considerable political capital in the past. In addition to these problems, the SNA has found itself increasingly unable to control the rise in power of Islamic courts in south Mogadishu.

Nevertheless, the SNA remains the most organized and militarily powerful faction in Somalia; it controls (at least nominally) more territory than any other faction, and has rarely suffered military losses. But the SNA at this time is quite a narrow coalition, composed mostly of Habr Gedr Sa'ad, some Murosade, and some Gaaljaal militia. In times of danger to the clan, it is likely that current divisions within the Habr Gedr will dissipate, and the clan will rally around Aidid. But unless and until that happens—and there are now powerful constituencies in Mogadishu trying to prevent the escalation of hostilities—his power base remains narrow and contested.

The Revival of Localized Authority

Since 1994, Somali political energies have clearly turned inward. Most political intrigue and conflict has been devoted not to broad, inter-clan and inter-factional disputes, but instead to an endless struggle for legitimacy and authority within Somali communities. These struggles draw militia men, factional leaders, elders, sub-clan leaders, politicians, intellectuals, clerics, leaders of women's organizations, and businessmen into complex alliances with and against one another in order to stake a claim to control clan politics. These internal power struggles rarely erupt into armed violence, and thus command little attention from the media, which is drawn to the more dramatic and visible clashes between militias. Yet these internal disputes over authority with the clan are of much greater importance to a long-term resolution of the Somali crisis.

During the UNOSOM intervention, factional and militia figures held the upper hand in the struggle for political legitimacy, they monopolized the UN's attentions and controlled much of the money that the UN poured into Somalia by way of procurement and employment contracts. But while the factions vied for influence at the national level, they largely ignored the demands for local governance within their spheres of influence. What their clansmen
sought were minimal and essential government services to cope with the day-to-day insecurity of life in a collapsed state—a reliable system of law and order on the streets, a dependable judicial system for settling disputes, a regulatory system for maintaining rights and obligations in the marketplace and streets, and legitimate political delegates to represent the clan in negotiations. In very few cases did the factions trouble themselves with these concerns. As a result, local communities took matters into their own hands, devising their own system of governance. In the process, they have rendered the factions superfluous in the everyday lives of the Somali people.

These localized polities are quite diverse in scope and effectiveness, and extremely fluid in nature. Clan elders, for instance, continue to be relied upon in almost every instance to resolve inter- and intra-clan disputes just as they had done prior to the collapse of the Somali state. Increasingly, they are also organizing themselves to represent the clan in establishing diplomatic links and accords with regional clans, sideling the factions in the process. International observers first pointed to this vital mediating and judicial role played by the elders following the successful series of traditional peace assemblies in the northwest of Somalia, a process which brought peace and stability to that region for nearly two years. The most dramatic recent example of the reassertion of the authority of clan elders has been in southern Somalia, where the Absame clan elders have claimed the right to unseat Col. Omar Jass as head of the Somali Patriotic Movement, and have proceeded with negotiations with Marehan and Rahanweyn clan representatives.

Yet the elders have real limits on their authority, and are not looked to by local communities to fulfill many other functional roles. In many instances, services once provided by the state have been radically privatized. The area of policing and security provides an example. In the Medina neighborhood of Mogadishu, for instance, several security and judicial systems overlap. One way that neighbors living within a few blocks of each other maintain security is through use of a neighborhood watch system. If armed outsiders are seen in the area or a crime is occurring, whistles are blown by residents, which alert neighbors. Since nearly every household is armed, this system can quickly form a lethal local posse, and is quite an effective deterrent to crime. Most Medina neighborhoods also provide payments to local armed youth (who otherwise might be terrorizing them) to serve as a private security force in their area. This can include small payments to young, unarmed boys to “keep watch” on the area and report anything suspicious.

Collectively this web of radically privatized, quasi-vigilante security arrangements provides reasonable deterrents to crime—for those who can afford them, and who hail from sub-clans with adequate power to reinforce the deterrent factor. Indeed, for those Somalis possessing valuable commercial property, especially vehicles, the best insurance against theft is the certainty that their own clansmen will exact revenge on any other clan which attempts to steal their property. However imperfect this security system may be, it is and will remain far superior to any police force in coming years.

However, since the outbreak of the civil war and now again with the withdrawal of the UNOSOM forces, a new system of policing and judging crimes is emerging in Medina and elsewhere—namely, the Islamic courts. Empowered by well-armed and well-disciplined young men, fundamentalist mosques have effectively maintained the peace in some neighborhoods by imposing Sharia law on offenders. Before the UN intervention, areas which were controlled by fundamentalists in Medina were known to be safe and weapons-free, and were sought-after locations for residence as a result. Now they are returning to activity, and are spreading their reach throughout neighborhoods in Medina and north Mogadishu. It is at this time impossible to know how their jurisdiction affects other, secular systems of policing and dispute settlement, but it is reasonable to assume that their simultaneous operation is triggering tensions in the community.

Even in the most disrupted and contested rural zones, evidence is mounting that militiamen and bandits who in past years had terrorized and starved agricultural communities are developing less violent and more predictable relations with the villagers. Along the lower Juba valley, for instance, gunmen have settled and established quasi-feudal fiefdoms over local villages. In return for a generous share of their crops, the gunmen agree not to attack the villagers and agree to defend them against other potential looters. Though this arrangement seems oppressive, many local villagers express a preference for this routinized expropriation over the terror of random banditry and violence. For their part, the gunmen are developing an interest in providing a secure environment for their “hosts,” in many places, and may over time become a reliable source of security in their area of domain. Stateless Somalia is moving slowly into that gray area between extortion and taxation.
Keeping the Peace

By PETER da COSTA
Does conflict, both internal and external, have to be a recurring fact of life in Africa? Ever since Kwame Nkrumah advocated an African High Command to implement conflict resolution, the Organization of African Unity has been wrestling with this question. Experts believe that the focus initially should be narrow, on regional management of conflict. And they point to southern Africa as best positioned to tackle the problem. South Africa's military and economic strength could be the engine for promoting stability and growth in the region, and that would energize the OAU's conflict management plans.

Opening a workshop on grassroots conflict resolution late last year, a South African foreign ministry official, Dr. Essop Pahad, stressed the importance of preventing the escalation of conflict through "existing mechanisms."

Pahad acknowledged the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Central Mechanism for the Prevention and Management of Conflict—set up by African leaders at the June 1993 Cairo summit—as the main structure through which sub-Saharan Africa should operate in matters of preventive diplomacy.

In his choice of words, Pahad may himself have been exercising diplomacy—for the OAU Tunis summit in June last year formally welcomed the newly independent South Africa as the 53rd member of the continental body, while dissolving the OAU Liberation Committee that had helped sustain the fight against apartheid.

The Tunis summit, taking place as it did in the wake of the ethno-political explosion of violence in Rwanda, was dominated by talk of conflict and it was there that the OAU conflict mechanism was inaugurated.

The mechanism is an ambitious structure that seeks to break Africa's dependence on outside mediators. It is predicated on cost-effective conflict prevention, but also seeks to breathe life into the expensive dream of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah who in 1963 called for the creation of an African High Command.

For now, such a command is an unlikely scenario, as much for financial reasons as for the OAU's principle of non-intervention in the affairs of member-states. As long as the OAU remains some $65 million in arrears, the Peace Fund to which the organization has committed 5 percent of its $30 million annual budget is unlikely to be fully subscribed.

Laurie Nathan, executive director of the University of Cape Town's Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR), is skeptical of the continental conflict mechanism—"because of the OAU's track record. It is a mistake for a continental body to look at conflict resolution, for the reason that regional and continental structures are not stronger than national structures."

"In fact," argues Nathan, "supra-national structures such as the OAU are weaker. They inherit the weaknesses of the member-states."

Some aspects of the OAU plan are, however, already in motion. Preventive diplomatic missions, lately to Burundi and previously to Somalia and Liberia, have helped build momentum for dialogue and have raised awareness of actual and potential conflict situations. Analysts, however, argue that, however well-meaning, the OAU is being undermined by an alarming proliferation of conflicts, many precipitated by what Africanist and historian Basil Davidson calls the "curse of the nation-state."

Patrick Smith of Africa Confidential argues that although the region's most viable states will "probably be shored up and strengthened to provide a bridge to more effective regional arrangements...It is also clear that the territorial division of Africa into nation-states based on colonial partition, with boundaries sanctified by the OAU as inviolable, is under the greatest pressure since independence."

Nathan agrees. "States are very reluctant to cede sovereignty to a higher authority, as has been evident in the creation of a European Union. In Africa, the problem is particularly severe, as many states themselves lack legitimacy and will cling to any shred of sovereignty they can."
The conventional wisdom, then, is that the OAU is a poor candidate for spearheading any continental initiative in conflict resolution. But South Africa's elevation in status from world pariah to full member of the OAU raises new and interesting possibilities for the management of conflict in sub-Saharan Africa—both within the context of a strengthened OAU as well as at levels closer to home.

In Tunis, President Nelson Mandela paid up South Africa's contribution to the OAU, and donated an additional quarter of a million dollars to the Peace Fund—a signal that the new member is at least for now committed to keeping the OAU afloat.

In his role as the OAU's second vice-chairman, Mandela warned the Tunis summit that the Rwanda situation was "a stern and severe rebuke" to the region's leaders, adding that "we have it in ourselves as Africans to change all this." Eager to demonstrate South Africa's willingness to enter the realm of mediation, Mandela held discussions with the leaders of Angola and Zaire—with the former to see how the then-stymied peace process in Angola could be advanced, and with the latter to offer South Africa's inputs on resolving the Rwanda crisis.

Rwanda was on the agenda of Mandela's first meeting as president with U.S. Vice President Al Gore, who raised the issue of South Africa's sending troops, and put the new OAU member's potential role in conflict resolution into sharp relief.

Mandela's initial preoccupation may be with overcoming the internal effects of apartheid by building a stable, equitable South Africa. But his country's unique geopolitical location leaves it little choice but to pursue the objective of regional security alongside internal stability.

With the region's largest and most professional army, a well-established defense industry, and a mine of academic knowledge in the conflict arena, South Africa is, argue analysts, the natural motor for home-grown African efforts to promote peace, stability, and economic growth in the world's most marginalized and unstable region.

The decline of Nigeria's politicized army—which is second in size only to the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) and remains the continent's biggest contributor to supra-national peace-keeping operations—leaves the field open to South Africa to take a leadership role in UN and other missions.

As the SANDF undergoes what is a difficult transformation, perhaps equally fraught will be the full integration of the new South Africa into the sub-region. When the Angolan foreign minister, Venancio de Moura, called at a meeting in Zimbabwe in March 1995 for the UN to urgently send peace-keepers to his country, he also made it clear his government would not accept South African troops on Angolan soil. Memories of the apartheid regime's involvement with Angola's former rebel army, Unita, and of its destabilization operations in southern Africa, do not fade away easily. But de Moura welcomed logistical support from the new South Africa, signaling that somewhere along the way the hard line is flexible.

South African scholars of conflict who condemn the OAU as an unwieldy, inefficient monolith see the future of conflict management in structures such as a "common security regime" for members of the new Southern African Development Community (SADC)—a regional authority set up in 1992 with a mandate to evolve regional economic and security policy that includes South Africa and replaces the limited Coordination Conference.

The CCR's Nathan believes the future of conflict management lies in a new model which "emphasizes the security of people and the non-military dimensions of security." The idea is of security as a holistic phenomenon where "the objects of security are not confined to states but extend at different levels of society to include people, geographic regions, and the global community."

Threats to security "are not limited to military challenges to state sovereignty and territorial integrity," explains Nathan in a January 1995 paper written for SADC together with fellow analyst João Honwana. "They include abuse of human rights, economic deprivation, social injustice, and destruction of the environment," and re-orient the end of security policy away from simply achieving an absence of war to include "the pursuit of democracy, sustainable economic development, social justice, and protection of the environment."

States should be more attentive in their internal security policy to the problem of violence against women and children. And while military force is seen as a legitimate defense against external aggression, Nathan and Honwana argue that it is "not an acceptable instrument for conducting foreign policy and settling disputes." Regional security can be promoted and the security dilemma mitigated if states adopt "a defensive military doctrine and posture."

SADC, which in August 1994 approved the formation of a sector on politics, diplomacy, international relations, defense, and security, is moving toward a common security regime along the lines of the five-member OSCE (formerly the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe). The OSCE may currently lack the capacity to actualize its stated interest in peace-keeping—but it does constitute a diplomatic lobby and framework body of the sort SADC aspires to.

SADC is pursuing disarmament, but to reduce the risk of flash points and because it believes the money spent on arms could be better spent on developmental activities. Nathan and Honwana argue that the end of the Cold War combined with donor pressure has led to dramatic reductions in southern African military strengths. Zimbabwe's full-time force level dropped between 1991 and 1994 from 54,600 to 46,900; Mozambique's from 58,000 to 30,000; and
Namibia's (Swapo guerrillas as well as South African-controlled troops) from 70,000 to 8,100.

Southern Africa's disarmament problems are altogether different from those surrounding the dismantling of the Northern post-Cold War infrastructure. In South Africa, reforming the SANDF and integrating former combatants into ordinary life presents a sensitive political challenge, while in Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, unemployed ex-soldiers have begun to embrace banditry. Soldiers serving under worsening conditions are also turning to crime.

Given the fact that South Africa has such a big arms industry and huge military infrastructure (in 1993 its reserves alone exceeded the combined might of other SADC states by half a million), argue Nathan and Homwana, the peace dividend to disarmament in South Africa would be to catalyze similar disarmament and stability in the region.

Another dynamic is the fact that with the demise of apartheid, the frontline African states no longer have a common enemy. This new reality may affect regional solidarity and precipitate inter-state disputes over trade, foreign aid, investment, refugees, natural resources, and territory.

Analysts cite a rising tide of anti-immigrant feelings within South Africa—the so-called “border-jumpers” phenomenon—as an example of a potential flash point. Tension is rising among South Africans who accuse foreigners from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and other sub-regional neighbors of taking their jobs. Exploited by local politicians inside the country, the apparent xenophobia may yet create a diplomatic backlash against South Africa from without.

Inter-regional rivalries are likely to have a major influence on how effectively SADC moves toward its goal of collective regional security. Mats Berdal, a research associate at the UK-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) cites the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) intervention in the Liberian civil war as an example of a regional military effort damaged by a perceived political motivation.

"Since its arrival in 1990, the 11,000-strong West African peace force (Ecomog) in Liberia has been viewed by neighboring states not as an impartial third actor, but as an instrument for promoting Nigeria's regional interests," writes Berdal. This "basic limitation on regional action is political in nature and stems from the difficulty for regional powers—even when operating at the behest of the UN—to maintain impartiality in the eyes of parties to a particular dispute...."

In his 1993 paper entitled "Whither UN Peacekeeping," Berdal notes the disastrous effect of resource shortfalls on well-meaning regional initiatives—another lesson SADC would do well to learn from the OAU. "A case in point is the peace-keeping force dispatched by the OAU to Chad in 1981," writes Berdal. "It took nearly a year to organize the force and, once deployed, it suffered from an acute shortage of military expertise, logistics, and financial support. These deficiencies contributed to its early withdrawal in 1982."

Berdal argues that regional efforts in the cause of conflict management should optimally be launched in cooperation with the UN. "One of the principal advantages of the UN as a vehicle for collective action remains its ability to dissociate an intervening force from the politics of a particular conflict." All regional peace-keeping initiatives should draw on the "legitimizing authority of the UN, and that, even the use of individual assets, be they diplomatic or military, should be emphasized."

While UN-led conflict resolution initiatives are being threatened by increasing funding shortfalls, many are emphasizing the role of grassroots actors in the prevention, monitoring, and resolution of conflicts. The Nathan/Homwana terms of reference for the planned SADC political sector provide for a council of foreign ministers that should, among other things, "facilitate the involvement of the people and non-governmental organizations of the region," giving weight to the views of NGOs and women's groups in its decision-making process.

Nathan's CCR, together with the Independent Mediation Service of South Africa, were co-organizers of the November 1994 workshop on grassroots conflict resolution in southern Africa—the first such gathering of its kind, bringing together 32 NGO participants from 10 countries.

Nathan argues for increased advocacy and for the capacity of civil society to handle conflict resolution at the grassroots level to be strengthened. In particular, women and youth should be empowered and their present work in areas of conflict resolution recognized.

Part of the bottom-up approach should include sensitivity to local cultural norms, as the failure of the UN in Somalia demonstrated. The IISS's Berdal argues that UN military actions "to which [secretary-general] Boutros Boutros-Ghali gave his unequivocal approval ignored vital aspects of Somali society and politics. Chief among these was the fact that clan elders would be crucial in any reconciliation between warlords, since only they could settle disputes over issues such as property and grazing rights."

Ultimately, Africa's institutional capacity to manage conflict is likely to develop at several levels. At the continental level, the new South Africa's potential role as an engine for the OAU is not in dispute. Whether Mandela's pan-Africanist sentiments can help actualize political scientist Ali Mazrui's idea of a "supra-national" OAU "Security Council," composed of the region's most influential states to diplomatically manage and decisively intervene in conflicts, is another matter entirely.
and through states alone, and will have to adopt flexible new rules of engagement with stateless Somalia. Moreover, the local polities emerging throughout Somalia are fluid in structure and authority, not easily amenable to the needs of donors and states for fixed and recognizable structures of authority.

**Decline of the Factions**

Before, during, and since the failed UN intervention in Somalia, efforts to forge a national-level accord to revive a central state have fallen victim to powerful decentralizing forces, leaving Somalia without any prospects of renewed central governance. Those decentralizing forces, which have brought renewed vigor to political life at the local level in Somalia, have also spelled the slow demise of Somalia's multitude of political factions and alliances, including rival coalitions of the Somali National Alliance, led by General Mohamed Farah Aidid, and the Group of 12, led by Ali Mahdi Mohamed. Never have the political fortunes of these two men looked more troubled than today.

Most assessments of the failure of Somali leadership and the UN to craft a national accord to rebuild the state in Somalia have placed too much emphasis on flawed diplomatic approaches and myopic leadership. To be sure, UN and Somali factional initiatives since 1993 have been disappointing. But it is worth underscoring that any state-building effort in Somalia, however enlightened and well-intentioned, must swim against a powerful current of countervailing forces, all of which tear at the seams of central authority. These decentralizing forces are political, economic, and social in nature.

Politically, statelessness still has a constituency, including those who profit from an economy of plunder, Mafia-like extortion rackets, and various other unlawful economic dealings; militia leaders whose power base rests on conquest and fear; the mooyaan, members of the militia whose status would decline if a government enforced the rule of law; and entire sub-clan groups who have occupied valuable real estate in Mogadishu and the inter-riverine areas, and who might forfeit ill-gotten gains if a peace agreement involved the return of stolen property.

Economically, there has never been a sustainable material basis for a viable state authority in Somalia's history. Socially, the decentralizing power of clan politics overwhelms efforts to re-unite Somalis. In the past, these decentralizing trends were reversed through foreign aid-supported patronage and military coercion. While militia leaders still can intimidate local leadership, they are far from possessing the kind of well-funded and intrusive security apparatus of the Barre regime. Neither patronage politics nor coercion will be available to future national leadership on a sufficiently large scale.

Nevertheless, there still remain some centralizing tendencies in Somali society. Numerous Somali businessmen realize that their commercial interests...
In April 7, a year after the start of the world's fastest genocide, Rwandans remembered their dead. The major ceremony was in the capital Kigali, where thousands of corpses, including those of prominent politicians, were reburied in the presence of national and international dignitaries, and crowds of ordinary Rwandans. There were slogans everywhere, the most common being "We bury the dead, not the truth," and, "Justice delayed is justice denied."

There were other ceremonies too, all over the country, following much the same pattern—a reburial, a sermon from a local priest, and then speeches from local politicians about the history behind the genocide, and the future that lies ahead.

The reburial program has been going on since December, but found a new urgency in February, when the first rains threw up tens of thousands of hastily buried corpses. Some of the ceremonies have been official, but many more are not, organized instead by villagers determined to give the butchered bones a final and dignified resting place.

Not all Rwandans remembered the dead on April 7. In the camps of eastern Zaire, Tanzania, southwestern Rwanda, and what is left of those in Burundi, life went on as usual. Fabien Mutabanda, chef du camp at Kibeho, in Gikongoro, southwest Rwanda, said that the 100,000 people there had other things on their minds. "We must think about food and shelter." Did he think that there had been a genocide last year? "I don't think 'genocide' is the right word. Of course, many people died, but that was because of our civil war."

This is the official line of Rwanda's former leaders, most of whom now live in Zaire and Kenya. They continue to call for negotiations with Kigali, leading to a power-sharing deal. This is absolutely ruled out by the new government, which wants to put them on trial for genocide instead. The international community agrees. France has dropped its demand that the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND), the former ruling party, be included in the government, the last country to do so. It also supported a Security Council resolution in March, calling on all UN members asked to do so to extradite those suspected of genocide, for trial by an international tribunal. The trials will take place in Arusha, Tanzania, home of the negotiations that
By GREGORY SALTER  As Rwanda slowly and painfully rebuilds its society, destroyed by the sudden outburst of massacres a year ago, plans are being made, with the help of the international community, to put leaders of the former government that carried out the genocide on trial. Thousands of people have been arrested, but they will languish in jail while the disrupted justice system is put back together. Meanwhile, more than 700,000 refugees have returned, and Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu and the new government are trying to cope with this and a host of other problems.

were supposed to have led to a smooth transfer of power in 1994.

Judge Richard Goldstone, who heads the tribunal, said in April that, on the basis of investigations undertaken so far, he will seek to try at least 400 people for organizing and coordinating the genocide. However, at the moment the tribunal office in Kigali has a staff of only five, though it hopes to recruit another 100. It only has money for the next three months, though deputy prosecutor Honoré Rako-tomanana expresses confidence that more will arrive soon. He predicts that the first charges will be laid in the second half of this year, and that, assuming that extraditions are successful, the first trials will take place in early 1996.

But extraditions could be a problem. Zaire has already indicated that its cooperation cannot be guaranteed. However, President Mobutu Sese Seko is unlikely to wish to jeopardize his new-found acceptance in Western eyes with outright refusal. Nonetheless, he has clearly profited from the presence of refugees and their leaders in his country, and the instability that they generate in the region. They have elevated him from a pariah to a key player once more, and given him leverage against the West, and his regional enemies such as President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, and the new Rwandan government. There seems no other explanation for his repeated non-appearances at regional summits that have so exasperated Rwandan Foreign Minister Anaste Gasana. “We were due to meet him in Brazzaville, and then in Nairobi in January, which was his idea in the first place. Both times, we were told at the last minute that he was unable to attend. But then in February, the Rwandan, Burundian, and Zairian defense ministers were due to meet in Bujumbura. Again, he canceled at the 11th hour. I have no doubt that he wants to perpetuate insecurity here.”

Aid workers in the camps testify that former government leaders have freedom of movement in Zaire, and are on good terms with local politicians. More ominously, substantial quantities of arms are coming into Goma from Eastern Europe. The BBC managed to film ex-soldiers engaged in military training in the Zairian Uvira camps in March. However, despite this, and the brave words of the militias in the Goma camps, who say openly that “we will return home by force, and win,” most analysts do not take this threat too seriously for the moment. Commander of the UN Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR), Maj-Gen. Guy Tousignant, stated in April, “I don’t see a great exterior threat. Banditry and minor incursions are the problem right now.”
The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), largely consisting of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which defeated the former Rwandan army last July, agrees. One commander said recently, "We beat them when we were in the bush, and they had everything at their disposal. We shall beat them again, if they ever try to re-invade."

Although security has been stepped up in Rwanda's border regions, the real threat is longterm. The Rwandan refugees in Uganda, who form the bulk of the RPF, fled the country in 1959 only to re-invade in 1990, 31 years later. Similarly, the 1.8 million refugees now camped around Rwanda's borders will not just disappear, and one day, they too will return.

Up to 700,000 of the new refugees have, however, returned to Rwanda since their mass exodus last year. This has often taken considerable courage. The Goma and Tanzanian Ngara camps are controlled by the former government and its militias, and they have worked hard to prevent returns. They have done this both physically, through intimidation and murder, and psychologically, by reinforcing already powerful fears among refugees that they will be arrested or killed if they return. The Bukavu camps are less controlled by them, but there too, there are widespread fears of the consequences of return. Many argue that their problems will come when they try to reclaim their properties; they say they will be denounced by the new occupants, so that they can stay put.

The government has tacitly admitted the problem, by introducing strict laws, ordering people to vacate the properties of returnees. However, laws are one thing, and implementation another. An unknown number of people have "disappeared," or been subject to reprisals. Maj.-Gen. Tousignant will say only, "I have no evidence of reprisals. I do have evidence that the judicial system is not in place."

Over 30,000 people have been arrested so far, and about 1,000 more are arrested each week. They are crammed into prisons built to house 4,000. In the Kigali central prison, nearly 9,000 people are in a building designed for 2,000. Every available space is filled, but about 50 new prisoners arrive every day. Regular visits from the Red Cross have ensured that at least some of their basic needs are met. The Red Cross largely feeds them, and has provided them with plastic sheeting, with which to cover themselves during the torrential rains of the season.

A remarkable feature of the prison is that it has no guards inside. Soldiers stand outside the gates, but inside, everything is regulated by the prisoners themselves. They are highly organized, extraordinarily calm, but increasingly depressed about their prospects.

"We don't know when our trials will be, but nearly all of us are innocent," the chef du prison told me. "We haven't even been visited by the minister of justice. Lots of journalists have come, but so far at least, they haven't done us any good at all."

Their hopes were raised on April 6, by the initia-

Rwanda's president, Faustin Twagiramungu

tion of proceedings against six prisoners, in a severely war-damaged court room, on the outskirts of Kigali. One of the accused, a 17-year-old, had defense counsel, provided by Unicef, who argued successfully that in his case, the summons procedure had not been followed properly. The others had no defense counsel, but their cases were also postponed, to allow the prosecutor to hear the evidence of the many new witnesses who presented themselves in court.

The proceedings ignited considerable controversy in governmental circles. The RPF, and two other parties in the coalition, argued that the trials should wait until the crime of genocide was on the statute books—the six were accused of murder only. They also want the 100 or so Rwandan lawyers now in the country, having returned from exile, recognized by the justice ministry. However, very few of these lawyers are willing to act as defense counsel—most prefer to prosecute. Defense counselors will almost certainly need protection, but the UNAMIR, bizarrely, is only prepared to offer it to foreign magistrates. France has offered 60 French-speaking magistrates, but it is not clear whether the government, which remains intensely suspicious of French intentions, will accept them.

The office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) contends that the opening of the trials was positive for this very reason.
argues that it has brought all these difficult problems surrounding the country's justice system to the fore, thus forcing national and international politicians to tackle them. The UNHCHR will be observing the trials, as part of a wide-ranging mission that includes gathering evidence on the genocide, much of which has been handed over to the international tribunal, and monitoring human rights abuses.

Trials are not the only issue that divides Rwandan politicians. Corruption is another. The ministry of finance, which is controlled by the Social Democratic Party (PSD) minister Marc Rugenera, who held the post in the last government, is accused by the inspector-general of finances, Mwema Kubwimana, of the embezzlement of over $500,000. The amount may seem small, but after the looting of the national and commercial banks' reserves by the former government, it is substantial enough in Rwanda. Specifically accused are the secretary of the treasury, Eugene Ruberangero, who has fled to Germany, and his deputy Philemon Munyaneza, who has been arrested. Rugenera is implicated because of his reported blocking of Kubwimana's attempts to have their conduct investigated, and to have them removed from their posts. Rugenera denies any wrong-doing, and insists that the money can be accounted for. He is supported in this by Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu, of the Democratic Republican Movement (MDR), who has strongly condemned Radio Rwanda for making public the accusations.

The affair will provide the newly appointed Parliament with an opportunity to test its abilities to monitor and control the government. MPs are determined to call Rugenera to account over the allegations, and he is equally determined to resist them. An initial skirmish between the government and the Parliament has been won by the latter. Stanley Safari, an MDR MP, was ordered by Twagiramungu in March not to stand for the presidency of any of the permanent parliamentary commissions. He ignored this, and was backed by the speaker of the Parliament, Juvenal Nkusi of the PSD. He was duly elected president of the key economic commission in late March, but so far, Twagiramungu has not reacted.

Twagiramungu has been involved in a number of other clashes recently. In December and January, he criticized the defense minister and vice president, Maj.-Gen. Paul Kagame of the RPF, for the state of security in the country, and for the number of arbitrary arrests. He is also involved in a power struggle with fellow MDR member Anaste Gasana, the minister for foreign affairs. Twagiramungu has ordered the party's national executive to "indefinitely suspend" Gasana from the MDR, but Gasana is contesting the legality of the move.

Nonetheless, Twagiramungu is highly thought of by many Western politicians and journalists. His ready recognition of the problems of arbitrary arrest and of persuading refugees to return, and the fact that he is a Hutu, seem to reassure them. However, many Rwandans believe that his main goal is to win the presidency, and that he will do or say whatever it takes to get there.

Taken as a whole though, the multi-party system is working, and Parliament's attempts to control the executive should impress democrats worldwide. Also, businessmen report a new governmental culture that, apart from the notable exception already mentioned, now frowns on corruption, rather than institutionalizing it, as was the case under the former regime.

The problems remain formidable. Tea and coffee, Rwanda's main exports, will be in short supply this year, and what little industrial infrastructure there was has been mostly looted or destroyed. Subsistence agriculture has been badly affected too. Most of the refugees are peasants, and their fields are not being tended for now. Peasants who are farming are working according to short-term plans of six months at most, and clearly do not have the confidence to plan their crops over a longer period. Commerce, however, has recovered remarkably quickly. Kigali markets are thriving, and a wide range of goods are available, if erratically and unpredictably. Much of this trade depends on the dollar economy created by the vast armies of NGO workers (there are over 100 NGOs at work in Rwanda), UNAMIR soldiers, and journalists. Prices tend to be exorbitant, and beyond the reach of most Rwandans.

Government infrastructure remains weak. Most government buildings are still severely damaged, and most of their looted equipment has yet to be replaced. State salaries are now being paid, but they are very low, and cannot compete with those offered by the NGOs. Nonetheless, the entire civilian administration is in place, countrywide.

But perhaps the most fundamental problem, aside from the refugees, is that large sections of the population live with the threat of arrest hanging over them. As long as the justice system remains paralyzed, national reconciliation will be impossible.

There is at least an abundance of positive spirit, and a desire to rebuild the country after the horrors of last year, despite the terrible trauma with which so many people still live. As one politician, who himself lost many members of his family last year, said in a speech on April 7, "For the rest of the world, this is 1995. But for Rwanda, this is Year One."
In the Name of Islam

By JULIE FLINT
Sudanese people are intimidated and the opposition is ineffectual for creating a climate of intolerance in which such fanaticism can thrive. The attack followed police raids on concerts and wedding parties, and a new drive to enforce Islamic dress and demeanor.

"We never expected something like this!" a Muslim academic exclaimed after the attack, which brought shades of Algeria to the peaceful banks of the Nile. "These people are breeding prejudice and intolerance as never before. They call themselves Islamists, but are obsessed with power and wealth."

The economic privileges enjoyed by members of the National Islamic Front stand in stark contrast to the misery ordinary Sudanese face as a result of corruption, economic mismanagement, and withdrawal of the foreign aid that accounted for a third of GDP before the NIF came to power. A professor who earned the equivalent of $360 a month 30 years ago makes $72 a month today. His in-laws, a retired couple in their 80s, live on a monthly pension of $35. A laborer earns enough to rent one small room in the slums surrounding Khartoum, with nothing left over for food or medicine.

The younger generations of the NIF are puritans and are shocked by their leaders' addiction to wealth and power at a time when the poor are really suffering whenever it faces a serious challenge, and warn that it makes no concessions on using whatever force is necessary to impose its objectives.

Thus it was that police opened fire late last year on a crowd of displaced southerners opposing attempts to move them into the desert outside Khartoum from long-established homes in the al-Kadier area of Omdurman—an organized slum on prime land along the Nile. Some reports said local people cast the first stone. But the protest ended with 14 squatters reported dead and several thousand trucked out to a desert area 12 miles away.

"The government doesn't care about these people," said a Western diplomat, surveying wretched, ragged families sheltering from the sun under tents made of vegetable sacks and cardboard boxes. "It talks about them as 'socio-economic hazards,' as if they were vermin. An Islamic regime in the Third World should be a model of how you treat your citizens. So they fail by their own standards."

Many observers believe that military reverses in the war against the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in southern Sudan could create the dynamic to overthrow a government whose base is as narrow as its security net is wide. Not only are the armed forces tired of a punitive war that many consider unwinnable, but the government's failure to care for its wounded is causing serious disaffection in many quarters. Twice last year, patients from Omdurman
Religious Intolerance

Late last year, a doctor at Khartoum hospital signed certificate no. 44/9/13/6 recommending financial assistance for an impoverished southern Sudanese woman admitted five weeks earlier with paralysis caused by tuberculosis of the bone. The hospital pharmacy disclaimed responsibility for her. So, too, did Zakat, the Islamic community fund which is bound, by Islamic law, to allocate part of its resources to non-Muslims.

"This person is a Christian, as is her husband, and does not want to convert to Islam," a Zakat official wrote at the bottom of Dr. Abdul Wahid Ibrahim's recommendation. He proposed a contribution of 1000 Sudanese pounds—roughly S2.

At Khartoum University, young women not wearing the veil were barred from examination halls and stripped of their student cards. In the Bank of Khartoum, employees who refused to veil themselves were initially fired and then, on appeal, docked merit points for appearance—a blow to their chances of promotion.

Deacon Kamal Tadros, head of programs for the Catholic archdiocese of Khartoum, was detained by security officials demanding the closure of 60 schools attended by 35,000 displaced children—many of them Christians from southern Sudan. Father Tadros, a man in his 60s, was "beaten about the head," according to a colleague. It was his second arrest this year: In April, he was imprisoned, and beaten, for more than a week.

All these incidents took place within a month of an inter-faith conference that attracted 150 foreign delegates—and bundles of dollars—to Khartoum, but failed to dispel accusations that its protests of religious tolerance are merely tactical.

"The government is using religion to court international favor," a Catholic churchman said. "It has nothing to do with Sudan: it is to impress the world. In Sudan they are trying to marginalize the Church because it is one of the few small voices left to speak for the ordinary people. It is the only voice in the country. There is no opposition."

But even the harshest critics of Sudan's Islamic government acknowledge that international pressure has had some results—at least in Khartoum—in the last year. "In many places, Catholic Christians are no longer harassed by the security people, but are left to organize their prayers, religious gatherings, and activities without interference," the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference wrote to President Omar Bashir earlier this month. Access to the displaced camps, where Christianity is the majority religion, is much improved.

"I build in places where I don't have a right to build," said Paul Boyle, a Scottish priest. 'On past experience, I should have been picked up; but I am left totally in peace'—a stark contrast with Father Tadros' experiences and with police pressure against a hospice and orphanage run by the Missionaries of Charity.

The confusion is typical—some say willful. The "monumental and all-pervading security system" the Catholic bishops complained of two years ago has been replaced by a welter of "contradictory and inconsistent directives and orders" that are no less inhibiting. "It has become extremely difficult to know what directives are truly government directives or the whims of some official," the bishops wrote this month. "We are often at a loss as to which government authority we should refer."

Outside Khartoum, away from international eyes, little has changed despite the public relations campaign that has opened Sudan's doors to church leaders including Pope John Paul II. In the town of Wad el-Medani last year, a 70-year-old man who converted to Christianity 30 years ago was whipped unconscious and threatened with crucifixion. Islamic relief agencies are systematically dismantling what little is left of the old state structures: In Malakal, for example, all secondary schools have been converted into Islamic centers, penalizing non-Muslim children. Priests wait months for travel permits and have constant battles with security officials.

"They call you and you sit all day," one recounted. "Then you are told to come back in the morning. Then they ask: Who's your mother? Where did you go to primary school? Where were you in January 1990? After a few months they call you back. If you answer differently, you're lying. If the same, you're a trained spy."

—Julie Flint

military hospital left their beds and closed bridges across the Nile to protest the poor quality of their treatment.

"Television reports always portray these people as heroes, symbols of self-sacrifice." said a man who had relatives among the wounded. "But many of them feel neglected. They feel used. The conditions in Omdurman hospital are heart-rending. The people dying in these wars are idealists. But this is a double-edged sword: They are willing to die for you, but they may turn against you if you don't live up to their ideals."

For months now, the SPLA has been promising to turn the tide of war in the south. But an attack on the government-controlled town of Kapoeta has failed to show results more than three months after the SPLA went on the offensive. With the IGADD peace process dead in the water, the immediate future seems to offer nothing but continued wretchedness—for north and south alike.
By TED KILLHAM

Chad was supposed to have a democratically elected government by April, but its chaotic state has led to a postponement until the end of the year. The disorganized opposition as yet has no viable candidate to run against the president, the former guerrilla leader, Gen. Idriss Déby (in photo, with the then French minister of cooperation, Michel Roussin), who is propped up by France. The generally lawless country has assumed a new importance, with the revelation it is sitting on oil reserves of up to 1 billion barrels, which should make Chad a major exporter in a few years. But it remains to be seen whether the country is governable.

Two years ago, Chadians promised themselves a democratically elected president by April 1995, but today there is still no constitution or polling date—and hardly any candidates either. Fifty-seven parties have registered so far, but only the president, Gen. Idriss Déby, and a feisty retired ILO bureaucrat living in Geneva have actually declared their candidacy.

The Higher Transitional Council (CST), elected by the 1993 sovereign national conference as a temporary parliament to steer the country through the constitution writing and elections, is widely regarded today as a rubber stamp and one of the major obstacles to the elections. Youssouf Saleh Abbass, vice president of the 1993 conference, says, "The opposition made a strategic error by sending the second string to the CST instead of their best people. They weren't competent and were easily corrupted."

Even their best people, with a few exceptions, are identified with the dictatorships of the past. Unseating Déby, and then actually governing an unruly Chad, will require a leader with more charisma and street smarts than any of the front-runners have shown so far.

With the transitional structure short-circuited and the president in control, the opposition seems gun-shy. Despite accusations that they are selfish, tribal, and small-minded, it also appears that an unarmed, diverse political opposition can't transform this situation without some outside help. If and when free and fair elections are held will depend as much on the international community, particularly France, as on the Chadians themselves.

Foreigners helped get them into this bind. Large-ly through the French, the Reagan administration armed and supported Hissène Habré, Déby's predecessor, in his war against Libya and its Chadians. But he had always served American interests more than French. By late 1990, because of renewed French interest in Chadian oil and waning American attention, the French (with some Libyan help) used Déby, one of Habré's most effective field commanders but exiled after a failed coup plot, to oust him.

Déby promised democracy (it was the fashion of the times in Franco-African relations) and was maneuvered into the sovereign national conference which temporarily legitimized his presidency and created the CST. But Déby had come to power on the back of a tiger. The small but belligerent Zagawa and Bidyat clans from both sides of the Sudan-Chad border quickly began using their presidential immunity to exact booty from N'djamena residents. More sophisticated now, they use the customs office and the state companies. And they don't intend to let their man lose an election.
Chad will almost certainly become a major oil exporter at the end of the decade. In January, the old consortium (Exxon, Shell, and Elf), Cameroon, and Chad reached an agreement to build a 720-mile pipeline across Cameroon to the ocean at Kribi. As it has been since the time of Habré, the oil dossier is handled with great secrecy by Hassan Bakhit, the president's assistant secretary-general. Estimates of proven reserves vary from 300 million to 1 billion barrels. Pressed on this point, Bakhit recently clarified things in his way by saying, "If the investors took the risk to invest $2 billion, they must be sure about getting their money back."

But many suspect that Chad is not getting the best deal it should. Solomon Tombalbaye, son of the first president assassinated in 1975 and himself a party leader, calls the subject practically taboo, but says "we know that the regime owes its survival to the raising of the Westerners' percentage—at the expense of the country."

In the markets, bars, and mosques, Chadians blame France for trying to hide the importance of their oil for as long as possible, for overthrowing François Tombalbaye in 1975 and then Hissène Habré in 1990 because they both favored American oil men. But what really links them is that, once Déby had allowed France's Elf Aquitaine into the consortium to replace Chevron and had proved unable to control his entourage, they didn't have the decency to get rid of him.

Although the French probably feel they made a mistake underestimating the greed of Déby's clansmen and their links with Sudan, they also probably felt it bad form to overthrow him once he had been legitimized by the national conference. But it looks bad to have 900 French soldiers stationed in a country while part of the local army (even if it is the part that doesn't speak French) screams around in Toyota pickups with RPGs hanging over the side, killing civilians and burning houses when anyone questions their droit de seigneur.

Two key French programs, one to professionalize the army and another to clean up the customs, failed to get to the root of the problem and made the French look nonchalant. Worse, to many it proved that France would prefer just enough chaos to keep the whole country on its knees. The well-paid and well-equipped 2,500-man tribal Presidential Guard still coexists with an underpaid, ill-equipped regular army that nevertheless has mostly Zaghawa commanders. Just in case, customs receipts keep falling; on imported fuel they dropped from FCFA 6 billion in 1990 to less than FCFA 2 billion in 1994.

Wild west management has crippled the country. Without tax receipts, government workers go unpaid. U.S. AID is closing and the World Bank has withdrawn its representative. Even the French government could not pay out more than about half of the $18 billion it promised for 1994.

The whole country lives under military control, but in the more crowded, fertile south, a clash of cultures makes it look like a foreign occupation. The racial epithets of slave-trading linger. Pushed by a growing population and a degraded environment, Muslim northerners have been pushing into the region of mostly non-Muslim farmers. Cattle herders, backed since 1982 by administrators from the pastoral north, have increasingly ignored the conventions that once regulated the delicate balance between them and farmers. Since Déby's takeover, locals talk of armed Sudanese mercenaries leading huge herds. Farmers accuse herders of helping the president's Republican Guard in its campaigns against "southern" rebels like Laokein Barde.

The fight over land isn't restricted to the south and the Republican Guard doesn't have any problems killing Muslims. In August 1993, the president's soldiers killed 160 Muslim Wadaians in the Rue de Quarante neighborhood of Ndjamena when they marched to protest a massacre of their kin by Zaghawa herders.

To Chadians, Western-style democracy without some sort of equalizing muscle doesn't seem well-suited to solving these problems. During the hasty voter registration campaign in February, Déby and his allies seemed intent on proving it.

After months of wrangling, the government and the opposition had agreed on the makeup of an Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), the precondition for international assistance. But the government went ahead with its registration before the CENI could be sworn in and
equipped to control the registration. The ministry of interior and security refused to allow an international, donor-funded voter training program, registered Chadians living abroad where government consular officers could more easily stuff ballot boxes, pushed aside the official census office recently established by the World Bank, and generally carried out a chaotic operation.

Enoch Djongang, president of the Chadian Human Rights League (LTDH), says that over the last year, the government has been naming provincial officials "who hardly know how to read and write. There are some who left business to become administrators. Others who we don't know where they came from, about whom we know nothing, nothing. They have no career behind them." He fears they plan to discourage opposition candidates, frighten the voters, and stuff the ballot boxes if necessary.

The general lawlessness also helps the regime. CST President Mohamat Bachar Gadaya insists, "If we have to wait until we have security everywhere, we'll never have democracy." But he sidesteps the real cause of fear among those not campaigning for the president's Patriotic Movement for Salvation (MPS) party. Tombalbaye says, "The army isn't national, it favors the sons of the North. The Republican Guard is like the DDS (Habré's secret police), it makes the political parties scared to venture out."

With an atmosphere so unfavorable to the "free, democratic, and transparent" elections that the French diplomats say they want, it's natural to wonder if they are using their influence wisely or to wonder what France really wants. Is rule, whether elected or not, in their interests?

French diplomats answer these sorts of questions by saying that France is spending as much money as it possibly can and that it's time that the Chadians acted a little more seriously; that France just wants the democratic process to work. But Ndjamena, as one Western diplomat said, has thousands of people trying to second-guess the French. Some are inside the presidential palace. It's not easy.

Several French attitudes exist simultaneously. Most recently, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé had opposed financial support to the electoral process in Chad without more concrete results. But Cooperation Minister Bernard Debré got backing from Prime Minister Edouard Balladur to jump-start the process with 10 million FF and a visit to Ndjamena.

The visit itself left some people off-balance. For the first time, Debré met officially with the opposition. Then in an interview in L'Un Afrique, he said, "Fifty-six opposition parties, do you realize? I received them all during my last stay in Ndjamena, it was surrealistic. This opposition has no common strategy."

Paris rarely condemns the rebel "politico-military" forces like the MDD which held an American UN consultant hostage for a week in March. Déby himself, once a guerrilla leader seemingly abandoned to his exile in the desert, overthrew Habré with their help. They don't let him forget his ex-comrades in arms awaiting their chance. Radio France Internationale appears to take seriously their every tangled operation and inevitable reintegration into the army.

Déby is the evil the French know, even if they can't control him. He served a purpose, getting Elf into the consortium. But now that they are in, and given that he has no real tribal support, wouldn't they prefer someone willing to allow the minimum of development? Tombalbaye says, "If Déby is elected, it'll be civil war; the population won't accept this government for five more years. Does France have an interest in another civil war?"

Most of the other opposition politicians and some Western observers also foresee a rebellion if Déby wins a rigged election. Many Chadians in the street, however, fully expect Déby to get the job and keep it. Mahamat Hissène, publisher of the Ndjamena weekly Le Pays, calls talk of rebellion "blackmail of the international community. People won't revolt because they can't, the people won't follow." They've been burned too many times already.

On March 31, the president, the CST and the organized opposition agreed to extend the CST's mandate for a third year until August 9, 1996. It instructed the CENI to take the elections in hand. And it acknowledged that the constitutional referendum, the first step in the electoral process before the presidential vote, will not be held until after the rainy season, in October.

France, the United States, and Libya have promised financial support for the elections now that the CENI is in place, but they emphasize that they don't intend to be fooled and will pay for concrete steps forward. Nobody will be surprised if the elections have not been held in one year.

More appealing, or at least less tarnished, candidates may become viable if some transparency can be guaranteed. Former president Goukouni Woddeye, although once considered a northern rebel leader, has become an elder statesman with wide support. The former ILO bureaucrat, Adoum Maurice Hel-Bongo, proved himself a crusty, unflappable master of ceremonies at the national conference. He has declared his candidacy but has no organization on the ground.

But Enoch Djongang of the Chadian Human Rights League has a more pessimistic scenario: "Because of the opposition's weakness, Déby will win, some people will revolt, there will be massacres. Then the opposition politicians will take posts in exchange for making peace."

Djongang also feels that a victory by Déby will mean the end of institutions like his. "If the worst case scenario happens, those guys won't give us a break." But he adds, "Nobody knows how it will end. We're really looking for a miracle."
It is no longer easy to pull off a coup d'état in Africa's most populous nation, warned armed forces spokesman Brigadier Fred Chijuka recently after the arrest in March of dozens of military personnel for alleged disloyalty. No matter that the present head of state, General Sani Abacha, played a leading role in three successful coups from 1983 to 1993: His implied message is that ambitious army officers will just have to wait their turn.

Recent history supports Chijuka's point: Since the majors' revolt in 1966 no armed revolt has succeeded in Nigeria and change has been effected through bloodless palace coups. A junior officer coup now has to overcome the vested interests of not only the current regime, but also a growing number of former Nigerian heads of state and retired generals who have invested much of their wealth in London or Switzerland but live in safety in Nigeria. They would not wish a radical group of officers, in the mold of Ghana's Jerry Rawlings, to take over. Furthermore, the fortress-like presidential headquarters in the new capital of Abuja—built by Germans, guarded by Israelis—has made the presidency even safer from a coup but more remote from the population than it was in the sprawling city of Lagos.

Civilian politicians will also need patience. The constitutional conference is to recommend when and how the military will transfer power. But the military appointed the constitutional conference and will vet its findings, and has no plans to quit soon despite last December's conference resolution that the regime should hand over by January 1996.

Nigeria's steady economic, social, and political decline under a succession of military dictatorships seems unstoppable now. The process of creating the transition to civilian rule could take years, even without the obstructions and cancellations that have derailed it in the past. The military elite, complacent with its huge income from oil revenues (pipeline in photo), and insulated from the hardships suffered by the population of 90 million, is unlikely to be dissuaded by international pressure, and a popular uprising seems unlikely.
The man who orchestrated that vote, Shehu Yar'Adua, is in Kirikiri maximum security prison, imprisoned under cover of a wave of arrests in March over a coup plot which the government claims to have foiled. There is no evidence of the alleged coup plot other than widespread discontent in the army. Yar'Adua was the number two in the Obasanjo military regime, which handed over to civilians in 1979, and has become the most formidable civilian politician in Nigeria. He was leading for victory in the 1992 presidential race when Babangida disqualified all the candidates in the final stage over alleged vote-rigging, but he retains a national network of supporters, a political party already in the making, and he makes no secret of his desire to become president.

The arrest a few days later of the former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, another retired general turned politician, was an even clearer warning that the Abacha regime is intolerant of critics who would hurry them out of power. Obasanjo had been trying to bridge the split between civilian political groups in southeast and southwest, a division which the Abacha regime has used to its advantage.

If Chijuka's remarks about the remote chances of a successful coup unwittingly explained why the ruling military clique feels secure, it also underlined the wider sense among Nigerians that their country is in a time warp: Though spared from Rwanda-style conflict by centralized military rule funded largely by oil wealth, they feel progress is impeded by the same self-serving ruling elite.

The Abacha regime is certainly on well-trampled ground. Abacha was the right-hand man to the previous military ruler, Ibrahim Babangida, who spent eight years on his transition to elected civilian government and then annulled the June 1993 election and tried to cling to power. Skillfully exploiting regional rivalries and alleged electoral fraud helped Babangida to delay the handover date three times before he stepped down in August. Later that year, Abacha the understudy took over the leading role, and the Yorubas now feel disenfranchised by the outcome of the crisis. Babangida's transition was claimed as meant to stop Nigerians voting by tribe, but now they even boycott on ethnic lines, as in the polling for the constitutional conference delegates, with an almost negligible turnout among Yorubas.

The political legacy of Babangida's transition is a period when it is impossible to hold a general election in which Nigerians from all over the country vote in significant numbers.

The Abacha regime's only political initiative to date, the constitutional conference in Abuja, has been denounced by critics of the military as futile in a country so prone to unconstitutional rule. But it provides a springboard for the politician who will work with the regime and will form the nucleus of future parties and of the recently appointed cabinet. Even the delegates admit that Nigeria does not need a new constitution and that their role has been to show a semblance of national unity.

The delegates were almost unanimous in their lack of sympathy for Abiola, whom they regard as a parvenu and opportunist; otherwise, the conference has failed to paper over the cracks. The two main issues—regional allocation of national wealth and the means of choosing a president—have underlined regional interests more than ever. While the Yorubas boycotted the conference, the other big southern tribe, the Ibos, are strongly represented and the minority groups stretched across the oil-producing areas of the southeast have pressed hard for a better share of the oil wealth and for one of their number to become head of state. The northern delegates, on the other hand, have fought to overturn the majority vote for a multi-million dollar women's program to help the poor—but paid for with public funds.

Even the civilian politicians in the constitutional conference and in his new cabinet are old hands at working with military regimes even though many have been deposed, arrested, or banned by army rulers. The foreign minister, Tom Ikimi, and interior minister, Babangana Kingibe, were both sacked as chairmen of the two parties in 1992 over alleged vote-rigging and Kingibe was the successful vice-presidential candidate the following year until the election result was annulled.

The process of creating political parties and holding U.S.-style elections for both legislature and executive from local council to state to federal level could take years even without obstruction, cancellations, or security problems that could derail a transition program. The crisis which toppled Babangida—the annulment of the June elections—and almost brought the country to a standstill twice in as many years has yet to be resolved. The divisions have become more entrenched since last June when Abacha arrested the winner of the 1993 poll, Moshood Abiola. Resentment in the Yoruba-speaking southwest and some other parts of the south over the annulment of their kinsman Abiola's victory lingers on and the Yorubas now feel disenfranchised by the outcome of the crisis. Babangida's transition was claimed as meant to stop Nigerians voting by tribe, but now they even boycott on ethnic lines, as in the polling for the constitutional conference delegates, with an almost negligible turnout among Yorubas.

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Paul Adams reports for The Financial Times from Lagos, Nigeria.
in favor of choosing the president by rotation between six main regions. The debate is academic unless the armed forces intend to leave government to civilian hands long enough for all six regions to have their share of top political office.

Tinkering with the constitution is another of the Abacha regime's inherited traits. Nigeria already has a constitution, promulgated in 1979 by the Obasanjo government which handed over to civilians, amended 10 years later under Babangida, but very little experience applying it. For 25 out of its 35 years since independence, Nigeria has been governed by military regimes with scant regard for the constitution. A decree by the Abacha regime last year placed itself above the law—no court can challenge its actions.

The natural enemy of this fossilized system of government would be a dynamic middle class, but years of corrupt and incompetent rule have undermined the professions and the economic power of the middle class. Education and infrastructure have declined steadily since the bubble in Nigeria's oil wealth burst in the early 1980s. The University of Ibadan was once on a par with European universities; now leading Nigerian companies do not recognize a Nigerian degree as valid entry qualification for employees under the age of 25. Low salaries have led to low professional standards: High court judges, who have official salaries of less than $100 a month and drive Mercedes limousines, have taken Abiola's Concord newspaper group to court for reporting that their cars were gifts from Babangida for helping him to annul the 1993 election. Many of the new generation of professionals see access to government contracts rather than qualifications or enterprise as the route to success.

This downward spiral has brought Nigeria to the top of the action list of the TransAfrica group, the influential lobby which represents black American opinions on Africa. This group spearheaded the anti-apartheid lobby of the U.S. government. Now that South Africa has rejected apartheid, TransAfrica regards military misrule in Nigeria as the main impediment to progress in sub-Saharan Africa. TransAfrica recently warned that it will push for sanctions against the Abacha regime unless it starts moving toward democracy, and regards the State Department's line on Nigeria as complacent.

But the external trading relations of Nigeria are quite different from South Africa's under apartheid. Political instability and declining profits in the non-oil sector have already undermined foreign investment in Nigeria, but it is hard to isolate the Nigerian economy. Much of Nigeria's wealth has been taken offshore to countries like the UK and Switzerland, while both U.S. and European oil companies have massive investments which yield high profits in Nigeria's oil fields even when the economy and society are in decline. Freezing the offshore assets of members of the regime would make government less attractive for the next generation of military officers, but would risk retaliation like the nationalization of the Shell/BP oil assets in Nigeria in the 1970s. The only punitive economic sanction which would bring down the regime as well as damage the national economy is an oil export embargo and that could not be effective without the backing of the UN Security Council, if practicable at all. The oil companies are a powerful lobby in Washington and European nations against any move toward sanctions.

The most damaging sanctions against Nigeria's economy are entirely self-imposed. Unworkable economic policies, blatant corruption, and a bad record on debt repayment have stopped almost all official loans and aid and discouraged private-sector investment. Yet the ruling elite, who have access to the billions of dollars earned from the export of nearly 2 million barrels of oil a day, are insulated from the hardship and declining living standards of most of the 90 million population.

Abacha operates a system of government that is likely to continue working for him and successive regimes like his own for some years to come, while the oil money ensures the support of the army and the professional politicians. Factors which could break this cycle of decline—an oil export embargo, a radical military coup, or a sudden change of heart by the ruling clique—are equally unlikely. Nor is Nigeria on the verge of popular uprising despite the arrest and dubious trials of government opponents like Abiola and Ken Saro-Wiwa, who campaigns for the minority Ogoni tribe in the oil-producing region.

The complacency of the ruling clique is matched by a distorted view of its place in the world, reinforced by the breaking of direct contacts with the governments of the U.S. and the UK since the annulment of the 1993 elections. Instead, Abacha receives occasional elder statesmen or special envoys like Jimmy Carter or Archbishop Desmond Tutu to plead for the release of Obasanjo or Abiola. The emergence of the East Asian economies and the mismanagement of Nigeria have made foreign governments more concerned with organized crime—especially drugs—and illegal immigration from Nigeria than long-term investment. Although the rest of the world, including Africa, has stopped looking to Nigeria for any kind of leadership on the continent, Nigeria's rulers cling to the belief that they are about to secure permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council.

Nigeria's gradual disintegration, through collapsing infrastructure and the decline of government institutions, is a real but long-term threat to the centralized state. Nigeria has been left far behind by South Africa, politically as well as economically, but the danger is that it could follow the path of Zaire: disjointed, almost ungovernable, and abandoned by the rest of the world except for a few companies interested in extracting its mineral wealth.
The Volta River Authority (VRA) has started supplying power directly to communities in the Lower Volta area which hitherto, were receiving power from the national grid through Allao-feedback arrangement from Sogakope.

A statement issued in Accra on Monday said the supply of power lowered the transmission from Abra to Soe and the supply from the VRA to the SASO.

According to the government contributin, the VRA financial debt would be $293 million.
In liberal, democratic Ghana, the independent newspapers vie to print the most lurid scandals involving government officials, in stark contrast to the bland state-owned newspapers, which cover development projects, spiced with sex stories. But what's good for the press does not apply to radio. The government is dragging its feet in approving the first independent radio, a medium far more accessible to the vast majority of Ghanaians than the printed word, and has already closed down a pirate radio station.

**By Daniel J. Sharfstein**

Last December, several hundred protesters marched through the dusty streets of Accra, singing hymns and waving brightly painted signs. After two scorching hours, they reached Parliament, where they sought to hand a petition to lawmakers. Waiting for them was a pro-government mob, sticks and stones in hand, and in a few head-cracking minutes, all that remained of the protest was the litter of torn signs. What were these people marching for, multi-party democracy? No. Ghana has one. After more than two years of constitutional rule, Ghanaians are battling over Bob Marley, Boyz II Men, and Marvin Gaye.

The protest was over the shutting down of Radio Eye, the country's first independent station, which broke the government's lock on the airwaves in mid-November. After months of being refused a license, the station started broadcasting from a secret location. For two weeks, Accra's taxis were thumping with the sounds of Radio Eye, which played R&B hits that young Ghanaians call “cool,” “funky,” and “smoothie numbers.” The plug was pulled on December 4, when police confiscated the station's equipment, starting a new chapter in the slow, awkward, but sure opening up of Ghanaian culture.

Having made the transition from military regime to republic in 1993, Ghana is one of the most liberal societies on the continent. Newsstands around Accra display dozens of papers founded over the last few years, their red, green and blue banners colorful evidence of the near-complete freedom of the print media here. But it is a different story for radio and television, which have remained under state control. In the wake of controversy over Radio Eye, the government allocated a frequency to the University of Ghana and promised more independent stations by February. A special committee on private radio broadcasting was convened in January to draw up guidelines for frequency allocation. Quietly submitted at the end of April, the committee's report proposes the formation of an independent body to oversee private radio. But it has been upstaged by an announcement that the state-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation would be leasing some of its own frequencies to private companies without any formal guidelines.

**Why is this taking so long? Kojo Yankah, the deputy minister of information, says, “It's not as easy as people think. In Africa especially, we have these religious conflicts, tribal conflicts, our democracies aren't strong—we haven't had a democracy on the continent long enough to be proud of. I just read a report on Rwanda. Different groups would use radio stations to announce ethnic slaughter. We support radio pluralism, but this has to be done carefully to avoid possible excesses.”**

But others see baser motives behind the delays. Radio Eye was the brainchild of Dr. Charles Wereko Brobey, a prominent opposition politician. While there are plenty of opposition newspapers, they reach relatively few people. Most of the rural population is illiterate, and papers hardly circulate outside the cities. But radio can open up a vastly greater audience for the opposition. “It's bound to affect the popularity of the government,” says Kwesi Yankah, a newspaper columnist and professor at the University of Ghana. “The rural areas equate the radio with truth. So if someone criticizes the government on the radio in the vernacular, it will automatically have an effect. Anything my mother hears on the radio, she says, ‘I heard it on the radio, and the radio doesn’t tell lies.’”

All this has made for lively reading in the independent newspapers. While the state-owned dailies, the Graphic and Times, print stiff stories about how Africa should not copy Western models of telecommunications and how radio pluralism is limited in India, the private weeklies—the Chronicle, Free Press, Independent Statesman, Voice, and Weekly Insight, among others—are flamboyantly covering the protest march and every court proceeding against Radio Eye, scrutinizing every official statement on the issue, and running in little boxes on the front page reminders that there should have been private radio months ago.

If the government is not trying to stifle dissent with the delays in private broadcasting, perhaps it is trying to keep the airwaves clear of the rowdy discourse that marks the private newspaper scene. While attempts to start independent radio stations have been stymied by a government licensing board, no such impediments exist for the print media. The result has been a thriving press, but one that the government hates. “Everybody thinks that they are a journalist because they can fold a sheet of paper and put a masthead or logo on it,” says one government official, who requested anonymity. “In radio, it will be the same way.”
Sometimes it is hard to believe that the state-owned papers and private papers are covering the same country. Ranging from apolitical and uncontroversial to propagandistic, news coverage in the Graphic and Times is a bland soup of seminars and trade fairs and launchings of development projects, spiced up with lurid human interest stories of sexual assault, teenage pregnancy, infant abandonment, and young men who die or go blind from drinking moonshine. The independent papers, on the other hand, are constantly reporting or recycling scandals. Their Ghana is one in which the housing minister rapes his maid, the finance minister impregnates the Canadian high commissioner, the vice president sleeps with a young woman, and the First Lady just relaxes in her fancy jacuzzi.

Relentlessly negative, the private papers seem more concerned with embarrassing the government than reporting the truth, even when many of the scandals they uncover are legitimate. “When I read about the history of the private media in the U.S., the time of yellow journalism, I think, they’re talking about us!” says Audrey Cadzepko, a columnist and lecturer in communications at the University of Ghana.

A key reason for the position the private press has staked out is that the opposition parties, which boycotted the 1992 elections, do not have seats in Parliament. Without a legitimate opposition in the government, the Fourth Estate has to fill in. But there is something more than this to the private press. Fueling its coverage is a deep hatred for the Rawlings regime, which is seen as absolutely tyrannical and hell-bent on undermining freedom of expression. The editors admit as much. “I must be honest with you,” says Kwei Pratt Jr., who runs the Weekly Insight. “I am not neutral in this battle. I am opposed to the government and all it represents.”

This “battle” mentality has produced serious investigations of hypocrisy, cronyism, and corrupt business deals and has certainly filled in many of the gaps in the state press. But it has also given editors license to stretch the truth when necessary. Referring to President Rawlings’s visit to the U.S. in early March, Kaba Blay-Amihere, editor of the Independent and president of the Ghana Journalists Association said, “I read in the Weekly Insight that there were 100 people protesting Rawlings in the U.S. It’s not true. There were about eight people. It’s a marketing strategy, to appear as anti-government as possible.” Trying to balance the coverage of the state media by any means necessary, the private press ends up not much different from the government propaganda it fights so vigorously.

Hardening the stalemate, the government has begun lashing back by charging journalists with libel and contempt. A writer for the Free Press was just jailed 30 days for branding a judge a liar and a criminal in his column, and the editor of the Chronicle may soon stand trial for his coverage of the Radio Eye march. To the writers and editors of the private papers, these government actions, along with its foot-dragging on Radio Eye, confirm their combative mission more than anything. The more the press goes after government, the more government goes after the press, and the more the press goes after the government, ad nauseam.

“As for the aggressive language, maybe it’s not all their making,” says Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu, a lawyer. “When you’re in a situation of constant confrontation—every story is denied, you are called names, every little mistake you make is blown up to discredit you—I don’t think it’s the environment that makes for passivist language or mild explanations. As the political temperature cools, changes will happen.”

Even as things seem to be heating up, there are signs that a cooling of the “political temperature” is imminent. The mechanism for this cooling will be neither the press nor the government. It will be what gives both of these institutions their authority: the people.

Regardless of what the papers say, popular sentiment is overwhelmingly in favor of radio pluralism—just ask any taxi driver—and the government will have to live up to its promise to issue guidelines and allocate frequencies. Even if the guidelines are initially strict and allocations scant, as many suspect they will be, the debate over radio will become more concrete. It will only be a matter of time before independent broadcasting has its day.

The elections in 1996 also promise change. The opposition parties have vowed to participate in the process this time around, and they are bound to have some representation in Parliament. The press will no longer have to bear the burden of opposition, and scandals may be fair game regardless of party affiliation.

As the campaign takes shape, government actions against the press will undoubtedly emerge as one of the few coherent issues for the mostly hapless opposition. For all their punch, the private papers have been unable to move from criticizing the status quo to constructing a viable alternative to it. Even the most cynical politicians in Rawlings’s camp will realize that allowing the papers to print and co-opting the issue of scandals may be fair game regardless of party affiliation.

Maybe most important of all, independent journalists are finally beginning to see the irony in their very free expressions of how oppressive the government is. Blay-Amihere, no friend of the Rawlings regime, remembers a time not long ago when private papers exclusively covered sports, the only subject that did not risk government harassment. He notes the difference today, saying, “I’ve been a journalist since 1976. I’ve worked through two military regimes and two constitutional regimes, and this is the best atmosphere. In 1989, when we started the Independent, I could wake up one day, and they’d say, you can’t print. Now they can’t do that.”
Justice—or Vengeance?

By ALAN ZAREMBO

Four years after the brutal dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam was toppled, some 46 top-ranking members of that government (with 27 in absentia) are on trial, charged with genocide, torture, and murder. If this Ethiopian version of the Nuremberg war crimes trials is conducted fairly, it could serve as a model for other countries that suffered genocide, like Rwanda. But some observers see the trials as a public relations gambit to win political points at home and abroad and obscure the Meles Zenawi regime's less than ideal human rights record.
The Islamic fundamentalist/military regime of Gen. Omar Bashir received more criticism this year for its continuing record of human rights abuses. In fact, though, many observers believe there are fewer people in detention and less torture now, because the population is completely intimidated. The government does not hesitate in using maximum force to crack down on opponents. But, privately, people say they are fed up with the fundamentalist oligarchy hoarding wealth and power while ordinary citizens can only eke out a meager living.

The new pressure on Sudan is coming from all sides—from Amnesty International, which launched a large-scale campaign in January with a report entitled "The Tears of Orphans"; from the special rapporteur, who made special mention of "alarming" abuses of women and children in a report to the UN's Human Rights Commission at the end of January; and from the London-based human rights group African Rights, which in February published a report on displaced people in northern Sudan who, driven from their homes by war and hunger, have found only discrimination and abuse in Khartoum and other cities.

The reports got predictably cursory coverage in the international press. Sudan, however, responded in predictably furious fashion—in the case of Amnesty, by banning the organization from Sudan and publishing two refutations of its charges: a 23-page government response and a rebuttal by trade unions and other supposedly independent organizations entitled, revealingly, "Crocodile Tears."

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n a prison ward called Alem Bekagne, Amharic for “I’m through with the world,” men wearing silky jogging suits, expensive sandals, and sombreros lounge in a concrete courtyard. They play cards, chess, table tennis, and Risk, the board game that sends players on a quest to rule the globe.

The inmates reminisce about their days in power, when they led tanks through the capital’s streets in revolutionary parades and killed opponents of their Marxist government.

“The government had to stop these anti-revolutionaries at any cost,” says Teka Tulu, once a dreaded security chief in Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam’s government. Hunched over a game of rummy, he is 60 now, with a white beard, and complains that the new government cut off his pension.

Sitting nearby is the former prime minister, Fikre Selassie. “I know I am in enemy hands,” he says, adjusting his Ray-Bans. “If they kill me, I don’t mind. We fought for 17 years. Now they are avenging. Most of us expect to die.”

When they are not in prison, the former officials put on dark suits and sit in court on trial for mass murder. In the most sweeping war crimes trials since those after World War II, Ethiopia’s new leaders intend to prosecute at least 2,000 members of the government they toppled in 1991.

The trials have become intensely political, with foes of the government saying they can’t possibly be fair in a court of victors. But on a continent plagued by governments that murder their own citizens, other countries are watching closely. Justice is elusive in Africa: Overthrown tyrants usually run to safety in exile.

Ethiopian leaders who fled are being tried in absentia. Mengistu lives in Zimbabwe. Prosecutors say 36 of his cadre are in the United States, 17 in Europe, 17 in Kenya, and six in Djibouti. Italian officials won’t turn over three former officials living in the country. Prosecutors, who have given lawyers on both sides more time to prepare their cases, say the trials could last years.

In the center of the round courtroom ceiling is a hammer-and-sickle emblem, a reminder of the days of the Dergue, Mengistu’s 120-member ruling body. The defendants, who face charges of genocide, torture, murder, and using famine and forced resettlement as weapons of war, are quiet except for an occasional}

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Two years after independence, Eritreans are busily rebuilding their war-ravaged former province of Ethiopia, guided by an authoritarian government that honed its self-sufficient methods during the 30-year war of independence. Some Western observers consider the administration of President Isaias Afwerki (photo) "control freaks," but it is wildly popular among most of the citizens, still in a frenzy of nationalism. For now, the formula seems to be working, but that could change when the opposition starts to organize.

In a bustling street deep in Asmara's trading district, it is easy to miss Yoel Afworki's tailor shop. A metal garage door, sealed shut with padlocks, blocks the storefront. A small, faded sign taped to the bottom of the door reads: "Closed by administration of the police."

As Jehovah's Witnesses, 24-year-old Yoel and his relatives refused to fight in Eritrea's liberation war against Ethiopia, abstained in the 1993 independence referendum, and shunned the war-battered country's mandatory national service program. "I'm not against the government. I'm against politics," Yoel explains. "I want to live with people in love and peace only. If I enter politics, I will make enemies."

He has quite a few now. In December, the government stripped citizenship from Jehovah's Witnesses. Government employees were fired. Passports were canceled. And police swept through the capital, revoking business licenses and locking up shops. Leaders say they were under pressure to do something to quell mass resentment brewing against the Witnesses. After the referendum, some patriotic Eritreans smashed their businesses.

By itself, the official crackdown on the Witnesses seems insignificant. There are probably only a couple thousand scattered among Eritrea's 3.2 million people. They are most visible on street corners in the capital, spreading their message that God is the world's only governor.

But the anti-Jehovah's Witness campaign shows a hidden side of Eritrea: a government dedicated to a Singaporean-style of control and a society so nationalistic after the 30-year war that, for now, few people mind. For most Eritreans, rebuilding roads and factories is more important than being allowed to oppose the government.

The official statement on the Witnesses says in part: "They avoided the agonies of war on conscientious grounds. Furthermore, they dissociated themselves, in body and soul, from the liberation of their country. While the population as a whole was fulfilling its duties as citizens by giving various forms of support, moral and financial, to the cause of liberation, Jehovah's Witnesses acted as disinterested spectators, oblivious to the injustices meted out to their people and their country."
Few Eritreans sympathize. Berhane Araia, a 52-year-old shop owner, was locked in jail three times under Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Ethiopian dictator, as his younger brother died fighting against. "Our people struggled, sending their blood and bones for freedom. In every house they sent their sons and daughters to war," he says. "The Jehovah's Witnesses never sent anybody. They refused to struggle for their country."

Four years after the rebel victory, the euphoria of independence—made official with a 99.8 percent "yes" vote in the 1993 referendum—still grips the country. Posters celebrating liberation crowd shop windows. The streets are festive. Though economic growth is sluggish and the government is still too poor to pay its former fighters, Eritreans are rebuilding with the same perseverance, sacrifice, and discipline they used to win the war.

The country seems an African anomaly. The average income is $140, among the lowest in the world. Yet there is thought to be little corruption. In the capital, garbage trucks stop at most homes twice a week. New red Mercedes Benz public buses cruise the streets. Crime is rare. Anybody can walk the dimly lit, palm-lined sidewalks after dark without fear. Older people scold children if they ask foreigners for money.

But while many Eritreans say a work ethic explains why few beggars roam the streets, there is a hidden reason. A few miles from the center of Asmara, 400 street people are locked up in what once was a tuberculosis quarantine center. A "TB Sanatorium Hospital" sign still marks the entrance. A 1994 U.S. Human Rights Report calls the center "ostensibly a holding facility for street beggars and a permanent shelter of the homeless and mentally ill."

Since technically no laws have been broken, no captives are ever charged or brought to trial. Some are held for as many as 14 months.

Inside are wards of people in ragged clothes, some hunched naked in the gloomy hallways. Others sit on wooden benches in dirt-floored pens. They are the same mentally ill, deformed, and decrepit people found on the streets in dozens of other African cities. Children are shipped off to the countryside or returned to parents who claim them. A staff worker told this reporter, who arrived unannounced late one afternoon, officials didn't mean for outsiders to see any of this; they refused to arrange a visit, saying the building was being renovated and that all the street people had gone home.

One Western diplomat called the new leaders "control freaks." They respond to such descriptions with disdain for foreign advice nurtured during a war. Eritreans living abroad funded the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), a guerrilla movement that smuggled books and blackboards into hideouts to teach its fighters to read. Western countries, repulsed by their Albanian-style literature, refused to help. The Soviets backed Mengistu's murderous campaign to cling to Eritrea, even if that meant destroying it.

On a recent trip to the United States, President Isaias Afwerki called his system of governance "controlled democracy." There is little open debate and no private newspapers. Although the National Assembly promises a press bill soon that will provide for mixed ownership of the media, Afwerki loathes American television. He believes the media should exist to educate, not entertain. He vows that the new constitution will allow opposition parties, as long as they are not based on ethnicity or religion. Presidential and parliamentary elections are promised by 1997.

For now, the only political party is the EPLF, renamed the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) last year in an attempt to separate the party from the government. With a "Victory for the Masses" sign above the door to their headquarters, party leaders are recruiting hundreds of thousands of members.

The party doesn't advertise its ownership of several private businesses—including a trucking company, an ocean shipping company, a public bus line, construction companies and an import company—which employ a couple thousand people, predominantly former fighters. The businesses were started during the war or from the EPLF's assets after the
Kenya Clamps Down on

Quickly and, party officials say, are meant to prod
development.

For example, the EPLF started the Red Sea Trading
Corp. with $14,000 in 1983 to ship sugar and
clothes across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia into
the towns the fighters liberated. The goods traveled
by small boats and camels. Now the company is
worth $24 million. During a cement shortage last
year, several private merchants tried to sell their
stocks at more than a 100 percent profit. Red Sea
undercut them by importing cement and selling it
for a 10 percent gain. “The mentality of traders here
is to make a tremendous profit at one time,” says
Hagos Ghebrehiwet, head of the party’s economic
division. “Some of them are mad, but we really don’t
care. If they want to try to rip off the public and get
rich at the expense of everyone else, we will make
sure that the commodities will be on the market at a
reasonable price.”

Party-owned contractors work in Eritrea’s rugged,
rural areas—places private companies won’t go—
to prevent regional imbalances. The party also enters
joint ventures with private investors. For example,
when Goitom Tesfal, an Eritrean businessman who
recently returned after many years in Germany,
needed a $400,000 rock crusher to start a road con-
struction company, he went to the party.

Does the overwhelming strength of the PFDJ hurt
the ability of opposition groups to form? Hagos
responds: “Is that our responsibility?” It is doubtful if
the government would face any serious opposition
even if other parties were allowed. Islamic fundamentalists sponsored by Sudan get little support. Some
members of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF)—the
EPLF’s rival in the 1970s—have returned from abroad
to join the 50-person constitutional commission. The
SSS cabinet is balanced between Christians and Muslims
prevent the rekindling of old hatreds.

“The EPLF has solidarity throughout the country,”
says Paulos Tesfagiorgis, a member of the constitu-
tional commission. “But how long will it continue?
Can it be like this in 10 or 15 years? What will hap-
when the opposition starts to organize?”

Now, the most serious risk to stability comes
from an unlikely group: “The biggest threat is not the
Islamic Jihad, the ELF leaders in Germany, or the

Soon after Western aid donors agreed last year
to continue their support for the government of
President Daniel arap Moi, the autocrat who has
ruled Kenya since 1978, the government stepped
up its despotic posture and has returned the
country to the abusive one-party style reminiscent
of the pre-1992 period.

In moves that have shattered any pretense of
the democratic experiment started just over
two years ago, the government has closed off
virtually all avenues for dissent and indepen-
dent political activity. In the meantime,
Kenyans helplessly watch as their country
threatens to join the host of other failed states
on the continent.

Heightened intolerance and paranoia were
displayed in early April when the government
ordered the arrest and detention of trustees of
Mwangaza Trust, the independent foundation
established last year by prominent Kenyans to
reignite the democratic engine. Paul Muite, the
outspoken and charismatic lawyer and leading
member of the opposition, and also the chair of
the trust, was among those arrested. Others
included Kiraitu Murungi, a leading Ford-Kenya
MP, Robert Shaw, an economist, and Wachira
Maina, the head of the Institute for Economic
Affairs. The arrests were made as the trustees pre-
pared for a meeting in the trust’s Westlands
offices. They were released several hours later,
without being charged.

The arrests were dramatic because so far Moi
had refrained from arresting Muite despite sev-
eral attempts in the past. Muite, regarded by
many Kenyans, including Moi himself, as a likely
successor to the presidency, has in the past used
his political acumen and extensive connections
and popularity to defy repressive government
policies. On many occasions, Moi has publicly
attacked, but stopped short of ordering his
arrest. The arrest therefore signifies an escal-
ation by the government of its terror tactics and
implicitly warns opposition figures that none of
them is untouchable. By the same token, howev-
er, the arrest raised Muite’s profile to new highs
in the public mind and underlined the fear with
which Moi regards him.

The arrests come in the wake of government
attempts to shut down independent, non-govern-
ment organizations. On January 19, the state
deregistered Mwangaza for “pursuing political
activities as opposed to being a charitable orga-
nization.” A Nairobi court has since allowed the
foundation to function pending its challenge of
the deregistration order. Moi and a coterie of
senior Kanu officials have, without proof,
attacked Muite and Mwangaza as foreign-direct-
ed and subversive. Mwangaza provoked the ire
of the government with Nuvi, the innovative pub-
lication that addressed grassroots issues in all
leahvah's Witnesses," says a high-ranking Western diplomat. "It is these fighters who need jobs." In the last two years, 40,000 soldiers have been demobilized. Some 10,000 more will follow this year, bringing the army down to 45,000. Veterans are national heroes. Children push their wheelchairs in the streets. But respect alone can't satisfy them.

In June, disabled ex-fighters at the Mai Habar rehabilitation center rallied against what they considered meager demobilization benefits. They blocked the nearby highway, hijacked several trucks, took the center's director hostage, and demanded to see the president. An Eritrean Kent State ensued when troops were called to disperse the rioters. They fired and killed three protesters. The government tried to hide what happened, but rumors spiraled until the president publicly acknowledged the incident three months later.

Problems with soldiers date back to the eve of the 1993 referendum when fighters demonstrated after the government announced they would work for free for the next two years. Some 100 were court-martialed, many slapped with jail terms of up to four years. Hundreds more demonstrators served time in old prisoner of war camps. The president later called the sentences too lenient.

Fighters still in the army live on allowances of about $25 a month. About 9,000 of the more educated fighters work for free in government jobs. Many live in camps or old barracks and work longer hours than their civilian counterparts who do get salaries. "It's no different than the lifestyle we had in the mountains, except now our families expect something from us," said Nerayo Tecemichael, 53, a former bush surgeon who runs the government relief agency. "When we were on the border 450 kilometers away, we didn't feel this pressure." Still he can't envision wide-scale revolt.

One source of tension is wealthy Eritreans who funded the war from abroad, but never risked their lives like the poor soldiers. Businessman Kidane Girmay, 43, left Eritrea in 1976 and sent money from Germany. He moved back this year to start an AIDS prevention non-governmental organization. "Sometimes I feel a bit guilty, but I shouldn't," he says. "Everybody didn't have to be a fighter. We need each other."
sure for reconciliation through an amnesty. Rwanda’s new leaders want to punish the killers—from the Hutu officials who planned the slaughter of the minority Tutsis to the peasants forced to kill their neighbors.

More than 6,000 genocide suspects have been locked in Rwandan prisons for months. The fate of an international tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania, is unclear: Rwandan leaders are resisting international attempts to ban the death penalty and try many of their own soldiers for war crimes.

Many Ethiopians are proud of conducting the trials themselves, relying mainly on the country’s 1957 penal code.

Differences over points of international law have been a source of legal debate. Defense attorneys object to the charge of genocide, which under international law includes eradication of ethnic, religious, and racial groups. Ethiopian law talks on political groups.

“No one ethnic group was singled out for extermination. There was no philosophy of ethnic supremacy,” says defense attorney Tameru Agegnehu. “Mass killings, mass executions, and wars were based on political differences, territory, and power struggle. This is much different than Nuremberg.”

But much like the Nazis on trial, the Dergue officials do not deny they killed. The Nazis argued that Hitler’s laws legalized ethnic purification. Many Mengistu officials believe they should not be punished for carrying out government proclamations on political purification.

Though admitting that some local officials abused their power, Fikre, the former prime minister, says: “We did not do any crime. All we did is what we had to do. We were working for the good of the people.”

That defense was unsuccessful at Nuremberg, where judges decided that the Nazi laws violated international law. The defense that officials were merely obeying orders also failed, though judges considered the chain of command when handing down sentences.

Like many communist governments, Mengistu’s regime kept scrupulous records. Prosecutors, who have been gathering evidence for more than two years; collected 250,000 pages of government documents, including politburo meeting minutes and signed execution orders. Some defendants listed victims on their pension applications to show allegiance to the revolution. Other evidence includes films of torture sessions, forensic evidence from mass graves, and testimony from 2,500 witnesses.

Though defense attorneys are questioning the state’s ability to pinpoint individual guilt. Their main strategy has been to attack the court itself as a wing of a government seeking revenge, not justice.

They accuse the government of human rights abuses for jailing 1,300 former officials without charge for more than three years. Many were captured by victims’ families on the street after the rebel victory. An estimated 70 percent of those in custody were officials of the kebels, neighborhood organizations empowered to kill anybody suspected of opposing Mengistu.

Defenders said prison guards have not complied with judges’ orders to let them communicate freely with their clients. Several lawyers complained they have not been allowed to collect notes from inmates, making trial preparation difficult. Tameru says he comforts his two clients by telling them: “You never gave your opponents this freedom. At least you’re alive and you’re going to appear in court.”

The price of absolute power under Mengistu was high from start to finish. The military junta that overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 started its reign by killing 59 of his government ministers. State radio announced: “It is the blood of oppressors.” The next year, prosecutors say, the junta decided to kill the emperor, strangling him in his bed and burying him under Mengistu’s office.

Last year, an Argentine forensics team dug up dozens of bodies with nooses around their necks from a mass grave on the outskirts of the capital. They are believed to have died near the end of the Dergue’s rule.

In the north in the 1980s, the government tried to eliminate support for the insurgents by poisoning wells, withholding food aid during droughts, and moving 600,000 people into resettlement camps. Some 100,000 were crushed or suffocated on buses, or died of disease once they arrived at the camps, set up under the guise of relieving population pressure in areas hit by famine.

Air force planes bombed one northern town, Haisien, for six hours one day in 1988, killing 2,600 people in the market. Legesse Asfaw, the governor of the northern province of Tigray, a man accused of ordering the bombing, refused to be interviewed in prison.

During the Red Terror, government thugs littered the capital’s streets with corpses, revolutionary messages scrawled across their shoulders. They forced relatives to pay for their bullets and sing revolutionary songs while picking up the corpses. Mourning the dead was outlawed.

Torture was institutionalized. A “No. 8,” for example, meant being hung upside-down and beaten on the soles of the feet to confess to opposing Mengistu and turn in friends. Prisoners were electrocuted, gagged with bloody socks, and burned with hot oil, then dragged on the streets after dark to die.

One by one, 25 inmates lay down in the road to be shot in the back of the neck, recalls Kiros Haddish, 34. When his turn came, he startled his executioners by shouting and running across the dark street and into the slums, where he hid.

“The mental torture is worse than beatings,” he says. “I will be cured when there is justice. The criminals have to be killed.”
Clockwise from top left: Jennifer at the TASO clinic in Kampala, Miriam Naula at the clinic in Mballe, Sylvia Kagabane with her son at the Mballe clinic, and Noerine Kaleeba.
of their grandchildren, or young girls quitting school to look after their siblings. In addition, an HIV-positive woman who becomes pregnant is likely to pass the infection on to her baby. Finally, the woman is often blamed for bringing the virus, no matter who falls sick first, and may be rejected by her husband and his family. This means that a woman with HIV risks losing all support, and may find herself disinherited and chased from her home.

The dynamism of Kaleeba and the TASO counselors forms the backbone of the organization, but it is the clients who make it so compelling. I met Sylvia Kagabane, a client, at a TASO center in Mbale, in eastern Uganda. Having split up with her first husband, she was working as a nanny in Kampala when she fell in love again. Only after marrying her second husband did she learn that he had left a wife in another part of the country, and that that woman had become sick with symptoms of AIDS. Eventually, Sylvia's employers began to suspect that she might have HIV, and they fired her.

She was already pregnant with her third child when she went to live in her husband's home village. At the same time, her husband started to mistreat her, and his family accused her of being lazy and pretending to be sick. After she gave birth and was still sick with fevers and diarrhea, she knew that her only alternative was to return to her own remote village, to live with her mother. She undertook the long journey, though she was extremely weak and had to carry her three-month-old baby on her back. Shortly thereafter, she was diagnosed with HIV and went to TASO for counseling. "TASO has done a great deal for me," Sylvia says. "It has helped me materially, with ideas, with treatment—people use me as an example now." And it's true—other TASO clients and staff told me that Sylvia was on the brink of death when she arrived, and now she provides support and hope to other women. "I'm just a great wonder," Sylvia jokes. "If you saw me in 1992, you wouldn't believe it."

At TASO centers throughout the country, women like Sylvia participate in the Women's Network, which provides support to women with HIV. The network was initially established for women to discuss a range of issues, including problems at home, their treatment by relatives, how to care for themselves and educate their children, and the attitudes of men. An income-generating component was added later to improve the members' financial situation and thus lessen their economic reliance on men. The network is also involved in educational programs in the local schools.

Jennifer is 36 years old. She lost her husband to AIDS in 1986, and became a TASO client two years later. She greeted me at a TASO clinic in Kampala and described the purpose of the network. "Some ladies are being rejected by their families. We welcome them here. We talk to them, give them assistance and counsel, so when they go back home, at least they are relieved from the stress they had." Like many of the women in the network, Jennifer's robust appearance and positive attitude have made many people doubt her illness. In fact, her neighbors have concluded that she is not actually HIV-positive: they think she just doesn't like men. Jennifer laughs when she tells this story, but her demeanor changes when she talks about what will happen to her children after she dies. It is then that the cracks in her courage are revealed, as she whispers, "I will break soon if I think about where my children will be."

Another of TASO's remarkable women is Miriam Naula, who chairs the Women's Network in Mbale and serves as the national publicity secretary. She seems somewhat thin and frail at first, older than her 30 years, but when she starts to talk, her personal strength becomes apparent. Miriam's story is not unlike many others. She suspected she might have HIV before she took the test in 1990, because the father of her child was involved with another woman who had died, apparently from AIDS.

"When I first learned, I was very worried all the time, crying all the time. With counseling, I learned to live with the problem. First of all, you have to accept that you have a problem," Naula explained. She now speaks publicly about the disease, talking to students, elders, and local government officials. "I tell others how I might have gotten the virus, how I knew, and how I've lived up to now. I encourage others to get tested and to care for other sick people in their family." In fact, Naula was among the first TASO clients in Mbale to come out publicly about her status. In those days, people didn't believe that she really had HIV. "At first, people thought that you were hired to say that you're positive. But now, they realize it's the reality."

In order for women to protect themselves against AIDS, they have to be aware of the disease and its modes of transmission. Naula encourages women to be tested so they can know which route to take: if you are negative, how to avoid infections; if you have the virus, how to live positively and avoid re-infection. Women also have to be taught how to care for others with AIDS, how to nurse the sick while protecting themselves from infection. She encourages mothers to talk to their children at home, to teach them how to avoid infection. Much of what Naula does involves sensitizing women about their rights, especially when the husband dies and his relatives try to grab the property and chase the widow out. "We encourage women to take up their responsibilities, to know their legal rights," Naula says. This includes helping women to write wills and trying to get the husbands to do the same, as well as educating women about inheritance laws.

Inheritance becomes a crucial issue for many women, since the husband's family often takes the property after he dies, especially if he left no will, leaving the widow and her children in dire straits. Although this problem touches women throughout Uganda, it presents particular difficulties when the
AIDS and its implications for their families. In his own. AIDS counselors report that some women are likely to face physical abuse merely for suggesting that their husbands use condoms, When pressed about the extent of the trend, however, Mwasame admitted that only two of the roughly 500 women clients he had seen since 1992 had actually left their husbands because they refused to consent to safe sex. However, accessing the justice system still seems remote to many Ugandan women, especially in rural areas.

There is also the issue of widow inheritance, since women can still be considered property once their dowry or bride price has been paid. In certain areas of the country, the husband's family still expects the widow to be inherited by—that is, to become another wife of—one of the husband's brothers. In traditional society, this was a way to provide for the woman and her children within the community, and many women still see this as desirable. But with the onslaught of AIDS, the dangers of this practice are becoming apparent. Jennifer experienced the family's pressure in this regard after her husband's death, but she managed to fight them off. "They said it was our custom for the brothers to take over. But I said, 'You people should learn, you should know what really killed my husband before I go with one of you.' They couldn't believe I was speaking the truth," she said. They finally gave up and left her alone.

Despite the increased activism on the AIDS issue and the reduced stigma associated with the disease, women still face serious obstacles in trying to protect themselves against AIDS. Ugandans across the board agree that if a woman suspects her husband may be HIV-positive or is simply concerned because he is involved with other women, it is exceedingly difficult for her to refuse to have sex with him. "The family tells you the basics of marriage, and it is an abomination for a woman to refuse a man," explains Maude Mugisha from Action for Development, a non-governmental women's organization. "You can't say no, even when you know it is very risky."

Of course, a woman could leave her husband and either go back to her family or try to make it on her own. AIDS counselors report that some women are making this choice, especially urban ones. Michael Mwasame works at the AIDS Information Center (AIC), a non-governmental organization that provides anonymous AIDS testing and counseling, and he encourages women to talk to their husbands about AIDS and its implications for their families. In his view, more women are beginning to negotiate sex with their husbands or boyfriends, but rural women are still likely to face physical abuse merely for suggesting that their husbands use condoms. When pressed about the extent of the trend, however, Mwasame admitted that only two of the roughly 500 women clients he had seen since 1992 had actually left their husbands because they refused to consent to safe sex.

The situation is evidently different for educated women, but there are disturbing indications that even well-informed, urban women fail to establish safer practices. Mary Grace Alwano, the director of the AIC in Kampala, is an intelligent, compassionate woman in her early 30s. She admitted that despite all the information available, some of her contemporaries are still unable to assert themselves with their husbands. "They know all the dangers, they are informed about the risks, but their husbands are so influenced by the culture and their peers." She continued, "To some extent, there has been behavioral change, but it's a gradual process. It's not consistent with the level of knowledge."

One of the most serious problems facing Uganda today is how to protect girls from infection, especially those who are lured by "sugar daddies" with economic benefits, such as payment of school fees. The incidence of AIDS in young girls under the age of 16 has skyrocketed in recent years. According to statistics released by the Ugandan ministry of health in 1993, girls between the ages of 15 and 19 have a rate of HIV infection six times higher than boys of the same age. Because of the AIDS crisis, older men seek increasingly younger girls whom they suspect are AIDS-free. As a result, the Ugandan government passed an amendment to the penal code raising the age of consent from 14 to 18. Unfortunately, the severity of the penalty—up to death—has acted as a disincentive to prosecute such cases. The law's effectiveness is also undercut by the fact that many women are already married by the age of 18. The Ugandan Law Reform Commission is currently studying the law, and will make recommendations about whether the age of consent should be raised or the penalty should be reduced.

Throughout Uganda, women are confronting the epidemic by trying to build a more independent life for themselves and their children. Some observers believe that Ugandan women are consequently being empowered. "If there is a silver lining to the pandemic, it is that women are being pushed to the wall. You are seeing the empowerment of women that wouldn't have come quickly without the specter of death," noted Holly Wise of the U.S. Agency for International Development. TASO's Noerine Kaleeba echoed this sentiment. "The storm of the epidemic will go down," she said. "But one positive aspect of the crisis for women is that it has started the process of emancipation."

But empowerment can be a threatening concept; it strikes to the heart of gender roles and societal structure, and implies a level of change that encounters great resistance. "It's a tall order," Kaleeba reflected. "We have to work together to protect each other. We have to love without destroying." Kaleeba is well aware of the challenges that remain, and soberly assesses the work that lies ahead. "There is a high level of awareness about HIV, though it has not necessarily resulted in behavioral change. But it's a beginning. How to relate that knowledge to your personal situation—that's where the work is. We have to bring the message from the poster to the bedroom."
Ironically, the plague of AIDS is having one positive effect in Uganda, where 18 percent of the adult population may be infected with HIV. It is prompting women to confront the practices that perpetuate their subservience in a male-dominated society. If a woman refuses to sleep with her husband whom she suspects of carrying the virus, she can be forced to comply, or thrown out of the home, or abandoned. Now, groups like The AIDS Support Organization, founded by Noerine Kaleeba (photo, bottom left), provide medical care, emotional support, practical and sometimes legal assistance to people with AIDS and their families. Consequently, women are becoming more independent and beginning to be emancipated.

HIV-Positively

By JANET FLEISCHMAN

Sylvia Kagabane's deep voice and dazzling smile exude confidence. She carries herself with a spirit and vigor that defy her illness. Like thousands of other Ugandan women, Sylvia is HIV-positive, yet she is determined to keep fighting. "You have to live positively," she told me. "You shouldn't sit back and wait for the time to die. By the time of my death, I will have planned for my children; they will have something to live on."

Uganda, where some 18 percent of the adult population may be infected with the virus, conjures up images of an uncontrollable AIDS epidemic, yet it is not a place of sickness and despair. Rather, Ugandans are struggling to confront the disease on multiple fronts, among them the social and economic practices that endanger women by perpetuating their subservient status. Increasingly, activists recognize that empowering women is crucial to the prevention of the spread of HIV.

Women in Uganda are made vulnerable to HIV by customs that marginalize them economically while depriving them of control over their sexual and reproductive lives. With the man usually being the family's sole breadwinner and property owner, the woman suffers serious consequences if she refuses to have sex with him, even if she suspects that he has the virus. He may leave the home, taking the family's material possessions with him; or he may eject her from the house; or he may force her to comply with his sexual demands. Social, cultural and legal norms ensure that women have few, if any, alternatives but to accede.

The continuing practice of polygamy is also an issue, since the risk of infection is increased as the husband takes on new wives, and the social stigma attached to an unmarried woman makes divorce difficult. In short, women are often compelled to remain in marriages that literally could be fatal. "People value societal attitudes, sometimes more than their own lives," says Lucy Shillingi, a counselor at The AIDS Support Organization (TASO).

TASO was founded by Noerine Kaleeba in 1987, after she lost her husband to AIDS. The organization provides medical care, emotional support, and practical assistance to people with AIDS and their families, and works to change community attitudes toward the virus. Kaleeba and TASO also strive to counter what she calls the "triple jeopardy" of women in Uganda. As she explains it, women suffer as mothers, as caregivers, and as human beings. Since women care for the sick, they bear a special burden when AIDS strikes their families. It also falls on women to look after the AIDS orphans, which leaves grandmothers taking care...
Rubber-Stamp Parliament

BY ANDREW MELDRUM

Nominally, Zimbabwe is a multi-party democracy. But President Robert Mugabe's ruling Zanu-PF party has a stranglehold on Parliament, on radio, TV, and the press, and on funding for political campaigns. In the April elections, one tiny opposition party managed to win two seats in Parliament; the rest of the opposition was shut out. Many of Mugabe's critics believe the constitution should be rewritten, charging that the 1980 document is anachronistic, ensures a one-party state, and gives scant protection to human rights and pluralism.

Zimbabwe's parliamentary elections were a foregone conclusion. Before a single vote had been cast in the April 8 and 9 elections, President Robert Mugabe's ruling party—the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF)—had already chalked up a majority of seats.

This extraordinary situation came about because 55 Zanu-PF candidates won by default when they were unopposed by opposition parties. With those 55 seats added to the 30 parliamentary seats appointed by the president, Zanu-PF had a majority of 85 in the 150-seat House of Assembly even before Zimbabweans went to the polls.

The final results of Zimbabwe's third election since independence in 1980 were even more overwhelming. Zanu-PF won 118 seats, while the opposition won just two seats.

"Such a victory is not a sign of strength of the ruling party. It is an indictment of our entire political system," charged John Makumbe, political science professor at the University of Zimbabwe. "This election underlines that Zimbabwe is a de-facto one-party state. Our constitution gives too much power to the president and the ruling party. The state has too much control over the newspapers and broadcast media. Our civil society is not strong. We have a political culture of fear so that people are afraid to oppose the ruling party."

Makumbe is one of many academics, church leaders, opposition politicians, and human rights activists who criticize the whole structure of Zimbabwe's political system. Following Zanu-PF's crushing victory, this collection of dissatisfied Zimbabwean democrats is now organizing to launch a campaign to get a new constitution.

But if Zimbabwe's elections were sewn up by Mugabe's party long before the polling stations even opened, nobody told Margaret Dongo.

Running as an independent candidate in the Harare South constituency, the petite and fiery Dongo held lively township rallies gathering hundreds of her supporters for singing, dancing, and her inimitable brand of speechifying. Mixing Shona and English, humor and anger, African tradition and inspirational Christianity, Dongo's speeches captivated her crowds of young and old.

"We like Margaret Dongo 100 percent," said Temba Matisi. "She is tackling the issues that affect us like the economy, unemployment, and poverty. We don't like sleeping members of Parliament who don't do anything and don't say anything. We don't like candidates imposed on us. We like Margaret because she stands up for democracy."

Standing amid an enthusiastic crowd of some 400 people just a week before the elections, Dongo led a rousing song called "Stand Up and Be a Hero." It was...
political rights, then they will stand up to such intimidation," said Dongo about her battle. "Zanu-PF regards me like a traitor, but I was always loyal to the party. I was only trying to help the party clean itself up. Most people from these poor areas, like Sunningdale where I live, don't say good things about the party. I had to report this criticism to those at the top so the party could try to improve its record. But instead of improving its policies, the party bigwigs attacked me."

Intimidation and attacks by bands of party faithful on Dongo's supporters continued through the campaign. When voting started, Dongo charged that hundreds of Zimbabwean army soldiers had been permitted to vote a day early in her district, and then vote again during regular polling days.

Dongo's defeat was repeated as 63 other independent and opposition candidates lost their uphill struggles against Zanu-PF. Patrick Kombayi was another former Zanu-PF leader who challenged the party. He was the first black mayor of the central city of Gweru, but the volatile Kombayi fell out of favor by the late 1980s. In the 1990 parliamentary elections, he ran an impressive campaign in Gweru against Vice President Simon Muzenda. But weeks before the voting, Kombayi was abducted from a rally, shoved in the trunk of a car, and shot. He survived, but was permanently disabled just days before the 1990 elections, the boundaries of his Gweru constituency were redrawn and Kombayi narrowly lost to Muzenda. Despite the presence of several witnesses at Kombayi's abduction, police took no action on the case for years. Finally, in 1993 two agents of the state CIO were arrested. They were found guilty of attempted murder and sentenced to jail in 1994, but were immediately pardoned by Mugabe.

Kombayi did not give up, however, and ran a lively campaign in the 1995 elections, representing the opposition Forum Party. Like all other Forum candidates, he lost.

Perhaps the strongest opposition candidates in Zimbabwe's 1995 elections were apathy and disenchantment.

"Why should I vote? It won't make any difference. Nothing will change," said Harare worker Tendai Masumbi. "The party isn't interested in our problems anymore. These days, they are only interested in lining their pockets."

Mashumbi's cynicism and disillusionment were echoed throughout the country. The sentiments were even stronger in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second city, where the country's Ndebele minority, making up about 20 percent of the population, are concentrated. Bulawayo residents loudly complain that the Harare government has ignored their needs, particularly for a secure supply of water, and has starved the surrounding Matabeleland region of southern Zimbabwe of development. Yet even in Matabeleland and Bulawayo, the opposition candidates fared as badly as the rest of the country.

The only two opposition candidates to win parliamentary seats were the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, leader of the Zanu-Ndonga party, and one of his followers, Freddie Sithole, in the Chipinge South and North districts, respectively. It was a vote of ethnic support by Zimbabwe's tiny Ndau group, which is concentrated in the far southeastern Chipinge area, along Zimbabwe's border with Mozambique. Sithole's Zanu-Ndonga put up 35 candidates throughout Zimbabwe, but they failed to win anywhere else.

Bishop Abel Muzorewa, prime minister of the short-lived Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government of 1979, led five small parties in a boycott of what he called the 'fraudulent elections, which are designed only to rubber-stamp Zanu-PF's control of the country.' Muzorewa charged that partisan state control of the electoral process and unfair press coverage did not give opposition parties a fair chance. Political wild card Edgar Tekere, once Zanu-PF's secretary-general and now the head of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement, also boycotted, telling his supporters to stay away from the "cheating game."

Not one to be left out of the act, former Rhodesian prime minister Ian Smith created a scene when he was refused permission to vote on the first day of balloting. When questioned about Smith's plight when he cast his ballot, Mugabe said that Smith must be permitted to vote. An emergency computer check showed that Smith had been erroneously entered into the computerized voters' roll as "Ian-Smith," not as "Smith, Ian." The media glare ensured that Smith would be able to vote, but his difficulty in casting his ballot highlighted the fact that voter registration was chaotic and therefore identification of voters at the polling places was often faulty. More than 100,000 voters were turned away at the polls, according to the electoral commission's own figures. Some opposition politicians charged the undeniable confusion was deliberate in order to manipulate results.

The Forum Party, which had a promising launch just two years ago, ran a listless campaign. Forum leaders charged the party lost its momentum because of infiltration by agents of the state CIO, who caused the numerous divisions and break-away groups which plagued the party last year.

"The Forum Party was launched with a great deal
of support. But then our party was infiltrated by CIO
agents who were most vociferous and argumenta-
tive," charged lawyer Ega Washington Sansole, a
Forum Party leader who lost his race for Parliament
in Bulawayo South. "These agitators caused us a
great deal of harm and splintered our party, split up
our support. Then they went over to Muzorewa and
caused his party trouble, too."

Rural voters faced intimidation by the far-reaching
party network, according to academics studying the
voting.

In general, Zimbabwe's opposition was inept, run-
ing lackluster campaigns that failed to tap the
widespread disillusionment with Mugabe's one-
party government. The parties failed to capitalize
on numerous scandals that exposed rampant govern-
ment corruption and nepotism. Certainly they
were hindered by lack of access to the state-owned
media monopoly of radio, television, and daily
newspapers, which unabashedly promoted Zanu-PF.

Another advantage for Zanu-PF was the $10 mil-
lion paid to the party from state coffers over the past
three years. Conveniently, state funding only goes to
departments that hold more than 15 parliamentary seats,
i.e., only Zanu-PF.

The numerous disadvantages that confronted the
opposition parties cannot hide the fact that the
majority of Zimbabwe's people still support
Mugabe's party. But the failure of the country's sig-
nificant dissatisfied population to win any represent-
ation shows a troubling flaw in the system.

Zimbabwe's lopsided election results galvanized
civil society groups to campaign for a new, more
democratic constitution. Stung by the mismatched
nature of the electoral contest, leading human rights
groups, church organizations, and academics vowed
to campaign for Zimbabwe's constitution to be
rewritten.

Zimbabwe's constitution was drawn up in the
smoke-filled rooms of Lancaster House in London,
and was a compromise document designed by
British diplomats to cobble over the differences
between Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front and Robert
Mugabe's Marxist guerrilla movement. Since inde-
pendence, the constitution has had 13 amendments
tacked on by the Zanu-PF-dominated Parliament.
Some of those amendments clearly eroded Zimbabwe's
protection of human rights.

Critics charge the constitution is an anachronistic
one-party state document that gives scant protection
to human rights and pluralism. Already two
influential cabinet ministers—Foreign Affairs Minis-
ter Nathan Shamuyarira and Minister of Mines Ed-
dison Zvobgo—have conceded the need for revision of
the constitution, particularly the 30 seats appointed
by the president.

"The inequity in the voting process is very obvi-
ous," said Makumbe, the political science professor.
"We need a constitutional conference, with all inter-
est in the country being represented, not just the
ruling party. We need a new constitution which
strengthens basic human rights and supports multi-
party democracy. Zimbabwe has an anachronistic
one-party state constitution that lags far behind the
constitutions of South Africa and Namibia, for ex-
ample."

Makumbe said he did not think President Mugabe
or his party would be interested in redrawing the
constitution. "The party has inculcated a culture of
fear so that nobody wants to step forward and chal-
lenge the party. Most people knew things wouldn't
change, so they weren't interested in the elections," said Makumbe. "But that is dangerous because it
gives Zanu-PF a license to mismanage and to con-
tinue with corruption and nepotism."

Makumbe says he does not believe the mass of
Zimbabweans will be motivated to directly challenge
Zanu-PF's political stranglehold until after the year
2000. "Maybe by then things will have really gotten
bad, and people will be really angry. And then, like in
Zambia and Malawi, the people will take to the
streets and say 'Enough,' and then the political
opposition will have to run to catch up."

Zimbabwe should be one of Africa's most suc-
cessful democracies. It is relatively prosperous, very
stable, and it boasts one of Africa's best-educated
populations, with an 81 percent literacy rate. At its
independence in 1980, Zimbabwe was seen as a bea-
con of hope for all of southern Africa, a place where
progress was made in having all races live together
peacefully and equitably. But now Zimbabwe has
fallen behind its neighbors and is stuck in an old-
style, one-party state model. South Africa and other
neighboring countries have new, more progressive
constitutions that give better protection to human
rights and pluralism.

"Our elections have been free, meaning relatively
free from violence, but they have not been fair
because opposition parties have not had a fair
chance," said Michel Auret, director of the Catholic
Commission for Justice and Peace. "These elections
have shown, for all to see, that we need a new con-
stitution. I've come to the conclusion that our con-
stitution is fundamentally flawed and must be
thrown out, lock, stock, and barrel. It will be no good
to try to revise it piecemeal. Let's have a constitu-
tional conference to bring together representation of
all Zimbabwe's interest groups. A constitution that
will strengthen basic human rights. The Zanu-PF
government will have to be dragged kicking and
screaming into the 21st century, but I think it is
worth the effort."

Zimbabwe's one-sided election results may be
credited with prompting effective action to organize
a constitutional conference. A concerted drive by the
country's nascent civil society for sweeping constitu-
tional change would be a dramatic boost for Zim-
babwe's democratic system.
a chimurenga (Shona for revolution) song that was a popular anthem during the war against minority rule. Dongo, herself a veteran of the Zimbabwean forces, turned the meaning of the song into one of support for her new struggle against the overpowering strength of the ruling party.

In other circumstances, Dongo's charisma, well-organized campaign, and popular support would have assured her electoral victory. But in Zimbabwe, the outspoken Dongo had the deck stacked against her and lost her Harare South constituency race. Dongo got 5,190 votes, while the winner, Vivian Mwashita, polled 6,287. Dongo was running against more than just Mwashita: She was running against the weight of the entire Zanu-PF political machine.

Dongo has an impressive record. She joined the anti-Rhodesian liberation war in 1974 when she was 14 and rose through the ranks. After independence, she improved her education and found work in President Robert Mugabe's office. Some report that Dongo was an agent of the notorious Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), but in any case she put her many talents to good use in 1990 when she was elected a member of Parliament. She continued her upward rise in Zanu-PF when she was appointed to its prestigious executive body, the central committee.

But that success within the party came to a screeching halt in 1994 when Dongo bitterly complained in Parliament about the government's lack of action to help many former freedom fighters get training for jobs, special health care, and other benefits. She also lashed out at Foreign Affairs Minister Nathan Shamuyarira and relatives of his who head a lackluster veterans' organization.

This was too much for the party and Dongo quickly became a Zanu-PF outsider. Her troubles started with the Zanu-PF primaries to win the party's nomination. Her constituency was re-drawn so that many of her supporters were moved to another area and another female ex-combatant, Mwashita, received the well-oiled party's support. Dongo complained about numerous irregularities and both she and her supporters were roughed up by party loyalists. Dongo furiously stomped out of the hall where the primaries were held and lost to Mwashita.

Not ready to give up, Dongo registered as an independent candidate and was automatically suspended from Zanu-PF for opposing a party candidate. A political dynamo, Dongo held numerous rallies, printed posters, leaflets, and tee-shirts, and campaigned door-to-door in the poor Sunningdale township where she lives. She scoffed at death threats while her supporters were attacked by Zanu-PF groups.

"If you educate your followers so they know their
New Era of Cooperation

By COLLEEN LOWE MORKA

Of all the regions on the continent, southern Africa holds out the best prospect for success—in trade, investment, political cooperation, and peace. Conflict, internal and external, is finally ceasing to be a factor in regional integration, as Namibia, South Africa, and Malawi are now democratic, and Mozambique and Angola are moving in that direction. The key to regional success will be deeper political cooperation.
From a region wracked by war and despair, southern Africa has been miraculously transformed into Africa's brightest hope for peace and prosperity.

The region, declares the African Development Bank in a recently released study on economic integration in southern Africa, "stands on the threshold of a new era."

"After years of struggle and sacrifice by all countries in the region, apartheid no longer dominates political and economic life in South Africa," notes the report, which was prepared in collaboration with the World Bank and Development Bank of Southern Africa.

"Although its effects and the inequities it has embedded will linger for a long time to come, the demise of apartheid opens up prospects unimaginable even a few years ago. The shadow of conflict and destabilization which has darkened the region for many decades is passing. New opportunities have emerged in every sector of economic activity for expanded trade and mutually beneficial exchanges of all kinds among the countries of southern Africa."

The challenge, says the report, is to seize the opportunities that this sea change has created, "before the moment passes."

In many ways, southern Africa has been preparing for this moment. Fifteen years ago, when the countries of the region joined together to form the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which aimed in part to reduce the region's dependence on South Africa, they made provision for the region's economic giant to one day become a member.

In 1992, as political changes in South Africa made it clear that this day was drawing near, the SADCC dropped one of its "C's" by transforming itself through the Windhoek Treaty into the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The treaty declared that with the independence of Namibia two years before, and changes under way in South Africa, the region was moving "out of an era of conflict and confrontation, to one of cooperation; in a climate of peace, security and stability."

These called for a framework of cooperation, SADC states declared, which included:

• deeper economic cooperation and integration on the basis of balance, equity, and mutual benefit, providing for cross-border investment and trade, and freer movement of factors of production, goods, and services across national borders.
• common economic, political, and social values and systems and strengthened regional solidarity, peace, and security.

South Africa joined SADC soon after its first democratic elections in April 1994. The decision by SADC at its annual consultative conference in Lilongwe, Malawi, earlier this year to create a sector on finance and investment, which South Africa has been asked to co-ordinate, underscored the desire by the region to put its newest member's economic muscle to the best use—and to get on with the business of economic integration.

But if the region is to truly "seize the moment," a number of challenges, requiring considerable political commitment, lie ahead.

SADC is still far from being an economic "community" as its name declares. The mass deportation from South Africa in recent weeks of "illegal aliens" from the region is a stark reminder that the great movement of people in the SADC region is far from being a reality—let alone the free movement of other factors of production.

SADC has not resolved its differences with the competing 23-member Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA) to which the majority of its members belong. And confusion over a newly created sector on political cooperation, democracy, peace and security has raised questions over just how willing member countries are to subject their national interest to the common good.

The imperatives for more meaningful cooperation are unanimously accepted. During the apartheid era, SADC generated considerable donor sympathy, raising over half of the $8 billion it required for its program of action. Most of this went into rehabilitating transport networks to ports in Tanzania, Angola, and Mozambique, which had come to a halt as a result of inefficiency and South African-sponsored destabilization.

With South Africa back in the fold, donor attitudes are hardening. Norwegian Assistant Development Cooperation Minister Asbjorn Mathieson, speaking for the Scandinavian countries which have donated over $1 billion in aid annually to southern African countries, said in Lilongwe that it was time for SADC to raise its own funds, not wait for handouts.

The Lilongwe communiqué acknowledged that one of SADC's major shortcomings "has been its inability to mobilize significant levels of the region's own resources for the implementation of its projects and programs." This underscored a key theme of the 1995 conference: how to mobilize resources through regional integration.

Recent political and economic developments in the region have laid a firm foundation for more meaningful cooperation.

Soon after the South African elections, Malawi held its first multi-party elections in decades, ending years of semi-feudal rule. Following a UN-brokered ceasefire agreement to a civil war that had dragged on nearly 15 years, Mozambique held multi-party elections in...
October, which have brought peace to the vast southeast African nation.

Botswana and Namibia, which both have strong multi-party governments, held peaceful elections toward the end of last year. Zimbabwe held its third multi-party elections since independence in 1980 in April this year. Tanzania is scheduled to hold its one-party state elections this October. Tiny Lesotho has shrugged off military rule and monarchical interventions to retain its popularly elected government.

Prospects for peace in Angola appear hopeful, following a renewed UN peace initiative to end the fighting that has divided the country since the opposition Unita refused to accept the outcome of multi-party elections two years ago. Angola, and Swaziland, which has a monarchy, along with Tanzania, are now the only three SADC countries without multi-party parliaments.

Pluralist politics have been accompanied by a strong trend toward more market-driven, transparent, and accountable forms of government. From an economic point of view, the countries of the region fall into three categories:

- South Africa and its immediate neighbors, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Namibia, which belong to the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). This provides for a free flow of goods between members, with a common external tariff, and a revenue-sharing formula for the accruing revenues.

- Although Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia have their own currencies, these are pegged to, and interchangeable with, the rand. Diamond-rich Botswana maintains its own exchange rate. Its pula currency is stronger than the rand.

- Until recently, Botswana experienced phenomenal growth in GDP, on the order of 13 percent per annum. This slowed down in the early 1990s as a result of recessionary conditions in world markets. Growth in GDP last year is estimated at just over 2 percent.

This is broadly in line with the growth rates in other SACU countries, which closely follow economic trends in South Africa. Although South Africa is experiencing growth after a decade of recession, this still falls short of target and underscores the importance of attracting foreign investment to the region.

- The former socialist and socialist-leaning countries in the region have done an about-turn, and since the mid-1980s have been implementing IMF- and World Bank-sponsored structural adjustment programs. These include: Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Of these, Zimbabwe has by far the strongest economy and private sector. Angola’s efforts at economic reform have largely been in vain because of the war; GDP growth last year was -26 percent and inflation is running at over 1,000 percent. However, with its huge oil and diamond resources, the country is potentially one of the richest in Africa.

- Malawi under Kamuzu Banda (voted out in the recent elections) purported a market philosophy. But in reality, the country was owned by three parastatals linked to the president. Malawi has been undergoing an IMF- and World Bank-sponsored SAP since 1981 and has generally registered positive growth.

All told, GDP growth rates in the SADC region over the last decade have ranged between 2-5 percent. Severe drought in Lesotho, Zimbabwe, southern Zambia, the northern part of South Africa, Botswana, southern Malawi, Namibia, central and southern Mozambique, which is likely to lead to a 3 million-ton shortage of cereal this season, is also likely to depress the growth rate this year.

But solid macroeconomic frameworks have been laid for future growth. These include: the lifting of price controls; reduction in government deficits; easing of the rigid control on money supply; a fall in inflation rates; restoration of positive interest rates; liberalization of exchange rates; trade liberalization; and privatization programs.

The draft protocol on finance and investment, prepared before South Africa took up coordination of the sector, calls for the establishment of a “common financial market” in six years, “including harmonization of key provisions with regard to central banks, the convertibility of currencies, and the establishment of a payments union.”

Privately, South African officials point out that this is a pipe dream. Despite the macroeconomic reforms in the region, these are still far from bringing the degree of uniformity that would be required for a convertible currency. SADC’s own theme document for this year concedes that, overall, budget deficits in the region stand at 8 to 15 percent of GDP—far higher than the 6 percent normally laid down by the IMF and World Bank. The result is high inflation and this shows wide fluctuation, from about 10 percent in the SACU countries, to over 1,000 percent in Angola.

South Africa itself has only just done away with its two-tier exchange rate. There is considerable discussion at the moment on the workings of SACU—the only area within SADC that enjoys a convertible currency.

South Africa is unhappy with the amount of money it has to pass out in revenues earned from the common external tariff to its neighbors. Meanwhile, countries like Botswana and Namibia, which are trying to industrialize against the tide of unfettered entry of South African-manufactured imports into their countries, want provision for protective tariffs for their infant industries. At least some of South Africa’s energies will be going toward addressing these problems in the immediate term.

Officials doing the preliminary thinking on the new SADC sector say coordination of macroeconomic policies in the SADC region is likely to take a minimum of three to five years with harmonization of policies and the final goal of convergence a considerable way off.
As a starting point, they recommend a system of multilateral surveillance, so that countries in the region keep each other informed of their macroeconomic policies.

At their own initiative, commercial banks have been establishing corresponding relations in the region which have been of considerable help to investors. An example is the recent purchase by South Africa’s Stanbic bank of the African operations of New Zealand’s Grindlays bank in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Botswana, Uganda, and Zaire.

With greater foreign exchange liberalization, cross-listings of shares on the stock exchanges of the region should increase. The African Development Bank, EC, and World Bank have been canvassing a cross-border investment initiative, which provides balance of payments support to countries willing to remove restrictions on the movement of capital, provided they meet certain macroeconomic criteria.

There was considerable discussion in Lilongwe on the desirability of new institutions to carry forward the community-building process. SADC noted that up to now, it has relied on member countries to coordinate sectors, and that the fate of these sectors has depended on the institutional capacities of the countries entrusted with the responsibility.

It was argued that as SADC moves toward closer economic integration, there may be a need to move away from the sector approach, and for the creation of more centralized regional institutions.

A lively debate took place around the issue of whether or not to establish a regional development bank. Alternative options to creating a new structure were negotiating with the African Development Bank to establish an “autonomous” branch in southern Africa, or looking into the restructuring of the South African-based Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) to serve a regional function.

Donors signaled their strong opposition to creating a new institution.

They also signified their disquiet with the continued inability of SADC and COMESA to reach an amicable agreement regarding overlapping regional organizations. A week before the SADC consultative conference, COMESA Secretary-General Bingu Wa Mutharika announced in Harare that SADC and COMESA were to hold a summit to resolve the issue of whether or not COMESA is to be split into north and south, with SADC countries belonging to a southern COMESA (and in effect pulling out of COMESA).

COMESA, which ironically is currently chaired by Malawi, took out a full-page advertisement in a Malawi newspaper to announce the summit during the SADC consultative conference. But SADC Executive Secretary Dr. Kaire Mbuende said he knew nothing of the summit. He declared that SADC stuck to the decision of heads of state at their summit in Gaborone last year to split COMESA in two.

The consultative conference also failed to agree on how to proceed with creating a new sector on political cooperation, democracy, peace, and security.

The idea of cooperation in the non-economic areas draws from the Windhoek Treaty which states that “a new southern Africa, concerned with peace and development, must find a more abiding basis for continuing political solidarity and cooperation, in order to guarantee mutual peace and security in the region; and to free resources from military to productive development activities.”

It also grew out of a felt need to find a successor mechanism to the frontline states, an informal network of southern African states that met regularly in the past over matters pertaining to South Africa and its destabilization activities in the region.

At a workshop held in Windhoek last year, academics and government officials from around the region mapped out an innovative plan to establish a committee of foreign ministers who would play a pre-emptive role in resolving conflicts in the region. They would also have overseen two sub-committees on security and policing issues, with the primary aim of reducing military expenditure, developing a peacekeeping capacity and encouraging regional cooperation in law enforcement issues.

The plan also envisaged a regional human rights commission to promote democratic practice and act as a watchdog against any abuses in the region. Finally, the workshop suggested a number of networks and institutions that would be informally linked to, but revolve around the new sector. These included a peace and democracy institute, and a SADC parliamentary forum (which had already been launched).

Although these concepts were adopted by the SADC Council of Ministers when they met last year, SADC members failed to agree which country would be allocated responsibility for this important sector when they met in Lilongwe. The issue was instead deferred to a meeting of foreign ministers in Harare in March.

The meeting in effect opted for a far more informal arrangement than what had emanated from the SADC workshop. Modeled on the frontline states concept, and based on the precepts of responding to crises rather than pre-empting them, the plan that foreign ministers will put to heads of state meeting in Johannesburg for their annual summit in August will involve meetings of heads of state to resolve crises in the region as and when these arise. The group will be chaired by heads of state on a rotating basis.

One school of thought argues that this ad hoc arrangement has already served the region well during the apartheid era and, most recently, in helping resolve political crises in Lesotho and Mozambique. Another argues that it does not provide a solid enough basis for the deeper political cooperation which is ultimately key to southern Africa’s future success.
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