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The Cunning of Conflict

Chris Allen

This issue was not planned and commissioned around a single theme, but is drawn from submitted articles (as one issue in each volume usually is). There is however one thread that links three of the main articles: the complexity of the politics of conflict in post-cold war Africa. While each of Reno, Harrison and Sesay have a distinct and different central theme, they are concerned with the ways in which actors exploit or depend upon violent conflict to sustain or promote their political positions.

Thus, Reno argues that the international financial institutions' insistence on privatising or contracting out African state functions to private firms on grounds of the promotion of efficiency and the reduction of the potential for patronage (or 'spoils') politics has produced perverse results in Sierra Leone. Here the Strasser regime, and presumably its recent successor, the Bio regime, used private firms such as Executive Outcomes and a series of mining companies, to help consolidate and centralise power. This has been achieved through their role in creating reliable sources of revenue under central control, in denying access to resources – notably diamonds, but also bureaucratic resources – to political rivals, and providing mercenary forces to combat the RUF of Foday Sankoh. 'Good governance' and civil society are undermined, not enhanced, by these activities, while conflict is if anything sustained.

Similarly, while the great bulk of literature on the civil war in Mozambique has concentrated on Renamo's external origins, its brutality and its destructiveness, Harrison shows how it has been able to exploit the impact of the war on communities and on the Frelimo government (in combination with other related but older features of Frelimo, such as its rural development strategy and authoritarianism), to its electoral advantage. Renamo has been able to play upon local divisions and resentments to create an electoral base, in ways foreshadowed in earlier commentaries by Young (1990) and Cahen (1993).

Sesay, in his article in the Liberian civil war, concentrates on the role of the ECOMOG intervention in shaping the course of conflict and negotiation since 1990. A subsidiary but significant theme, also touched on by Reno, is the functionality of conflict to almost all the parties concerned, not simply as a means to gain territorial or other advantages and thus influence the outcome of negotiation, but as an element of their political dynamic. As Stephen Ellis (1995) argues, warlordism in Liberia involves the use of armed groups to seize control not so much of territory per se, but of exploitable assets such as timber, whose sale provides the means to reproduce the loyalty of the group and to enrich the warlord. Senior officers on the 'other side' – the ECOMOG forces – behave in the same fashion, using their command positions and access to transport etc. to loot and extract resources from areas which they dominate by force. Reno sets this in a wider context:
Nigeria's military rulers find new ways of extending patronage rewards to a slimmed down elite network through exploiting commercial opportunities associated with army interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Gambia.

Studies of conflict since 1990 (see e.g. Furley 1995, Zartman 1995), while sensitive to the influence of past external intervention and conflict promotion and to the persistence of cold war attitudes (as in Angola) have tended to elaborate three themes: (a) new factors underlying local-regional conflicts, and especially warfare; (b) the intensity of conflict, and its political, social and economic destructiveness; and (c) the need for and means of conflict resolution, very largely seen in terms of international responsibilities and implementation.

Discussion of the Somali conflict, for example, has stressed the clan basis of the warring militias (while often ignoring the extent to which the clan system was politicised and transformed under Siad Barre), and the degree to which local social and political institutions were damaged or even destroyed during 1988-94, in addition to the destruction of services and the deaths arising from war, famine and the theft of land and other resources. African Rights' massive and moving account of the Rwandan massacres (now available in an enlarged second edition (African Rights, 1995b), while discussing the role of a constructed ethnic divide, lays more stress on the Habyarimana government's planning for massacre, the role of ethnic propaganda (notably by private radio stations) and the government's fear of loss of power and loss of immunity through the introduction of political reforms. Studies in the Horn have focused on the arming of local militias by governments and their opponents, especially in Sudan, and the transformation of what were once ordered and limited conflicts over access to grazing, water, land or cattle into attempts wholly to deny such access to entire communities, or even to destroy them (see, for example, African Rights' report on attacks on the Nuba in Sudan, which they characterise as genocidal (African Rights (1995a)).

The rapidly growing literature on conflict resolution in Africa is associated with expanding activity in the field by the UN, by regional organisations, and by an extraordinary variety of NGOs, new and old. They, and the literature (with a few exceptions like Macrae and Zwi) see conflict as at root dysfunctional, as an aberration, even when in part it arises from resistance to human rights abuses or intervention, or defence against violent attack. There is a parallel here between this narrow conception of conflict and the treatment of all but formally democratic regimes, or of non-market and especially socialist economic strategies, as aberrations: the important thing is to promote - at all costs - peace, multi-party competitive electoral systems, and neo-liberal economic policies. There is therefore a tendency to avoid seeing conflict as a part of the political process, either as struggle or - no less commonly now - as an essential element within an organisation's or a regime's political dynamic. Thus it may be mistaken to view the Sudanese government, or Unita in Angola, as necessarily having more to gain from external mediation and a negotiated settlement than it has from continued conflict.

To see conflict in this fashion not only forces one to reconsider the validity of much of contemporary justification for and methods of conflict prevention, mediation and resolution, and of their imposed character, but also the stability of what has apparently been achieved. The lesson of Somalia may be less that the US and UN were ill-prepared and ill-informed, or that they adopted the wrong strategies etc., but that local resolutions have been achieved not through their actions but in their absence, both in the north (Somaliland) and more recently in parts of the south.
Editor's Note
An unfortunate error crept into the editorial for issue 66, for which the Managing Editors wish to apologise. The substantial role in planning and creating that issue of a non-member of the Editorial Working Group, Gloria Thomas-Emeagwali, was left unrecognised; she should of course have been included in the editorial credits, with Alfred Zack-Williams and Giles Mohan. This editorial, however, is solely the responsibility of Chris Allen.

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Ironies of Post-cold War Structural Adjustment in Sierra Leone

William Reno

Africa's creditors stress 'capacity building' measures to strengthen bureaucratic effectiveness to reverse economic and political decline (Dia, 1993). World Bank officials point to the East Asian example of success at using government policies and institutions to promote 'market friendly' growth policies insulated from the pressures of clients demanding payouts as a positive example for Africa (World Bank, 1993a). Analysts recognise, however, that decades of patron-client politics and intractable rent-seeking (the use of state resources for personal gain) behaviour among state officials limits short-term prospects for increasing revenue collection. With little internal financing for market boosting policies, World Bank programmes prescribe extensive civil service layoffs. Subsequent reductions in unproductive expenditures will reduce corruption, balance national budgets and remove obstacles to private market growth. Economic growth will in turn produce a class of entrepreneurs to demand more policies and slimmed down bureaucracies to enhance economic efficiency. This 'growth coalition' will identify their interests with those of cost-effective technocratic administrators (World Bank, 1994a:10-3).

Meanwhile, reform programmes stress the role of foreign investment in generating reliable, politically insulated revenues, especially where domestic public and private investment is limited. A recent World Bank report recommends privatisation and commercialisation of customary state activities where scarce revenues and political entanglements make technocratic reform unlikely (World Bank, 1994b:22-51). It argues the advantages of private contractors taking direct responsibility for state services, especially in public works and utilities that are crucial to attracting more foreign investors and supporting local entrepreneurs.

Sierra Leone's recent World Bank agreements resemble other African government-creditor arrangements in which state services are to be taken over by private commercial operators (Sierra Leone, 1995). Sierra Leones multilateral lenders, led by the World Bank, propose that private operators be found to run state services for a profit. A strong profit motive will encourage them to become vigorous collectors of fees and taxes in contrast to corrupt civil service employees under the influence of powerful interests. Services rendered in this fashion will thus be politically immune from patronage politics. Meanwhile, civil service employment can be more safely pruned in agencies that are no longer needed to perform crucial functions (Kessides, 1993).

But World Bank-sponsored reforms in Sierra Leone in the 1990s have produced outcomes contrary to the goals of building bureaucratic efficiency. Foreign investors
and contractors did efficiently perform state functions formerly reserved for corrupt bureaucracies. Creditors and rulers benefited from more predictable revenues. Rulers, however, used foreign firms to consolidate their power and fend off sudden increased threats from political rivals. Sierra Leone's rulers engaged foreign firms for profit and as partners to wage war against opponents and limit rivals' independent access to wealth and weapons.

The Sierra Leone case illustrates how the post-cold war milieu of patrimonial collapse and creditor-sponsored reform does not necessarily favour efficiency or any official commitment to development. Instead, local innovations and adaptations of 'reform' leave rulers free to destroy state agencies, to 'cleanse' them of politically threatening patrimonial hangers-on and use violence directly to extract resources from people under their control. 'Reform' in this manner destroys bureaucratic means of exercising power and provides alternate means of control that encourages hard-pressed rulers to mimic the 'warlord' logic characteristic of many of their non-state rivals. Rather than marginalising local economies from global commerce (Kaplan, 1994) or signalling 'state failure' and anarchy (Zartman, 1995), this process promotes stronger global ties between troubled patrimonial African political economies and the world economy. The adaptive strategy receives a boost from post-cold war global shifts in external resources available to weak state leaders. To the extent that the same shifts aggravate internal political crises, they provide a further incentive for rulers to innovate and experiment with new ways of exercising power.

Regime Security and Post-cold War Reform

Sierra Leone's rulers faced intense pressures to comply with creditor demands to reduce expenditures and government employment. In return, good relations with multilateral creditors brought the promise of loans and debt rescheduling, worth about $500 million since 1992, or about 80 per cent of GNP. Occupants of State House appeared to have no real option but to comply with creditor demands. As among ruling circles in other deeply creditor dependent and internally weak African states such as Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea, Sierra Leone's rulers faced a growing list of economic and political conditions for loans. Nonetheless, they have to continue appeasing creditors to get loans to buy off loyal associates and fend off internal rivals. At first glance, these developments appear to leave such ruling groups little leverage as external resources needed to manage internal threats dwindle or come with more stringent conditions (Ayoob, 1995). The end of the cold war fundamentally changed the nature of relations between patron-client politics in Africa and major powers outside Africa. Formerly, rulers could expect some external resources in return for their political support of cold war patrons (David, 1991). Global definitions of 'good citizenship' also entitled rulers to limited resources from old colonial masters and great powers. Post-cold war decreases in these resources, coupled with high costs of continuing internal patron-client politics and mounting debt leave rulers increasingly 'hemmed in' (Callaghy, 1993).

These global shifts disrupt internal patron-client networks. Rulers in states lacking effective bureaucracies, and who are surrounded by newly marginalised but still expectant clients face contradictory pressures. Layoffs of public sector employees in return for loans or creditor leniency – in the case of Zaire, for example, recent austerity plans foresee public employment dropping from 600,000 to 50,000 (LEcho, 14 December 1994) – risk creating legions of disgruntled former beneficiaries of state
largesse. Suddenly shrinking state employment creates opportunities for enterprising strongmen to find allies among the discontented job-leavers. Post-cold war growth of small arms trade in Africa increases the security threat to incumbent leaders from these marginalised groups (Klare, 1995). As the 1994 coup in Gambia demonstrated, newly marginalised clients can team up with those at the periphery of the collapsing political system. In this case, unhappy public sector employees found common cause with armed youth from the capital city's shantytowns. The global spread of illicit trade, a consequence of political changes elsewhere, has given political outsiders additional ways to collect resources free from the direction of State House.

Yet continuing to distribute state resources to supplicants promises to accelerate economic decline and further alienate foreign supporters. Even if resources are found to rebuild institutions of government, this too is an unappealing strategy once patronage networks begin to detach themselves from central control. Increasingly independent strongmen can use effective bureaucracies to challenge rulers shorn of patronage resources in the name of efficiency (Migdal, 1988). The success of Captain Valentine Strasser's April 1992 coup d'état in Sierra Leone underscores the peril of strengthening state agencies. The decision of his predecessor, Joseph Momoh, to build up army strength to counter a 1991 invasion from Liberia and the concurrent Sierra Leonean insurgency exposed his inability simultaneously to retain a grip on the state and on patron-client organisations. The shrinkage of patronage rewards, the deinstitutionalisation of civilian agencies of the state and Momoh's very limited public support stripped him of the resources he needed to balance opposing forces and impose his own control over them. Momoh's failure may have been very instructive to the man who deposed him.

Struggling to survive, Strasser tried new techniques, seized opportunities as they appeared, incorporated new social actors into his ruling coalition and reincorporated old ones on new terms. Seen in this light, bureaucratic collapse is not simply 'state collapse,' but rather a reconfiguration of political authority compatible with exogenous and internal post-cold war shifts. Ironically, creditor pressures provide an incentive for Strasser to experiment with forms of social control while intentionally destroying state agencies. The Sierra Leone case illustrates that considerable agreement exists between creditors and rulers of weak states that government institutions ought to be pruned drastically. Both desire to extract state officials and their associates from the framework of patron-client politics. Creditors regard this exercise as a revenue saving and efficiency measure since, as one local representative put it, 'it destroys bureaucracies that do not work anyway. If we give them the money for such purposes, they just waste it' (interviews with Freetown informants, 1995). Rulers view it as a means of reducing threats to their internal security. Yet the dilemma remains for the ruler: How can angry clients cut off from rewards be disciplined in the absence of significant formal state institutions, while still appeasing creditors? How can revenue be raised without the means to mobilise resources and promote development in any meaningful sense?

The key to a viable non-bureaucratic strategy lay in Momoh's, but especially Strasser's use of foreign firms and contractors as surrogates to help enforce discipline among those no longer included in patronage networks and intensifying links to external resources. Their dilemma centred on how to accumulate resources and concentrate coercive capabilities without losing control to bureaucracies or strongmen who had developed their own perspectives and pose a threat to the incumbent ruler. One option was to find other external allies to balance against strong rivals.
Foreigners have the critical feature of posing a tangible counterweight under presidential control to state bureaucracies and increasingly autonomous strongmen. More recently, the foreign firms that creditors and 'reformers' court helped Strasser freeze competition among rivals with himself at the top. Control over resources with their help was used to solidify his position as a powerbroker to the country's population.

Momoh's and Strasser's strategies illustrate how crisis managing rulers of very weak states find significant latitude to manipulate and reinterpret externally imposed rules to achieve these aims, while limiting the impact of fragmented patronage networks. Reconfigured political control raises doubts about assumptions that economic liberalisation reinforces political liberalisation (Hyden & Bratton, 1992). It also suggests that political control is pursued in spheres that others recognise as 'private' but are in fact integral to the exercise of rulers' power. Distinctions between state and society, recently fashionable in 'governance' approaches to political change in Africa become less clear. The label of autonomy is difficult to attach to nominally private firms that are integral partners in a reconfigured system of rule. This also means that the growth of 'private' businesses that are thought to limit the reach of predatory regimes in places like Zaire, Nigeria and Sudan can however extend their reach in non-bureaucratic ways.

**Manipulating Reform to Centralise Political Control**

Sierra Leone's heads of state have long understood the wide range of benefits of cooperation with foreign partners. Before he stepped down in Momoh's favour in 1986, president Siaka Stevens built a network of loyal politicians organised along commercial, especially illicit diamond mining opportunities that he financed with profits from state-run diamond mining operations that he then converted to personal use (Reno 1995, 105-12)

Lebanese traders and diamond dealers provided him with links to international markets. By the mid 1980s 'official' smuggling accounted for at least 80 per cent of the country's diamond exports, normally the country's largest source of trade income (Reno, 1988, 210). Political control in this context rested upon manipulation of trade and those involved in it rather than the development of production with support of a bureaucratic state that would be less discriminating in providing benefits. At first, foreign loans with relatively lenient conditions and even private credits arranged through Lebanese middlemen helped Stevens to weather a general economic downturn and still provide benefits to his associates and followers (World Bank, 1985).

Momoh inherited these entrenched political – commercial networks when he rose to power in 1986. He initially set out to establish himself as a magnate in the image of Stevens. But Stevens chose Momoh as a successor precisely because Momoh lacked personal control over Stevens' established political allies, their partners and their source of income. Just as Stevens stepped down in 1986, multilateral creditors stiffened performance criteria for further loans. Momoh turned to foreign collaborators, including among them two Israeli diamond mining companies, in an attempt to contest politician control of diamond resources. Bereft of easy access to foreign loans, Momoh's aim was to suffocate the increasingly autonomous diamond trading of local strongmen and make it possible to allocate mining opportunities according to his own clientelist priorities.
Momoh’s eventual failure to accomplish this task highlighted the internal vulnerabi-
ity of his regime, especially in 1988-89 as unruly strongmen resisted his efforts to
control illicit trade. Momoh’s ineffectiveness then became apparent to his associates.
The worsening economy and Momoh’s attempts to make up for lost diamond
resources through distributions of dwindling state resources to his own clients
further alienated already wary creditors. Pressure from creditors and mounting
economic problems seemed to make economic austerity and administrative reform
inescapable by the late 1980s. Creditors also balked at offering finance simply to
enlarge Momoh’s patrimonial potential, reiterating concern ‘over Sierra Leone’s
continued failure to fulfil its financial obligations to the Fund’ (IMF, 1989:27).

Creditor officials in Sierra Leone made clear their concerns that corrupt state agencies
were to blame for Momoh’s inability to sustain even minor reforms. Delegations of
high level ‘technocratic reformers’ were flown off to Ghana after 1989 to observe how
massive cuts in public sector employment, centralised command over policy and
pruned state responsibilities was boosting economic growth there. Sierra Leone’s
agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank

in 1991 stressed that loans would be contingent on State House commitments to
dismantle a public sector deemed responsible for inefficiency and unproductive
spending. To those who evaluated state agencies against their formally stated
functions, state officials did not appear to do much in Sierra Leone except waste
revenues. Social spending was in a state of collapse, standing at just 15 per cent of its
level of a decade earlier. Revenue collections had also decreased, from 30 per cent of
GNP in 1982 to about 20 per cent of a smaller 1992 GNP (Bank of Sierra Leone, 1994).
The harshness of required austerity amidst crisis seemed to indicate that Sierra
Leone’s leaders had either little leverage or little room for manoeuvre in negotiating a
reform programme that would further dismantle patronage networks and increase
the president’s internal security dilemma. Following the example of Ghana (World
Bank, 1993b:55-9), dismissals reached 15,000 personnel, or 40 per cent of total state
employment, by 1994. Seen in the context of the larger economy, this affected 30 per
cent of the country’s salaried labour force (Economist Intelligence Unit, 1994:16).

Dismissals produced an additional benefit for creditors by destroying inefficient
state-owned enterprises. Local representatives of creditors had regarded privatisation
exercises in the 1980s with suspicion, since most ‘privatised’ companies came under
the control of insiders and powerful politicians. These firms then remained dependent
upon state largesse of one sort or another. At the time, Momoh had little choice but to
provide inherited client politicians with easy access to credits in exchange for loyalty,
a major cause of serious inflation and credit scarcity for the country’s few
independent entrepreneurs. The subsequent dismantling of the public sector, however,
did not condemn Momoh’s regime. By shutting off autonomous accumula-
tion, it strengthened the hand of the president who struggled to assume a position as
principal distributor of resources. World Bank demands thus helped the president
gain a freedom of action with respect to a political class and bureaucracy that were
cutting loose from the centre and were operating independently at the expense of a
runaway official debt.

World Bank officials quickly stressed the importance of ‘regularising revenue
collections’ within this policy milieu. Accordingly, creditors supported the arrival in
1991 of a German firm, Specialist Services International (SSI) to operate ports and
collect customs and British-owned Marine Protection Services of Sierra Leone
(MPSSL) to police and collect royalties from the country’s offshore fisheries. Creditors concluded that foreign firms with few local political connections represented the best prospect of eventually clearing Sierra Leone’s debt arrears, restoring fiscal solvency and eliminating corruption. Specialist Services International and MPSSL offered Momoh the opportunity to deny subordinates an opportunity to acquire foreign exchange independently of the president’s favour, even if the foreign operations produce little revenue for local use beyond paying creditors. These arrangements also indicate the extent to which creditors are reluctant to include agencies of ‘the state’ and its corrupt officials in any project of ‘capacity building’. Creditor and debtor both share suspicions that formal state institutions promote centrifugal forces that weaken central control.

Diamond mining, at one time contributing 70 per cent of state revenues, presented Momoh and creditors with their greatest problem and potentially their greatest reward. As Momoh’s regime struggled to repair relations with creditors, local IMF officials stressed the need to find a foreign investor able to ‘regularise’ diamond mining and mineral revenue collection. Reformers proposed attracting foreign firms with the promise of exclusive mining rights to a significant portion of the diamond region. A Dallas-based firm, Sunshine Broulle, showed some interest in 1991-92, but withdrew as rebel incursions in the diamond fields grew worse. The firm made tantalising offers to provide its own security force and take on some local social service burdens (National Diamond Mining Corporation, 1990). Momoh recognised an opportunity forcibly to marginalise his political rivals and redirect foreign exchange away from them without fielding a politically vulnerable and costly security force of his own.

Sierra Leone’s creditors sought a diamond mining company to accomplish in diamond mining areas what US-owned Sierra Rutile was doing around its titanium ore mine. Sierra Rutile controls a 224 square mile concession. Until rebel attacks disrupted mining in 1995, it was a major source of foreign exchange for debt service. The company provided additional social services for families living in the concession area. Thus released from any obligation to use state agencies to raise tax revenue or provide social services, Momoh could still benefit from the foreign firm’s success at accumulating wealth. Equally important, he could deny resources to his rivals and devote more of his energies and meagre resources to battling his political enemies.

The collapse of the Sunshine Broulle deal contributed to Momoh’s rising security threat, however. As the rebel war intensified and unruly clients, including army commanders, continued to divert state resources, troops went unpaid. Allegations circulated in Freetown that individual commanders mined diamonds with army machinery and were using pay meant for soldiers to finance their operations. The allure of diamond wealth, the scarcity of state resources for patronage rewards and Momoh’s inability to control strongmen created a situation in which the country’s patronage networks were dividing into distinct rival factions as in neighbouring Liberia. Like Liberia’s civil war, the collapse of a creaky patronage system spun off independent operators whose political and financial appetites could no longer be satisfied at the centre. Politicians and military commanders increasingly resembled warlords, using their own control of violence to accumulate resources and reward their own followers.

Momoh’s experiment was cut short when the unpaid 27 year-old Captain Strasser and his comrades deposed Momoh in April 1992. This coup demonstrated the risk of maintaining a bureaucratic organisation that allowed individuals enough autonomy
to build their own followings. Upon assuming control of State House, however, Strasser found himself facing the same pressures that confronted Momoh. Meanwhile, rebel attacks spread. By 1993, rebels and military units that collaborated with rebels occupied much of the eastern third of the country. They controlled the country’s primary source of mineral and agricultural exports and by 1995 they threatened Freetown itself.

Centralising Control though Privatising War

Strasser continued Momoh’s strategy of fighting rebels with state military force. But as enlistment crept up to 14,000, at least triple pre-war figures, the revenue crunch, officer indiscipline and soldier defections continued to hobble the fighting effort. The institutional approach contributed to Strasser’s more menacing internal security situation. Already half of state revenues were devoted to the war effort. Yet it was too risky to alienate creditors by shifting all available revenues to the war effort at the expense of debt service obligations; past cooperation had translated into Paris Club debt reductions and subsequent multilateral and bilateral assistance. A recent account estimates that US food assistance benefited a third of the country in 1994, further releasing Strasser from the need to build effective bureaucracies to provide social services (Shiner, 1994). European Community grants were rebuilding power generating capability in Freetown. More assistance was promised to help with resettling refugees – about a third of the country’s population – uprooted by the war.

DeBeers’ interest in a diamond mining concession offered Strasser a chance to improve upon his predecessor’s strategy. Like Momoh, Strasser had compelling internal security reasons to remove interlopers from the diamond fields. The pressures he faced, however, were more intense, namely the occupation of mining areas by rebels, many of whom include miners who considered themselves exploited under old politician-run operations and disobedient strongmen. Some strongmen, including army commanders, refashioned themselves as ‘warlords’, leading youthful miners, rebels and soldiers (who, when collaborating with rebels, are known locally as sobels) in independent mining operations. The political unreliability of the army made a conventional state institutional strategy of regaining control unappealing. DeBeers also required assurances that independent operators would not poach local diamonds and disrupt its own operations, a condition that Strasser’s state agencies could not fulfil. At the same time, the company needed a juridically recognised interlocutor capable of respecting its contract rights in mining areas. Accordingly, foreign firms could use state sovereignty to gain preferred access to resources and evade regulations elsewhere. Strasser’s regime could share the benefits of partner firms commercial success while maintaining the outward appearance of international standards of sovereignty.

Strasser’s innovation lay in extending collaboration with foreign firms to include military combat. As with efforts to re-centralise accumulation, foreigners proved useful as reliable collaborators against internal rivals. Strasser’s first opportunity appeared among about 800 Nigerian troops to help battle rebel forces. Ties with these forces were solidified with the ‘privatisation’ of several agricultural and logging operations in the south and east of the country under Momoh, again denying autonomous sources of accumulation to local rivals and potential rivals in that sector of the economy. Finances and domestic politics in both countries, however, limited Nigerian troop deployment. Experiences in Liberia also indicate that Nigerian commanders extend their commercial dealings to contending factions and stake out their own commercial turf (Ellis, 1995).
Strasser's best hope lay in hiring reliable outsiders to support him in his war with foreign-based rebels and internal rivals. A precedent for this already existed in arrangements with Sierra Rutile to police its own concession area, by 1994 the country's largest source of foreign exchange under State House control. Sierra Rutile showed the way further when it hired Frontline Security Services to take direct responsibility for protecting its lease area. Accordingly, Strasser's government hired another British firm in late 1994, Gurkha Security Guards, Ltd. to help regain control over economically viable parts of the country. Freetown street rumour identifies DeBeers as the bankroller of this operation, though this allegation is not proven (Thomas, 1995).

This strategy of using foreign mercenaries and advisors as a replacement for the national army has become more acceptable to outsiders in the wake of the cold war. United Nations experiences in Bosnia and Somalia make clear that crisis management will have to be centred in Freetown. Outsiders may be more tolerant of how this is accomplished, since most recognise that 'rebel' forces often turn out to be renegade military units and followers of rival politicians. They were aware that Strasser's defeat would have drawn factional fighting into Freetown itself. Were this to occur, aid organisations would find fighting among members of the old patrimonial elite coalition similar to that around Mogadishu. Creditors and interested governments ultimately supported Strasser's policy of contracting out customary core functions of the state to potentially undesirable groups. They recognised that the alternative – protracted struggle amongst competing factions – would be a less desirable outcome. Outsiders interested in fostering accumulation – creditors for debt servicing, foreign firms for profits – recognised that centralised control is critical for keeping interlopers from disrupting the flow of diamonds. Ironically, foreigners interested in reinforcing a standard of sovereign behaviour needed Strasser as an interlocutor of Sierra Leone's relations with the rest of the world, despite his divergence from classically 'statist' concerns. They preferred to negotiate debt repayment with Strasser than to have to confront illiterate young men who loot for a living and faction leaders who articulate no political programme.

Gurkha Security Guards worked within Strasser's formal state structure, coordinating their efforts with the army, virtually the only major functioning state agency. The Gurkhas' experience highlighted the extent to which the Strasser regime had become separated from and at odds with the dwindling formal institutions of the state. This became apparent when rebel forces killed the Gurkhas' American commander and Strasser's aide de campe in well-coordinated attacks. Freetown observers suspected that the attack was the result of inside information. The murder of a Ukrainian helicopter pilot inside Army Headquarters in Freetown a month later confirmed the threats to Strasser lurking in the highest reaches of the state's institutions. So dire were the implications of this murder that Strasser's spokesmen dismissed it as a suicide over a love affair gone sour.

Executive Outcomes, a Pretoria-based company, replaced the British firm in 1995. This contractor, employing South African veterans of combat in Angola and Namibia and former Rhodesian Selous Scout anti-insurgency experts, worked exclusively with their State House employer. According to informants in Freetown, unlike their Gurkha predecessors Executive Outcomes employees identified Sierra Leone Army personnel as potential enemies, and made clear their intentions to shoot army personnel encountered as they battled rebels. This policy suited State House, which identified elements of the army as hostile to Strasser's efforts to control the country's
resources. Executive Outcome’s strategy also produced quick results, delivering the main mining areas to State House control in July, 1995, clearing it of both rebels and ‘sobels’ attached to the military.

Executive Outcomes success highlighted a new commercial network. The firm’s parent corporation, the South African-based Strategic Resources, has links to Branch Mining, a diamond mining firm that moved into Sierra Leone in August 1995 in a joint venture with the Sierra Leone government. It is possible that this mining firm footed Executive Outcomes bill in expectation of future diamond mining profits. If so, this contact would be useful for exploiting DeBeers anxieties over newcomer influence in the Sierra Leone diamond industry. It is also significant that Executive Outcomes ties to this enterprise indicates that firms quasi-commercial character, an involvement in Sierra Leone that extends beyond their primary role as supposedly politically uninvolved mercenaries.

*The company may bring additional commercial benefits, paralleling its move into trucking and construction industries in the territory of another customer, the Angolan government* (Thomas, 1995; McNallen, 1995).

Strasser’s strategy also had its drawbacks. His collaboration with foreign forms forced him into a position where his partners could compel him to continue fighting rebel forces rather than moving towards negotiations, as some foreign advisors were recommending. Moves to start peace negotiations that became apparent in December 1995 made hard-line military factions that also benefited from collaborations with foreigners anxious about the threat of peace. They feared that negotiations with rebels would create political pressure to expel Executive Outcomes and the possibility that they might be excluded from lucrative deals with foreign firm-mercenary partners. In January 1996 one such hard-liner, Strasser’s second-in command Julius Maada Bio, launched a successful palace coup. Strasser was shuffled off to Guinea, but his arrangements with foreign forms continue under Bio’s administration. This latest coup shows, however, that the innovating rulers strategy attracts its own followers who are willing to act to maintain the strategy for their own profit.

**Exploiting Dependency**

Sierra Leone’s rulers have compensated for their problems of autonomy and power by intensifying their exploitation of dependence and employing conscious strategies that will secure links to the global economy. This process may be mistaken for societal ‘disengagement’ where this involves informal and illicit trade and undercuts formal bureaucratic organisation and abjures state mobilisation of society. One scholar notes that ‘societal disengagement, would, if carried out to its logical conclusion, result in the dissolution of the political community – as it has done in contemporary Somalia and Liberia’ (Rothchild, 1994:202). This interpretation presupposes what African states should be, not what African political authority actually exists. Predictions of anarchy and collapse in other very weak African states (Kaplan, 1994) are more properly understood as laments for what Africa is not rather than accurate descriptions of post-cold war reconfigurations of political authority.

The Sierra Leone case illustrates the methods of exploiting dependency. Foreign firms, mercenary troops, anxious creditors and aid organisations all have contributed resources that sustained State House without formal state agencies. A different kind of political authority has taken shape. Bounded territoriality has become less
significant where the targets of control are people and economically useful areas. Sierra Leone’s rulers and foreign partners have safely ignored economically unviable areas of the juridical state which are not likely to lodge rivals or provide political resources. Authority constructed in this way abjures conventional state definitions of a public realm and any commitment to serve it.

This process of exploitation has been determined by several factors peculiar to the Sierra Leone case. The availability of resources that are attractive to outsiders, especially diamonds, creates opportunities for Sierra Leone’s rulers to experiment with alternative means of exercising power. The country’s demography plays a role in shaping strategies, insofar as control over people and trade replaces territorial definitions of sovereignty. President Strasser’s – and now President Bios’ – capacities to influence population mobility, especially in their struggle to control illicit mining and army marauding, has contributed to their accumulation of wealth and enhanced their appeal to foreign collaborators. Finally, the capacity of societal groups to resist or negotiate has influenced the configuration of the new ruling coalition. For example, Strasser struggled to control strongmen. But to do so, he appealed to impoverished, unemployed youth who otherwise find that they have little to lose in taking up an occupation of looting or illicit mining. Accordingly, Strasser attempted to portray himself as ‘The Redeemer’, paying respects to youths’ political aspirations. Strasser’s own youth – he took power at age 27 – and his sponsorship of Freetown street art containing nationalist or other overt political themes initially contributed to his consolidation of power (Opala, 1994).

Ultimately, however, Strasser’s capacity to sustain mass appeals was undermined by material scarcity. Patronage on the cold war scale is no longer feasible. Given the imperative to suppress threats among strongmen and in state agencies, development, as most Sierra Leoneans understand it is an even more remote possibility. The key to the viability of Strasser’s strategy centred on resolving the problem of exit and resistance in a setting of scarcity where power undermines continuity and calculability. Here lies the special role of the Contractor, which marks a fundamental shift in the rules of African weak state politics. State power in the post colonial era rested upon expectations of entitlements from external patrons. Post-cold war interstate norms, creditor demands and rising internal threats push rulers of weak states to appeal to external partners who expect to make a profit in exchange for services rendered and risks incurred. This basis for collaboration intensifies exploitative relations to subjects and further removes political authority from them.

This shift, made more likely by structural adjustment programme requirements of civil service layoffs, commercialisation of state functions and preference for foreign investors, bears little resemblance to catechisms of ‘governance’. It also reduces the probability that there will develop a class of entrepreneurs whose interests will be distinct from and enforceable against those of the state. Instead, relations between state power and commerce resemble the colonial catechism of *mise en valeur*; an alien authority that supervises a society and uses labour and control over commerce to discipline subjects. Those who do not take part in accumulation on the ruler’s terms are punished. Exit of nonproductive members of society is not a serious threat. Limiting active economic evasion becomes a major preoccupation of rulers and their foreign partners, however. To the extent that control can be mapped, it traces an archipelago of economically useful people and regions. In such a setting, material bases of a ‘civil society’ capable of addressing rulers and defending producers’ interests are unlikely to develop.
This shift is not limited to Sierra Leone. It reflects a change in African states’ positions in the post-cold war global economy. A striking feature of contract firms that differentiates late twentieth century developments from charter company colonialism centres on their origins. Many collaborating firms hail from political establishments in relatively weak states that are themselves managing internal pressures and external constraints. For example, Nigeria’s military rulers find new ways of extending patronage rewards to a slimmed down elite network through exploiting commercial opportunities associated with army interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Gambia. Financial sector ‘reform’ unleashes some Nigerian banks to provide services for all sorts of trade in West Africa that larger and more established banks avoid (Reno, 1995b).

Surely Executive Outcome’s success in Sierra Leone benefits other South African enterprises interested in extending their investments in an underexploited region. As one South African political scientist noted of sub-Saharan Africa, ‘we are not going to get much from Washington, or Paris or London. This is where our future lies’ (New York Times, 6 July 1995). Local leaders may be able to exploit these newcomers’ advances. A French newsletter, for example, warns of ‘aggressive financial, industrial and commercial competition, in particular by Anglo-Saxons and Japanese, in league with South African firms’ (Lettre d’Afrique, June 1994). There are already indications that Zaire’s President Mobutu, a master at replacing bureaucratic with commercial control, attracts increasing attention from French commercial and diplomatic interests fearful of rivals’ roles in Mobutu’s political-commercial strategy of weathering the demise of his state’s formal institutions. In a very real sense, African economies do not face increasing marginalisation from the cold war’s end. They continue to be engaged in the global economy, albeit now in more unconventional and violent ways. The way in which this comes about signals the emergence of a new division of labour that reflects a hierarchy of real power capabilities among increasingly heterogeneous African states.

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Democracy in Mozambique: The Significance of Multi-party Elections

Graham Harrison

This article examines democracy as a process rather than an event, or some kind of transition from one regime to another via a period of exceptional change. In doing so, it reveals a set of often contradictory forces which seriously question the democratic content of social change in Mozambique since 1992. The key points which this article raises are: a particular model of democratisation has been, paradoxically, imposed on the masses by national and international elites, in the context of an extremely anti-democratic economic environment, dictated by the World Bank and IMF; people's views of democracy are inseparable from their economic condition and that consequently, ordinary peasants see democracy as meaningless in the face of the same old privations, or as something for others, in the context of differentiation; people have partially articulated the liberal-democratic model around a challenge towards arbitrary state authority during an unstable and fluid conjuncture in Mozambique's history; the elections threw into relief local social dynamics, based on particular experiences of the war, Frelimo, and traditional authority. With the formal policy debate receiving little attention, beyond the ubiquitous promises for more schools and hospitals, local histories became active sites of contestation, used to legitimise and delegitimise the two main parties, and to re-invent so-called traditional power. While it may be true that the elections marked a reconciliation between Dhlakama and Chissano, at the local level conflict between the parties remains at a level which provokes daily concern for many villagers, especially as the material conditions of communal village life have generally remained very harsh since the end of the war.

Mozambique's elections in October 1994 were generally seen to have been a success, favourably compared to other countries in the region (South Africa and Angola), and evoked as evidence that the UN can manage a political transition which does not collapse into chaos. But a success in what sense? Principally, positive evaluations of the elections reflect a sense of relief that they took place without violence, and that both the main parties, Frelimo and Renamo, accepted the results. A success, then, according to those universal criteria which Western institutions use to ratify all political transformations they have been involved with during the 'new world order': the elections were reasonably free and fair. The electoral process itself is, however too narrow a focus for an evaluation of the fragile democracy which, it is claimed, exists in Mozambique today. A more profound understanding would derive from an attempt to understand the social process or forces which underpinned and interacted with the elections – their preparation, the event itself, and the aftermath.
Democratisation is not a discrete event focused around an election, as some liberal political scientists would have us believe, but rather a process, in which a crucial concern is exactly what social forces and classes are driving it. I argue that democratisation is an inaccurate word to describe the changes taking place in Mozambique today, and I illustrate this by highlighting three particular facets of political change: first the international interests revolving around Mozambique's politics; second, the States' concerns in holding the elections; and finally, the dynamics of the elections in rural society. The third area receives most attention here as surely any definition of democracy requires that it enjoys some political relevance to the masses. Democracy will only be as genuine as people's willingness and capacity to defend it, and therefore it is important to understand the local social dynamics which have defined the election process in Mozambique. If these dynamics suggest a process of empowerment and collective attempts to realise an idea of the future which reflects the conditions of the majority at the present, then one can realistically talk of democracy. In their absence, declarations of democratisation in Mozambique may be premature.

An Imposed Democracy

A short review of the run-up to the creation of a multi-party system in Mozambique reveals how democratisation was, in paradoxical fashion, undemocratic; that is, undertaken in the absence of popular agitation or support, which has defined democratisation in capitalist democracies elsewhere.

The Rome Peace Talks from 8 June 1990 to 4 October 1992 marked the beginning of a direct dialogue between Renamo and Frelimo with a universally-accepted mediating presence. It was during the third round of the Rome negotiations (out of a total of 12) that Frelimo promulgated a new constitution which legalised political parties and anticipated multi-party elections. Finally, on 4 October 1992, the Rome Peace Accords were signed, marking the end of the war and giving 12, later, 24 months to prepare the country for its first multi-party elections.

Despite a genuine popular desire for a political settlement, borne out of massive exhaustion with the war (Wilson, 1994), the agreement in Rome to hold multi-party elections was far from popular. Rather, it reflected the concerns of:

- the West to introduce Renamo into the polity as part of its desire to restabilise the region in the wake of Nelson Mandela's release from prison;
- Renamo to gain access to the state after a particularly debilitating period of the war (notably after the 1992 drought); and
- Frelimo's need to normalise conditions in the face of the near-collapse of its armed forces, and under immense pressure from outside interests.

The genuine popular celebration of the signing of the Rome Peace Accords was, then, rather a celebration of an end to the war rather than an embracing of multi-partyism as a better way of running formal political life. The multi-party constitution was borne out of the elitist machinations at Rome and an international political context which saw Western governments and institutions linking aid to democratisation (Riley, 1992:541) and good governance. An ostensibly democratic political system has been imposed on Mozambican society with minimal involvement of the rural majority.
(whose access to information through newspapers and radio is extremely limited) as part of an agreement reached by the political elites of the two protagonists in the civil war ratified by the West

One might expect, then, that having reached such an agreement, that the elections themselves would be of less importance to those who crafted the peace agreement. The elections might become part of a claim to power, but not have importance *per se*, on their own terms. However, it is clear that the state, and particularly the National Elections Commission, made great efforts, despite very limited resources, to register people, set up voting booths, and generally make it possible for the vast majority to vote. This was most marked in the voter registration process, which involved distributing documents with a photograph to each citizen over 18: this eventually meant creating 6,148,842 voter’s cards (SWB, 21 November 1994).

There is further evidence of a strong motive to hold the elections which cannot be explained as part of the political machinations mentioned above. Despite a poor level of voter education (in Cabo Delgado at least), there was a strong obligation to vote emanating from local state structures. Voting at the booths was an almost solemn affair (personal communications, electoral observers in Cabo Delgado), suggesting that the elections were more a duty than a right. During conversations about the elections regarding the actual three days of voting, many comments suggested a process of control/coercion underlying the voting; for example, people voted because it was an order, to avoid the suspicion of the neighbourhood chief or to mark my presence along with everyone else.

Why, then, did the state make such efforts to get the voters out? I would suggest that any answer to this question must take on board the context of a state, severely weakened by war and economic liberalisation, trying to reassert a sufficient degree of authority or even (more positively) hegemony over Mozambican society. In a different context, Benedict Anderson identifies three institutions which galvanise the imagined community of the nation, one of which is the census. Anderson sees the census as a representation or map of the way the state perceives society (1991:163). Whilst Anderson described the distinctions between citizens within southeast Asian colonial states, the history of the Mozambican state is characterised by attempts to homogenise the population in an attempt to consolidate the nation (Cahen, 1988). In light of this, any post-war enumeration or collection of data of the national citizenry can be seen as part of the states attempt to reassert its formal jurisdiction over those within its national boundaries, enveloping those who may have spent long periods in Renamo zones or recently returned from other countries, and reasserting its authority over those already within its control.

The electoral registration represented a first attempt by the state to enumerate its citizenry (of over 18 years in age). The Minister for Justice made explicit comparisons between the two shortly after electoral registration took place (Savana, 3 June 1994). The strong imperative behind this census-type electoral registration to reassert a degree of state authority can be seen in the chapter of the electoral law dealing with electoral registration. Before setting out the terms of electoral capacity, it reads:

> *For the presidential and parliamentary elections, the electoral registration is authoritative, obligatory, and unique. All citizens of duly confirmed Mozambican nationality, and who on polling day have reached the age of eighteen years, shall be subject to electoral registration* (Articles 38 & 39, Electoral Law of Mozambique, emphasis added).
The language of the electoral law is explicit: registration is obligatory and provides the first attempt to define the Mozambican citizenry as voters after a protracted war which rendered the state ineffective in large areas and with 1.5-2 million people recently returning from neighbouring countries. There was evidence of just such a process in Cabo Delgado on the border with Tanzania where Mozambicans and Tanzanians interact through trade and family links, making the official border a fiction. Many Mozambicans were using their voter's cards as proof of citizenship (Savana, 19 August 1994).

Voting was also important, not merely as a choice of leader or an endorsement of the peace process begun in Rome in 1990, but as an attempt by the state to reintegrate, through the act of voting, a national citizenry. Voters were not merely expressing their support for a party; they were also investing some political credit in the state itself as the focus for a legitimate contestation of power.

So far, it would appear that the impetus behind the elections derived from the top, to be imposed downwards. This does not mean that the installation of a multi-party system and the elections themselves were run in dualistic fashion, with the elites carrying out formal institutional modifications mainly in urban areas, whilst most people in rural areas were minimally affected by a kind of newspaper democracy. Rather, there was a dynamic interaction between the two levels which allowed local forces and interests to shape the elections and the broader changes in the political system. Before we turn to these local dynamic, a short note on field research is required.

Fieldwork in Cabo Delgado
Research into local level socio-political change during democratisation was undertaken in two districts of Cabo Delgado during April and May 1995 (Endnote 1). The bulk of the information came from interviews with various social groups within the villages dealing with their reflections on – and evaluations of – political change, concentrating on the period from the ceasefire onwards. These interviews yielded the following themes which reveal something of the characteristics of social change within specific rural communities: different understandings of the word democracy; the ideological discourse of the elections; and continuity and change in a local context. Respondents spoke more freely under the condition of anonymity, thus, their names are not given. In what follows, reference is only made to interviews when direct quotation is made, or when the circumstances of the interview were particularly important.

Defining Democracy
The word democracy did have a relevance to many Mozambicans. It was also a fundamental reference of both the main parties. However democracy was also something unknown, in the sense that it was seen as something that could only be enjoyed through a better education or social standing.

Frelimo
In Maputo, the unanimous ratification of the new multi-party constitution was welcomed by President Chissano who saw it as a sign of the cohesion of Frelimo party ranks and the extension of a democratisation process begun in the mid-1980s (Facts
Mueda's history has always been an important part of Frelimo's history. With initially strong popular support on the Mueda plateau and some structures existing from the liberation war, Frelimo consolidated its power through the state in a more conclusive way than it did in other areas: for example, by 1978 'almost the whole population [of Cabo Delgado] was integrated into about 150 [communal] villages' (anon., 1979:4) of which 64 were located in Mueda district, compared with a national average of 20 per cent of the population being located in communal villages by 1983 (CEA, 1983:19).

Shortly after independence, Mueda became a focus of rural development in Cabo Delgado as part of Frelimo's pledge to give priority to the former liberated areas (Egero, 1990:147-9). In addition to the high levels of villagisation, Frelimo's strong presence in Mueda (and elsewhere in the province) was evident in the persistence of People's Shops, run by the state, after they had been abandoned as a disaster in every other province. In this early period (up until the early 1980s), a more political French NGO, CRIAA, and the Swedish government established large rural development programmes in Mueda with the explicit aim of consolidating Frelimo's socialist development programme via the communal villages (Levin et. al., 1990).

Furthermore, Cabo Delgado was directly affected by the war later than other provinces, Renamo having started attacks in 1984. In the south of Cabo Delgado, the war caused huge population movements, with people fleeing from Renamo or the war in general, and being moved by Frelimo away from Renamo's influence. Further to the north including Mueda, Renamo's impact was less profound. Although there were numerous attacks on the villages of the district, Renamo operated mainly in the baixa (lowlands) surrounding the Mueda plateau, making its presence felt on the plateau perhaps from 1991 (Adam, 1994:78). In sum, Cabo Delgado is the province least affected by insurgency but where villagisation has had its greatest expansion (Hall, 1990:57).

On the plateau, then, the power of the state remained intact up until the peace accords, despite sporadic Renamo attacks creeping closer towards the district headquarters (interview, Director of Commerce, Mueda, 19 April 1995). This context serves to frame the negative sense that democracy had for Frelimo officials and cadres in Mueda district headquarters and the villages close by.

Democracy was synonymous with the collapse of the single-party system which had predominated since independence. During a lift from the neighbouring district of Muidumbe to Mueda, my two colleagues (both Frelimo members, one a government employee and Frelimo political worker, or militante) had a long conversation about how democracy was destroying everything. They reminisced about the certainty and strong guidance of Samora Machel (Mozambique's first president), and how a general confusion had set in since the legalisation of political parties and the Rome Peace Accords. Many villagers also noted a decline in Frelimo's ability to order since the preparations for the elections. A clue to why democracy was seen in this light by Frelimo is revealed by an interview with Namaua's village president and long-standing party member:
... So, does the village president command a lot of respect here? Yes, but not with everyone
... Why not? Because of democracy. I tell people to carry out tasks, but they refuse, saying
'this is democracy'. It’s because of democracy (Namaua, 16 April 1995).

The existence of other parties and the need for all parties, including Frelimo, to ensure
support created the opportunity to challenge the scope of the power of Frelimo to an
extent that was unthinkable before. During the war, Renamo was feared by the people
in Mueda headquarters and in the surrounding villages. Furthermore, most villages
had militias, controlled by the village president ostensibly to protect the village, but
also to monitor the villagers. In this context of insecurity and rumours of Renamo
actions, Frelimo managed to maintain power in a way that couldn't be sustained after
the ceasefire and the electoral campaign. Militias were disbanded, and the authority
of the village president was challenged as other parties visited – often criticising these
powers – during their political meetings: freedom of expression is no longer a sign of
the enemy as in previous times (Savana, 24 March 1995). People used this context of
fluidity to challenge the scope of authority within Frelimo's structures at the base,
refusing to sweep the open areas of the villages or attend meetings. This is not a new
phenomenon, but most people said that this kind of tension over the proper extent of
state control had become sharper since the introduction of a multi-party constitution
and an end to the war.

Renamo

Renamo's understanding of democracy was very much tied up with the relation
between Frelimo and the state. For local Renamo cadres, democracy could only be
realised once the two were distinguishable from each other. In interviews with local
Renamo delegations in villages and district and provincial headquarters, the main
concern was a sense that Frelimo still controlled all branches of the state, making all
political activity difficult. Although Renamo has everything to gain from fabricating
stories of Frelimo authoritarianism, it was apparent that local village authorities – the
village president and the various organisations he controls such as the Organização de
Mulher Moçambicana and the secretários do bairro – were indistinguishable from
Frelimo and were acting in a prejudiced or hostile manner with regard to Renamo in
circumstances where, according to the multi-party model, they shouldn't have been.
For example, Renamo meetings were disrupted by Frelimo members who were
generally believed to have been organised by the party. Civilians also complained
about problems holding public political meetings because of local Frelimo
obstructionism.

One case is particularly illustrative in this regard, not least because it came not only
from local Renamo cadres but also from the president of the locality for Sambene
(incorporating three communal villages). His tasks involved those of the local state,
receiving orders and information from the district administration in Mecuí. During
the interview, the president often prefixed his replies with 'we in Frelimo'. That this
relation affected the way the local state related to Renamo was also unequivocal. The
Mozambican Assembly of the Republic passed a law on the assembly of political
parties, stating that in order to hold a public meeting a party must notify the local
authorities and the police at least four days in advance, but no official letter of
authorisation would be required (Mozambiquefile, August 1991). Renamo was refused
permission to hold a public meeting because it hadn't delivered a letter from their
headquarters in Pemba, to be approved by the administrator in Mecuí and then
submitted to the president of the locality. Similar complaints came elsewhere from
Renamo.
In the second place, Renamo spoke of democracy as synonymous with freedom. This related to the problems that Renamo faced as a political party, mentioned above (e.g. freedom of assembly or speech), but it also related to another theme. Renamo laid great emphasis on the theme of freedom of habitation, meaning that people should be able to leave the communal villages if they want to. This has been legal for some time, but is a right which Renamo raises far more than Frelimo. From the way people related Renamo political rallies in Mecufi (where villagisation was very unpopular) it was clear that this freedom was set against a very negative, but often representative, description of the communal village and can therefore be seen indirectly encouraging people to leave. This aspect of Renamo's understanding of democracy is more antagonistic than its attempts to gain the acceptance of a state less intertwined with Frelimo, because it directly challenges one of the central foundations of Frelimo's ideology, development policy, and political *modus operandi* – the communal village (Casal, 1991; Geffray, 1991). Despite the fact that communal villages have patently not succeeded in their task as the backbone of Mozambique's rural development due to Renamo attacks on them during the war and their own contradictions and antagonisms, they remain a central reference point for Frelimo cadres when talking about the future of rural development (e.g. interview, Raimundo Pachinuapa, provincial first secretary of Frelimo, 20 May 1995).

The centrality of the communal village to Frelimo's power and ideology was evident from the tension regarding people's decisions to leave. In Mecufi, many people wished to leave the communal villages and return to their old sites, dispersed inland next to their fields and perhaps orchards of coconut and cashew trees. However, despite officially stating that everyone was free to leave the communal villages, Frelimo was attempting to stop people leaving. In Zaulane they were told by a Frelimo cadre that they could leave, but that they would have to wait for a letter from the provincial government to arrive at the administrative post of Morrëbue before they did so. People were still waiting for the arrival of the letter during the field visit, suspicious about the reasons for its delay. While many people expressed a desire to leave the village, they felt insecure about actually moving because they thought that Frelimo might round them up and put them back in the village as they did before.

So, whilst Renamo resented the lack of clarity between the party and the state, Frelimo resented the way in which its *de facto* monopoly of political life was being eroded. This is reflected in a number of struggles within villages, for example over the movements of people out of communal villages, and Renamo's complaints about the role of village presidents. As these conflicts have persisted after the elections, villagers have often remarked that the elections have resolved nothing or even that things have become less stable since the elections.

**Popular Understandings of Democracy**

There were a range of popular interpretations of democracy and the elections, all of which highlight characteristics of change in contemporary Mozambique. During interviews with peasants in the villages of Mueda and Mecufi, two questions were asked in order to elicit opinions: 'What difference had democracy made to your life/life in the village', and 'what was the meaning or significance of the elections for you'?

The principal response to the question regarding the concrete impact of multi-partyism in day-to-day life was that there hadn't been any. People had a number of very grave concerns and problems such as rising prices, lack of employment, poor harvests, and little or no social provision which the elections and the new political
system had done nothing to address six to seven months after voting. Some people then went on to say that perhaps seven months isn't long enough to judge the impact of multi-partyism in economic terms. Yet it is difficult to see how these first impressions will radically change as the multi-party assembly of the Republic shows no signs of resistance to the World Bank and IMF control of the parameters of macro-economic policy.

However, many people realised that it was not that nothing had changed; rather it was that things had changed, but not for them. There was a consciousness since liberalisation that some were taking advantage of the socio-economic conditions created to begin to accumulate wealth. For example, in Mueda, many people thought that the main impact that democracy had was that it gave people the freedom to set prices (group interview, Namaua, 14 April 1995) reflected in the rural-urban terms of trade decline for peasants; some peasants hadn't enough money even to buy soap to wash their clothes.

This response was more common in Mueda than in Mecufi which is a lot nearer to Pemba, the provincial capital, commercial centre, and port. Transport costs are lower and many people (most in Zaulane) buy goods in Pemba where a degree of competition exists. In Mueda, the availability of consumer and producer goods is restricted to the trading houses in Mueda town, the old lojas do povo (people's shops), now in private hands, and mobile trading posts. This gave traders (comerciantes) a certain degree of monopsony power especially in the more remote villages. Furthermore, the underdeveloped nature of the market in Mueda encouraged high prices because of the weak bargaining position of peasant producers qua sellers of crops.

There is a lack of finance for traders from the main bank which makes buying crops from peasants and petrol difficult. The traders lack of liquidity put the peasant sellers of crops in a vulnerable position. Many recounted how they had been offered lower prices for their crops, with traders insisting that they couldn't pay more as they simply didn't have the cash. In many cases, for example, traders would only buy crops on a barter basis in exchange for cloth, which peasants would prefer not to do, but felt they had no choice. It was also generally thought by peasants who sold crops to the comerciantes that this barter hid a lower buying price for the peasants. In some cases traders would even tell peasants which style of cloth they could have in return for their crops. The vulnerability of peasants attempting to sell their crops vis-à-vis traders and shop owners was enhanced when peasants had to walk perhaps for up to four hours to get to the shop – they were hardly likely to reject an offer and return home after another four hours carrying a sack of maize on their head.

Another element in the popular understanding of 'democracy' related to the struggles going on between the two parties regarding the nature and role of the state. The lack of respect or order that Frelimo at the local level blamed on democracy was, for many in Mueda, particularly the young, the opportunity to challenge the extent of the village president's authority. People were using the new political environment as an opportunity to criticise the centralised nature of communal village power. For example, in one village during a Frelimo electoral campaign visit, the village president received all the Frelimo T-shirts which were usually doled out free of charge to onlookers at political meetings. He then distributed them to other villagers, thus reinforcing his support base of clientele. Some of those who didn't receive T-shirts and resented the arbitrary nature of the president's actions, invoked democracy
in order to challenge the extent of the presidents power. Less people would turn up to village meetings for the same reasons.

So, the term democracy did have resonance in people's world views revealing some local political changes: Frelimo's insecurity after monopolising formal political power for 20 years; Renamo's attempts to carve political space for itself to operate in, and within this fluid context, the attempts by people to challenge characteristics of the state which they found oppressive or unjust. Nevertheless, popular ideas of democracy were most marked by people's insistence of evaluating it in terms of material change: how can one talk of democracy when the struggle for life is such an immediate concern for the majority of peasants?

Contesting the Elections, Contesting History

Structural adjustment and extreme aid-dependency have resulted in a situation whereby alternative options for economic development are impossible or unthinkable in the short term. For this reason, neither major party presented any economic policy radically different from the other. Consequently, parties at the local level took to reinterpreting history in order to present themselves as the better alternative.

Colonialism

For those who actively voted for Frelimo, the principal reason they gave was that Frelimo won the country its independence. Frelimo itself laid heavy emphasis on people's collective memory during its political campaign. For example, the provincial party first secretary explained Frelimo's victory as a result of the persistence of the liberation struggle and events like the Mueda massacre in 1960. The message that one should vote for Frelimo because it liberated the country still has relevance to people, particularly in Cabo Delgado - the cradle of the revolution. During its political rallies, stress was put on the brutal and exploitative aspects of colonialism - forced labour, detentions, beatings, and racism. By highlighting these negative facets, Frelimo made the positive point that it had got rid of them through the independence war.

Renamo also evoked the colonial era, but in a way wholly different from Frelimo. In addition to de-emphasising the unequivocally unpleasant nature of colonialism, Renamo bought up themes which are less clear-cut. One such issue was the *regulo*, that is, a Portuguese-approved chief who relies on an adaptation of traditional chiefly powers to exercise functions such as labour and tax collection for the colonial state (Isaacman, 1987). In Frelimo's discourse, the *regulo* was a collaborator who sold people to the Portuguese (interview, old peasant farmer, Muinde, 8 May 1995). However, Renamo spoke of *regulos* in terms of continuity, stability, order, and self-identity or tradition, and which had a great deal of resonance in the littoral areas of Mecúfi. In fact, many people saw colonialism principally as the days of the *regulo*, so it is worth looking a little into the history of their development within these areas.

The coastal dynastic lineages expanded from 1800 onwards as a result of the ivory and slave trade. These lineages sold slaves to the merchant class on the coast, or sold directly, for example to the French India Company (Medeiros, 1984). As a result of their spatially advantageous position at the end point of the caravans which stretched inland, the coastal chieftaincies managed to accumulate some wealth and influence. Mbwiliza summarises as follows:
from the 1850s the export of commodities such as ivory, slaves ... and the importations of cloth, beads ... firearms and ironware from Europe and India were fundamental in facilitating new forms of surplus appropriations from the peasantry by an alliance of the local comprador class of [Macua] chiefs, Mwinyis, Sheiks ... and the Portuguese and Indian traders (1980:34; 1991).

Furthermore, these coastal chieftaincies also benefited from the efforts of the Portuguese to modernise their occupation from the 1950s onwards (Soares, 1993:163, 167). One aspect of the increase in economic activity during this period in the south of Cabo Delgado was an increase in the price and output of cashew exports, mainly destined for India. Those families with cashew orchards (and other tree crops, e.g. coconut, banana and lemon), prospered in the late colonial era as a result.

The Arope lineage managed to take advantage of this broad historical context constituting the main lineage in one of the field sites owning a large coconut and cashew orchard on the coast, where present-day Zaulane and contiguous Morrébue administrative post are located. Its own history illustrates how those in powerful positions in pre-colonial social structures could maintain their power during the colonial period. The lineage had its origins in Montepuez, but moved to the coast, gaining wealth from its tree crops and fishing, and eventually expanding to the extent that the hamlet where the matrilocal unit lived was more of a small village than a dispersed homestead. The Arope lineage had supplied a long line of powerful regulos during the colonial period, and their historical influence and power was something most people recognised. Another illustration of the enduring power of this lineage is that the village president was also from this lineage, as well as the local regulo (interviews, Arope ex-regulo; Zaulane village president).

It is important to take account of this local history because it shows how a powerful lineage was able to maintain influence and respect. This relates also to the history of the anti-colonial war: Frelimo did not establish zones of control in this area as it did to the north, which might have modified the role of regulos, although not in a straightforward manner (Mondlane, 1969:165).

Conversations with those old enough to have known the regulos from the coastal areas of Mecufi recalled that they were not simply perceived as the collaborators or oppressors. All interviewees (with one exception) said that the regulo had good relations with the local populations. Although they acknowledged the functions that the regulo performed for the Portuguese, there were other points which weighed in the regulos favour to the extent that they tipped the overall balance in his favour. For example, regulos sometimes hid families if they couldn't afford to pay tax, only to rediscover them later when they had raised the money. They visited families who had a sick relative or some other trouble. Furthermore, regulos were generally the former lineage chiefs or Mpewes and, when a regulo died, the lineage elders would choose another member of the family and present him to the Portuguese for approval. The colonial authorities accepted the choice made according to people's accounts. This continuity in lineage-based legitimacy allowed them to maintain their spiritual authority through the persistence of religious and magical ceremonies.

In summary, the history of the lineages which bore the regulos of the Mecufi coast shows that the chiefs-to-become-regulos held a great deal of power and wealth. Furthermore, the regulos, despite their position in the Portuguese colonial state, managed to maintain a considerable degree of legitimacy and maintain a sense of continuity with their role as Mpewe in the period before colonial rule.
This persistence of *regulo* authority and popularity is a mainstay of Renamo's support. One of their principal messages during the election campaign was that if they won the elections, they would bring back the power of the *regulo*. One Renamo delegation, when asked about the high percentage of the vote that Renamo had won in Mecífi, replied that it was due to the support that the *regulos* gave during the campaign: the *regulos* bore fruit for us in the elections (interview, Renamo delegation, Morébue, 13 May 1995). But support for Renamo was not merely a proxy vote for the *regulos*. Renamo was also using this popularity to make gains from Frelimo. This involved a romanticisation of the *regulos* past role which emphasised the unpopular aspects of Frelimo's authoritarian developmentalism. The perceived lack of respect and/or order within the communal village were juxtaposed with an image of timeless cosmic order, while the often high-handed nature of Frelimo dictat was compared with the more human, embedded nature of *regulo* authority. There is some truth in this, but it is important to be aware that Renamo consciously selected specific aspects of *regulo* power which stressed the negative aspects of most people's experience of Frelimo. After all, Renamo did not mention the *regulos* role as overseer of forced labour to construct the road from Pemba to Morrébue which involved workers carrying tonnes of soil in baskets on their head (interview, Administrator, Morébue, 11 May 1995).

Renamo's depiction of the colonial period stressed the shortcomings of Frelimo in another way by pledging to encourage the whites (meaning colonial capitalists) back to work with Mozambicans. In order to highlight the benefits of this policy, and to stress the fact that almost all Portuguese left around the time Frelimo gained power, Renamo spoke of Portuguese capitalists in Mozambique with fond reminiscence. One Renamo delegate, when asked at the end of the interview if he had anything more important to relate gave a long account of life in colonial times, as a way if illustrating how things had declined. He lamented the fact that a lighthouse nearby had stopped working, the closure of the rest house and bar, the collapse of the energy system, the closure of the creche and garage, and the fact that grass had overgrown on the landing strip and football pitch. As with the *regulos*, there was no mention of the exploitative and brutal nature of colonial capitalism: the *chibalo* (forced labour), beatings, and ugly racism that the colonists displayed (Penvenne, 1995; Isaacman, 1995)

The underlying message of these kinds of accounts was that the Portuguese provided wage employment and commerce, the lack of which is a very great concern with many villagers as agricultural terms of trade fall and prices rise. Everyone was also aware through their own experience that the majority of this employment stopped when the Portuguese fled in anticipation of a Frelimo government. So, as with the *regulos*, Renamo romanticised the colonial period, ignoring its exploitative racism, in order to stress the negative aspects of Frelimo's accession to power and to entice people to vote for Renamo – self-declared supporters of this historic fictional vision of peace, order, and wage employment.

**Independence**

The history of the independence period up to the end of the war was also contested. This struggle revolved around the communal villages and an assessment of their development. Communal villages were, and still are, a fundamental part of Frelimo's vision of the future. It is therefore vital to Frelimo to defend their past record. The benefits of living in a communal village are well-rehearsed and naturally formed a major theme of Frelimo's speeches: the provision of schools, health posts, and access to agricultural extension. This argument was made with more vigour where there had
been development of this type. In Muinde, Frelimo had installed a comprehensive hand-pump well system which gave everyone easy access to clean water. This was also the case in Zaulane, although there were fewer wells. In Mueda, since the pledge to provide water shortly after independence, many villages are still waiting for the arrival of wells to put an end to the one to four hour journey to lower land to collect water. Also important, especially for women was health provision; none of the villages I visited had a health post. Namaua was close enough to Mueda town to make visits possible, but people complained that it was costly to get there, that there were no medicines, and that there was corruption in the hospital; for example, the private selling of medicines was re-sold illicitly in the villages at a high mark-up. Zaulane neighboured the Morrébue administrative post, but the health post there was barely functioning.

Consequently, Frelimo made a more defensive argument for the communal villages. As most people had lived in them for the last ten years, the negligible social provision was a strong ‘push factor’ which had led many people to consider leaving, for example, the communal villages in Mecúfi, thus forcing on Frelimo further defensive justifications regarding the villages. Frelimo asked people how they were going to collect water, or let others know of the death of a relative. Who would give assistance if one came across great hardship, and how would people manage to connect with the market when living in small, dispersed homesteads?

Thus, Frelimo’s message was that there had been some attempt to provide social facilities, and that leaving the communal village to live in lineage-based dispersed homesteads was a less favourable option. Frelimo also mentioned the impact of the war on communal villages, but when Renamo arrived in 1984 people had already experienced ten years of broken promises, it was not a prominent theme. In none of the villages visited had Renamo destroyed any infrastructure, although one private shop had been burnt, and many roads were made inaccessible during the war. For villagers, Renamo’s impact was mainly the insecurity caused by sporadic abductions and murders in the more remote fields.

Renamo portrayed the communal villages very negatively. This was in keeping with the actual assessments of most people in the villages of Mecúfi. It was also visible in the recently abandoned huts which were particularly marked in Zaulane. The majority of people said they were forced to move to communal villages and didn’t know why Frelimo was carrying out this forced relocation. Furthermore, life within the village was generally negatively assessed. People had to walk great distances to their fields taking up large amounts of time and energy and leaving crops open to damage by animals. The militias were deeply unpopular, as was evident by the fear that some members had of being attacked after their disbanding and the fact that militias employed widespread press-ganging to recruit new members. The militia also used to force people to give taxes or collections of food and money to the village authorities often with the threat or use of force. Some families went without food because of this, and it made the Frelimo secretário very unpopular. It was also widely reported that the local Frelimo authorities used the sjambok (beating stick; see Endnote 2) as punishment, often arbitrarily. Furthermore, the agglomeration of such large numbers led to confusion and tension between families, such as the theft of crops or livestock and the fact that the village provided greater opportunities for adultery. For example, one household was deeply suspicious of its neighbours because every time everyone left their hut, property would be stolen from their yard, and they felt that only an unknown family with a good vantage point could steal in this way.
Renamo was keen to emphasise this experience, speaking of people being kept like hens in a coop or birds in a cage. It also spoke of how Frelimo had given them nothing in the communal villages, illustrating its championing the cause of freedom to leave the villages. This gave them substantial support in Mecúfi.

To summarise, Frelimo's created history centred on the real victory of independence, the destruction of colonialism, and the moderate and frustrated benefits of communal villages. Renamo, on the other hand, romanticised the colonial past, but made a great deal of political capital out of the unpopularity of the communal villages. It now follows to look at what happened after the electoral campaigns and the elections.

'The Elections Have Solved Nothing'

In the Western press, the elections were hailed as the ratification of the peace process and an illustration of strong popular support for an end to the war. We have already seen that this 'votes for peace' argument is only a partial explanation, and that part of the reason for the high turn-out and the orderly nature of the elections was a result of the states desire to re-establish its basic working unit: the nation. Furthermore, there is not necessarily a feeling of reconciliation or at least post-war stability that one would expect after a massive popular election. Rather, there is an enduring atmosphere of tension, both in Mueda and Mecúfi; some were even convinced that there was more tension and ill-feeling since the elections. For example, during the electoral campaign, many felt that they could only go to one political rally, identifying themselves as Renamo or Frelimo. After the first meeting, they would feel uneasy about going to a rally of the other party. One group of men complained that the tension between the parties pervaded many aspects of life: if one had a problem, one could either take it to Renamo or Frelimo, but whatever one did, the other party would ask why the person didn't come to them.

The phenomenon of post-electoral tension and (sometimes) conflict was most apparent in Muinde, Mecúfi. It roots were manifold. In the first place, the logistics of the elections resulted in equivocation regarding the results. The ballot boxes were sealed and taken to Pemba for counting, after which they were transported to Maputo for recounting and the checking of spoiled and blank ballots. Results were then given at the provincial level to determine how many candidates from the respective parties lists would gain seats in the Assembly of the Republic. Muinde probably returned a Renamo majority (interviews with teachers in Sambene who staffed the polling booths); in any case, there were certainly enough Renamo supporters to make the results far from a foregone conclusion. No one seemed to know that the results would be counted for the level of the province, thus allowing villages and even districts to return a Renamo majority, but still have a Frelimo result. Thus, when asked why they thought Frelimo won the elections in Cabo Delgado, people often replied by saying that they weren't sure that Frelimo had won - most people voted for Renamo. The ballot boxes went to Maputo for weeks; they were later informed that Frelimo had won.

The uncertainty over the results in Muinde led to a post-election conflict between the local (and very influential) regulo and a number of Frelimo officials, which ended in an attempt to detain the regulo and others. In an atmosphere of such uncertainty António Simbine, then provincial governor, had to come to Sambene to confirm election results.
Frelimo’s post-electoral behaviour has not ameliorated the tension surrounding the results. At the local level in Mueda and Mecúfi, Frelimo has taken its victory in the elections as a ratification of mono-partyism. For example, Frelimo members were reported to have torn down Renamo posters saying that now the election is over, they have no business being there; if Renamo wins the next elections, they can put posters back up. Renamo also has trouble holding meetings (as mentioned earlier), and verbal and physical threats are still made. In one village I visited in Mueda, a man was chased out of the village by the village president and others under the accusation that he was a Renamo sympathiser.

There are aspects of Renamo’s post-election modus operandi that exacerbate Frelimo’s hostility to it, and probably make the latter less willing to concede political space. Renamo works very closely with regulos and other religious and spiritual authorities. This results in the party being directly involved in or associated closely with social and political functions outside those associated with an opposition party. For example, regulos are attempting to re-establish their position as a council for grievances and disputes, despite many of these being within the remit of the Frelimo state. The regulo in Zaulane/Morrêbue, spoke of how people were now coming to him with their problems, rather than the village authorities. This can only increase the feeling of insecurity on behalf of the Frelimo cadres. Renamo also has an effective organic network of information collection and dissipation, via the regulos – all of whom are embedded in local history. This network has social as well as political connotations: for example, the chehe (Islamic spiritual leader) has religious and educational functions and the rainha (spirit medium) enjoys support because of her spiritual power and ability to hold rites of initiation. This makes their explicit support for Renamo very threatening for Frelimo leading one Frelimo leader to accuse Renamo of setting up its own state (interview, Frelimo delegate, Muinde, 6 May 1995).

The relationship between traditional power and Renamo is worth further comment in light of the more historical perspectives being taken regarding Mozambique's present predicament. It was clear that, despite the continuity of regulo authority mentioned earlier, regulos, in their relation with Renamo, were as modern as they were traditional. For example, one regulo had given up any functions under this title, happily working as a carpenter in Pemba until he attended a Renamo rally and had his position recreated as part of the Renamo political structures. He draws upon his lineage position and the authority of his cousin (the last active regulo), but it remains clear that he took advantage of the situation to revitalise a position which had not existed before. Another present-day regulo who was in fact forced to become a regulo after his cousin died, had been a farmer for the last 20 years, reasserting his title after being invited to meet a Renamo delegation who outlined the advantages of doing so. Furthermore, the functions of regulos as conduits of information both from and to Renamo is far from traditional.

In fact, in many regards, Renamo is more modern than traditional in its ideology. All Renamo delegations had very modernist ideas of Mozambique’s future development, often very similar to Frelimo’s, reflecting the high incidence of ex-Frelimo cadres in local-level Renamo. Perhaps the most illustrative comment in this regard was made by the substitute head of the provincial delegation. He told me of Renamo’s plans to clear up untidy street markets by relocating stalls within designated areas. If Frelimo had suggested this, one can imagine the reaction of some academics to this anti-society, modernising, and authoritarian policy.
Conclusion

Democratisation in Mozambique was in the first instance a result of a political pact between the higher levels of Frelimo and Renamo, under the powerful influence of the West. Although rural politics was not isolated from broader macro institutional change, it articulated with this change in a way that highlighted contradictions which have not been resolved by the elections, rather than a broad identity of people’s social aspirations with the new political system. Further questions also need to be addressed before one can realistically talk of democratisation in Mozambique: for example to what degree is it meaningful to democratise a state with such a minimal capacity to represent popular interests? Rather, for the Mozambican state, asserting its mere presence over the whole territory was a more pressing issue.

Perhaps I should be accused of condemning Mozambique’s transition before the flowers of a democratic civil society can bloom. I hope that this proves to be the case, but as Mozambique’s economic situation showing no real sign of sustainable recovery or escape form the recessionary effects of structural adjustment, there may prove to be little time before the states’ stability begins to wane and a state form more appropriate to the dictatorship of the international finance institutions replaces it.

Endnotes

1. The research for this article benefited greatly from the support of the Centre for African Studies and ARPAC.

2. The use of the word sjambok raises further questions, as it refers to a leather whip used in South Africa, and known in southern Mozambique. In northern Mozambique, the colonial instrument of physical punishment was commonly the palmatoria, a wooden paddle. Perhaps the explicit use of the word sjambok reflects the fact that it was imported by Frelimo after independence.

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Civil War and Collective Intervention in Liberia

Max A Sesay

In December 1989 civil war in Liberia broke out having profound implications for that country and its neighbours. The horrific conflict devastated Liberia's natural, human and material resources; large numbers of Liberian refugees poured into other West African states, and human rights abuses by all parties to the conflict were widely reported. Despite this grotesque picture, the wider international community, especially the United Nations and United States, failed to intervene to stop the conflict. It then fell on Liberia's sub-regional partners to halt her total disintegration. After an initial failure to accomplish this through diplomatic and political means, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) decided in August 1990 to intervene with a military Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

This article argues that ECOWAS intervention in Liberia represents a strange case of peacekeeping and conflict resolution. While there was still a conflict to resolve at the time of intervention in August 1990 there was no peace in Liberia to keep largely because the faction that controlled most of the country was still fighting; ECOWAS was not invited in by the parties to the conflict, although two of the parties later welcomed the proposal to intervene; and, above all, there was insufficient legal basis for an ECOWAS intervention. In view of the initial composition of ECOMOG and the varieties of regional and political interests at play, the ability of ECOMOG to remain truly neutral as a peacekeeping force was also questioned. The developmental costs of regional peacekeeping and public reaction to events in Liberia are also significant. This study concludes that this case of intervention has significant implications for the role of regional and economic organisations in the maintenance of international stability in the post-cold war era, the prospects and need for an 'African high command' and the future of ECOMOG as a permanent security mechanism in West Africa.

Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts

The end of the cold war and the proliferation of ethnic, regional and other forms of conflict have reopened the debate over the basis on which any form of intervention in the affairs of another state is permissible. The traditional position is that military intervention in the territory of another state is illegal. Such intervention was taken to mean a violation of both sovereignty and the prohibition of the use of force laid down in the UN Charter. This position lasted as long as the East and West confronted each other during the cold war, despite efforts by international human rights lawyers to create exceptions on moral and humanitarian grounds.

Since the late 1980s, and especially after the end of the cold war in 1989, perceptions of security have changed, international relations have assumed a multi-dimensional
complexity and the diverse utility of military forces has become more apparent. Security is no longer restricted to military issues, but widened to incorporate economic, environmental, social and gender issues. The principle of non-intervention has also been subjected to great rethinking. Some regional and ethnic conflicts as well as conflicts over scarce resources have the potential to create regional or global instability and are thus capable of endangering the lives of civilian populations (Kaplan, 1994; Homer-Dixon, 1994; Mayall, 1992). Massive displacement of populations and their conversion to refugees in other countries intensifies the need for scarce resources in the host countries which forms a recipe for future conflicts. The widely accepted wisdom since the end of the cold war, therefore, is that intervention in another state can be undertaken on a number of grounds. First, on humanitarian grounds, as in the case of intervention in Somalia in 1992; second, to stop forms of aggression with a potential for international instability, such as intervention to expel Iraq from Kuwait in 1991 (Greenwood, 1993; Fisher, 1994); and third, where the government is universally recognised to have collapsed, leading to a breakdown in law and order and the possibility of irreparable injury to lives and human rights (Farer, 1993:336).

The focus for the fulfilment of the hopes whipped up by the end of the cold war has been on the UN. Its international security and collective intervention role around the globe has burgeoned since 1990 (Roberts, 1993). However, an increasing expectation is that such interventions should mostly be informed by a desire to keep, secure or restore peace and protect the lives of ordinary people. Peacekeeping as a technique in conflict resolution dates back to the 1940s. It is an adaptation, not a specific provision, of the UN Charter. It is widely believed that peacekeeping success rests mostly on an attitude of neutrality and impartiality, trained and experienced multinational forces and the use of force only in self-defence. Essential, too, is adequate and reliable sources of finance, a clear and practicable mandate and the continued support of the Security Council, which is the only body that has the power to authorise such an intervention. The consent of all, and invitation from one or all of, the disputing parties is necessary for the deployment of peacekeeping troops (James, 1990:2; Durch and Blechman, 1992:9; Dobbie, 1994). The degree to which ECOMOG has conformed with these norms and principles in its efforts to restore and keep peace in Liberia since 1990 helps to mould our thoughts on the peculiarity of this intervention (Vogt, 1992; Williams, 1992; Wippman, 1993; O’Neill, 1993; Ofuatey-Kodjoe, 1994; Weller, 1994). One lingering question is whether ECOWAS-type interventions will become the norm in the post-cold war era and, therefore, likely to be replicated in other parts of the world.

Taylor’s Invasion and Outbreak of Conflict in Liberia

To most people, Charles Taylor’s invasion of Liberia on Christmas Eve in 1989 represented a practical expression of disgust for, and disappointment and disillusionment with, the regime of Samuel K. Doe. The Doe era (1980-1989) was characterised by sustained levels of brutality, dramatic economic decline, political immobilisation, and purges of real or imagined enemies. The regime’s brutality was markedly represented by the haste with which those allegedly implicated in plots to overthrow the government were summarily executed, the televised execution in April 1980 of fifteen former politicians on a Monrovia beach and the regime’s ferocious response to a failed coup in 1985, led by Thomas Quiwonkpa. Quiwonkpa was a Gio from Nimba County, former head of the Liberian army and friend of Charles Taylor (Africa Watch, 1989). Doe is widely believed to have introduced a ‘new tribalism’ in Liberia that
constituted the root cause of the eruption in 1989. The bureaucracy, army, security forces and the public services became permeated with members of his ethnic group, the Krahn, who comprised only four per cent of Liberia's pre-war population of 2.5 million. In a pathetic attempt to give legitimacy to his regime, Doe organised an election in 1985. However, in the eyes of the entire world, Doe stole the elections and robbed the Liberian people of the most peaceful and only legitimate means of changing their government (Lowenkopf, 1976; Nelson, 1984; Liebenow, 1987; Sawyer, 1992).

On 12 April 1980 Doe and 16 others overthrew the nine-year old government of William R. Tolbert in a bloody coup d'état and established the People's Redemption Council (PRC). This displaced the minority Americo-Liberian oligarchy that had dominated life in Liberia for a century and half. In the light of this, it can be argued that even though the Liberian civil war was sparked off by the excesses and atrocities that were associated with the Doe regime, the problem is deeply rooted in Liberia's historical and political past. The civil war is one segment in a long chain of events aimed at replacing the old political establishment with a new order (Nelson, 1993). This, along with economic hardship, explains the popular euphoria that greeted both the 1980 coup and Taylor's invasion in 1989. In both cases, however, events were soon to assume disappointing dimensions when all of the original ideals seemed to have been quickly devoured and replaced by personal ambition and greed.

Given the series of failed attempts to oust Doe from power in the 1980s, the incursion by Charles Taylor’s rebel group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), was initially dismissed as another in the long list of foolish attempts to create minor trouble for Doe's regime. Instead of being serious about flushing out the rebels, Doe's army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), which was predominantly Krahn, resorted to acts of savage brutality against the civilian population of Nimba County, home to the NPFL rebels. This counter-insurgency strategy succeeded only in alienating the inhabitants of the county even further, as it seemed like a repeat of the events of 1985, and set the tone for what followed. The Gio and Mano thus joined the ranks of Charles Taylor’s NPFL, determined to see that Doe was ousted from power. The NPFL then started attacking and killing not only Krahn civilians, but also Mandingos, who had gained a dubious reputation as supporters of the Doe regime. Within a short period, therefore, the fighting that was initially intended to remove Doe from power became an all-out civil war largely fought along ethnic lines (Ruíz, 1992:5; Berkeley, 1992).

Fighting reached the capital, Monrovia, within six months of the outbreak of the war. By then, Taylor had already captured over 90 per cent of the country. Sustained attacks and a prolonged siege of Monrovia by rebel factions, in a bid to capture the presidential palace, the Executive Mansion, resulted in further destruction and loss of lives. This prompted a direct West African intervention that changed the configuration in Liberia. Designed to 'keep' the peace, the West African force got embroiled in the fighting and failed to prevent the capture, torture and murder of Doe in September 1990. A cease-fire negotiated in Bamako, Mali, in November 1990 paved the way for a series of peace meetings under the auspices of the late Felix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire and resulted in the signing of the Yamousoukro IV Accord in October 1991. This truce collapsed when Taylor, in October 1992, again attacked and besieged Monrovia in what has become known as 'Operation Octopus'. Taylor, however, eventually lost control of Monrovia and the surrounding territory when, in reaction to his attacks, the regional force mounted heavy bombing raids on NPFL positions. Another round of peace talks led to the signing in Benin in July 1993 of what is still the
most comprehensive instrument in the Liberian peace process so far, the Cotonou Accord. It provided for encampment, disarmament and demobilisation and laid down the procedures for the conduct of general elections. By this time, however, it was now clear that Taylor's decision to sign cease-fire agreements was not an expression of his sincere commitment to a negotiated solution. He took advantage of the lull in the fighting to re-arm and relaunch his attacks and negotiated only under intense military and diplomatic pressure.

By 1994, the warring factions in Liberia had proliferated; the joint diplomatic efforts by the UN, ECOWAS and OAU failed to settle the conflict; and Liberia is now basically controlled by various rebel factions, foreign troops and foreign observers. The Accra Accords, signed in December 1994 to replace the discredited Akosombo Accord that preceded them, both brought about by Ghana's President Jerry Rawlings as chairman of ECOWAS, collapsed over the composition and chair of the proposed five-man Council of State. Both peace instruments were a mere affirmation of the principles of the Cotonou Accord. The scheduled elections of November 1995 were cancelled when fighting resumed in most of Liberia in February 1995. Rawlings' continued diplomatic efforts, however, led to the signing in August 1995 in Lagos, the Nigerian capital of what was quickly hailed as representing Liberia's best chance for peace, the Abuja Accord. Ghana, Nigeria and the UN had all threatened to pull out if the warring factions failed to demonstrate a commitment to ending the war (Sesay, 1995). But by the end of 1995, fighting between the ULIMO-Mandingo faction and ECOMOG soldiers in western Liberia was threatening the Abuja Accord. Disarmament, which was to start in December 1995 ahead of the elections scheduled for August 1996, had been postponed twice (Sesay, 1996).

**International and Regional Dimensions of the Conflict**

The regional and wider international dimensions of the Liberian conflict became evident within months of the outbreak of fighting and led to the eventual ECOWAS intervention. One significant issue in this process was external financial and military support for the belligerent parties. There is evidence that Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Burkina Faso provided the training, money and weapons for Charles Taylor and his rebels. Libya provided most of the weapons, oil and money; Burkina Faso contributed men and training; and Ivory Coast was not only Charles Taylor's major conduit for supplies and reinforcement, but also the country that prevented any discussion of the Liberian conflict in the Security Council in the first year (see below). In late 1992, a series of leaked memos from US embassies in Monrovia and Abidjan, made clear that the Ivorian government wanted a solution in Liberia 'that would likely have led to Charles Taylor's legitimate accession to the presidency and, the Ivorians hoped, a peaceful and stable neighbour on their western border' (*Africa Confidential*, 20 November 1992). On Doe's side was the covert support given by Nigeria and the United States, military advisers from the latter reportedly active at the war front and informing on rebel movement (*West Africa*, 22 January 1990; 12 & 19 February 1990; 3 December 1990; 4 February 1991; 18 March 1991; 4 May 1992; *The Guardian*, 11 December 1991).

Another external dimension to the Liberian conflict was the targeting of foreign nationals in an attempt to pre-empt foreign, possibly US, intervention. As war engulfed all of Liberia and moved to the capital, there were widespread reports of rebel forces and government troops resorting to hostage taking and indiscriminate killing of foreigners. This involved nationals from Western countries and citizens of
ECOWAS member states alike. In the later stages of the war, Nigerian journalists, American nuns and British and American ecologists were either killed or taken hostage. The attack by government troops on 30 May 1990 on the UN compound in Monrovia and other foreign missions further worsened the situation (*The Guardian*, 1 December 1992; *New African*, December 1992).

The question of regional stability was also uppermost in the minds of West Africa’s leaders. There was fear in many circles of the real possibility of the anarchy and bloodbath in Liberia spreading to, and engulfing, other states in the region. Charles Taylor’s forces were known to have been drawn from dissident and exiled oppositional groups from various West African countries. By late 1992, even the US was worried over the lack of a solution to the conflict. In a leaked State Department memo of 28 October 1992, the US acknowledged that ‘the current conflict holds great danger for the sub-region. Escalating tensions could cause additional refugees and conflict to spill over to Liberia’s borders, widening the war and leading to more arms proliferation’ (*Africa Confidential*, 20 November 1992). Events in Sierra Leone long before the leaked memo were already eloquent of the regional destabilising effects of the Liberian conflict. Since March 1991, Corporal Foday Sankoh’s Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a Sierra Leonean dissident group initially backed by Charles Taylor, mounted sustained incursions into Sierra Leone’s southeastern flanks. These activities paralysed economic activity in the area and eventually provided the circumstances for the overthrow of government in Freetown in April 1992. The military junta that seized power in Freetown, whose authority is now seriously undermined by the continued rebel attacks, was composed mainly of soldiers that had served in peacekeeping operations in Liberia. The April 1992 events in Sierra Leone were re-enacted in The Gambia in July 1994, when soldiers who had served with ECOMOG in Liberia overthrew the 29-year old regime of Sir Dauda Jawara.

**International Response to Civil War in Liberia**

At first it was expected that, in view of the gruesome nature and growing effects of the war, the international community would intervene to halt the process of disintegration in Liberia. Due to its ‘special relationship’ with Liberia, the US was expected to do everything required to halt the fighting. Aside from the bonds of history which made Liberians feel like ‘step-children’ of the US, Liberia appeared to all to be America’s most strategic point in the west coast of Africa. US interests in Liberia have always been tied to the large military and intelligence apparatus based there: satellite communications installations and a radio relay station. Liberia’s Freeport also served strategic purposes for US Marines and naval vessels. From a commercial perspective, a lot of US commercial vessels are registered in the name of Liberia and fly Liberia’s flag for convenience. However, this time the Americans did not intervene.

While relations between the US and Liberia had always been close there was a deterioration in the 1980s after Samuel Doe’s seizure of power. Liberia became identical, in the eyes of most Americans, with summary executions, economic mismanagement, human rights violations and corrupt and fraudulent bureaucrats and politicians. However, the Reagan government’s support for Liberia remained strong despite this image. In the context of the cold war, Liberia’s decision to remain firmly in the US camp and her continued strong ties with Israel were welcomed and encouraged. In the early to mid-1980s, therefore, Liberia became the largest per capita recipient of US aid in sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated total sum of $500 million in aid between 1980 and 1988 (Zimmerman, 1993). But Doe’s corruption and ineptitude
bankrupted Liberia. The failure in 1987/88 of a US team of 17 financial experts, Opex, to restore order to the country's finances led the US to abandon Liberia; increasing US hostility to Doe's government undermined it. Thus all efforts by Doe in 1990 to get the US government directly to intervene in the conflict failed, leading to charges that Doe was simply another victim of 'imperial euthanasia' (West Africa, 14 May 1990).

Both the Bush and Clinton administrations, however, also treated the leaderships of the rebel groups with great scepticism. The US was uneasy about Charles Taylor's reputation and established connections. Taylor returned to Liberia from undergraduate studies in the US in 1980 after Doe's coup. As head of the government's General Services Agency, Taylor was accused of embezzling $900,000 through fake contracts and fled Liberia in October 1983. He was arrested and imprisoned in the US in 1984, awaiting final decision on extradition charges brought against him. He escaped after 18 months and found his way to Burkina Faso, from where he planned his insurgency. His Libyan connections, which Taylor has always vigorously denied, did nothing to mitigate his poor reputation. Accordingly, America's refusal to give him support was not surprising. Prince Johnson, leader of the now defunct breakaway Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), also had a reputation for unreliability and brutality and was regarded as erratic, mentally unstable and psychotic (West Africa, 6 April 1990; Ruiz, 1992:10).

In June 1990 the US was content to send a fleet of six ships to the coastal waters off the shores of Liberia after reports that foreign nationals and interests were being targeted in the fighting. In 'Operation Sharp Edge', US Marines evacuated embassy personnel, US citizens and other nationals that had sought refuge at the embassy and telecommunications site (Parker, 1991). This is not to suggest that covert US involvement did not occur. Diplomatic and other sources reported US Rangers, along with Israelis, actively involved in combat against Taylor's rebels in the early stages of the war (West Africa, 12 March 1990). At another point, the US was accused of sharing intelligence information with Taylor's NPFL, including enemy troop movement (West Africa, 2 December 1991). Moreover, Liberian refugees in the US received the status of Temporary Protected Persons. A bill to help internally displaced Liberians, Liberian refugees in other countries and the reconstruction of post-war Liberia was also passed in Senate in 1991 (West Africa, 18 February 1991; 30 May 1994).

Publicly, however, US policy remained that the Liberian conflict was a purely internal affair and required no direct US intervention. Later the US supported the West African search for a solution to what was generally considered an African problem (West Africa, 23 November 1992). In the post-cold war situation, moreover, Liberia was of little significant strategic or political interest for the US. Furthermore, by August 1990, the disintegration of Liberia was relegated to the periphery by Saddam's invasion of oil-rich Kuwait. It was left with individual American statesmen and diplomats to help in the search for a solution to this problem: Jesse Jackson, former president Jimmy Carter and former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen (West Africa, 28 May 1990; 15 April 1991; 2 September 1991; 25 November 1991).

The failure of the US to intervene came as a disappointment to many, but left some in the hope that the rest of the international community would do something to stop the carnage. In particular, people pinned hopes on the United Nations which, in the aftermath of the end of cold war superpower rivalry, appeared to have reinvented itself and seemed competent to handle issues that threatened international peace and
security. However, almost three years after the outbreak of fighting and despite calls from some quarters for a direct intervention, the UN was conspicuously absent from the Liberian scene (West Africa, 19 November 1990).

For more than a year after the outbreak of war in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire frustrated every attempt to get the Security Council to meet and consider the Liberian situation, although other members of the Council would also have held the view that the Liberian conflict was an internal and African matter. Even Zaire, which held the Security Council presidency when the war broke out, together with Ethiopia, was opposed to the Council dealing with Liberia. The two African countries feared to initiate a precedent that would, in all probability, be applicable to them in future (Wippman, 1993:165). The Council met for the first time to consider the Liberian conflict on 22 January 1991 at Côte d'Ivoire's request. A statement by the Security Council afterwards, predicated on an ECOWAS communique of 28 November 1990 and drafted by Côte d'Ivoire itself, simply called on all parties to the Liberian conflict to continue to respect the ECOWAS-brokered Bamako cease-fire agreement (West Africa, 4 February 1990; 28 January 1991; UN Chronicle, September 1990:36).

Significantly, an identifiable pattern of UN intervention would emerge and become a permanent feature in its dealings with Liberia: support for the ECOWAS peace initiative. In time, this led to allegations that the UN was taking sides in Liberia (New African, December 1992; November 1993).

Due to further calls in 1992 for a direct intervention, the UN Security Council voted unanimously on 19 November 1992 to pass Resolution 788, supporting an arms embargo on the rebel factions imposed by ECOWAS (Security Council, 1992). The resolution came in the aftermath of a change in the military and political configuration in Liberia. A new warring faction, the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), initially based in neighbouring Sierra Leone, had emerged and launched sporadic attacks on NPFL strongholds. Moreover, 'Operation Octopus', claimed heavy casualties on the side of the West African peacekeeping force and forced the latter to mount heavy artillery bombardments on NPFL positions (West Africa, 2 November 1992; Beijing Review, 30 November 1992). These events were followed by the UN Secretary General’s report (Security Council, March 1993) on Liberia and a second Security Council resolution reaffirming support for ECOWAS (West Africa, 12 April 1993).

Thus Security Council resolution 788 opened the way for a series of UN reports, two other resolutions, a special programme of economic assistance for rehabilitation and reconstruction, and an inter-agency fund for emergency humanitarian assistance to Liberia. These activities paved the way for, and culminated in, a continuing UN commitment starting with first, the sending of a technical team to help in monitoring the cease-fire (Security Council, August 1993) and eventually, a UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) (Security Council, September 1993). UNOMIL had specific instructions to work in close cooperation with the West African peacekeeping force. Essentially, UNOMIL should oversee the process of disarmament, encampment and demobilisation of the estimated 60,000 combatants in Liberia and supervise a general election. The final cost of this operation was initially estimated at $40.3 million (General Assembly, 1993), but has eventually escalated with the continued renewal of UNOMIL's mandate (UNOMIL, 1994; West Africa, 16 May 1994).
ECOWAS Intervention: A New and Strange Role?
The decision by a few ECOWAS countries to intervene in Liberia received support and applause from several quarters, including the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and other non-ECOWAS African countries (West Africa, 4 February 1991; 27 January 1992; 6 April 1992; 21 December 1992; 25 January 1993). In fact, it is the only example in the world of a regionally-based peacekeeping force sent to a country within that region to oversee the resolution of a conflict. ECOWAS intervention was prompted by the refusal of the US and UN to intervene directly despite awareness of the legal, logistical and financial implications of such a move. But by so doing, ECOWAS had, to all intents and purposes, assumed a new role and the nature of its ‘peacekeeping’ was accordingly unusual. Any discussion of this new role for ECOWAS, however, has to be put in context.

By June 1990, the rebel forces had besieged Monrovia causing wanton destruction of life and property; the embattled Doe was confined to his Executive Mansion (Blunt, 1990a; The Listener, 2 August 1990). Political authority and law and order collapsed, creating a power vacuum and plunging Liberia into complete turmoil. ECOWAS at first assumed a mediation role, initiated a process of negotiation to find a political solution to the conflict and established a five-member Standing Mediation Committee for the purpose (West Africa, 16 July 1990). This committee was made up of Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Mali and The Gambia. At its first meeting, the Committee called for a cease-fire in Liberia, proposed the establishment of an interim government and established the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) with a view to separating the warring parties and keeping the peace after a cease-fire agreement (ECOWAS, 1990a). Samuel Doe and Prince Johnson welcomed these developments and consented to the proposed ECOWAS intervention. Significantly, however, ECOWAS was denounced by Charles Taylor, who refused to give his consent to intervention of any kind.

With over 90 per cent control of the country, Taylor interpreted the proposed ECOWAS intervention as a ploy to prevent him from taking over government in Liberia and vowed to continue fighting (West Africa, 16 July 1990; 20 August 1990). From the onset, therefore, ECOMOG was committed to a huge and complex task. A brain child of Nigeria’s then military ruler, General Ibrahim Babangida, ECOMOG was made up initially of contingents from the four Anglophone countries – Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and The Gambia plus Guinea. These five contributing nations were all governed by leaders who either came to power through military coups or had a propensity to stay in power in perpetuity. To some, therefore, the leaders of the ECOMOG nations represented an ‘old order’ resistant to the forces of change symbolised by Charles Taylor’s movement. There was, therefore, great doubt over the true motives of ECOMOG.

Nevertheless, on 24 August 1990, 3,500 troops from the five ECOWAS countries landed in Liberia to make, rather than keep, the peace (The Economist, 18 August 1990; West Africa, 19 August 1990; Oladimeji, 1993). Taylor lived up to his promise by attacking the ‘peacekeepers’; ECOMOG returned fire and serious fighting ensued (New African, November 1990; The Economist, 1 September 1990; West Africa, 3 & 10 September 1990). A temporary cease-fire brokered by ECOWAS lasted until 10 September 1990 when Samuel Doe, on his way to ECOMOG headquarters, was captured, tortured and killed by Prince Johnson (West Africa, 17 September 1990; 15 October 1990; Blunt, 1990b). Following this incident, the first ECOWAS extraordinary summit was convened at Bamako, Mali, in which ECOMOG’s mandate was changed
from 'peacekeeping' to 'peace enforcement' (ECOWAS, 1990b). A cease-fire agreement was also signed (ECOWAS, 1990c) and an interim government led by Dr. Amos Sawyer, elected in August 1990 by an 'All-Liberia Conference' at Banjul, was installed in early 1991 (West Africa, 10 September 1990).

Legal Basis for Intervention

The foremost problem that arises from this ECOWAS decision is that of the legality of intervention. ECOWAS, as the name implies, is a sub-regional organisation formed in 1975 with the primary aim of fostering economic integration in West Africa. The treaty that created it, therefore, makes no provision for a collective security or peacekeeping role. But the problems of integration and the fact that regional peace and security are a precondition for development were never lost on its member states (West Africa, 15 July 1991; 25 May 1992; 27 July 1992). In fact, in 1978 a protocol on non-aggression, requiring member states to take intra-regional disputes to the organisation for peaceful resolution, was adopted (ECOWAS, 1978). This protocol, however, addressed neither the issues of threats coming from without the region nor conflicts that are purely internal. In 1981, therefore, this inadequacy was attempted to be addressed by another protocol on mutual defence. This defence pact, which took effect in 1986, provided for mutual defence against extra-regional aggression, laid down mechanisms for dealing with disputes that could not be handled under the terms of the protocol on non-aggression and, above all, stipulated procedures for dealing with 'internal armed conflict within any member state engineered and supported actively from outside likely to endanger the security and peace in the entire community' (ECOWAS, 1981).

ECOWAS intervention was, therefore, arguably justified on these grounds. Surprisingly, this protocol was never invoked until the outbreak of the Liberian conflict, despite the various crises of the 1980s. Some West African statesmen have, however, come to believe that by deciding to intervene in Liberia, ECOWAS has assumed a new role and represented an important step forward (Africa Report, November/December 1990; West Africa, 1 July 1991). Perhaps this is because the Liberian civil war is unprecedented both in its scope and the threat to regional peace it poses (West Africa, 24 December 1990; 3 August 1992). Nevertheless, it is questionable whether ECOWAS was yet ready for a military role. Certain key structures stipulated in the mutual defence pact were ostensibly lacking, namely, an Allied Armed Forces drawn from identified troops of member states and a Defence Council and Defence Commission responsible for the implementation of military assignments.

ECOWAS intervention would similarly appear to have violated a cardinal principle of the OAU Charter, that is, non-interference in the internal affairs of another state. However, this has been treated as understandable and has been largely ignored by the international community. Since 1994, the OAU itself has been rethinking the principle of non-interference in light of the new challenges to the continent since the end of the cold war. Apart from the frequent attacks from Burkina Faso's Blaise Campaore over procedural matters and poor consultation, the OAU applauded ECOWAS for its peaceful mission in Liberia and nominated an 'eminent person', former president of Zimbabwe, Canaan Banana, to join ECOWAS in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict (West Africa, 18 January 1993). In view of the OAU's track record of impotence in dealing with crises in Africa, the ECOWAS initiative in Liberia represents a sharp contrast and reopened the debate over whether the OAU should not have an 'African High Command' (West Africa, 27 May 1991). ECOWAS is thus
deemed to have set the scene for a more proactive and, perhaps, interventionist continental organisation. Salim A. Salim, Secretary General of the OAU, even defended ECOWAS and argued that the use of force in Liberia in no way constitutes a breach of the OAU’s charter. He has no reason, he asserted, to believe that non-intervention should be interpreted to mean indifference to massive human suffering of the kind witnessed in Liberia (West Africa, 22 October 1990). In short, the OAU was simply coming to terms with the new thinking of the post-cold war era.

A similarly complex legal difficulty occurred with regard to the UN. Chapter eight of the Charter provides for regional organisations, authorised by the Security Council, to deal with situations that constitute a threat to international peace. Indeed, the Liberian conflict posed a threat to the peace of an entire sub-region, but ECOWAS intervention did not receive prior authorisation from the Council partly for reasons discussed above. In addition, however, The Gambia’s President Dauda Jawara, then ECOWAS chairman, revealed that he had been advised that the sort of intervention envisaged did not require Security Council approval and, in any case, the UN Secretary General had written to him and wished ECOWAS good luck in their undertaking (West Africa, 1 July 1991). Moreover, the Council’s resolutions on Liberia afterwards, and the fact that UN peace efforts in Liberia were explicitly to complement those of ECOWAS, can be interpreted as a tacit recognition and support for the expedition. Statement after statement issued by the Security Council reiterated support for the ECOWAS peace plan. Over the question of use of force, the Council’s arms embargo on the warring factions in Liberia did not affect ECOMOG, a clear endorsement of the need for ECOMOG to use minimum force to contain recalcitrant factions and bring peace to Liberia.

It is clear from the above discussion that the cardinal international relations principle of non-interference in the affairs of another country was compromised by the ECOWAS initiative, but this was (at least ostensibly) on humanitarian and regional security grounds. The ‘humanitarian nightmare’ in Liberia was a phenomenon that ECOWAS heads of state that contributed troops to ECOMOG were at pains to emphasise. They recognised that although Doe was still nominally head of state of Liberia, and had welcomed an ECOWAS intervention, he had nevertheless lost the power to govern. The whole of the country, with the exception of the Executive Mansion in which he was cocooned, was in rebel hands. Law and order had broken down and Liberia reduced to a state of anarchy. The starvation that ensued, the collapse of health facilities and other basic necessities of life and the instability caused by displacement, refugee movement and spill-over of the war to neighbouring countries, were all cited as the genuine basis for intervention. The cold-blooded massacre of 600 defenceless civilian refugees at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church by government troops in July 1990 was the first unequivocal example of civilian massacres (Ruiz, 1992:6-7; The Economist, 1 & 15 September 1990). By 1994, it was estimated that about 150,000 Liberians died or were killed, 750,000 had become refugees in other countries and over a million were internally displaced and lived in shelter camps in various parts of the country (WHO, 1994). At the initial stage, only minimum force, generally viewed as quite proportionate to the humanitarian crisis that gave rise to it, was used by ECOMOG. This allowed for humanitarian relief to reach the people and in this respect, the ECOWAS enterprise was a regional model. The decision to undertake further ECOMOG military build-up was informed largely by Taylor’s intransigence and continued attacks on the ‘peacekeepers’, the proliferation of warring factions and the need to give the force a more multinational and African outlook, through the inclusion of other ECOWAS and non-ECOWAS African
countries (UNOMIL, 1993). Mali, Senegal, Uganda and Tanzania have all variously contributed troops to ECOMOG, although a proposal for Burkina Faso’s participation was rejected. Thus it is reasonable to argue that the real basis of the dispute over ECOMOG was not so much disagreement over legality of the mandate, but rather intra-community political differences and rivalry (see below). Nevertheless, the manner in which ECOWAS adapted itself to the provisions of international law and the unusual support it got from quarters that are traditionally the bastions of orthodox practice in international affairs make this a strange case of intervention.

Neutrality in ECOMOG Peacekeeping

The neutrality of ECOMOG in its operations in Liberia has been much debated, and at times derided, by observers and commentators. This has added to the peculiarity of the nature of its peacekeeping. The decision by ECOWAS to intervene against opposition from Charles Taylor, who viewed ECOMOG as a ‘mercenary’ and ‘invasion’ force and vowed to attack it, meant that combat was almost inevitable and neutrality likely to be elusive. Nigeria’s preponderant role in the operation has been a thorny issue and, for some, a very suspicious move. General Babangida was known to be a close friend of Doe. Before the war, Nigeria’s financial support to the University of Liberia led to the naming of the Graduate School of International Relations after the Nigerian leader. Doe had managed to reverse Liberia’s sour relations with Nigeria in the early 1980s, which ensued after the civilian regime of Shehu Shagari (1979 -1983) refused to allow Doe, following his seizure of power, to take Liberia’s seat at the 1980 ECOWAS conference in Lagos. Babangida had also endeared himself to other West African leaders through his unprecedented generosity with Nigeria’s oil resources. Goodwill on the part of ECOMOG heads of state towards Nigeria was, therefore, demonstrated by cooperating with Babangida on Liberia.

ECOMOG deployment thus came to be seen as a move to save the military dictatorship of Doe from collapse. Nigerian military assistance to Doe after the outbreak of fighting, and Doe’s 1990 visit to Lagos to show solidarity with Babangida following the April 1990 Orkah coup in Nigeria, were also known in most circles, matters for which Nigeria was constantly pilloried by Charles Taylor. For Taylor, the ECOWAS decision to intervene in Liberia simply sanctioned Nigeria’s ‘occupation’ of Liberia. The position of ECOMOG Field Commander, the highest in the force’s command structure, has always been held by a Nigerian. It was adopted in 1990 after ECOMOG, under the command of Ghana’s General Arnold Quainoo, miscalculated in its security precautions and failed to avert the capture and execution of Doe in ECOMOG-controlled territory. This was reported to have highly infuriated the Nigerian leader. Moreover, of the estimated 11,000 ECOMOG troops stationed in Liberia, about 7,000 are Nigerians (Monrovia interview, August 1994).

ECOWAS intervention in Liberia and the dynamics of peacekeeping should also be discussed against the background of regional politics in West Africa. Apart from the wrangling over legal issues, ECOMOG and Nigeria’s role in it turned out to be a divisive factor. Led by Nigeria’s traditional rival for regional hegemony, Côte d’Ivoire, French West Africa turned out to be unenthusiastic about the ECOMOG idea. The exception to this was Guinea, which shares borders with Liberia and was the most affected by the Liberian refugee problem. Togo and Mali, which were members of the Standing Mediation Committee, initially refused to contribute troops to ECOMOG. Like Mali, Senegal eventually did, but the latter pulled out after six of her soldiers were killed in a gun battle with Taylor’s NPFL. Almost all the French-
speaking countries, therefore, showed sympathy for Taylor's cause and France, their former colonial master and still greatest benefactor, continued to do business with Taylor against all criticism. The conviction in French and Francophone circles was that the Liberian venture was the beginning of a 'Pax-Nigeriana' that had to be contained at all costs. But this view has been called into question by some Nigerian scholars, who interpret the events simply as an example of Nigeria's enduring desire to play a leading role in inter-African affairs (Nwokedi, 1992).

However, Taylor's continued refusal to accept the peacekeeping role of ECOMOG and his continued attack on the regional force led first, to a change in the force's mandate from 'peacekeeping' to 'peace enforcement' and second, to the force adopting a 'defensive offensive' posture (The Guardian, 15 January 1991). In the effort to effectively counter Taylor's attacks, ECOMOG has also made shady deals with other rebel groups, who have a better understanding of the terrain and have provided the peace troops with intelligence in exchange for weapons (West Africa, 8 October 1990; 25 November 1991). Moreover, when Taylor launched 'Operation Octopus' in 1992 and besieged Monrovia, ECOMOG responded with a remarkable ferocity. Nigerian Alpha war planes went into a bombing spree and strafed NPFL rebel positions around Monrovia, the port city of Buchanan and Gbarnga, Taylor's NPFL headquarters (New African, December 1992; The Guardian, 17 October 1990; New York Times, 15 November 1992). Such an 'offensive defence' by ECOMOG coincided with very damaging remarks made by former US president, Jimmy Carter, that the peace force had become a combatant and could no longer be trusted to remain neutral and impartial (New York Times, 15 November 1992).

Pointing to Taylor's constant scheming and provocation of the peacekeepers, a lot of people in Liberia and West Africa were angered by Carter's remarks and Nigerian jets were in action well into 1993. ECOMOG thus scored enormous military successes, but was criticised for also killing innocent civilians, attacking relief convoys and violating Ivorian territory (Africa Report, May-June 1993; New African, February 1993). Even the UN was accused of being complicit in this by overlooking the atrocities caused by ECOMOG bombing (Africa Watch, 1993). Nigeria's dominant role and the growing currency of the view that ECOMOG lacks the attitude of neutrality and impartiality normally ascribed to a peacekeeping force, became a significant tool in Taylor's propaganda machine. In their desperation to cut him down to size and end the Liberian conflict once and for all, ECOMOG played well into Taylor's hands. On the ground, ECOMOG's offensive succeeded in reducing Taylor's influence to only two counties and dragging him onto the negotiating table. Its neutrality is, however, believed to have been greatly compromised.

Military Intervention and Development
ECOWAS's decision to assume a 'new' and 'strange' role in the bid to enhance regional development and ensure relative stability has obvious but serious implications for West Africa's development. West Africa is one of the poorest regions of the world and Nigeria is the only oil-producing country in the region. According to 1994 UNDP statistics, seven of the ten poorest countries in the world are to be found in West Africa (UNDP, 1994). If it is true that regional development can hardly be pursued under unstable conditions, it is also true that development has been greatly skewed by the diversion of resources to military purposes. Although no reliable statistics are yet available or accessible, the cost of maintaining troops in Liberia has been very high. By mid-1993, the total cost of the operations since August 1990 were
estimated at $500 million. Almost a year later, in July 1994, informed sources at ECOMOG headquarters in Liberia put the figure at $1.5 billion (Monrovia interview, August 1994). And although regular, US financial assistance to ECOMOG, an estimated average sum of $10 million a year, is meagre indeed.

The financial costs of maintaining individual country contingents are borne by the respective countries. In effect, some of the world’s poorest countries have had to divert resources from the myriad of domestic and developmental problems at home to military participation in a multinational coalition in Liberia. For a long time, debate on individual country expenditure on ECOMOG was stifled in most of the participating countries because of the sensitivity of the issue, hence the absence of comprehensive and reliable statistics on the subject. By March 1995, however, the silence was broken when Ghana reported that it has spent in excess of $10 million on its contribution to ECOMOG since 1990. This was very quickly followed by Nigeria’s announcement, disclosing that it spends $30,000 per day on maintenance of its ECOMOG contingent (International Peacekeeping News, 1995). These facts are broadly in line with general assertions that Nigeria shoulders over 70 per cent of the financial burden, that is, almost equal to her troop contribution (Africa Confidential, 24 January 1992). Excluded from these estimates is Nigeria’s provision of oil products for the entire operation and most of the heavy weaponry, military aircraft and naval vessels.

In fact, for countries such as Sierra Leone and The Gambia, their participation is regarded as almost insignificant relative to the total costs involved. They have been kept in the operation basically as a political and public relations device at home and abroad – to give ECOMOG a multinational outlook and divert public attention from the pressing problems at home (Monrovia interview, August 1994). Nigeria has a battalion of troops in Sierra Leone, almost the size of the Sierra Leone contribution to ECOMOG and trained and equipped the Gambian army.

The costs of ECOMOG operations, both in human and financial terms, have thus been weighing heavily on the participating parties. Across the region, domestic public opinion has become hostile to their country’s involvement in Liberia. In Sierra Leone and The Gambia, the governments of former presidents Joseph Momoh and Dauda Jawara were overthrown by military coups d’etat respectively in 1992 and 1994 as a result of developments that were judged largely connected with the Liberian situation. In Nigeria, Babangida’s domestic problems were compounded by his immense unpopularity over the costs of his Liberian enterprise and hastened his exit from power in 1993. In Nigeria also, an additional factor to discontent over Liberia was the associated corruption. There is popular belief that most of the income from oil resources alleged to have been used to finance the ECOMOG operation were, in fact, diverted into overseas accounts. In Senegal, the country’s participation in Liberia became a political football in the run up to the elections of 1994.

In short, maintaining troops in Liberia, despite Nigeria’s dominant role, constitutes a heavy financial burden on the participating countries. This fact was underscored in Ghana’s President Jerry Rawlings’ acceptance speech of the ECOWAS chair in August 1994. While pledging ECOWAS’ commitment to end the conflict, Rawlings was quick to point out that tremendous resources are involved and that international help has not been forthcoming. He is convinced that the decision to intervene could not have been taken in today’s political conditions. He argued that ‘our economies can simply no longer bear the cost of sustaining troops in these ECOMOG contingents, and political support for the continued presence of these troops in Liberia, in the face of the continuing stalemate is understandably waning’ (Monrovia Daily News, 12 August
He also warned that 'unless the warring factions commit themselves to a permanent peace, the ECOMOG troops may ... will be withdrawn' (The Inquirer, 8 August 1994). Thus 'the mood among ECOWAS members contributing blood and fortune to ECOMOG is bloody minded' (Africa Confidential, 20 November 1992).

ECOMOG and Peace in Liberia

An assessment of the success of ECOWAS’s strategy in resolving the conflict and restoring peace in Liberia is also pertinent. The fighting in Liberia is a good example of an unconventional conflict, involving the use of irregular armies and guerilla tactics. Rebel soldiers are often drug-ridden, they lack heavy armour or air cover and are bloodthirsty and unprofessional. There is also widespread use of child soldiers and superstitious practices (Riley, 1993). Historically, defeating such evasive forces through the use of professional and regular armies has been futile. On the other hand, the ineffective role of African diplomatic efforts and the refusal of warring factions to take peace seriously was not lost on West African leaders in 1990. This explains why the diplomatic option that led to the signing of the various peace accords was vigorously pursued alongside the military intervention. However, after thirteen cease-fire agreements by August 1995, Liberia is still in the grip of war and tension.

One cogent explanation of the failure of ECOMOG efforts to achieve comprehensive peace in Liberia lies in the political economy of the conflict. Charles Taylor's activities before and after the death of Samuel Doe have led most people to cast doubts on his professed motives for his 'liberation struggle'. To all intents and purposes, Taylor's quest for power, like that of the leadership of the other warring factions, is suspect and appears to be driven by the opportunities it offers for personal enrichment through control of Liberia's resources. Within only six months of the outbreak of war in 1989, Taylor was able to amass over $3.6 million from timber exports to the European community, through the port of Buchanan he controlled until 1993 (Reno, 1995). Taylor, through his Sierra Leonean protege, Foday Sankoh (leader of the RUF rebels), also sought to incorporate produce, gold and diamond producing areas of neighbouring Sierra Leone into the 'Greater Liberia' Taylor set out to build. Resources from these sources have sustained his arms procurement process and have helped prolong or fuel the war. Allegations of ECOMOG involvement in related activities are also widespread in Monrovia.

This fact accounts for the difficulty ECOWAS has faced in dealing with Taylor and his rivals and, therefore, in restoring peace to Liberia. Taylor (and more recently, his opponents) have consistently violated cease-fire agreements, abrogated peace accords and extracted several concessions from ECOWAS. Taylor has also devoured the original aim of his liberation movement – the expulsion of Doe. He has continued to fight long after Doe had disappeared from Liberia’s political scene and has since reversed his initial non-presidential ambitions. The ultimate aim of the leadership of the liberation fighters, it seems, is the occupation of the prized Executive Mansion and the accumulation of wealth.

The difficulty in attaining peace in Liberia, despite the desperate bilateral efforts of Nigeria and Ghana since September 1994 is, however, also due to other factors (BBC, 1994). Three complex and interrelated forces are deemed to be at work here. First, it takes an enormous amount of effort for people who have been locked in a gruesome conflict for over five years to reconcile their differences. So far, the confidence and security-building mechanisms necessary to tackle this problem are still inadequate.
Civil War and Collective Intervention in Liberia

(Sesay, 1995). Second, there is the problem of continued external support for the various warring factions, including support from some ECOWAS countries themselves. This has had a great undermining effect on the peace process. Third, peacekeeping of this nature involves enormous resources. This problem can only be resolved if all ECOWAS countries live up to their financial obligations and more assistance is given by the wider international community. The evidence after five years, however, is that such financial support from external sources is doubtful.

There can be no doubt that ECOMOG possesses comparatively superior military power and, therefore, the capability to conclude the war militarily. However, ECOMOG stopped short of doing that in 1994 for a number of reasons: as a face-saving mechanism for Taylor; to give the political and diplomatic options a chance; and to encourage the various factions to form political parties and contest general elections. So far, this has failed and peace remains as elusive as ever. Much of Liberia is still in the hands of various rebel groups with sporadic fighting continuing in territories outside ECOMOG control. Unless peace comes very quickly, the proposed elections in August 1996 are likely to be cancelled. In the absence of a durable ceasefire, an electoral register cannot be compiled and serious campaigning cannot start. Furthermore, ECOMOG is likely to collapse if Nigeria and Ghana carry out their threats of withdrawal if Ghana’s peace initiatives fail. Moreover, UNOMIL would first be reduced and then, pulled out if the warring parties in Liberia fail to cooperate. As in the case of Somalia, such a move would be a signal that the international community has given up its search for a peaceful solution to the Liberian conflict.

ECOMOG’s twin-track strategy of pursuing peace through diplomacy and force is yet to achieve its ends. ECOWAS has, no doubt, accomplished the limited goal of ensuring that humanitarian assistance gets to a war ravaged country, where the breakdown of law and order was almost complete (Sheriff, 1995). However, it is still difficult to justify the means ECOWAS has used to restore peace to Liberia, especially the loss of blood and fortune. At the heart of this conundrum is the continued external support for the warring factions and the poor international financial support for the ECOMOG operation. This is compounded by the commercialisation of the conflict by Charles Taylor and others. Among other things, therefore, these are some of the lessons that can be learned from intervention in internal conflicts in Africa (Harbeson and Rothchild, 1995; McCormick, 1995).

Conclusions

This strange case of collective intervention and peacekeeping in West Africa offers an opportunity for rethinking intervention in the post-cold war era. The evidence and analysis above have shown that humanitarian motives and the need for regional stability have at least temporarily overridden the notion of sovereignty and territorial inviolability, to which the international community acquiesced. Africa’s increased marginalisation since the end of the cold war has posed new challenges for the continent’s leadership. Even in the past, external intervention in Africa was mostly dictated by economic, political or ideological factors that affected outsiders in significant respects. Despite the mistakes that have been made, the Liberian initiative represents a bold attempt by Africa leaders to face up to the new challenges, especially when it serves their economic or political interests. The lessons from this experience must be learnt, as the operation has not been executed as clinically as the critics would have wished. Indeed, there have been instances of human rights violations and allegations of corrupt accumulation by ECOMOG troops.
The context for this approach to peacekeeping in Liberia was, however, set by the refusal of the international community, especially the UN, to make an immediate and meaningful response to the conflict. What is, therefore, essentially a customs union had to take on a military security role for which it was ill-prepared. The problem thus lies in deciding whether the ECOMOG case can justify intervention in the internal politics of member-states by other regional and economic organisations in the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. More serious is the question of distribution of responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and stability between such regional organisations and the UN. In my view, the ECOMOG case is unique and has to be understood within the context and timing of developments in Africa and the changing global attitudes since 1989.

A number of problems would have to be overcome if ECOMOG is to become a permanent security mechanism. To avoid repeating the mistakes made in Liberia, the necessary institutions would need to be put in place, the ECOWAS Charter reviewed to incorporate the notion of collective security and the modalities of implementing this military role formulated in a manner that makes it easy to operationalise. Confidence-building measures should be put in place to ensure greater intra-regional political cooperation. This would help achieve the region-wide consensus necessary for the effective functioning of such a body and reduce to a bare minimum the chances of a repeat of the diplomatic musical chairs experienced in Liberia.

A further difficult problem to overcome will be that of ensuring reliable and sustainable financial support for ECOMOG. Given the competing domestic economic demands for the meagre resources of this poor region, politicians are likely to encounter stiff opposition from their people if huge amounts of money were to be diverted to such military uses. This is by no means an indictment of the prudence and astuteness of African leaders; nor is it intended to diminish the significance of ensuring regional stability, which is necessary after all for the pursuit of further integration and development. Rather, the issue is whether any leadership in Africa would demonstrate sufficient will to pay the developmental and short-run political costs of such a decision. Dependence on external sources for financial support has its distasteful consequences. It can mean external leverage for policy direction and change, inefficacy and paralysis. As a consequence, the prospects for financing a permanent and successful regional security body are not very bright. At present, the spectre of war and conflict engulfing West Africa, with the effects of the Liberian conflict spreading to Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Guinea and threatening to tear these societies apart, is a real prospect. Immense interest thus exists in the possible ways West African leaders will address this.

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The Decline of Eurafrica? Lomé’s Mid-Term Review

Trevor Parfitt

The last day of June 1995 saw the completion of the review of the Lomé Convention, a comprehensive trade and aid relationship between the European Union and 70 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. Given that the Lomé regime is one of the most long lived and comprehensive arrangements in North-South relations it might have been expected that there would have been a considerable reaction by those interested in development issues. In fact, the general reaction has been muted. This is because there is a certain lack of enthusiasm for Lomé, not least on the part of powerful forces in the EU. It has been suggested that the Convention is in decline due to waning EU commitment to development in the ACP states. In this article we shall examine whether or not the Lomé relationship is actually being allowed to die on the vine by the EU. First, we shall examine developments over the history of the relationship in order to discern trends that have emerged over the longer term. We shall then turn to the recent history of the Convention since 1990. Finally, we will analyse the terms agreed at the recent Mid-Term Review in order to assess what the future seems to hold for the Lomé regime.

The Lomé relationship dates back to 1975, when the first Lomé Convention was agreed for an initial five year duration. At that time the Convention was greeted with an almost millenial enthusiasm from those who thought that it would lead to a more just North-South relationship. Indeed, it was and remains a unique phenomenon in the largely dispiriting saga of North-South relations. Under the terms of the Lomé relationship the EU guarantees the ACP states substantial amounts of aid from the European Development Fund (EDF), mostly on generous terms, and free access onto the EU market for 99 per cent of their products (although this is limited by various non-tariff barriers). Amongst the benefits offered by Lomé are Stabex, a scheme designed to compensate ACP claimants for unavoidable declines in their export earnings from agricultural goods on the EU market; Sysmin, a similar scheme for mineral exporters; and the Centre for Industrial Development (CDI), which is charged with the task of assisting ACP states with industrial development.

Some critics (including the present author) argued that the Lomé relationship was actually aimed at preserving the existing Eurafrican relationship, whereby the EU obtained raw materials from the ACP states and sold processed goods back to them. Indeed, the ACP states soon found that the Lomé Convention was not going to be the key to some new golden age. Stabex was underfinanced and could not meet the demands placed on it during the recessionary 1980s, which led the EU to unilaterally reduce the compensation paid to ACP claimants on several occasions. The CDI was also inadequately financed to make any substantial impact on ACP industrialisation,
whilst Sysmin proved to be an agonisingly slow disburser of aid. As noted above, ACP producers found difficulty in getting certain of their exports past EU NTBs. The rules of origin were particularly problematic as they stipulated that most ACP exports had to have 50 per cent of value added created in the ACP. Very few ACP countries had the capacity to produce processed products that met this criterion, a situation that did not assist them in any efforts at economic diversification (for further details and criticisms of the Lomé Conventions see Parfitt and S. Bullock, 'The Prospects for a New Lomé Convention', ROAPE, No. 47, 1990).

Despite such drawbacks the Lomé regime offered substantial benefits, particularly in the form of largely unconditional aid on generous terms. These were sufficient to induce the ACP states to continue with the Lomé regime notwithstanding the dilution of their early enthusiasm. Consequently, further agreements were signed throughout the 1980s, culminating in the agreement of the fourth Lomé Convention in 1990. Whereas the previous conventions had lasted for five years, Lomé 4 had a duration of ten years, from 1990 to 2000. An initial five year tranche of aid was negotiated in 1990, with provision for a second tranche to be negotiated in 1995 at the so-called Mid-Term Review.

It is only in recent years that doubt has grown as to whether there will be a further Lomé Convention in 2000. As we have indicated, the question is not one of whether or not the ACP states will agree to one, but whether the EU wishes to continue its special relationship, in particular with the African signatories to the Lomé regime. It is well known that the EU has undergone radical internal transformations in recent years as a consequence of the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty. These changes, together with the end of the cold war and the emergence of a post-communist world, have led the EU to embark on a thoroughgoing re-examination of its external policies and in particular its development policies.

The most explicit statement suggesting changes in development policy came in the Treaty on European Union (the Maastricht Treaty). Article 130u states:

Community policy in the sphere of development cooperation, which shall be complementary to the policies pursued by Member States, shall foster: the sustainable economic and social development of the developing countries and more particularly the most disadvantaged among them; the smooth and gradual integration of the developing countries into the world economy; the campaign against poverty in the developing countries.

Community policy in this area shall contribute to the general objectives of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

A Commission document on Development Cooperation Policy in the Run-Up to 2000 (commonly referred to as the Horizon 2000 document) elaborated on these principles. It is worth noting that economic development was defined as consisting of:

- restoring the major macro-economic balances, through a stabilisation phase the length and cost, particularly social cost, of which have often been underesti-mated (sic);

- then a further reaching operation to restructure the economic fabric, the main component of which is the liberalisation of economic activities, which must be achieved in a coordinated way at domestic level. Although the state is called
upon in this way to drop its role of direct investor, it must not neglect its role in creating the physical and regulatory environment which business needs in order to invest (European Commission, 1992, p.12).

These statements are indicative of a major change in attitude to what might be termed the traditional Lomé regime. As we have seen, Lomé aid has traditionally carried little conditionally. It had to be used to buy European project inputs, but there was no political or economic conditionality. Under Lomé 1 the EU gave aid to Mengistu’s communist regime in Ethiopia, whilst simultaneously giving aid to right wing regimes such as those of Banda in Malawi and Houphouët-Boigny’s in Ivory Coast, without making any demands for political change. Nor did the EU insist on economic conditionality, such as the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the IMF and the World Bank. The above extracts from the Maastricht Treaty and Horizon 2000 make it eminently clear that the EU is now insisting that what might be termed a liberal political and economic programme has to be adopted by recipients of its aid. In the next section we shall examine how this fundamental transformation came about.

The Road to Market

There were initial signs of change in the early to mid-1980s when DG8 (the Directorate General for Development in the Commission, which is responsible for administering the EDF) began to try to introduce some degree of EU control over the use of aid at the beginning of Lomé 3 (which ran from 1985-90) via what came to be known as ‘policy dialogue’. Essentially this consisted of negotiations between DG8 and the aid recipients during which the EU representatives put pressure on their ACP counterparts to focus aid on a particular sector, usually the agricultural sector. The EU had also tried to press for a human rights clause that would commit the ACP states to observing basic human rights, but without success. These initial moves towards conditionality were prompted by growing EU disquiet that its aid was being misused by the ACP states. Internal documentation also indicated that the Commission was coming to accept the view that ACP failure to develop and, in particular, improve its exports to the EU, was caused by the internal policy failures of interventionist ACP governments that had distorted their own markets (Kiel Study, 1984). This was, of course, very similar to the views popularised by the World Bank in the well known Berg Report. By the end of the 1980s the EU had been able to move much closer towards an explicit alignment with the Bretton Woods Institutions in arguing that market orientated macro-economic reforms were necessary in the ACP states and particularly in Africa (see, for example, European Commission, ‘Structural Adjustment’, 1990). This leap towards a more rigorous conditional approach had been made possible at least in part by the depth of economic crisis facing most of the African states, which destroyed much of the leverage they had gained during the more favourable 1970s. Furthermore, the quick disbursing sectoral and general import programmes that the EU mounted in response to this crisis were initially funded from outside the Lomé Convention, which made it possible to impose new conditionality. Usually this meant that the recipients had to have a Fund/Bank approved structural adjustment programme.

When it came to negotiating Lomé 4 the ACP states were anxious to retain access to the short term relief offered by the import programmes. Consequently, it was fairly unproblematic for the EU to retain adjustment conditionality as the price for incorporating such programmes into the new convention. However, the principle that the ACP should retain the acquis (or acquired rights) that they had gained under
previous agreements was taken to mean that conditionality could not be applied to the whole aid budget. In the end a new structural adjustment window was created worth ECU 1.15 billion as compared with a total aid budget of ECU 12 billion. However, a proportion of each ACP country’s allocation of aid (its National Indicative Programme, or NIP) could be allocated to sectoral and general import programmes. The EU also managed to have article 5 inserted into Lomé 4, under which the ACP states committed themselves to promoting human rights – but, the Union was given no sanctions in the event of an ACP abuse of such rights.

Whilst Lomé 4 was being negotiated, events in Eastern Europe took a dramatic turn with the fall of communism and the liberation of the Warsaw Pact states from Soviet domination. As many commentators have observed, this had serious implications for Africa inasmuch as it meant the emergence of a rival area for aid funding. It had particularly serious implications for the Lomé Convention, for the newly democratised states of Eastern Europe proved willing to accept liberal political and economic conditionality. Officials within the Commission and the Council of Ministers began to compare Eastern European commitment to reform with that of the ACP and found the latter group lacking. One high-ranking EU official observed that the most striking quality of many African leaders was their ‘mediocrity’ and ‘their lack of any new ideas’. They tended to indulge in a stale ‘third worldist rhetoric’, blaming the Lomé Convention for their own failure to develop. As we have seen, there was a growing tendency within the EU to argue that the ACP states in general had failed to take advantage of Lomé due to their own policy errors. It also became increasingly common to argue that many states had misallocated and abused EU aid because they were generally corrupt, inefficient and authoritarian. Such views led the Europeans to reconsider the terms they had negotiated for Lomé 4 and find them lacking. As noted above, market conditionality only applied to a small part of Lomé aid and Article 5 only constituted a promise to observe human rights. By contrast, the charter for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development made all its aid for Eastern Europe conditional on observance of free market policies, human rights, democratic procedures and open and accountable government (the observations in the above paragraph are largely based on confidential interviews with EU personnel conducted in June 1992 and June-July 1995).

Growing EU disenchantment with the existing terms of the Lomé Convention, combined with the obligation to develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) under the terms of the Maastricht Treaty, led EU policymakers to the conclusion that the preferential treatment being offered to the ACP states should be ended. As much was indicated by Article 130u of the Maastricht Treaty and the Horizon 2000 document, both of which explicated the need to premise all EU aid on market and political conditionality, as indicated above. The Maastricht Treaty commitment to develop a CFSP also raises the question of what role aid is supposed to play as an aspect of European foreign policy, and (potentially at least) as a tool for securing European interests. We shall proceed to an examination of how the EU has begun to apply the principles of Maastricht to the Lomé regime during Lomé 4 (mk 1) and the negotiations for the Mid-Term review.

The Convention of Adjustment

The EU moved quickly to ensure that political conditionality was applied to the ACP states, regardless of any ‘acquis’. A 1991 meeting of the EU Council of Ministers unilaterally passed a Resolution making Lomé aid conditional on ‘sensible economic
and social policies, democratic decision making, adequate governmental transparency and financial accountability, creation of a market-friendly environment for development, measures to combat corruption, as well as respect for the rule of law, human rights, and the freedom of the press and expression' (Resolution of the Council on Human Rights, ‘Democracy and Development’, 10107/91, Annex 1). This legal basis was used to suspend aid to a number of ACP states from 1992 onwards. At the end of 1994 eight states remained under suspension due to security problems, lack of democratic procedures, or abuses of human rights. They included Gambia, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Togo and Zaire. Additionally, aid programmes to Burundi and Rwanda had been suspended *de facto* due to the crisis situations in those countries (European Commission, ‘EDF Operations in 1994’, 1995).

However, the EU did not develop any particular definitive set of political criteria against which to measure the ACP states. The Commission officials involved in application of political conditionality explained that observance of a predetermined set of criteria, violation of which would automatically lead to sanctions, would be too rigid. They argued that different regimes required different treatment which necessitated a case by case approach. This enables the Union to apply political conditionality in a nuanced manner, only enforcing the ultimate sanction of suspending aid with the most obdurate regimes. However, it also laid the EU open to accusations of unequal treatment of different ACP states. It was argued that for a period France used its influence to shield Togo from the new dispensation, although that country has subsequently suffered suspension (confidential interviews with EU personnel, June 1992). Perhaps the central complaint about the procedure adopted in the wake of the 1991 resolution pertained to its unilateral nature. Suspension measures against various ACP states have provoked protests from the ACP group, not against the suspensions as such, but against the unilateral nature of the procedure (European Research Office, ‘Human Rights and Democracy’). Various institutions were set up under the terms of the Lomé Convention in order to give the ACP a voice in the running of the Lomé regime, including an ACP-EU Joint Assembly. The Joint Assembly has gone on record condemning various ACP states for human rights abuses, but it nevertheless resents the failure of the EU to consult it on sanctions to be taken against these states.

With regard to aid carrying structural adjustment conditionality, Lomé 4 (mk 1) saw a tremendous growth in disbursement of this type of funding. Aid for structural adjustment accounted for less than 5 per cent of disbursements under Lomé 3, but by December 1994 it accounted for 24 per cent of allocation decisions. This was not only financed from the new Structural Adjustment Support Facility, which had disbursed ECU 744 million (out of its total allocation of ECU 1.15 billion); it was also taken from the programmed aid allocated to each individual country (the NIP). By the end of December 1994 it had been decided to use ECU 251 million of NIP funding as adjustment aid. This represented about 9 per cent of NIP decisions taken up to that point under Lomé 4 and some 30 per cent of disbursements. The Commission accepts that the proportion of programmable assistance has fallen from 65 per cent to 57 per cent. However, it must also be borne in mind that Stabex funding is increasingly being used for structural adjustment (European Research Office, ‘Trends in the Utilisation of EDF Resources’). Clearly, DG8 is mobilising as much EU aid as it can for adjustment programmes.

However, this does not only reflect an EU will to apply economic conditionality. The import programmes that carry such conditionality are quick disbursing facilities and
this has enabled DG8 to overcome a long standing problem with Lomé aid – its slow disbursement rate. This had been a matter of great concern to DG8, which noted that at the end of 1989, nine years after the signing of Lomé 2 in 1980, some ECU 530 million remained uncommitted to projects and over ECU 830 million had not been disbursed (European Commission, 'From Lomé 3 to Lomé 4: Review of Aid at the End of 1989', 1991). EU officials attributed this slow rate of spending to the inability of the ACP states to produce project proposals of the requisite quality to win funding (interviews with EU personnel). The high disbursement rates associated with the import programmes helped to raise the spending rates for Lomé aid to acceptable levels. However, the drawback with this arrangement was that it reduced the proportion of aid going into long term investments (development projects). The Commission itself recognises that the import programmes and other short term disbursement facilities (for example, for rehabilitation operations after emergencies) reduce 'the resources available for operations that promote long term development which should remain the EDF's ultimate objective' (European Research Office, 'Trends in the Utilisation of EDF Resources'). Thus, it would seem that the combined imperatives to enforce economic conditionality and spend aid quickly are pushing the EDF in the direction of becoming a short term disbursement facility rather than a force for long term development.

Another factor in the conditionality formula that further complicates the question of programming aid for long term development concerns policy dialogue. It will be remembered that this was the first manifestation of conditionality in Lomé aid, which took the form of negotiations between DG8 and each ACP state as to which sectors their respective aid allocations would be focused on. Each country's NIP would be based on the outcome of these negotiations. Initially these were fairly straightforward as they entailed establishing that aid would be used in support of each state's established development objectives. However, policy dialogue has moved from ensuring that aid is used in accordance with declared ACP policy to the position where it questions whether or not such policy is in line with the macro-economic preferences of the EU. The content of policy dialogue has also broadened as the EU has become interested in such matters as whether the ACP are committed to the free market and to democratic practices. All of this naturally creates more scope for policy disagreements and delay. Furthermore, many ACP states have low and declining state and administrative capacity and are unable to properly perform their role in the negotiations (European Research Office, 'Sustainable Development: The Role of Programming'). All of these factors tend to reinforce the above-mentioned tendency to appropriate growing amounts of aid for the quickly disbursing mechanisms at the expense of aid for long term development.

Ironically, Stabex, the one Lomé aid mechanism that was already a quick disburser, was subjected to reforms that introduced a number of delay prone procedures. From the earliest days of the convention, DG8 had been worried about the lack of accountability for ACP use of Stabex compensation which came in the form of a transfer of foreign exchange. Whilst this was potentially of great use to recipients, it also opened the system up to abuse. Consequently, in Lomé 4 the EU introduced the practice of negotiating a contract with each Stabex recipient, this being known as a 'framework of mutual obligation' (MFO). The framework would set out what the Stabex funding would be spent on and would establish a timetable for the spending of the aid. This gave the EU a voice in determining the use that the funding was put to. It also gave them a potential sanction in the event of abuse of the aid, for if funding was misappropriated from one phase of spending the EU could refuse to disburse future
tranches. Although this system might help to reduce abuses of the Stabex system, it has also introduced a new set of time consuming procedures that have slowed down disbursement of the aid. Only ten MFOs were agreed in 1992 and eight were agreed in 1993, although there were about 60 claims each year. It has been suggested that the new procedures associated with the MFOs have put a strain on both the ACP and the EU bureaucracies (interview with EU personnel, July 1995).

The operation of Stabex was also slowed down by the decision that wherever possible the funding should be used in support of structural adjustment. This has meant that aid has been delayed whilst the IMF and the World Bank have negotiated SAPs with various Stabex recipients. In addition Stabex was again found to be under-funded at ECU 1.5 billion for Lomé 4 (mk 1). Consequently, it has been unable to meet all the claims made on it during the first three years of Lomé 4. On average the coverage rate was 40.7 per cent and only ECU 110 million was left to cover the final year out of ECU 300 million that had originally been budgeted (European Communities, Court of Auditors, 'Special Report No. 295, The Stabex Fund in the context of the First Financial Protocol of the Fourth Lomé Convention', 1995). Not surprisingly this has raised ACP discontentment about the operation of the Stabex fund.

Overall it can be seen that the increasing impact of political and economic conditionality has had some undesirable effects on the Lomé regime, moving the emphasis of the EDF away from long term development loans to short term relief and introducing delays into the operation of Stabex. One might ask if the move towards conditionality was the only significant departure exhibited during the operation of Lomé 4. In fact, there were some other innovations worthy of note. Perhaps the most noteworthy developments consisted of a commitment to assist in the promotion of ACP private enterprises (in Title 8 of the Convention) and to aid trade development (Title 10). The EU promised to assist in the provision of management, advisory and start-up services, technical assistance and training in support of enterprise development. Little has actually been done in pursuit of these goals during Lomé 4 (mk 1).

However, the offer of trade assistance has led to the implementation of a ‘Trade Development Project’. The trading performance of the ACP has been one of the major disappointments of the Lomé regime since the ACP share of the EU market has been consistently in decline since the start of Lomé 1. In 1975 when Lomé 1 began, EU imports from the ACP stood at 7 per cent of total imports. By 1980 this had fallen to 4.2 per cent and by 1991 ACP exports to the EU stood at 3.7 per cent of all EU imports. The Trade Development Project is designed to improve this performance through provision of technical support, human resource development and trade information services to governments, trade operators and the business community in the ACP (details from European Commission, ACP-EEC Trade Development Project, 1993). As yet the project is in the early stages of implementation and it is too early to attempt to evaluate its effectiveness. The significant thing about it is that it indicates at least some level of continuing commitment to the Lomé regime on the part of the EU. Most of the other innovations that we have discussed have been more indicative of an EU desire to control its relationship with the ACP through the introduction of various types of conditionality. This tends to lend credence to the suggestion that the EU was losing faith in the ACP. Given that the EU was facing a new need to provide considerable aid for Eastern Europe it became all too feasible to argue that the EU was raising the conditionality targets that the ACP had to reach in the anticipation that they would fail, thus releasing funding for the East. However, the presence of innovations such as the Trade Development Project would seem to point in the opposite direction,
indicating an EU willingness to launch significant new initiatives to assist ACP development. In the next section we shall examine the negotiations and the terms finally agreed for the Mid-Term Review of Lomé 4 to see if these lend credence to the view that the EU is downgrading the Lomé relationship, or if they provide confirmation for a more optimistic view of Lomé’s future.

Towards the Horizon

A review of the EU proposals for the Mid-Term Review reveals an EU determination to continue with the imposition of conditionality on the Lomé regime. The EU communication to the ACP organised the Union’s negotiating position into four categories: being human rights, democratic values, the rule of law and good governance; enhanced dialogue; instruments and procedures for cooperation; and a residual category to deal with other questions such as the status of EU delegations in ACP countries and cultural cooperation. All of these categories, with the exception of the last one, entailed an introduction of conditionality, or at least a formalisation of conditionality that was already being put into practice during the operation of Lomé 4 (mk 1).

With regard to the first category, which clearly dealt with political conditionality, the EU wanted human rights and democracy to become an ‘essential element’ of the Convention. Whereas Lomé 4 (mk 1) had included a guarantee to observe human rights, the EU now wanted to extend coverage of the Convention so that it also bound the ACP to observe principles of good governance and to implement economic policies conducive to promotion of market economies and the private sector. The EU wanted to give this conditionality teeth by inserting a clause in the Convention enabling the Union to suspend the Convention (either partly or wholly) in the event of non-compliance by an ACP state.

Perhaps the central innovation proposed in the second category concerning enhanced dialogue was the proposal to divide the disbursement of each country’s NIP into at least two installments (this was termed ‘phased programming’). Disbursement of the second instalment would be conditional on adequate execution of projects and programmes financed from the first instalment of aid. Thus conditionality was now to be extended to all of the EU’s programmed aid and not just to the structural adjustment facility. There were a number of positive proposals to examine how the ACP might benefit more from the trade concessions of Lomé and to assist private sector development through such means as enhancing ACP commercial and financial services.

The third category dealing with the instruments and procedures for cooperation saw the EU attempt to undertake a fairly radical rewrite of the operation of the Convention to tip the balance of control decisively away from the ACP states to DG8. Hitherto, the official position has been that the ACP states are responsible for project formulation, appraisal and for drawing up the financing proposal (in reality, the EU delegations to the ACP states and the desk officers at DG8 have usually been fairly heavily involved in these processes). The Convention specifies that each ACP state has to appoint a National Authorising Officer to oversee these procedures. This was all part of the philosophy inherited from the first convention, which was distinctive for giving the ACP states a large measure of control over the aid that was entrusted to them. As we have seen, EU philosophy has moved radically in the opposite direction since that time and its proposals for the Mid-Term Review reflected this. Most notably, the EU
wished to transfer responsibility for preparation and appraisal of the projects and preparation of the financing proposals away from the ACP and to DG8. The Commission also wanted a technical cooperation instrument to be set up for each ACP state, which would enable DG8 to deploy technical assistance at its own discretion without interference from the ACP states. The European Council would not approve this proposal, but approval was given for negotiations to transfer project formulation, appraisal and writing of financial proposals to DG8. Critics noted that this went directly against current trends in development thinking which have put a stress on trying to build capacity in aid recipient states (details of EU negotiating mandate from ‘Background Information Briefings’ for conference of 28-29 April 1995 entitled *Europe and Africa: Defining a New Partnership*. Additional data drawn from European Research Office pamphlets entitled ‘Strengthening Policy Dialogue: Review of Procedures’; and ‘Modification of Instruments’). However, it falls directly in line with the suggestion that the EU had lost faith with the initial philosophy of the Lomé regime, which was one of power sharing with the aid recipients, and that it now wanted to exert its control over the ACP states.

The clearest aspect of these proposals is the EU desire to apply and formalise the use of wide ranging economic and political conditionality in just about every aspect of the Lomé Convention. To the extent that there are no major innovations designed to enhance aid to the ACP, as opposed to exerting control over disbursement of aid to the ACP, this EU negotiating mandate could be seen as a discouraging signal for the future of the Lomé Convention. This extension of conditionality can all too readily be interpreted as the overture to a reduction of aid to the ACP, which could then be redistributed to other recipients.

This seems especially to be the case if one examines the wrangle that took place over how large the aid envelope would be for Lomé 4 (mk 2). There is a long tradition of the various members of the EU holding up negotiations with the ACP whilst they argued amongst themselves as to how large the Lomé aid allocation would be and what they would each contribute to it. It has come to be the norm that the EU would make its aid offer at the very last minute in the negotiations with the ACP, the implicit understanding being that whatever the ACP may have asked for, there was no more money on the table. The Mid-Term Review did not break this tradition, with agreement only being reached at the last possible moment when the negotiations were scheduled to end on 31 June 1995.

The ACP had started out by asking for US$21 billion, but this plainly became an impossible target in the face of determination by both Britain and Germany to reduce their contributions to the Lomé Convention. This meant that France, which held the presidency of the European Council for the first six months of 1995, was struggling to obtain agreement over a proposed package of ECU 11.8 billion (US$17.55 billion), which was lower than the ECU 10.8 billion (US$14.25 billion) allocation for Lomé 4 (mk 1) in real terms. In the end, the EU’s June Summit at Cannes agreed to a sum of ECU 13.3 billion (about US$17.55 billion), to which the EU added ECU 1.658 billion from the European Investment Bank (EIB) to give a total package of ECU 14.965 billion. However, it should be remembered that the EIB funding is lent at commercial rates and can only dubiously be termed aid. The aid money of ECU 13.3 billion covers a 21.5 per cent inflation rate over the period 1990-95, but it does not give the ACP states any real increase over the ECU 10.8 billion aid package for Lomé 4 (mk 1), particularly if one remembers that the latter deal was offered by an EU of twelve member states, whilst Lomé 4 (mk 2) was negotiated on behalf of a Union of fifteen
One thing that seems clear is that the ACP aid allocation is indeed being determined in relation to the allocations for Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean states adjoining the EU (although the impact of these developments has not as yet resulted in any decisive reverse for the ACP states as we shall see). A recent analysis of the EU's aid policies showed grant aid allocations for 1991-95 as follows: the ACP received ECU 10.8 billion; Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union received ECU 6.9 billion; the non-EU Mediterranean was given ECU 1.5 billion; and Asia and Latin America took ECU 2.9 billion between them. These figures indicate that the ACP were allocated nearly half (48.9 per cent) of total aid granted by the EU during 1991-95. It is instructive to compare these figures with the European Commission's proposed allocations for the rest of the decade, which proposes a division as follows; ECU 6.7 billion for East and Central Europe; ECU 2.734 billion for the former Soviet republics; and ECU 5.16 billion for the Mediterranean. It can be seen that the ACP share (at ECU 13.3 billion) has declined slightly to 47 per cent without taking into account whatever aid may be allocated for Asia and Latin America. However, if one takes into account EIB loans, the ACP share of aid is much lower given that ten former Eastern Bloc countries drew over ECU 2.6 billion over the period 1991-95, whilst the Mediterranean were allocated ECU 3.6 billion for 1992-6 and the ACP were allocated ECU 1.2 billion for 1991-95. These figures bring the ACP share of aid well below 50 per cent (data from reports by Ms D. Perceval, IPC and from ‘Editorial Material for Delegation Newsletters’, No. 5, May 1995).

Perhaps the most obvious trend that these figures show is a move towards emphasising aid for the Mediterranean states. This reflects EU strategic considerations. The Mediterranean states are much closer neighbours than the ACP and represent a sensitive area. The Union is concerned to stem the flow of illegal immigrants into Europe from North Africa and is also perturbed by the spectre of political Islam in Algeria. It therefore makes eminently good sense from the strategic point of view to give a greater emphasis to this neighbouring area as compared with the more remote ACP states. Many of the same considerations could be argued to apply to Eastern Europe, the economic and political stability of which is also very important to the EU. Given the post-Maastricht mandate for the Union to develop a CFSP, it seems logical that the EU should use aid to secure the stability and alliance of these important neighbouring areas, thus relegating the ACP states to a backseat status in which their aid would be cut to release funding for use in these more strategic areas. The aforementioned figures do show that aid for Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean areas has been raised, but not to such an extent that ACP aid has collapsed. Whilst the allocation to Lomé 4 (mk 2) may be disappointing it cannot be interpreted as signalling any definitive policy decision to sideline the Lomé regime.

This is reflective of the difficulties that tend to beset the EU when it tries to coordinate policy in strategically sensitive areas. As most observers would agree, EU policies are usually the outcome of negotiations between different member states with often variant interests and aims. The division of aid over the period of 1995-2000 was largely the outcome of arguments between Germany, which wanted to maximise aid to Eastern Europe, Southern European states that wanted to ensure a substantial aid allocation for the Mediterranean area, and France which wanted a successful conclusion to the negotiations for Lomé 4 (mk 2). These variant positions can be seen...
as reflecting the politico-strategic interests of the respective states. Germany's geographical position gives it a clear interest in promoting relations with Eastern Europe and the same might be argued to explain Southern European partisanship for the Mediterranean states. France stands out as the only remaining EU state with serious interests in sub-Saharan Africa and it is notable that the French did everything in their power to try and ensure that the Mid-Term Review was completed by the end of their presidency on 31 June 1995. This included raising their own contribution to the EDF (from ECU 2.666 billion in Lomé 4, mk 1 to ECU 3.12 billion) so that they have overtaken Germany as the largest contributors to the Lomé Convention. The French spokeswoman, Catherine Collona, noted that 'Germany and France are now contributing more than 50 per cent of this fund' (report by Ms D. Perceval, IPC). ACP reaction was that the offer represented a bare minimum, but they indicated their recognition of France's role by thanking the French representatives for their efforts during the negotiations.

The ACP could also be grateful that the basis for financing the Lomé Convention was not changed. The EDF is not financed from the EU budget as is the case with aid to other areas. Instead the EU member states have to pledge a separate amount of aid when the EDF is negotiated for each convention. This is thought to have at least one advantage for the ACP states in that it insulates them to some degree from competition for their aid. However, many of the EU member states have grown to resent this arrangement, seeing no reason to give the ACP states this special treatment. The MTR saw a number of demands for the Lomé Convention to be budgetised, which would allow Lomé aid to be compared more directly with aid to the ACP's rivals. France apparently held out against this proposal and their opposition was enough to stifle it on this occasion (interviews with EU personnel, July 1995).

Given that the outcome to the aid negotiations was far from disastrous, it might be asked how the ACP fared with regard to the other aspects of the Convention, most notably trade and the question of conditionality. In the sphere of trade a number of piecemeal concessions were made. Whereas the ACP had asked for tariff reductions of 36 per cent on some farm products covered by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EU granted 16 per cent tariff reductions. Quotas were also relaxed or increased for a variety of products such as canned tuna, fresh figs and strawberries. The rules of origin were also modified to allow 10-15 per cent of value added created in certain neighbouring developing areas to be counted towards the amount required to allow ACP goods free access to the EU market. As we have seen, these rules were thought to obstructACP diversification because they required ACP exports to the Union to incorporate a large amount of value added produced within the ACP exporter (usually some 50 per cent). Most ACP states were incapable of producing processed goods that met this criterion. This new cumulative clause may help to foster some regional cooperation and win greater access for some ACP products.

The remaining central issue was how far the EU would be able to impose its proposals on conditionality. It is worth noting that the structural adjustment facility was retained and increased from ECU 1.15 billion in Lomé 4 (mk1) to ECU 1.4 billion for the remainder of Lomé 4. The EU also took the opportunity to formalise the practice of using Stabex funds for structural adjustment. Perhaps the main gain for the EU was that it was able to impose the principle that aid to the ACP states should be disbursed in two tranches. The first tranche will consist of 70 per cent of total programmed aid, which will be disbursed over the first three years of Lomé 4 (mk 2). The second
tranche will only be released in light of an assessment of how the first tranche was spent. The criteria that will determine whether the second tranche will be released or not are yet to be fully defined. However, the EU Commissioner for the ACP states and South Africa, Joao de Deus Pinheiro, commented that the system would be in keeping with the EU's future Lomé motto – 'efficiency and effectiveness'. He further commented that

The two tranche procedure will give more money to those who absorb money well, whereas in the case of those who do not use it for whatever reason, their money will be used on others who do. There will be no more sterile money in the Convention (The Courier, No. 153, p. 7).

Clearly the traditional problem of slow disbursement is a major concern for Pinheiro. The proposal to focus aid on the countries that can best absorb it has rather mixed implications. On the one hand, poor countries with low absorptive capacities are likely to be penalized for reasons that are beyond their control. Such an outcome is hardly in accord with the Maastricht commitment to focus aid on the poorest. However, if this system provides an incentive to produce more viable project proposals it may help to (at least partially) reverse the aforementioned trend to spend an increasing proportion of Lomé aid on short term import programmes. This may be seen as a dubious proposition inasmuch as there is nothing concrete in the proposal to improve the capacity either of ACP states or DG8 to produce such proposals. Given that there are already doubts about DG8's capacity to perform some of its present duties, it might be asked how practical it is to premise release of the second tranche on evaluations of each ACP state's record in using the first tranche. The Commission can hardly base a decision on a cursory examination of a state's spending record. It must ensure that the money has been spent correctly and efficiently. This may not be an easy task to accomplish in all 70 of the ACP states in a short period. In other words, it seems likely that the procedure will lead to delays in release of the second tranche. Nevertheless, the EU is probably pleased that it has succeeded in applying a measure of conditionality to all of its aid. We can be sure that an ACP state's absorptive capacity will not be the only criterion in deciding release of the second tranche. The political and economic conditionalities mentioned before will also come into play in any such decision.

If the two tranche system was the main gain for the EU, the ACP can at least console itself that it was able to circumvent the proposed programming changes that would have transferred responsibility for most stages of project design and appraisal to DG8. It may well be that the Commission decided not to press this issue in light of the demands that some of the other proposals (such as the need to evaluate ACP performances at the end of the first tranche of aid) were likely to make on them. The ACP states were also able to make a substantial gain when the EU pressed for introduction of a human rights suspension clause. Any suspension of aid or trade preferences for breaches of human rights can only be done after consultation with the ACP states. Thus, the present system of unilateral EU suspensions of aid has been replaced by a more consensual approach. However, this system only applies in the case of human rights suspensions and does not extend to release of the second tranche of aid (details of Lomé 4 from The Courier, No. 153, pp. 6-8; interviews with EU personnel in July 1995; reports by Ms D. Perceval, IPC; and 'Editorial Material for Delegations Newsletters', No. 7, July 1995).
Conclusion

At the beginning of this article we noted the declining enthusiasm for the Lomé Convention, especially on the part of the EU, and we posed the question of whether Europe's commitment had collapsed to the extent that it would allow the convention to die. It is clear that the ACP states face increasing rivalry for EU aid from Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. Equally, it is clear that these two areas have more strategic value to the EU than do the ACP states. Only France among the EU member states seems to be unequivocally in favour of the Lomé Convention. It must be asked whether this narrow base of support will be adequate to secure ACP interests, especially as France may have divided loyalties. The French have a strong reason to support the Union's Mediterranean initiative in the hope that it will staunch the flow of North African immigrants into France. If ever forced to a choice between continuing the EU-ACP relationship and developing the relationship with the Mediterranean the French would have pressing reasons to opt for the latter. Certainly, there is a body of opinion in the EU which suggests that support for Lomé is so low that there is unlikely to be a Lomé 5. It has been argued that there is no logic in grouping such disparate regions as Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean together and that they should be dealt with as separate areas rather than as a bloc. It is also notable that the Horizon 2000 document makes no mention of the Lomé Convention and does deal with each of the areas separately. All of this is indicative that the Lomé Convention has lost its unchallenged primary position in the EU's policy towards developing areas and may be suggestive of a more decisive loss of favour. However, the outcome of the MTR hardly reflects an apocalyptic decline for the Lomé Convention. The aid levels are just barely adequate, but they do not represent an actual cut. Of course the decisive role of France in achieving this outcome must be remembered, but even so the emphasis has been on making aid conditional and exerting greater EU control of ACP policy rather than on withdrawing from the relationship with the ACP. Indeed, it would be difficult to justify such a radical policy reverse as ending the Lomé Convention. There would be an outcry from the ACP states and many development NGOs who constitute quite a well organised lobby in Brussels. It seems unlikely that the Lomé regime will actually die, but it is clear that the ACP will face increased competition for aid from the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe and it will have to deal with more interference in the form of conditionality. This will be especially the case if Lomé aid is budgetised in accordance with the views of most of the EU member states. In conclusion it seems most likely that there will be a Lomé 5, but the ACP states and the pro-development lobby will have their work cut out if they are to avoid further decline.

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Note: For the sake of simplicity I have referred to the European Union throughout, although the EU as such has only recently come into existence. This article is based in part on interviews with various EU personnel conducted in June 1992 and June/July 1995. Use was made of The Courier and the EU newsletter, 'Editorial Material for Delegation Newsletters'. Special thanks are due to Ms Debra Perceval of IPC who made her informative and timely reports on the Lomé negotiations available to me. I am equally indebted to Dr Paul Goodison of the European Research Office who supplied me with valuable ERO documentation. It should be noted that most of the ERO documents cited were produced over the period of June 1994 to July 1995, although none of them were individually dated.
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Briefings

The Global Coalition for Africa: Towards a Broader Dialogue?

Ernest Harsch

The debates initiated by the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) took a particularly heated turn during the final hours of its November 1995 conference in the Dutch city of Maastricht. One African leader after another, responding to repeated exhortations from Northern donor representatives to ‘take ownership’ of their economic and political reform programmes, stood up to vent their frustrations over the exacting aid conditions often laid down by external financial institutions – and over African governments’ limited ability to do anything but accept them.

‘Why don’t we just tell them to go to hell?’ asked Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, echoing a suggestion by former World Bank president Robert McNamara, one of the co-chairs of the GCA. ‘We can’t’, Meles answered his own question. ‘We need the money’. In virtually similar terms, Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania and a long-time critic of the structural adjustment programmes pushed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), concluded: ‘Africa can no longer resist structural adjustment. In any case, how can Africa resist? You can’t resist when you want the money.’ Even Kwesi Botchwey, former Ghanaian finance minister and an early proponent of structural adjustment, acknowledged that as long as African governments ‘feel constrained to “own” and “accept” investment priorities and policy choices in order to obtain vital aid resources’, all talk of African ownership of the reform initiatives would remain a ‘sham’.

Such candor, relatively rare at high-level international conferences on Africa, was a hallmark of the GCA’s gathering, the first of its kind since the Dutch government hosted a similar meeting on Africa in Maastricht in 1990. Organized around the theme of ‘Africa’s Future and the World’, and capping several days of academic discussions, meetings by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and cultural events in the city, the conference took up issues ranging from democratization and conflict resolution to economic reform priorities and Africa’s interactions with the outside world.

The several hundred participants at the formal plenary sessions on 27/28 November – who included five African presidents and four prime ministers, representatives of key donor agencies and institutions, and a healthy sprinkling of academics and NGO leaders – generally avoided prepared statements and heeded the call by Dutch Development Cooperation Minister Jan Pronk, another GCA co-chair, to engage in ‘open, frank political discussion’. Since the main purpose of the conference was not only to identify areas of ‘consensus’ but also to stimulate debate on contentious issues, the spontaneity of the discussions was for the most part welcomed, even when it spilled beyond the GCA’s own specified agenda.

From its inception, the GCA has billed itself as an informal platform for policy dialogue, highlighting selected issues deemed to merit more intensive or focused
discussion among policy-makers than has generally occurred in other fora. It was one of the first venues at which donor representatives spelled out their conceptions of ‘good governance’, pressed African governments to place a higher priority on population policy, faced up to the role of multinational corporations in promoting corruption, and acknowledged some of the shortcomings of standard structural adjustment programmes.

Not only has the GCA’s agenda been selective, but so has its composition, with discussions involving primarily donor representatives and those African governments that generally have accepted structural adjustment and the need for ‘good governance’. But as the discussions and participation in the Maastricht conference seemed to suggest, the GCA is now moving to broaden those limited parameters to some extent. This was partly signalled by the addition of three new co-chairs – Prime Minister Meles, Benin’s President Nicéphore Soglo, and Canada’s Minister of State for Africa Christine Stewart – beyond the GCA’s previous three, Pronk, McNamara, and Botswana President Ketumile Masire. It was also marked by a greater involvement of NGOs and academics and by a certain distancing from the structural adjustment orthodoxy of the Coalition’s early years.

Origin and Background

The initial idea for the GCA was floated by the World Bank. In the final section of its major 1989 report, Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, the Bank noted that a number of international institutional arrangements for assisting Africa’s development already existed, most notably the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). Observing that UNPAAERD was slated to end the next year, the Bank continued: ‘To take this initiative a step further, a new global coalition is proposed for the 1990s’. The very last paragraph of the report then stated:

The proposed global coalition for Africa would be a forum in which African leaders (not just from the public sector, but also from private business, the professions, the universities, and other NGOs) could meet with their key partners – the bilateral and multilateral agencies and major foreign NGOs – to agree on general strategies that would then provide broad guidance for the design of individual country programs. The coalition could seek agreement on actions to tackle the priorities identified in this report: environmental protection, capacity building, population policy, food security, and regional integration and cooperation. It could provide the impetus for channeling external assistance to programs in these areas and for monitoring programs. The creation of this coalition would be a decisive new step forward for Africa and its partners. It would mark a new resolve to work together for a better future. (World Bank, 1989:194).

In response, the Dutch government organized a high-level international conference on Africa in July 1990 in Maastricht. Now known as ‘Maastricht I’, the conference was co-chaired by Pronk, McNamara and Masire and drew senior representatives from virtually all African countries, as well as officials of major bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and institutions. The conference’s declared aim was to forge a consensus on Africa’s reform process, with a particular stress on ‘improved governance’. As a follow-up, the ‘troika’ agreed to constitute the GCA and to prepare further informal discussions, establishing for that purpose a small secretariat ‘which might be provided by an existing institution’ (Pronk, 1990).

The secretariat was subsequently set up in Washington, with the ‘existing institution’ being the World Bank and addi-
tional funding coming from a number of UN agencies and several African governments. An Advisory Committee was set up consisting of eight African and eight donor-country economics ministers, as well as top officials of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), World Bank, IMF, and several UN agencies. At its first meeting in Paris in September 1991, the Advisory Committee specified the GCA’s role as ‘a political validation process facilitating exchanges of views on those critical African development issues not adequately addressed at present.’ It further clarified that the Coalition ‘should not be construed as a fund-raising vehicle in the traditional sense, but rather as a process that will create the enabling environment for domestic and international investment and place Africa competitively on the world investment map.’

(GCA, 1992:250)

Some of the early concerns about the GCA’s role now appear to have been over-drawn. With a mandate limited to organizing periodic meetings and with no capacity to finance specific policy measures or programmes, it was unlikely that the GCA would have been able to develop as any kind of alternative to the main multilateral institutions, even if that had been its intention. Moreover, the overall stagnation and even decline in donor aid to Africa in recent years has made it very difficult for the GCA to play a significant ‘catalyst’ role, as it had originally envisioned.

Instead, the GCA has operated mainly as a discussion group, as it said it would. Toward that end, it organized further annual meetings of its Advisory Committee in Kampala, Cotonou, and Harare. It co-sponsored, with the government of Japan and the United Nations, the 1993 Tokyo International Conference on African Development. And it commissioned studies on topics ranging from population and agricultural policies to democratization and external financing. Through these activities, the GCA has served to reflect the current thinking of an influential component of the ‘donor community,’ as well as of those African governments that have succeeded in securing a measure of donor confidence. It has, moreover, provided a forum in which some the differences and tensions within those circles could be more freely aired, perhaps because the discussions have been kept within a limited range of basic viewpoints.

Opening the Doors

From the outset, the GCA proclaimed the importance of involving NGOs and civil society representatives in the discussions over political reform and development strategy in Africa. However, this was not reflected initially in its own structure or meetings, which were dominated overwhelmingly by government officials and representatives of the multilateral and
bilateral donor institutions. Several prominent NGOs, such as Partnership Africa Canada, were invited at the last minute to the GCA’s 1991 Advisory Committee meeting in Paris, but chose not to go because they had already committed themselves to attend the UN’s final review of UNPAAERD. Some GCA officials later raised a variety of logistical obstacles, such as difficulty in determining which NGOs were genuinely representative.

By 1993 it became clear that not all within the GCA favoured such a de facto exclusion of non-governmental voices. Parallel to the GCA’s June 1993 Advisory Committee meeting in Cotonou, Benin, the Dutch government financed a seminar of African NGOs in nearby Porto-Novo. Pronk personally assured the NGOs that the GCA would place a higher priority on working with them, and a representative of the African NGOs was permitted to deliver a short message to the Advisory Committee meeting in Cotonou (Härsch, 1993).

This tentative overture took a more serious turn two years later, when three days of academic and NGO conferences were organized in Maastricht just prior to the official GCA meetings, and selected ‘civil society’ representatives were invited to take part in the GCA’s Advisory Committee and plenary sessions. While generally welcoming the opportunity to address Africa’s political reform process and other issues on the GCA agenda, a number of academic and NGO participants expressed continued skepticism.

During the final session of the academic conference, held at the University of Limburg, a one-on-one debate was organized between Yash Tandon of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Zimbabwe and Herman Cohen, a member of the GCA secretariat in Washington (and a former US assistant secretary of state for African affairs). Tandon sharply criticized ‘good governance’ as an external model benefiting foreign corporations and African elites. He also accused the GCA of being ‘top-down’ and ‘patronizing’ and of operating within an economic and political reform framework set by the World Bank and the Western governments. In reply, Cohen denied that the GCA was seeking to impose a specific agenda on Africa, affirming that the Coalition welcomed open dialogue and sought to serve as a platform within which Africans could put forward their views to the donor community.

The question of GCA-NGO relations came to a head at the NGO/civil society conference the next day, with numerous NGO representatives urging the Coalition to open its doors. Both Pronk and McNamara agreed. McNamara praised Pronk in particular for having pushed for greater NGO participation ‘from the beginning of the GCA’. McNamara acknowledged that such suggestions had initially met resistance from within the Coalition, in part because working with NGOs can be ‘damned annoying at times’.

A half-dozen or so non-governmental participants were able to speak in the subsequent plenary sessions, and the co-chairs indicated that more formal channels for NGO participation would be established in the near future. A statement read out to the plenary on behalf of African NGOs urged the GCA to remain ‘an independent and inclusive forum for genuine dialogue and consensus-building between Africa and its development partners in the North’, while also expressing deep concern about ‘subtle attempts to use the GCA as a conduit for implementing wrong and unpopular economic policies imposed on Africa by the World Bank and the IMF’.

Democracy and Governance

Both at the academic conference and the main plenary sessions, much of the discussion, especially by African partici-
pants, focused on redefining governance and democracy in more precise and appropriate terms than those often put forth by Northern donor representatives. The question ‘whose governance?’, the explicit theme of the University of Limburg conference, ran like a thread through the GCA debates as well.

‘Democracy is not limited to elections or a multiparty system’, Frene Ginwala, the speaker of South Africa’s Parliament, told the plenary. ‘You need the freedom of association. You need the freedom of information. You need the freedom to challenge and to monitor government and other officials. Without that kind of society, democracy becomes a ritual.’

President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea declared that ‘good governance should be viewed not as a mere function of the multiplicity of political parties, but in terms of the real empowerment of the people in all their diversity. With the right mix of policies, diversity can enrich the democratic process and enhance national cohesion.’ Among steps towards that end, he suggested affirmative action for deprived groups, constitutional guarantees of the cultural integrity and linguistic heritage of different peoples and the consolidation of effective regional and sub-regional cooperation.

Hassan Sunmonu, secretary-general of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, stated that peace and stability can come only through democracy. ‘Not a democracy imposed on Africa’, he added, ‘but one that it has designed for itself.’ He cited the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, adopted at a conference in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1990, as providing many of the essential elements of such a democratic vision.

At the academic conference, several speakers, among them Brian van Arkadie, a consultant based in Tanzania, and Jacques Bugnicourt, executive secretary of Environment and Development Action, Third World (ENDA), headquartered in Senegal, stressed the importance of examining good governance and democratization within the context of structural adjustment. To some extent, they suggested, the external financial institutions’ preferences for economic liberalization were influencing the particular forms of governance and democracy they favoured in Africa. At the same time, there also were inherent contradictions between the two processes.

Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia hit on one of those contradictions during the GCA plenary sessions. Excessive donor conditionality – or ‘micro-management,’ as he put it – tended to cut across genuine political pluralism in Africa. When reform packages are ‘written down, to the last comma, outside Africa’, competing political parties within African countries are unable to present voters with real alternative programmes. ‘Multipartyism becomes a sham, a choice between personalities rather than a choice between policies’, he said. ‘Africa is not being given the chance to choose between policies.’ Instead, ‘there is only one party, the IMF and World Bank party.’

Both at the NGO/civil society conference and at the main GCA sessions, issues of political and democratic rights also came repeatedly to the fore. These were pushed most sharply by Nigerian Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka, who was able to address both gatherings, and Amnesty International Secretary-General Pierre Sané, who delivered the keynote address to the NGOs. To sustained applause from the GCA participants, Soyinka fervently denounced the executions of nine human rights and environmental activists by the Nigerian military regime and urged the imposition of an international oil embargo (a call that was also taken up by the African NGOs participating in the GCA plenary). President Alpha Oumar Konar, of Mali called the executions in Nigeria ‘shameful for Africa’, while Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe argued that
elected leaders in Africa must ‘take exception to military dictatorships in countries like Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Gambia’. In accord with the GCA’s standard practice of not adopting formal positions, the plenary itself did not take up Soyinka’s call for a boycott of Nigeria, although Pronk revealed at a later press conference that the Nigerian government had not been invited to attend the Maastricht conference.

The question of African women’s political, social, and economic rights was not specifically on the Maastricht agenda, nor had it previously featured as one of the GCA’s chosen topics of discussion. But coming just a few months after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, it was perhaps inevitable that such issues would push themselves to the floor. Tanzania’s Gertrude Mongella, general-secretary of the Beijing conference, criticized the GCA for not reflecting the Beijing decisions in its documents and for not including women on its discussion agenda. Others speakers pointed to the predominance of men on the conference podium.

It may have been in response to such criticisms that the GCA decided to include a woman, Christine Stewart, among its new co-chairs. McNamara also announced, at the end of the conference, that he would likely resign as a co-chair in 1996 – on condition that he is replaced by an African woman. And when the GCA co-chairs highlighted the five main topics that the Coalition would likely take up in future discussions, they listed conflict prevention, governance, economic growth, regional cooperation, and, for the first time, ‘the full empowerment and productive employment of women, and recognition of the crucial role they play in the political, economic and social development of their countries.’

Corruption: ‘It Takes Two to Tango’

One commonly cited obstacle to ‘good governance’ in Africa was the prevalence of corruption. But rather than just blaming Africans for being corrupt, as has often been the case in external discussions of the subject, the GCA plenary frequently turned to its international nature, especially the role that donor governments and multinational corporations have often played in promoting it. ‘It takes two to tango’, as Britain’s minister for overseas development, Baroness Linda Chalker, acknowledged.

This point was highlighted very strongly by Peter Eigen, chairman of Transparency International, an NGO devoted to combatting corruption worldwide. ‘The principal source of grand corruption is in the North,’ he affirmed. In collaboration with the GCA, Transparency International has been active in a number of Africa countries, including Benin, South Africa, Malawi, and Uganda, in helping governments, political parties, NGOs, and other sectors develop legislation and practices that would make bribery and other forms of corruption more difficult.

When Eigen noted that the bribing of foreign officials is legal in most Northern countries, and even officially supported in some of them, a number of African participants expressed shock. If Northern governments are themselves promoting corruption in developing countries, asked Ugandan Finance Minister J. Mayanja-Nkangi, ‘what is the moral strength of pointing fingers only at Africa?’ Former Malian head of state Amadou Toumani Tour, noted that even when corrupt former officials are brought to trial, as has happened in Mali, it often proves very difficult to retrieve embezzled funds if they have been deposited in foreign accounts.
Structural Adjustment and ‘the Right to Differ’

Although much of the debate on economic issues assumed the need for far-reaching policy reforms, including further liberalization, there was a notable reluctance to continue championing structural adjustment as a panacea for Africa’s ills, at least in its most extreme pro-market and anti-state variants. Many seemed to agree with Pronk’s statement that ‘We need to put an end to traditional structural adjustment programmes, which looked only to the short-term. We need to replace these models with something better suited to Africa.’

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the UN Development Programme’s assistant administrator and regional director for Africa, argued that African countries should ‘banish forever the name structural adjustment’, with ‘its Bretton Woods institution imprimatur’. She added, ‘Policy measures, reform or otherwise, should be adopted because they are the right thing to do and not because this is what the World Bank or the IMF require. This means we must have the right to differ’. For example, she said, African countries may choose to subsidize agriculture as a means of achieving food security, as long as it is affordable, or move cautiously on privatization in order to preserve infant industries. They should also reallocate resources away from debt servicing and conspicuous consumption and towards education, health, food security, and gender equality.

It was within this context that the African complaints about external conditionality erupted. Speakers from Benin, Chad, Mauritania, and other countries complained that such conditions are often contradictory and confusing, with unrealistic expectations about prompt results. ‘Some of our international financial partners are not very realistic in approaching our problems’, noted Mozambican Prime Minister Pascoal Mocumbi. ‘It does not make sense to set goals that cannot be attained’. He questioned the wisdom of large-scale privatization in a country like Mozambique, which is recovering from decades of war, where two-thirds of the population lives in poverty and where almost no Mozambicans have capital to take over privatized enterprises.

Prime Minister Meles characterized negotiations with donor agencies as a process of ‘Chinese torture’, in which the donors apply constant pressure, over long periods of time, ‘until you are finally frustrated out of your wits’. He cited the example of a specific dispute with the World Bank, involving little more than a difference of three months in the opening of foreign exchange bureaus within Ethiopian banks. ‘Give us the benefit of the doubt’, he appealed. ‘We can’t have trust if you try to micro-manage our economies’.

The Travails of Globalization

The final plenary session, on ‘Africa and the world’, dealt largely with the difficult international economic circumstances confronting the continent. IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus urged African countries to adjust to the rapid globalization of international trading and financial systems by increasing their competitiveness, diversifying their exports, and pushing much harder to integrate markets within Africa. If not, he warned, they will suffer the ‘risk of marginalization’.

Taking the floor shortly after Camdessus, Nyerere expressed concern that little attention was paid to issues of compensation to Africa during the Uruguay Round negotiations on liberalizing world trade, which GCA documents acknowledge will result in immediate net losses for Africa. This failure to consider compensation, noted Nyerere, came despite the fact that African countries had signed the final accords like everyone else, thus obligat-
ing themselves to further liberalization of their own trading practices. Despite concerns about aid dependency and about how aid is currently allocated and targeted, African and Northern participants generally agreed that the continent needs more aid. But there was little optimism about Africa’s ability to obtain it. While several donor representatives (mainly from the Nordic countries) pledged to maintain current aid levels, most participants believed it highly unlikely that development assistance will rise by any substantial amount in the near future – if it can even be maintained at current levels.

As a consequence, the conference placed a particular accent on the importance of alleviating the continent’s debt burden. The GCA co-chairs affirmed that the World Bank and IMF, with the Paris Club of creditor governments, should work with each low-income country to establish a comprehensive debt ‘exit strategy’. To applause, McNamara said that this should include reducing debt service payments to no more than 20 per cent of a country’s expected export earnings. ‘Decisions to this end should be taken in 1996’, he said in the concluding statement of the co-chairs. ‘For too many years effective action has been postponed.’

As for the GCA itself, the plenary concluded that the Coalition should continue for another five years. While Pronk saw considerable consensus on many of the topics taken up in Maastricht, he also highlighted a number of more contentious issues requiring further debate, including aid conditionality, demilitarization, and the role of the international arms trade (the latter two having been touched on only in passing in Maastricht). Besides doubling the number of co-chairs and promising to directly involve NGOs and civil society representatives, the GCA also decided to expand its Advisory Committee into a larger GCA Policy Forum. In addition to representatives of international institutions, the annual Policy Forum debates will be open to ‘all African countries committed to democratic policy reforms and sustainable human development’.

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Bibliography

The quotations from the November 1995 Maastricht conference are from the author’s notes and tapes, as well as from texts of addresses and statements distributed to conference participants.


Lesotho: Inner to Outer Periphery?
Roy Love

While the change to democratic government in South Africa has been welcomed by most people in what used to be termed the ‘front line’ states, the future relationship between these states and South Africa is likely to remain problematic for many of their inhabitants. Lesotho, in particular, may well now be in a process of transition from ‘dependent development’ to ‘dependent underdevelopment’ as a result of a surge of regional polarisation since the early 1990s.

Economic Background

The employment of Basotho mineworkers in South Africa alone provides a dramatic illustration. Between 1990 and 1993 the number of Basotho mineworkers employed in South Africa dropped from 127,330 to 108,688 with an accompanying fall in the value of remittances of over 60% (Bureau of Statistics, 1995). Although the main reason for mining retrenchment was recession in the industry due to a weak international gold price, this traditional form of dependence now combines with an increased concern within South Africa for its own high numbers of unemployed, estimated at around 40%. The re-employment of Basotho workers at the same high levels as before cannot therefore be guaranteed. This is a serious matter in a country like Lesotho where 22.7% of the labour force of almost 618,000 (Central Bank of Lesotho, 1993) is employed outside the country and which has an unemployment rate, in terms of adults having no income earning opportunities whatever, even in the informal sector, of around 35% (UNDP, 1995). In the non-urban lowlands of the country as many as 49% of households have at least one migrant worker member, whose contribution to household income averages around 45%. Even in the capital, Maseru, in the mid-1980s almost one in five households contained at least one migrant worker, contributing over 15% to household income on average (Household Budget Survey, 1986/7).

The situation worsened in November 1995 when agreement was reached between the NUM and the South African government that Basotho mineworkers of ten years standing could obtain South African citizenship. While this is a good agreement for the workers concerned, in terms of their entitlement to benefits, it implies a removal of their families to South Africa and a consequent reduction in remittances and deferred payments (which are retained in the Lesotho Bank until the end of a miner’s contract) thus reducing local multiplier effects of these money flows. There are many other Basotho employed in South Africa to whom this would be an attractive option were it extended to them.

Alternative employment opportunities for retrenched workers are severely limited. Although agriculture provides income to over 80% of the population, many of whom will be in that 25% of the population which receives only 1.5% of the country’s total cash income and who are mainly resident in the mountain areas, it contributed only 13.2% of GDP in 1993. Long term problems are manifest in extensive erosion which has reduced arable land from 13% of land area at independence to around 9% today, usually blamed (in the ahistorical ‘expert’ reports) on lack of investment, overstocking and open grazing of livestock, and rendering the country even more vulnerable to recent periods of drought. During 1991-93, for example, maize production averaged only 40% of the 1990 harvest.

Since 1980 there has been steady expansion of manufacturing industry, which by 1993 contributed some 84% to the value of exports. Even so, the sector still only employs about 4.3% of the labour force. Much of the expansion in this sector was
due to the attraction of Lesotho as a base for entering South African markets both physically and as a member of SACU (Southern African Customs Union), during the apartheid years, having in these respects much in common with Swaziland and Botswana. However, with the opening up of the South African economy to foreign investment, helped by the removal, for instance, of the financial rand in 1995, and active investment promotion by that country, the attractions of the peripheries with their relatively poor infrastructure and low levels of training has diminished dramatically.

**Political Stability**

An additional problem in Lesotho is that the country's transition to democratic government has not been as smooth as in South Africa, rendering it even less attractive as a venue for foreign investment in spite of lower wage costs and reasonable road and rail communications with South Africa. Elections in April 1993, following seven years of military rule, brought the BCP (Basotho Congress Party), the main party in opposition to the previous civilian government of the BNP (Basotho National Party), into power, but in an uneasy cohabitation with the military, the police and the monarchy. The new administration was dissolved by King Letsie III (who had been installed by the previous military regime), in an unpopular action backed by the army, and which drew in the leaders of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe as mediators in re-establishing the elected government a month later. This agreement included the re-instatement of Letsie's father, Moshoeshoe II who had been ousted in 1990 (Southall & Petlane, 1995; ISAS Workshop, 1995).

It is impossible fully to understand these events without considering the whole period since independence in 1966, which space forbids here, but the essential issue is one of how a traditional monarchy, with its associated (formal and informal) power structures, seeks to retain an influential role within the more democratic constitution which the rest of the world now expects.

The tripartite international intervention by the leaders of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe in 1994 reveals the importance placed by these states on regional stability, both in their own direct interests (with regard to flows of refugees, for example) and in how they feel the region may be viewed as a whole by potential international investors. Given it's wooing of international capitalism the last thing, one may safely assume, that the ANC wants is an example of an unstable African ruled state on its doorstep. The seriousness with which these states took their position is transparently clear in the letter from Mugabe to King Letsie in which not only sanctions were threatened (which would immediately impoverish the country) but also 'the imposition of such specific measures as members of our region would agree upon' (quoted in Sejanamane, 1995). The situation resembles nothing so much as the US concern with it's 'backyard' in Central America, with similar regional hegemonism. It is also notable that all three leaders attended the funeral of Moshoeshoe II on 26 January 1996 after his unexpected death in a car accident, indicating not only their respect for the death of a neighbouring head of state but signifying to his successor, Letsie III, and the government their continued interest in the affairs of the country despite what appears to have been a relatively smooth transfer of the crown.

It is ironic that the Lesotho military coup of 1986 was backed by the South African government of the time, being thus one more instance in a long line of regional interventions by South Africa in which reaction to short-term crisis has added to long-term instability in the region, an instability which is now embarrassing for the Government of National Unity in its endeavours to establish international re-
spectability. Although the outcome in this most recent case was the desirable restoration of an elected administration, the precedent of unsolicited external brokerage, albeit in an alliance with two of the other 'respectable' regional states, raises questions about how South Africa's political and economic strength in the region may develop in the future, as it was undoubtedly the military and economic strength of South Africa which gave force to the threats.

Development of Underdevelopment

South Africa is not only sucking in capital from elsewhere that might in the past have considered neighbouring countries like Lesotho, but is also becoming a focus for international aid as donors cut back and concentrate on a smaller number of the more politically important recipients. In Lesotho, for example, USAID and the US Information Center have reduced their programmes, closed their offices, and transferred staff to South Africa (where even a massive expansion of Peace Corps is to be introduced!). Other agencies and countries to have reduced ('downsized!') their aid contributions to Lesotho in recent years have been UNDP, IDA, Canada, Denmark and Sweden; and external assistance as a proportion of GNP has fallen from 12.0% in 1990 to 8.9% in 1993, although the total has fluctuated between $107.8m and $115.1m (in current values) during the same years. The UNDP blames 'low implementation rates' for its own cutbacks but the withdrawal of many bilateral agencies and running down of NGO activity has been driven more by Western budgetary cuts. This is now the prime factor affecting aid flows to politically marginal, but poor, countries like Lesotho. Poor implementation is not, after all, a new phenomenon and is symptomatic of the problems which, within its own terms of reference, aid is meant to address. It is also, of course, an expression introduced and defined by the donors themselves. These reductions of donor support have continued despite the government's adoption of two IMF packages of adjustment, dating from 1988, which resulted in government budget surpluses by 1992/3 and 1993/4, a reduction in the ratio of total debt to GNP, and a turn-around in the balance of payments position to current account surplus. This has not been enough to satisfy the major donors, however, who want greater progress in what they term "structural reform" as well as macroeconomic stability. This implies even more retrenchment in state employment, more definite moves towards privatisation and greater efficiency of market incentives in agriculture and industry. The political element in all of this is evident in the 1995 UNDP Report which refers to data on the distribution of income from the 1986/87 Household Budget Survey as evidence that the post-1988 reforms haven't gone far enough! The same report uses the paradoxical argument that the presence of widespread poverty is symptomatic of the absence of effective structural reform rather than a phenomenon whose pervasiveness may actually have been exacerbated by fiscal conservatism at the macro level.

The consequence of all this may be predicted by simple and traditional Keynesian arguments: between 1990 and 1993 the real GNP of Lesotho declined by an average of -1.2% p.a., which, with an annual population growth rate of 2.6% implies a per capita decline of almost -4.0% p.a.. In real terms per capita GNP is now less than it was in 1980. Even this dismal picture would be worse were it not for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, in which considerable faith for the future has been placed, amidst, however, considerable hype. This project, costing US$8bn, involves one of the largest dam projects south of the Sahara, but with the very 'first world' object of meeting the demand for water in the Gauteng area around Johannesburg and Pretoria. However, although construc-
tion will continue until 2025, contributing up to 10% of annual GDP, regular recurrent income in the form of royalties will only provide about 14% of the Government budget at current levels, and will remain a considerably smaller contributor to state revenues than SACU based custom duties which comprised 59% in 1993/4. It will, however, produce most of the country’s electricity, at present almost entirely imported from South Africa, though the real cost in terms of domestic resources is not clear.

The country is now, therefore, in a classic state of open dependency on a much more powerful neighbour, a dependency moreover which is generating underdevelopment: retrenchment of mineworkers, diversion of aid, and flooding of markets with South African produce all handicap internal attempts even at some form of dependent development. The Highland Water Project is highly enclave oriented and vulnerable to alternative developments being considered by the South Africans, including exploitation of the Zambesi in the north and the southern Orange watershed to the south of Lesotho. It is not, therefore, as the neo-classicals would have it, a simple matter of comparative advantage in the supply of water, but of the power of a single buyer able to play off one source against another. This is evident, likewise, in the renegotiation of the Southern Africa Customs Union agreement in which Botswana and Namibia are looking for flexibility to trade independently outside the region while Lesotho and Swaziland are seeking to retain a hold on the revenue sharing arrangement, thus permitting South Africa to face a divided opposition.

Greater South Africa vs. Little South Africa

What is often forgotten is that this has been a cultivated dependency. Country reports by aid donors and international agencies usually describe the country’s resource limitations as resulting from a combination of poor endowments and human ignorance. There is little acknowledgement of historical determinants, of past processes which render the problems of the people of the country as much a product of white domination over Southern Africa as are those of black people in South Africa itself. These processes include loss of arable land, barriers to trade (at times when Lesotho was actually exporting grain to the towns of the Orange Free State and Transvaal), and promotion of migrant labour, long before the years of official apartheid destabilisation.

The capitalism of the past, operating through the channels of imperialism on the one hand and state racism on the other, ensured that opportunities for developing beyond the status of labour reserve were severely constrained. The capitalism of the present, still firmly entrenched in South Africa, and likely to expand, judging by the volume of incoming foreign (production) capital since the 1994 elections, is likely to by-pass the people of Lesotho even in this capacity as it concentrates ever more intensively in the industrial centres of South Africa itself. At the time of writing, South African newspapers contain almost daily reports of renewed Western capitalist interest (IBM, Coca Cola, Fiat, MacDonalds, CitiBank, Merrill Lynch, for example) in South Africa, encouraged by what one referred to as the ‘pragmatic’ policies of the ANC. South Africa is now usually regarded as a ‘springboard’ into other African markets, in contrast to the reverse argument of the apartheid period. As far as the smaller peripheral countries are concerned, there is also a self-obsession in the new South Africa that is as damaging in its own way as was the destabilisation of the past.

In the past, the assumption of South African governments had been implicit, since the formation of the Union in 1910, that the rest of the region, with the
exceptions of 'Rhodesia' and Mozambique, was in effect part of a greater South Africa. In the case of labour a single market certainly tended to prevail for much of the 19th and 20th centuries lending encouragement to this view. The post-apartheid scene is evolving in a much more explicitly nationalist way. It is not a question any longer of the South African state wishing to embrace, incorporate or subsume the surrounding smaller states in order to enhance its own political security, as it is the intention of South African based capital to capture the markets and exploit such investment opportunities as these peripheral countries have to offer.

In so doing, however, it is not only an alliance between domestic capital and foreign capital that underdeveloped regions like Lesotho are up against but also an overwhelming pre-occupation of most Western governments, state agencies, and NGOs with the re-incorporation of South Africa into the western ambit. At the official level this is manifested in the visits, during 1995, of the American Vice-President and the British monarch, of sports teams in cricket, football and rugby, and of cultural performers such as international operatic stars, none of whom, of course, get anywhere near the peripheral states where poverty, as elsewhere in the world, ensures exclusion. Even NGO attention seems to be attracted by the 'glamour' of working in the 'New South Africa', inspired perhaps by liberal Western guilt that here is a society where there appears to be a real chance of working to compensate for the racism of the past which Britain, for example, played a major role in creating and sustaining.

The increased activity of international business, welfare and cultural players in South Africa is no more than the manifestation of that country's re-incorporation into the global economy, or, rather, its more open, recognised and legitimised incorporation through the election of the GNU. As South Africa resumes it's place amongst those other former settler colonies like Australia, New Zealand and Canada the smaller neighbouring states like Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana revert from their special status as 'front line' states against apartheid, where cold-war considerations gave them added significance for the West, to that of typical minor peripheral nations of little geo-political significance to the major capitalist nation states.

Within South Africa, attention is unlikely to get beyond the problems of the former 'homelands', in an 'inner periphery' which will exclude Lesotho despite its geographic isolation within the boundaries of South Africa. These legacies of apartheid are also contributing to a situation of popular fear of large numbers of illegal immigrants arriving in South Africa to look for work, a fear that seems to be taken up by black and white alike, with the former afraid of losing jobs to immigrants and the latter afraid of the effect on their privileges of increased black numbers. In this situation, which is in danger of replicating European levels of xenophobia over 'floods of immigrants' (Weekly Mail & Guardian, 5-11 January 1996) the Basotho mineworkers have been fortunate in having had the support of the NUM. The future for the remainder of the country's population, whether migrant or domiciled, looks considerably bleaker. In such a context, it is paradoxical that the independence from white South Africa which Lesotho's leaders fought to maintain in the past is now a negative factor in the new marginalisation of the country as South Africa turns increasingly inward in social terms while retaining regional dominance in the economic and political arena.

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Bibliography

The 1995 Tanzania Union Elections

Lisa Richey & Stefano Ponte

On 29 October 1995, the first multi-party elections since independence were held in Tanzania, ending 34 years of one-party rule by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) / Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) and, after their merger in 1977, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). The political transition toward multi-partyism started officially on 27 February 1991, with the appointment by President Mwinyi of the twenty-two member 'Commission on One-Party or Multi-party Political System for Tanzania'. The Commission collected opinions from 36,299 people throughout Tanzania, of which 77.2% preferred continuing with the one-party system. Nevertheless, following trends toward broader democratization and pressure from international donors, the Commission recommended the transition to multi-partyism, which was accepted by governments of both the Union and Zanzibar. In the joint session of the Houses of Representatives held in April-May 1992, the Constitution was amended and the Political Parties Bill was passed to revise the role of CCM in the government and to enact a new electoral framework.

The Political Parties Register was established in 1992. For a party to be provisionally registered (for 180 days), it should not have advocated the use of force, its membership must have been voluntary and open to all citizens, and its activities could not be concentrated only in one part of the Union. Full registration was achieved when a party had shown a minimum of two hundred supporters in at least ten regions, including one in Zanzibar and one in Pemba. In 1994 the first local multi-party elections were held, and in January 1995 the newly created National Electoral Commission (NEC) began the preparations for the 29 October Union Elections.

The Registration Process

The registration of voters was supposed to be held from 6 August to 4 September, 1995. The registration process was carried out in 40,500 centres, with an average of about 300 voters per station. By the week of 19-26 August, only 34% of all potential voters had registered. The low turnout was due to the delayed opening of a number of centres for lack of materials and transport, inadequate civic education, and poor timing of the operation. The nomination of the various candidates in the constituencies was done on 28 August; therefore, many people failed to register because they did not know who would be candidates for their constituencies.

Because of low turnout for registration and pressures by political parties and observers, the registration period was extended up to 14 September. Appeals by political leaders, aggressive publicity by the media, and knowledge of the candi-
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dates’ names brought positive outcomes. By the end of the extended period, 81.1% of potential voters had registered.

Extending the period for registration was a political success; however, NEC failed to provide payments to registration clerks for the extra ten days. In some areas, registration officials refused to return the registration books to the Returning Officer (RO) in charge of the election at the constituency level, until they were paid. While some ROs attempted to retrieve the books through the use of explanation and persuasion, others had to ask for the intervention of the police force. In some instances, neither negotiations nor force succeeded in the short term, and the return of the registration figures was delayed for weeks, impeding further preparations for election day.

The Electoral Campaign

The nomination of the candidates for the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections on 28 August marked the beginning of the electoral campaign period. Fourteen political parties fielded candidates for the Union Elections, while only four candidates ran for the Presidency.

Despite the official opening of the campaign period on 29 August, few of the political parties could afford to begin due to lack of funding. NEC had promised a subsidy of one million Tanzanian Shillings (roughly US$1,600) per each contesting candidate for the Parliament, but only half of that sum was released and with a delay of two to three weeks. Splitting payments had been decided by NEC as a result of problems during the local elections of 1994. Money had been given at the beginning of the campaign, and in some cases it had not been used as intended.

The issue of publicly funding parties’ activities, while requiring very minimal conditions to register as an official party, led to charges of bribery by some opposition officials. Their claim was that the government, under the rubric of allowing free participation for all, was actually leading independent candidates – particularly those with no genuine party structure, platform, or institution – to compete for the Parliament as a means of acquiring personal monetary gain. Opposition leaders believe that this was an easy way to insure splintering and confusion amongst non-CCM supporters.

While each candidate had to provide a schedule of rallies to be held in his/her constituency, this proved to be a list of good intentions, because few rallies took place in the first weeks of the campaign. CCM candidates, who could draw resources from party coffers, had access to transportation, publication materials, and

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>Date of Full Registration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Chama Cha Mapinduzi</td>
<td>1 July 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHADEMA</td>
<td>Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo</td>
<td>21 Jan. 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUF</td>
<td>Civic United Front</td>
<td>21 Jan. 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRA</td>
<td>National Reconstruction Alliance</td>
<td>8 Feb. 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PONA</td>
<td>Popular National Party</td>
<td>5 April 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TADEA</td>
<td>Tanzania Democratic Alliance Party</td>
<td>5 April 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPP</td>
<td>Tanzania People’s Party</td>
<td>4 Feb. 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLP</td>
<td>Tanzania Labour Party</td>
<td>24 Nov. 1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDP</td>
<td>The United Democratic Party</td>
<td>24 Mar. 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMD</td>
<td>Union for Multi-party Democracy</td>
<td>21 Jan. 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPDP</td>
<td>United Peoples Democratic Party</td>
<td>4 Feb. 1993</td>
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public address systems. Candidates from some other parties (NCCR-Mageuzi on the Mainland and CUF in Zanzibar) were able to begin campaigning early because they had their own private resources or a significant contribution from their party machinery.

When the campaigns finally got under way, they entailed rallies, posters, flags, songs, dancing, political messages delivered over megaphones from cars, and 'door to door' campaigning. Even after receiving the subsidies, small parties were hardly campaigning at all. Some were struggling as represented by one TLP candidate who, lacking motor transportation from village to village, was referred to in his constituency as 'the man with the bicycle'.

The Presidential campaign by the opposition was fragmented into four camps because the parties failed to reach an agreement to field a single candidate. At the end of August 1995, it seemed that NCCR-Mageuzi, CUF, UDP and CHADEMA were likely to field Mrema of NCCR-Mageuzi as the opposition's presidential candidate. According to the NCCR-Mageuzi Director of Elections, the deal collapsed when NCCR-Mageuzi wanted to nominate also the vice-presidential candidate from its ranks, while CUF insisted for a member of its own party. As a result, only CHADEMA (and later UMD) joined the coalition to support Mrema.

Perhaps the most influential player in the Presidential campaign was not a candidate, but former President Julius Nyerere. He was allegedly behind the controversial selection of Benjamin Mkapa for the CCM ticket, and he organized a nationwide tour of political rallies, comparable to the apparatus that Mkapa himself was using. Nyerere's move attracted sharp criticism within the opposition. Many claimed that, as the 'Father of the Nation' Nyerere should have kept a more neutral stance and encouraged all parties in the transition to multi-party democracy. Nyerere's speeches included elements of civic education with pleas for peaceful elections and an end to corruption. At a rally in Musoma, Nyerere even charged a local CCM Parliamentary candidate with corruption. However, Nyerere was also critical of all opposition parties for their lack of political experience and leadership ability.

Most campaign rhetoric was based on personality and promises of local development. Throughout the country, CCM candidates focused on their record of peace and stability, sometimes drawing contrasts between the war and ethnic violence in neighbouring countries and the thirty years of peace in Tanzania. Often, CCM candidates accused other parties of playing on religious and ethnic cleavages. Also, they criticized them for lacking in organization, political philosophy and governing experience.

It is difficult to merge the different political messages of the various opposition parties together, but one overarching theme was harsh criticism of CCM for Tanzania's poor 'development' record during their 35 year reign. The poor condition of transport infrastructure, rising levels of unemployment due to retrenchment of government workers, decaying quality of education and health care, rising cost of living, and limited access to clean water were all blamed on the poor management of the CCM-led government.

NCCR-Mageuzi was also critical of the vast economic power in the hands of the Asian community, and of the sale of
parastatal corporations, particularly if these sales were done to the benefit of foreign companies.

Media access during the campaign was an important issue for opposition parties. Because the country has witnessed a mushrooming of publications in the last few years, access to newspapers was not a problem; however, the quality of newspaper reporting was questioned. The Election Media Bulletin published by the Association of Journalists and Media Workers (AJM) described the newspaper coverage as ‘appalling’, noting also ‘violation of professional ethics, malicious and outright lies, open bias, deliberate misrepresentation and the failure to distinguish between government function and campaign’ (AJM Monitor, September 6-13, p. 2).

The battle for the airways proved to be difficult for the opposition parties. The fact that newspapers do not reach most of rural Tanzania in a timely fashion, if at all, underlines the importance of getting access to state-run Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD). It is the only station able to reach the entire national territory and the most common information source. According to the AJM Monitor, Mkapa and CCM obtained more coverage on RTD than opposition candidates and parties. On the other hand, all four Presidential candidates had the chance to face each other in a live TV debate on the Dar es Salaam station ITV, which was also broadcast on RTD. Discrepancies between parties’ access to resources profoundly affected the extent to which they could reach their audiences. However, flags of several parties were visible, even in the most remote villages, and vociferous political discussions were carried on without fear in public places.

**Election Preparation**

During the election preparations, there were serious logistical and financial problems which led to an overall air of confusion. In the weeks preceding election day, the ROs had received no funding or information regarding the hire of vehicles for transporting the election materials to and from each polling station. In many areas, registration stations consisted simply of a table beneath a mango tree. To insure secrecy of the ballot, ROs needed to construct vibanda (small sheds) or to hire private houses, but NEC did not provide adequate financial resources.

The most significant preparation problem concerned the training seminars to be held for all election-day workers. Polling officers and their assistants, as well as agents from each party, were to be trained for three days in each constituency. These seminars which were the only source of information on running the polls took place in some constituencies on the 28th – the day before the election! Seminars were short – lasting only two hours in one constituency, and about half a day in many. A confusing handbook of instructions was given out to some at the seminars, while others had not seen it until the poll opening on election day. The official statement by the Commonwealth Observer Group noted:

> We believe that inadequate preparations, especially in logistical planning, by the NEC contributed to delays in election materials arriving at the stations and to the chaos and confusion we witnessed on polling day, scenes we have not witnessed before when observing elections in other Commonwealth countries.

**Election Day: 29 October 1995**

Only one week after the controversial election of the President and the members of the House of Representatives in Zanzibar, many feared unrest and protest during the Union elections. The results for the Zanzibar elections had been released on 26 October, and opposition parties had threatened to boycott the Union elections, but eventually agreed to
participate. Opposition officials argued that CUF had won the island elections, but that during the final compilation of results, CCM managed to reverse the outcome. According to the official results, the CCM presidential candidate won with margin of just 1,565 votes, and CCM took 26 seats against the 24 won by CUF (which won all the seats in Pemba). By 29 October, the debate on the validity of the official results and the polemics about rigging during the Zanzibar elections were still in the air. In these circumstances, one would have expected a climate of unrest during the Union Elections, but this was not the case, and the problems came from different sources.

Poor logistical coordination during the preparation – especially financing from NEC – took its toll on election day. Throughout the country, many stations were lacking supplies, and very irregular times for voting forced people to wait for a long time before casting their vote. In some constituencies, there appeared to be more than simply a poorly coordinated election, even a possible systematic discouragement of voters. However, in most areas, the problems seemed widespread and indeed random. Despite this, the level of commitment on the part of the voters, some election officials, and some polling agents was commendable.

Materials for voting (ballots, indelible ink, report forms, locks, etc.) were delayed in arriving to many regions and were thus late to the constituencies and to the polling stations. In some constituencies, polling officials refused to take the materials to the stations until they received their payments due from the seminar period. Several ROs were distributing payments on election day, while the polls remained empty and voters waited. Some polling stations were opened a few hours after the official 7:00 a.m. starting time, others were finally opened in the evening, forcing voting until the early morning hours, and still others were not opened at all on the 29th. Even after receiving their supplies, many stations were missing crucial materials – particularly ballot papers. Voters had to wait hours in queues, and complaints followed that many people, particularly women who did not have the luxury of neglecting household work for very long, were prevented from voting at all. There were many stations which did not insure the secrecy of the ballot. Some polling stations were held in hallways, on storefront porches, or in makeshift verandas. In the stations where voting took place, there was generally a calm and cooperative atmosphere. Voters were enthusiastic, committed, and immensely patient. In constituencies where polls were generally in order, turnout was around 70%, while in places of extreme shortages and disorganization, turnout was as low as 30%. The decision by NEC to extend voting hours from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. in view of the extensive delays in poll openings, caused confusion and led to further difficulties with closing, counting and returning materials.

The closing process was long and tedious, and involved repetitive signing of forms. The instruction book lacked a clear step-by-step explanation, and failed to emphasize which procedures were crucial. Because of this, some report forms of election outcomes were not signed by the party agents, ballot boxes were sometimes sealed and unsealed many times, and documents were not placed in the proper envelopes, making future retrieval of information for cross-checking impossible. The secrecy of the ballot was rarely secured by sealing the ballot counterfoils (on which the voter’s registration number was written, according to the electoral law).

Returning materials to the RO’s office was often chaotic and unsupervised. In many areas, polling officials had to transport the ballot boxes by foot during the night. When they arrived at the RO’s office, there was not an organized method for collection which led to confusion. In
one constituency, international observers witnessed persons breaking the seals and opening the ballot boxes in the crowded hallway of the building housing the RO's office. People were removing the result forms, recopying them in the hallway, and supposedly handing them in as their official reports from the polling stations.

While counting at the polling stations was generally fair and transparent, the compilation of results at the constituency and regional levels was fraught with problems. Some ROs were found literally hiding in tiny offices with their assistants, attempting to finish their work without 'interference' by the observers, candidates or party agents who are permitted by law to witness all stages of tabulation. Observers who did cross-check the figures at the constituency levels found many errors. In one constituency, there was a difference of 10,000 ballots between the presidential and parliamentary races. Errors of this sort were not uncommon, and there were rarely checks at each stage of the tabulation to prevent them from compounding. A paradoxical aspect of the logistical problems was that in remote areas where we might expect difficulties (such as Mtwara or Ruvuma Regions) things ran smoothly, yet Dar es Salaam and other urban areas faced the most serious delays.

The Dar es Salaam Re-run, 19 November 1995

The 29 October elections in the constituencies around Dar es Salaam were characterized by the general disorganization and shortages of materials which plagued some other areas of the country. In stations which received adequate supplies to open for voters, the atmosphere was calm, but in those stations which remained closed or faced severe shortages of ballot papers, confusion, bitterness, frustration, and suspicion mounted. These situations of chaos and disorder in Dar es Salaam were seen by NEC officials who then decided on 30 October to declare the results of all constituencies in Dar es Salaam Region null and void and to hold another election on 19 November.

The decision by NEC to re-run the Dar es Salaam elections met with varying responses. The preliminary statement issued by the Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO) based at the University of Dar es Salaam concluded:

*Justification for singling out Dar es Salaam for rescheduling while letting the other regions go ahead has yet to be established by the Commission.*

A coalition of ten opposition parties presented a case to the High Court pleading for an injunction to halt the re-run of the elections, citing that there were similar problems throughout the country and that all of the elections should be nullified. As the opposition parties were waiting for the court's decision, NEC continued plans for the election re-run.

To avoid the previous election problems, NEC took numerous actions for Dar es Salaam. First, NEC made Tsh. 2,442 billion available to finance the re-run and the British High Commission furnished new ballot papers at a cost of Tsh. 7,035 million. The REC and four ROs were replaced, and Presiding Officers were replaced by army personnel. A new series of training seminars were organized for all election officials to be held at the ward level. Registration was permitted for persons who had lost or discarded their registration cards after the first election. Also, it was decided that party agents would be paid directly through the party headquarters to avoid problems of funding directly from the RO.

On 13 November, the High Court, citing questions of jurisdiction and lack of compelling evidence, dismissed the petition by the opposition parties to restrain the Director of Elections from declaring the Presidential election and to halt the Dar es Salaam re-run. Upon hearing the
High Court’s decision, ten opposition parties declared that they would boycott the re-run. By 15 November, the number of boycotting parties had been reduced by half, and confusion over which candidates were participating, with or without party support, abounded.

In some wards around Dar es Salaam, party agents from NCCR-Mageuzi and CUF boycotted the training seminars, but agents from other parties were still participating. In areas such as Ilala, Kigamboni and Temeke, where there had been few problems with the 29 October election, officials were frustrated at having to conduct the exercise again.

The election day went smoothly, but was characterized by extremely low voter turnout in every constituency. On average, only 42% of all registered voters cast a ballot during the re-run. Apathy, confusion and disillusionment were cited as explanations for the poor turnout. The boycott by opposition candidates in some constituencies discouraged voters, as did the perception that polls would be surrounded by a large police presence.

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<th>Tanzania: Basic Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Population Estimate</td>
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<td>2. Estimate of Eligible Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Registered Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Actual Votes (President)</td>
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<td>5. Actual Votes (Parliament)</td>
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<td>6. Valid Ballots (President)</td>
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<td>7. Valid Ballots (Parliament)</td>
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**Conclusion**

The lack of voters for the Dar es Salaam re-run, whether it represents apathy or protest, showed that NEC would be given no second chance to repair the mistakes it made during the first election. The final results show CCM taking most of the country in both the Presidential and Parliamentary races. CCM won 78% of the Parliamentary seats, while Mkapa obtained 61.8% of the votes for the Presidential Elections (see Tables). However, questions are still being raised as to how these numbers reflect the ‘real will of the Tanzanian voters. Even if the total turnout rate was around 76%, the logistical problems encountered in some areas on

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tanzania Parliamentary Election Results</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Party</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>CCM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHADEMA</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUF</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCCR-Mageuzi</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
* Some of the Parliamentary seats are assigned by nomination. The six seats under the ‘others’ row are reserved for the Attorney General and the Zanzibar Representatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tanzania Presidential Election Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Cheyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim Lipumba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Mkapa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augustino Mrema</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
29 October did not allow many people to exercise their right to vote. The re-run of the Dar es Salaam elections was characterized by such low participation as to make it a questionable indicator of public will.

To date, more than 100 petitions have already been filed to the High Court regarding irregularities on the elections. Statements from the Commonwealth Observer Group, the OAU, the Joint International Observer Group and the Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee have been extremely critical of many aspects of the electoral process. The hope is that NEC will learn from the mistakes of this election and create a more enabling environment for the year 2000 general elections.

Lisa Richey is at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA and Stefano Ponte is at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.

Eritrean Refugees in Sudan

Berhane Woldegabriel

Despite the formal independence of Eritrea in May 1993, the Eritrean refugees in Sudan continue to live as card-carrying second-class citizens in sub-human conditions in camps and settlements, stranded by the political wrangle between Sudan and Eritrea and the perpetual shortage of funds of the ever stressed United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The situation of ten million African refugees who are currently dispersed round the continent poses a serious challenge to international organisations. In particular, the UNHCR in Geneva and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa need to work out new strategies that could bring about lasting solution to the apparently insoluble problems that face these refugee communities. The issue of the half million Eritrean refugees who remain in Sudan more than three years after their country achieved independence illustrates these problems.

The three conventional solutions in the case of long-term refugee settlement have been as follows: the first is to assimilate and naturalise refugees in their host countries; the second, to resettle refugees in ‘third countries’ (for example, in the USA and Canada); the third option, which is the most preferred, is voluntary repatriation to countries of origin. The last option presumes that the political or social situation which had threatened their lives and had compelled them into exile no longer exists.

Sudan is the largest country in Africa. In the 1980s, it granted sanctuary to hundreds of Palestinians and to more than 1.2 million refugees from six of its eight neighbouring states. Since then virtually all of the Ugandan, Zairian, Chadian, Libyans and Palestinians have either returned to their respective countries of origin or found themselves other ‘third’ countries to resettle in.

Most of the Eritreans and Ethiopians in Sudan are still there despite the end of the long Ethio-Eritrean war in 1991. There are around half a million Eritreans in Sudan, most of them in refugee camps. Clearly the three conventional solutions have failed to put an end to the life of uncertainty and anguish of the ‘stateless’ Eritreans. Despite the hospitality of the Sudanese people, refugees were used expediently as scapegoats by Sudanese political parties. The 1974 Asylum Act of Sudan prohibits naturalisation of refugees, and prevents them from owning any fixed assets, such as land, houses etc. University education in medicine, pharmacy and engineering was barred to them. Subsequently, refugees remained
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economically marginalised and politically vulnerable.

Formal resettlement of Eritrean refugees from Sudan to the USA, Canada, Australia and Europe, regarded as an option to solve the refugee problem and assist Sudan simultaneously, always fell short of resettling 2,000 people per year. In other words, at that rate, it will take at least 250 years to transport all the estimated half a million Eritreans out of Sudan, assuming that the receiving country continues its willingness to take refugees whose population growth remains constant. As indicated above, particularly where naturalisation is not permitted and resettlement in ‘third’ countries is too slow to be viable, voluntary repatriation of the refugees to their home countries becomes the most preferred of the three options. For the Eritreans and many Ethiopians in Sudan and for many others in similar circumstances such as the Afghans in Pakistan, there must be at least a fourth option. The development of this option is primarily the task of the UNHCR, but the refugee units of regional organisations such as the OAU also have an obligation to seek a viable solution to the seemingly intractable refugee problem.

The Tripartite Agreement Between Sudan, Eritrea and the UNHCR

In the political wrangle between Sudan and Eritrea and the perpetual shortage of funds of the ever pressurised UNHCR, the half of a million or so Eritrean refugees who have been surviving in settlements and camps in distressing circumstances will continue for some more years to come despite the formal independence of their country in May 1993. Soon after the Eritrean Liberation Front (EPLF) set the country and its capital city – Asmara – free from 30 years of Ethiopian occupation in May 1991, the Eritrean refugees in Sudan might have expected that after their long wait they would return home at last. Little did they know that the authorities had agreed that most of the refugees should stay where they were – in the hot and dusty semi-deserts of Sudan. After the referendum of 1993, Eritrea became a member of the United Nations and will soon celebrate its third year of formal independence (actually fifth year of liberation); however, the refugees are still left to survive in misery, with little hope to look forward to. Three years ago, the UNHCR and the governments of Sudan and Eritrea had signed agreements to systematically and swiftly resettle the exiled Eritreans back in their country. Practically, however, the scheme is scarcely in operation, while overtly the three parties are conducting a face-saving diplomatic manoeuvre so that the voluntary repatriation programme could appear to be progressing.

The Role of the UNHCR

According to the UNHCR at the pledging conference of the Eritrean Programme for the Rehabilitation of Eritrean Returnees (PROFERI), held in Geneva in July 1993, only $32.5 million, nearly half of it in food aid, was pledged by donors out of the requested $111 million for Phase One. The goal of Phase One was to repatriate

approximately 135,000 returnees to sustainable communities throughout Eritrea. This planning figure includes 100,000 returnees from Sudan who would require repatriation transport as well as integration assistance in Eritrea.

The start of the Pilot Operation phase which planned to repatriate 25,000 refugees by December 1994 was still more than a few thousands short by May 1995. The delay was ‘due to late finalization of the Memoranda of Understanding as well as some logistical problems’ according to the UNHCR 1994-95 report on Eritrea. In March the UNHCR referred to the modification made to the original plan of the Pilot Operation, and stated the reason to
be ‘unexpected development’. The UNHCR spent nearly half a billion dollars for refugee programmes in Sudan, which was mainly directed to Eritreans, whose influx into Sudan started as early as 1967. Although it is generally believed that a little over 10% of funds earmarked for refugees actually reach the ordinary refugee in a settlement or a camp, the programme’s budget was presumed to have been utilised in building temporary thatched hut accommodation, sinking wells, erecting primary health centres, elementary schools and grinding mills, and in the construction of a network of summer weather roads in the 35 refugee settlements in the semi-deserts of Eastern Sudan.

About 200,000 Eritreans lived in 30 of those planned settlements either as agricultural wage labourers in the vicinity of large-scale cotton and sugar cane plantations, on plots of land allotted to them by the government of Sudan. Many of them practise pastoralism to supplement their meagre incomes. The remaining 200,000 or so, usually referred to as ‘spontaneously settled’ live in urban centres, including the capital, Khartoum, without any direct assistance from the Government or UNHCR.

The UNHCR is apparently short of funds, as more and more demands are being put as a consequence of the civil wars in Europe, Africa and the ex-soviet Union. Unless some special funds are allocated by the International Community for Eritrean refugees, the UNHCR as it stands, is unable to earmark the $350m which the Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (ERRC), calculates is necessary to resettle the refugees back home.

It is more economical for the UNHCR to spend less than $20m annually to maintain its refugee programme of nearly thirty years in Sudan, than to commit itself to a $350 million operation inside Eritrea. Although it is rightly believed that voluntary repatriation is the most appropriate and durable solution to the refugee problem, such a venture will require of the UNHCR to build some infrastructure for basic health, education and other community services for the returnees. The buildings provided in these circumstances would have to be more durable than those in the refugee settlements.

The Role of Sudan

Across the Eritrean border, Sudan needs the $15.2m in hard currency that it receives from the UNHCR for the refugee programme. It is already some time since Sudan lost virtually all development (not humanitarian) aid from its traditional donor governments and major international financial institutions, ostensibly for its expansionist Islamist policies.

The impact of the international embargo imposed on Libyan economy following allegations after the Lockerbie bombing has also deprived Sudan of the support of a former ally. Colonel Ghadafi’s regime has withdrawn millions of dollars worth of Libyan money in remittance from Sudan, and has dismissed hundreds of thousands of Sudanese from their jobs and expelled them from Libya during the last quarter of 1995. However, to the government of Sudan, refugees are not only hostages to be bailed out by the UNHCR, but also a political trump card to manipulate Eritrean policy in favour of Sudan. About 80,000 Eritreans have returned home, most of them from Sudan and without any help from UNHCR. They were supporters of the EPLF which has become the government. Most of those left in Sudan are Moslems and belong to the Tigre, one of the two main ethnic groups in Eritrea. With a resident population of less than three million, Eritrea is a country of nine ethnic groups or nationalities.

According to a UNHCR employee who left Sudan in mid-December 1995, more than 120 Eritrean refugees were arrested
by Sudanese security personnel in Kassala, a town not far from the Eritrean border. The authorities gave no reason to the relatives who dared to ask of the victims for the arrests. Sudan accuses Eritrea of plotting against it with Uganda and Ethiopia, and with the connivance of Israel and the United States. Eritrea also accuses Sudan of similar conspiracies, alleging that it has used its Islamic fundamentalist influence on the Al Islah party within the Yemeni coalition government, and ignited the Yemen-Eritrean war over Hanish, the Eritrean islands in the Red Sea, in late December 1995.

The Role of Eritrea

The Tigre nationality, generally known as the Beni Amir, has its kin in Eastern Sudan. During the war for Eritrean independence from Ethiopia, many of the Eritrean Tigre, who like their Sudanese counterparts, are traditionally suspicious of the Abyssinian highlanders who are Christians (save the Jebertee), were behind the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). The ELF predates the EPLF in its struggle for Eritrean independence, but was defeated by a combined force of the EPLF and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in 1982. Some of the refugees in Sudanese settlements were victims of that war and still bear a grudge against the EPLF-controlled government.

In an attempt to accommodate all Eritreans and establish a broader base, the Eritrean government has provided ministerial posts to a couple of ex-ELF leaders and managed to attract some of their followers. Nevertheless, in the advent of Islamic revitalisation, or fundamentalism (depending on how one wishes to view it), some Eritreans have joined the anti-government Eritrean Islamic Jihad (EIJ) – an armed organisation. Despite the Sudanese government's emphatic denial, the National Islamic Front (NIF), the party of Dr Hassan El Turabi, which is currently ruling Sudan, is no doubt supporting the EIJ. There are reliable reports that Sudanesec security officers have been discouraging Eritrean refugees from returning home, but persuading them to join the Islamist organisation, or any of the relatively secular ELF fronts of Abdella Idris or the ELF-RC, whose leader of 20 years, Mr Ahmed M. Nassir, was replaced democratically in October 1995 by Ibrahim M. Ali.

Eritrea has severed its diplomatic relations with Sudan and subsequently sued the latter in international forums, such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa and the European Union/African Caribbean and Pacific countries (EU-ACP) in Brussels; Eritrea has even raised the issue in the United Nations. Since then, Sudanese efforts to strengthen the Eritrean opposition forces from the pool of refugees in Sudan have become overt.

In June 1995 Asmara hosted a conference of all the main Sudanese opposition parties who vowed to oust the NIF government in Khartoum. The Eritrean government is alleged by the Sudanese government of General Omar El Bashir of providing a training camp to the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of Colonel John Garang, and radio broadcasting facilities to the National Democratic Alliance, the umbrella organisation for the major Sudanese opposition forces; Eritrea vehemently denies these allegations. President Isaias Afeworki told Richard Dowden, a British journalist,

"We are out to see that this [Sudanese] government is not there any more ... we will give weapons to any one committed to overthrowing them."

Al Mustaqbal, an Arabic paper published in London stated, that President Isaias' statement in the Economist, amounted to 'a declaration of war'.

Another Sudanese allegation which Eritrea dismisses as baseless, is military training provided to members of the Beja...
Congress Party, yet another opposition to the government in Khartoum. Like the Beni-Amir, the Hadendwa, too, have their kin (the Hedareb) in Eritrea.

As Eritrea was to Ethiopia an outlet to the Red Sea, the Beja control the Sudanese outlet to the Sea. If Khartoum and the rest of the country is cut off from its sea ports of Port Sudan and the ancient town of Suakin, the government of General El Baashir is liable to crumble, if only through a shortage of oil.

If with the participation of the Beja the Sudanese government fell, the Beja will have accomplished their mission and be redundant in Eritrea. The question is, like the Arab Mujahideen who returned from post-cold war Afghanistan, the Beja may, like the Afar (or the pre-1977 Somalia of Siad Barre) entertain the notion of struggling for greater land. But such a Beja land would have to be carved out not only from Sudan, but from Eritrea as well. Their current alliance could become a political time bomb to the power elite in Asmara in a way the Afar on the opposite side of the country are perceived to be.

The Eritrean government, despite its good intentions is not fully prepared to accept the returnees from Sudan for two reasons. First the country has been impoverished by the 30-year war for independence. Four years after independence, it is still not able to produce enough food for itself, despite relentless efforts. Thus, a sudden increase in the existing high level of unemployment by adding 20% to the current total population may destabilise the government. Second, also linked to the destabilisation factor, is the mutual suspicion between the EPLF authorities and the ELF-sympathisers within the returnees. These economic and political risks associated with the return of refugees from Sudan is a liability which Asmara finds it expedient to procrastinate.

A Fourth Option?

It is clear that the UN, the OAU and some international NGOs, are striving to find long term solutions to the root causes of involuntary displacement of peoples through the processes of economic development and conflict resolution. The UNHCR, despite its ever expanding tasks and limited resources, has shown commendable flexibility when it broadened its mandate to include its active involvement in the rehabilitation process of ex-refugees in the countries of their origin. However, there is still a basic policy problem as illustrated by the situation of the Eritrean refugees in Sudan.

All three authorities to the tripartite agreement in Geneva in 1992 took part in a diplomatic exercise rather than a practical solution. As usual, the loser is the weakest party – the refugees who have hardly any say when their destiny is determined by politicians whose priorities are different from theirs. Do not people in similar predicaments in the world now deserve a stronger UNHCR or perhaps a different institution? The OAU is too poor and the rest of the capable world either is too busy or too indifferent to resolve the problem. The Eritrean official in charge, Dr Nerayo Teclemariam, has claimed that his organisation, the ERRC, could transport, resettle and rehabilitate all the half million Eritrean refugees in Sudan within five years, if only he could raise $350 million. Is $10 million a year for five years too much to ask from the G7 (world's seven leading industrial countries), especially after their cold war era involvement in the war in Eritrea left it in economic disaster?

Eritrea is unlikely to speak out for the refugees because, as much as it is aware that it cannot guarantee a decent and sustainable existence for all the returning refugees, and probably thinks that publicising the issue will reflect badly on itself, there is no legal obligation on Sudan to accommodate refugees who wish to re-
turn to their country. The US, and particularly the UN which could have granted Eritrea its independence as early as 1950 and prevented the 30-year war, are responsible for the problem of Eritrean refugee repatriation.

Soon after Sudan declared itself an Islamic State under divine laws (the Sharia), and deliberately undermined democracy and secularism as the bases of ‘good governance’, development aid was cut, and Sudan was internationally regarded in a negative light. The West views Sudan as a breeding ground and sponsor for strands of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. Sudan was thus systematically isolated as a pariah in the society of nations, and was made ‘unattractive’ to the international media, apart from some favourable representations in the Arabic press. More isolation means less publicity, and subsequently less attention from international organisations. This works against the interests of the refugees who are also suffering from the partial withdrawal of resources by the UNHCR.

However, whilst the three conventional solutions for refugee settlement are not working in an urgent case such as that of the Eritreans in Sudan, it is crucial that the international community renews its humanitarian assistance to Sudan in this respect whilst still emphasising the need for Sudan to reform its human rights practices. In the meantime, donors of humanitarian aid to Sudan will need to formulate mechanisms that would guarantee the channelling of resources to the refugees more directly as opposed to the mere trickles that currently exist. This strategy would provide a fourth option in the apparent absence of any other workable solution at present.

**Berhane Woldegabriel** is in London.

*Dedicated to my friend and colleague Dr Ahmed A. Karadawi who spent most of his adult life working for and with refugees and died in Sudan in November 1995.*

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**Ethiopia Elects a New Parliament**

*June Rock*

In May 1995, Ethiopia went to the polls in the first nation-wide parliamentary elections in the history of the country to elect federal and regional assemblies. These elections marked the end of the four-year transition that began with the decisive military defeat of the 17-year-long military dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam, popularly known as the Derg (‘committee’), in May 1991, by two Fronts: the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF).

The EPRDF is a coalition of ethnic-based liberation movements, formed in 1989, with at its core the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). The TPLF, since its formation in 1975, had waged an armed struggle against the previous regime for regional autonomy and had, in 1989, already wrested full control of its home province, the northern highland region of Tigray. The EPLF, formed in 1972, had waged an armed struggle for Eritrean independence against both the Derg and its predecessor, the ancien regime of Emperor Haile Selassie (1916-1974). Eritrea finally acquired its independence, after a 30-year-long war of secession, on 23 May 1993 following an internationally monitored referendum.

On 28 May 1991, one week after the hasty flight of Mengistu Haile Mariam to Zimbabwe, the EPRDF, with remarkably little violence, took control of the capital, Addis Ababa, and of the country. Since then the Ethiopian state has been restructured in a process of democratisation initiated by the EPRDF-led Transitional Government (TGE) winning a landslide victory in the parliamentary elections. The boycotting of the elections by opposition parties does, however, raise the question of whether or not the new
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government has the level of popular support reflected in the election results. This contribution first sets out the context for the 1995 parliamentary elections, it then discusses the conduct and results of the elections, and concludes by considering the question of whether or not there exists a realistic alternative to the EPRDF at the present juncture.

Background and Context

Ethno-regionalisation: Since 1991 Ethiopia's unitary state structure and the old system of governance, based on centralised state power, has been replaced by a federation of ethnically defined states based on the notion of 'voluntary union' and rights of secession by referendum. The basis for this radical departure from the system of governance under the two previous regimes was a 20-Article National Charter adopted by the Addis Ababa based Conference on Peace and Reconciliation in July 1991, in which many of Ethiopia's various ethno-based liberation movements participated.

The Charter – a quasi-constitution to serve the transitional period until a new Constitution would be promulgated – recognized the right of every nation, nationality and people to self-determination up to and including the right to secession.

The EPRDF-led TGE, installed on the basis of the Charter in July 1991, was composed of a Council of Ministers and an 87-member non-elected Council of Representatives (COR). The EPRDF – comprising, in addition to the TPLF, the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM, formerly the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM)) and the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO – formed in 1989, by the Oromo faction of the former EPDM), had a majority of 32 of the 87 seats in the COR. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), with 12 seats, had the second largest share of seats after the EPRDF; the Oromo constitute the largest ethnic group in the country, accounting for circa 40 per cent of the population. Meles Zenawi, head of the TPLF, and chairman of the EPRDF, was made Acting Head of State, and the post of Prime Minister went to Tamirat Layne, head of the ANDM.

In January 1992, 14 regions, defined on the basis of the Charter, were created by Proclamation (Proclamation 7/1992, January 1992), with elections to elect local (zonal and district) administrators set to take place six months later, in June 1992. The number of regions has since been reduced to 11 following the voluntary merger, mid-way through the transition, of regions 7,8,9,10 and 11 to form the Southern Ethiopian People's Regional Administration (SEPA) and the creation of an additional region, Dire Dawa, formerly part of region four. The resultant 11 regions include: Tigray (Region 1), Afar (Region 2), Amhara (Region 3), Oromiya (Region 4), Somali (Region 5), Beni Shangul (Region 6), Southern Ethiopian People's Regional Administration (Region 7-11), Gambella (Region 12), Harar (Region 13), Dire Dawa, and Addis Ababa (Region 14).

The stated rationale for the EPRDF-led TGE's ethno-regionalisation policy was the political imperative of peace and stability. Ethiopia had been wracked by internal political conflict for decades: in the north of the country, the 30-year long secessionist war of Eritrea and the 20-year long struggle for regional autonomy in Tigray; and, in the south of the country, the various ethno-based liberation movements' struggles against the colonization and socio-cultural suppression of their respective peoples by the northern, highland Amhara, dating back to the conquest and incorporation of Ethiopia's southern territories by Menelik II (an Amhara from Shoa, the region around Addis Ababa) at the turn of the century and associated with the ruling classes of both the Imperial regime and the Derg.
Given that ethnicity – almost all liberation movements had been established along ethnic lines – and demands for regional autonomy were the two salient features in the support base of the various liberation movements, a system of democratic representation and ethnno-regional autonomy was seen by the ruling EPRDF to provide a formal mechanism for the resolution of conflict and to offer the best prospect for internal peaceful coexistence. The provision on the right to session by referendum was to guarantee the prevention of a return to a situation like that between Eritrea and the previous two regimes (personal communication with Dr. Negasso Gidado, at the time Minister of Information, and Dawit Yohannes, at the time Secretary to the Constitution Commission).

Recognition of ethnic differences and decentralisation of state power to ethno-regions and the ethnicisation of national politics is unique in Africa. Democratisation movements elsewhere in Africa, including, for instance, the former northern province of Ethiopia – Eritrea – have been neutralising ethnicity in politics, and have banned political parties based on ethnicity or regionalism.

However, the policy of ethno-regionalism has had some adverse effects. During the early years (1991-1993) of the transition, for instance, the politicisation of ethno-based rights led, in some rural areas, to incidents of localised, sporadic fighting (e.g. parts of Arsi, Harar, Bale, and Southern Wollo) which in some areas took the form of ‘ethnic cleansing’. ‘Non-natives’ were harassed and forced to flee after their houses were burnt down. These incidents were often the result of local power struggles and were, in some areas, prompted by members of political organisations concerned with issues of territoriality (as witnessed in Southern Wollo by the author).

There is also a centralist position which argues that there has been a longtime process of ethnic integration. A significant proportion of Ethiopian people have a mixed ethnic background and don’t feel that they belong to any specific ethnic group – they simply define themselves as Ethiopians. These people now face a crisis of identity as a result of the policy of ethno-regionalism (see also, Kassahun Berhanu, ROAPE, No. 63, 1995).

The New Constitution: The Constitutional Commission was appointed in April 1993, with a mandate to draft a new Constitution based on the results of public discussions on major constitutional issues (Constitutional Commission Newsletter, Issue No.1, March 1994). The draft was to be submitted to the COR for adoption before being ratified by an elected Constituent Assembly. The Commission, under the Chairmanship of Kifle Wodaji, a lawyer by profession, was composed of representatives from a variety of political, professional, and religious institutions.

The Commission held a series of public meetings to make its existence and its programme of work known to the public. The process involved not just the formal drafting of a legal instrument, but also, through the launching of public debate, the fundamental task of civic education. The Commission undertook efforts to explore the various constitutional options by, for instance, a full appreciation of experiences elsewhere and by its efforts at civic education through broad consultation and public debate.

The elections for the Constituent Assembly (CA) empowered to ratify the new constitution took place in June 1994 under the auspices of the National Electoral Board (NEB) established in 1993; the new constitution was ratified in December 1994.

During the drafting of the new constitution the main issues of contention were ‘the right to secession’, ‘decentralisation and the formulae for centralised and
decentralised financing', and 'land tenure'. In many respects, the points of the new constitution dealing with the controversial issue of ethnically defined regions and the right to secession follow closely in the spirit of the TGE's earlier proclamations. The constitution defines (Art. 45) the new form of government as parliamentarian and makes explicit that the new structure of governance is a federation of ethnically defined regions. Chapter 4, which defines the state structure stipulates (Art. 45.2) that 'States shall be delimited on the basis of the settlement patterns, identity, language and the consent of the people concerned'. The right of 'nations, nationalities and peoples' to secede from the federation, and the right of 'nations, nationalities and peoples' to secede from existing states and form a separate state, is entrenched in Art. 39.4 and in Art. 47.2 respectively.

In practice, however, secession is constitutionally difficult. Secession from the Federation requires a two-thirds majority in the responsible state legislature. The Federal Government is then obliged to organise a referendum within what is a cooling off period of three years, with a simple majority vote then being binding. Secession from an existing region/state requires a written demand to the regional council. If approved by a two-thirds majority, the council must organise a referendum within one-year, with a simple majority vote being binding. Given the likelihood that it would be a minority ethnic group within an existing state wishing to secede, that it would be able to muster the requisite votes in the responsible legislature remains questionable.

Central to the devolution of central state power are the formulae for centralised and decentralised financing. The TGE's earlier Proclamation (Proclamation 41/1993, January 1993) dealing with the issue of revenue sharing between central and regional governments categorized revenues as central, regional, and joint and described the different arrangements in detail (see, The World Bank Report, Ethiopia: Public Expenditure Policy For Transition, Vol. II, October, 1994). With very minor changes, these arrangements were incorporated in the new constitution. What the earlier Proclamation did not specify were the rules and procedures for the allocation of centrally-collected revenues to the regions.

Article 62.7 of the constitution dealing with the allocation of centrally-collected revenues to the regions clearly retains substantial economic power at the centre: 'the Federal Council shall determine the subsidies that the Federal Government may provide to the States'. The implications of this concentration of economic power at the centre are: first, in practice, what has been devolved to the regions is essentially political power; second, the central government is in a powerful position to ensure the implementation of its macro policies (given that the Federal Government is, thus, the effective arbiter of regional spending); and, third, the Central Government has a great deal of responsibility to ensure equitable regional development.

The debate on the controversial issue of land tenure in official discourse and in the media during the drafting of the Constitution centred around the issue of state ownership versus privatisation. In 1975, the Derg implemented a land reform which nationalised all land and gave usufruct rights to peasants as members of Peasant Associations. The main defect of the land reform from the viewpoint of those advocating land privatisation was that the constant need for peasant associations to redistribute land to newly formed households undermined peasant security and inhibited peasant investment in production and land conservation.

The EPRDF stated its commitment to state ownership of land early in the transition. This can be seen in the context of the EPRDF's stated commitment in its
November 1991 Economic Policy reforms, to the rehabilitation and development of the agricultural sector, on the one hand, and the government’s need to earn foreign exchange, on the other. Control over land would enable the government both to implement its agricultural policies and to designate land for commercial farming.

Article 40.3 of the Constitution dealing with land tenure vested ownership of land in the State. Ethiopian citizens are guaranteed usufruct rights over farming land, and legal recognition is given to pastoral land rights – a constitutional right unique in Africa:

*pastoralists have a right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as a right not be displaced from their own lands (Art. 45.2).*

Private investors can acquire land through lease from the government for investment purposes, and the government can expropriate land upon payment of fair compensation. However, the Constitution does not specify the modalities of land allocation which are the responsibility of the regional governments and are, thus, likely to vary in detail from region to region.

The 1995 Parliamentary Elections

The Parliamentary elections constituted the third round of nationwide elections organised by the TGE. These and the two previous elections – the 1992 local (zonal and district) and the June 1994 Constituent Assembly – were boycotted by the OLF and several other political parties. The OLF opted out of the TGE shortly before the June 1992 elections after a series of political confrontations with the EPRDF. Significant among these disagreements was the demand by the OLF for a system of proportional representation. The OLF claims to have the full support of the Oromo people, the largest ethnic group in the country, and a system of proportional representation, it was claimed, would give it the representation in the COR equal to its constituency. A further disagreement arose over the recognition of the EPRDF’s army as the national army and the proposed unilateral reduction in the OLF army. The OLF also accused the EPRDF of spawning the Oromo People’s Democratic Organisation (OPDO) in a deliberate attempt to undermine it politically (Jalal, 1993). After opting out of the TGE the OLF resumed its armed struggle in the countryside, this time against the incumbent TGE. These clashes led to the arrest and imprisonment of some 200 OLF supporters. Most of those arrested were subsequently released (Amnesty International, July, 1995).

The Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Coalition (SEPDC) also boycotted both the CA and the Parliamentary elections. Dr. Beyene Petros, head of SEPDC, and chairman of the Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy (CAFPD), a coalition of opposition groups, claims he was forced out of the TGE and COR after attending the Paris based Alternative Conference on Peace and Democracy in 1993 (personal communication). Other boycotting parties include the Western Somali Democratic Front (WSLF) and the All Amhara People’s Organisation (AAPO).

None of these parties were prevented from participating in any of the elections. The boycotts were over alleged intimidation and in some cases the arrest of party leaders and activists and the closing of party offices by pro-EPRDF cadres (see, for example, Tronvoll, 1995; Kassahun Berhanu, ROAPE, No. 63, 1995; Pausewang, 1994). A frequently cited example of arrest based on dubious evidence is the arrest, in June 1994, of Professor Asrat Woldeyes, leader of the AAPO, who is currently serving a five year prison sentence for alleged ‘warmongering’ and ‘conspiracy against the state’, a charge refuted by AAPO.
According to Amnesty International (July, 1995), the evidence against the AAPO leader is not clear cut.

The EPRDF counters these claims by arguing that the reluctance of these parties to participate in the elections is because they know they don’t have the level of support they claim for themselves. Yet, the reason they don’t have this support is because they have no political programme, other than the achievement of individual power; they spend their time talking to ‘the west’ instead of trying to build a local political constituency (personal communication, Dr. Negasso Gidado, OPDO, former Minister of Information; Dr. Barnabas Gebre, TPLF).

It is difficult to know what to make of these allegations and counter allegations given that many, although not all, of the allegations made by opposition groups are based less on substantiated evidence and more on the accusations of opposition party members (Tronvoll, 1995; Amnesty International, July 1995).


One party that had boycotted the two previous elections, but participated in the Parliamentary elections was the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). The ONLF, composed of a number of factions, held a meeting in Harar three months prior to the elections and subsequently issued a statement deposing the old leadership, restructuring and reorganising the party, and changing the old policy of armed confrontation to one based on the recognition of peaceful political participation. The new leadership was recognized during subsequent negotiations with the TGE, but the ONLF had, by that time, missed the candidate registration deadline. The TGE made a concession on the observation of electoral rules thereby allowing the ONLF to field candidates.

The Parliamentary elections were timed to take place on 7 May 1995. However, Ethiopia’s poorly developed infrastructure put logistical constraints on Regions 2 (Afar), 5 (Somali), and 13 (Harar), all predominantly pastoral regions; these were postponed to 18 and 28 June. Voter registration, supposed to finish two weeks before the elections, was extended by one week until 3 May. According to officials in the NEB (personal communication), the extension of the registration process was due to ‘logistical difficulties’.

The estimated number of eligible voters and number of registered and actual voters by region is shown in Table 1. The lack of data on the projected number of eligible voters in Regions 5 and 6 and the increase in registered voters over the projected number of voters in Region 2 and in Dire Dawa indicates that population figures are not known in some regions, and underestimated in others. Thus, it is not possible to ascertain the percentage of eligible voters that registered.

The total number of registered voters, 21,387,818 was, however, significantly higher than voter registration figures for the CA elections (i.e., 15,162,725, Pausewang, 1994:10). The NEB attributes this increase in voter registration partly to its own increased efforts in civic education, and partly to the fact that during the two previous elections members of the former defence and security forces and members of the defunct Worker’s Party were excluded from participation; these restrictions were lifted for the Parliamentary elections (personal communication).

The figures show an overwhelming 91 per cent of registered voters went to the polls. This turn out is significantly higher than the 80 per cent participation rate in
South Africa’s recent elections, and the 76.5 per cent turn out in Namibia’s Presidential and National elections of December 1994 (Simon, ROAPE, No. 63, 1995).

Some 69 political parties and around 400 independents participated in the elections. The number of parties competing for the 548 seats in the National Council of Representatives was 47 (Ato Sampson, Head of Candidate Registration, personal communication). The majority of the parties were affiliated to the EPRDF.

Ethnic groups with a membership of less than 100,000 (the extent of one constituency) automatically received a seat in the COR. As a result, 22 groups, especially from the south and west of the country – some of which had never had any previous dealings with the central government – got a free seat in the COR.

The EPRDF was able to campaign on a record of achievement, both as national liberation movement and government. The EPRDF’s commitment to peace and stability has been demonstrated by the peaceful transition of power in May 1991 and the subsequent restoration of security in most of the country. Some reported irregularities notwithstanding, the commitment to hold elections as part of the democratisation process has also been demonstrated as has the commitment to a political system of governance based on a constitutional democracy.

The EPRDF also had a well defined economic programme and was able to campaign on its Five Year Development Plan for Peace and Security, adopted in April 1995, and on its economic achievements so far, including, the deregulation of producer prices and the liberalisation of transport and marketing; the significant decline in public expenditure on defence over the period 1989-1994 from 25 to 7 per cent of total government expenditure, and the increased public expenditure on social services (health and education) from 13 to 23 per cent, and on infrastructure (roads, transport, and irrigation) from 7 to 17 per cent over the same period (The World Bank Report, 1994). The EPRDF is also advantaged in that it is very well organised, and it knows how to reach and mobilize the peasantry based on years of experience during its 20-year armed struggle.

By contrast the campaigns of the opposition parties and of most of the independents were based on a mild expression of intent to build a school or other social amenity for the local community. The only national level party that ran on a platform that explicitly differed from that of the EPRDF was the Ethiopian National Democratic Party (ENDP). The ENDP, a centralist party, headed by Fekadu Gedamu, former vice-president of the COR, campaigned against the EPRDF’s regionalisation policy, advocated the privatisation of land and called for all properties nationalised under the previous regime to be returned to their original owners.

The number of seats won by party and independent candidates in the Federal Council and in the regional assemblies is shown in Table 2 consisting of the figures for 7 of the 8 constituencies in Region 2 (Afar) and the the figures for 16 of the 26 constituencies in Region 5 (Somali); there is no data for Dire Dawa. As the data for 535 of 548 Federal Council seats show, the EPRDF won a landslide victory, winning 502 of the 535 seats.

According to the NEB, some 280 observers were registered to monitor the elections including circa 220 international representatives from Europe, the US, Canada, and the OAU. Some local political organisations also fielded observers.

The elections were generally considered to be much improved in planning and execution than the CA elections and the 1992 elections. Altogether, some 32,000 polling stations were established in more
than 500 constituencies. Some irregularities in electoral procedure were noted in some electoral districts, including the lack of sufficient privacy in voting booths, and incidents where candidates were encouraged to vote for a particular candidate by election officials. In most cases these irregularities, after being pointed out to election officials, were rectified (see, e.g., Ad Net, 1995; Tronvoll, 1995).

In some electoral districts the similarity of symbols representing the candidates on the ballot paper reportedly created confusion for some voters in that they could not differentiate between the symbols of the candidate of their choice (NEB officials, personal communication; see also, Ad Net, 1995). The NEB can also be criticised for the prolonged delay in publishing the official results which were only made available in their complete form on 2 October 1995. According to NEB officials (personal communication) the delay was due in part to the postponements of elections in some regions and constituencies and, in part to resource shortages within the NEB.

In general, the elections were described as peaceful and seen to be fair. A notable exception, however, is the Report of the Norwegian Observer Group (Tronvoll and Aadland, 1995) which 'dismisses' the elections as 'neither fair, free, nor impartial'. The Report identifies two main reasons for these accusations. One is the boycott of the elections by the 'main opposition' groups and, thus, the lack of competition. As noted above, attempts were made both by the international community and the TGE to persuade the boycotting parties to participate in the elections – a process also noted by the authors but dismissed in favour of the opposition members alleged fears of intimidation.

The second, and highly controversial, reason is the author's claim that the overwhelming turn out of voters was based on 'fear' and 'political apathy'. The Report, based on a sample of 21 polling stations, cites 'accusations' by undocumented sources that peasants were 'threatened with eviction' if they did not participate in the election (p. 31). However, none of the peasant respondents interviewed by the author's had received such threats, nor did the they provide evidence of such incidents elsewhere. That some peasant respondents reported participating in the elections because they were 'told' to do so by peasant association leaders is also cited as an example of participation on the basis of fear. This is clearly a subjective interpretation of the intent of the peasant association leaders that can be otherwise interpreted not as a 'threat', but as an encouragement.

The author's claim that the overwhelming voter turn out reflected 'political apathy' follows their claim that the peasant participation was based on fear and that their participation in the elections was itself a form of resistance. Given their lack of evidence the related argument on 'political apathy' does not hold. Interestingly, with regard to the author's claims 'that the peasantry was living in a state of fear' they further state: 'some of our impressions are more intuitive than based on concrete observations and facts' (p. 45).

Conclusion

It is difficult to know whether the parties that boycotted the elections have the widespread support that they claim because of their continuing failure to submit themselves to the verdict of the electorate. The parties themselves are weak in organisation and none of them have a clearly defined economic agenda. The OLF leadership is divided and living in exile. The OLF clearly had a support base in Wollega, Bale and Harar, and made a strategic error in pulling out of the political process in 1992. The vacuum left by the OLF appears to have been taken up by the OPDO. The SEPDC is
headed by Dr. Beyene Petros, who is also head of the Coalition of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy (CAFPD), and the Hadiya Party (his own ethnic group). Essentially, SEPDC, and CAFPD, want to ‘re-do the transition’ and start again (Beyene Petros, personal communication; see also, CAFPD Report, 1995). Similarly, the leadership of the AAPO is in prison. The AAPO was only formed in 1994 and is a centralist party; it claims to have wide support in the Amhara region but has never stood in an election.

In contrast, the EPRDF is well organised and has a clear political and economic agenda. Most importantly, the EPRDF has achieved a seemingly stable peace. At the present juncture there is no realistic, political alternative to the EPRDF.

June Rock is in the Department of Politics, University of Leeds. The author wishes to acknowledge that the funds for this research were made available by the Nuffield Foundation.

**Bibliography**


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**Table 1: Number of Eligible, Registered and Actual Voters by Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Projected No.</th>
<th>Registered No.</th>
<th>% of Est. that registered</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>% of registered voters that voted</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Tigray</td>
<td>1,550,702</td>
<td>1,364,087</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1,341,850</td>
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<td>576,616</td>
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<td>–</td>
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<td>6. Beni Shangul</td>
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<td>191,140</td>
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### Results of 1995 Federal & Regional Elections

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### Results of 1995 Federal & Regional Elections

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<tr>
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<td>Harar</td>
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* = EPRDF affiliated parties  
1 Results only for 7 out of 8 constituencies  
2 Results only for 16 out of 26 constituencies  
3 In Addis Ababa EPRDF candidates were fielded under the name of the Front.

Source: Ethiopia National Election Board
Western Sahara: Making Haste Slowly – Little Progress Towards the Referendum

David Seddon

In September 1991 the UN began what was scheduled to be a six month operation to supervise a referendum on the future of the Western Sahara. Five years later, no referendum has been held. The original UN plan was clear on who could vote. Yet much of the delay is due to disagreement and confusion over voter identification and eligibility.

In his report to the UN Security Council on 12 July 1994, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated that he hoped to see a referendum on the future of Western Sahara in February 1995. Activities prior to the vote – including the return of Saharawi refugees, a reduction in the Moroccan military presence in the Western Sahara and an exchange of prisoners of war – were, he reported, due to start in October 1994. Despite lack of agreement on who could vote in the referendum, it was reported that the voter identification process had been launched. This process was stalled, however, by objections by the Moroccan government to participation by observers from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Eventually, in September, two OAU observers arrived to take part in the voters’ registration process (although the Moroccan government insisted that it recognised them only as ‘personal envoys’ of the Tunisian president). There were continuing problems throughout the remainder of the year, associated with irregularities and unwarranted interventions by the Moroccan authorities in Moroccan-occupied territory in the voter registration process.

On 13 January 1995, the UN Security Council passed a resolution (973) stress-
identification finally began in 1994, three years behind schedule, it remained painfully slow: by mid-March some 21,000 (under 20 per cent applicants) had been satisfactorily identified. To help overcome this, the report proposed to double the number of centres from four to eight. It also noted the long-overdue delivery of the 89-volume Spanish colonial Civil Register (the reference key point for voter identification) from Madrid, which should speed up the process.

The report also outlined preparations for subsequent stages of the ‘peace plan’. The Moroccan army must reduce its forces to 65,000 in the Western Sahara; remaining troops and Polisario/SPLA units must then be confined to designated locations and monitored by MINURSO military contingents. Prisoners of war should then be exchanged and refugees returned to the territory. A mission of the UNHCR to the region in February 1995 estimated that preparations for the return of refugees would take six months and that the actual return would take a further three months. In April 1995, the report was endorsed by the Security Council, which called for the full cooperation of both parties to the conflict to ensure that target of processing 25,000 voter applications each month was achieved. The March report, however, contained no firm timetable; and in April the UN Secretary General conceded that holding the referendum before early 1996 now appeared impossible.

The Security Council determined, however, to send a special mission to the Western Sahara to investigate and report on the situation. The significance of this can be seen from the fact that this is only the sixth of its kind since the inception of the Security Council. The President of the Security Council stated that the main task of the mission was to speed up the implementation of the Western Sahara conflict settlement plan. The mission was asked:

- to make the parties understand the necessity of full cooperation with MINURSO to implement all the aspects of the settlement plan and that any new delay could jeopardise the future of the UN presence;
- to assess the progress of the identification process and consider its problems, taking into account the new deadline of January 1996 for the referendum;
- to determine the problems in other fields for the accomplishment of the settlement plan, especially the reduction of the Moroccan military presence in the territory, the containment of the Polisario forces, the liberation of prisoners and political detainees, the exchange of prisoners of war, and the return of refugees.

In May, numerous young Sahrawis, demonstrating peacefully in the streets of El Ayoune (in the Moroccan-occupied area of the Western Sahara) to demand a referendum and to show their support for the Polisario, were arrested and eight of them condemned by the Moroccan state High Security Court to prison sentences of up to 20 years. The Polisario, in response, suspended its collaboration with the voter identification process. It stated, however, that it would not tolerate any further delays in the implementation of the agreed procedures for progress towards the referendum. In the meanwhile, several reports indicated that the eight young Sahrawi detainees had been subjected to cruel and degrading treatment.

The UN Security Council mission took place between 3 and 9 June 1995. It was led by ambassadors from the USA, France, Oman and Botswana, and included the Deputy Special Representative for Western Sahara. The European Day for disappeared Saharawis (10 June) was marked in several European countries as well as in the refugee camps. On 13 July, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on EU representatives
to put pressure on Morocco to comply with the UN peace plan for the Western Sahara. It also adopted a resolution calling for the unconditional release of eight students, condemned by a military court in Morocco to lengthy prison sentences for demonstrating and calling on the Moroccan government to respect international human rights conventions. The sentences of the young Saharawis arrested after their peaceful demonstration in El Ayoune, were reduced to one year by the king of Morocco under international pressure and Polisario agreed to continue with its collaboration in the identification of voters. At the August session of the UN Sub-Commission for Human Rights, held in Geneva, several NGOs intervened on the question of the Western Sahara and the detention of the Saharawi demonstrators.

In the meanwhile, the willingness and capacity of the United Nations to implement 'the peace plan' and carry out the promised 'free and fair' referendum on the future of the Western Sahara is seriously in doubt. Morocco continues, with remarkably little impediment (whether by MINURSO or other UN agencies) to pursue its strategy of occupation, intimidation and repression, and to impede progress towards the referendum in whatever way possible. And the future of the Saharawi people hangs in the balance.

There is continuing evidence of the willingness of some high-level UN officials, and of the three major Western governments (US, Britain and France) on the UN Security Council to adopt positions compatible with the Moroccan position on the Western Sahara.

For example, former US Ambassador Frank Ruddy, who launched a fierce attack on the inadequacies of the UN operation in the Western Sahara earlier in 1995, was barred from speaking at a UN hearing on the Western Sahara in early October. Ruddy, former deputy chair of the commission preparing for the referendum told the Washington Post that this censorship was 'unprecedented' and provided further evidence that the UN had become 'an instrument of the Moroccan government'.

A report produced in October 1995 by the New York based Human Rights Watch (HRW) provided new evidence of continuing Moroccan obstruction of the UN peace plan for the Western Sahara. The report, *Keeping it Secret, the United Nations operation in Western Sahara*, outlines the findings of a visit by HRW to the occupied territory. The HRW findings can be summarised as follows:

1) The UN relinquished control of voter identification to the parties to the conflict. A UN official has now conceded that, as a result, the UN cannot be certain whether legitimate voters have been excluded or illegitimate voters included;

2) Morocco has submitted applications to join the electoral register on behalf of individuals with questionable ties to the Western Sahara - out of 180,000 applications put in by Morocco, 100,000 are from persons living outside the territory);

3) Moroccan authorities have routinely prevented access by Saharawis to voter registration centres and have confiscated papers from those who have been able to register;

4) Moroccan authorities have been intimidating local tribal leaders who are responsible for verifying the eligibility of voters;

5) Senior UN staff have pressurised their staff to take decisions contrary to accepted identification procedures;

6) UN personnel are under constant surveillance by the Moroccan authorities and were 'reluctant, even frightened' to talk to HRW.
HRW conclude that if the UN does not take appropriate action, then the future of the region will be determined in the wake of the collapse of a misdirected UN operation which Morocco has succeeded in manipulating.

Finally, there is independent evidence that the position of the UN Secretary-General himself as well as that of the US, Britain and France on voter identification and eligibility is strongly biased towards the Moroccan position. A proposal, put to the UN Security Council by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali in December 1995, to proceed with voter identification for the referendum using oral testimony before a Moroccan appointed tribal leader, without any Polisario presence – which would have introduced a fundamental change in the agreed procedures and further assisted Morocco to add significant numbers of illegitimate voters to the list – was supported by the US, Britain and France. Other members of the Security Council, however, voted against the proposal, and required the Secretary-General to intensify his consultations with the two parties. If agreement is not reached, the UN will consider its options, including, apparently, the withdrawal of MINURSO.

David Seddon is in the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia.

Editor's Note: Those wishing to indicate moral support or to provide material support to the Saharawis in their struggle for self-determination might contact: The Bureau of Human Rights, The European Coordination of Support for the Saharawis, BP 53, 1211 Geneva 9, Switzerland, fax. 22 312 40 22; AFAPREDESA, (Association of Families of Prisoners and Disappeared Saharawi People), BP 10, Tindouf, Algeria, fax 213 793 15 6.

Eritrea and Yemen: Control of the Shipping Lanes

Martin Plaut

In December 1995, Eritrean and Yemeni forces clashed over control of the Hanish islands, close to the mouth of the Red Sea. The fighting itself was brief and the outcome clear: by Sunday, 17 December, the Eritreans were in control Greater Hanish, having routed the Yemenis, taking 195 prisoners. However, the origins of the dispute and the consequences for the region are far from self evident.

The uninhabited islands sit astride one of the world's major shipping lanes, 160 kilometres north of the Bab el-Mandeb, the southern entrance to the Red Sea. They lie at one of the critical 'choke points' of world trade, guarding the route to the Suez Canal. Although the Canal has declined in importance since most oil now goes via tanker around the Cape, it is nevertheless vital to world shipping. It remains the busiest canal in the world, transporting over 423 million tonnes of shipping in 1994. It is also vital to the Egyptian economy, providing in excess of $2 billion a year in transit tolls. Any conflict that might reduce the flow of traffic through the Red Sea would therefore not only be of concern to maritime nations, but would ring alarm bells in Cairo.

Diving into Dispute

The islands are roughly equidistant from both Eritrea and Yemen, and conflict over them has been brewing for some time. In a statement setting out the background to the dispute, issued on 20 December 1995, the Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Salih, said that a German company had submitted an application to develop what he referred to as 'an investment project' on the Greater Hanish island at the beginning of 1995. The company, Konzeptbau, planned a £1 million hotel and scuba diving complex on the island. The com-
HRW conclude that if the UN does not take appropriate action, then the future of the region will be determined in the wake of the collapse of a misdirected UN operation which Morocco has succeeded in manipulating.

Finally, there is independent evidence that the position of the UN Secretary-General himself as well as that of the US, Britain and France on voter identification and eligibility is strongly biased towards the Moroccan position. A proposal, put to the UN Security Council by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali in December 1995, to proceed with voter identification for the referendum using oral testimony before a Moroccan appointed tribal leader, without any Polisario presence – which would have introduced a fundamental change in the agreed procedures and further assisted Morocco to add significant numbers of illegitimate voters to the list – was supported by the US, Britain and France. Other members of the Security Council, however, voted against the proposal, and required the Secretary-General to intensify his consultations with the two parties. If agreement is not reached, the UN will consider its options, including, apparently, the withdrawal of MINURSO.

David Seddon is in the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia.

Editor's Note: Those wishing to indicate moral support or to provide material support to the Saharawis in their struggle for self-determination might contact: The Bureau of Human Rights, The European Coordination for the Saharawis, BP 53, 1211 Geneva 9, Switzerland, fax. 22 312 40 22; AFAPREDESA, (Association of Families of Prisoners and Disappeared Saharawi People), BP 10, Tindouf, Algeria, fax 213 793 15 6.

Eritrea and Yemen: Control of the Shipping Lanes

Martin Plaut

In December 1995, Eritrean and Yemeni forces clashed over control of the Hanish islands, close to the mouth of the Red Sea. The fighting itself was brief and the outcome clear: by Sunday, 17 December, the Eritreans were in control Greater Hanish, having routed the Yemenis, taking 195 prisoners. However, the origins of the dispute and the consequences for the region are far from self evident.

The uninhabited islands sit astride one of the world’s major shipping lanes, 160 kilometres north of the Bab el-Mandeb, the southern entrance to the Red Sea. They lie at one of the critical ‘choke points’ of world trade, guarding the route to the Suez Canal. Although the Canal has declined in importance since most oil now goes via tanker around the Cape, it is nevertheless vital to world shipping. It remains the busiest canal in the world, transporting over 423 million tonnes of shipping in 1994. It is also vital to the Egyptian economy, providing in excess of $2 billion a year in transit tolls. Any conflict that might reduce the flow of traffic through the Red Sea would therefore not only be of concern to maritime nations, but would ring alarm bells in Cairo.

Diving into Dispute

The islands are roughly equidistant from both Eritrea and Yemen, and conflict over them has been brewing for some time. In a statement setting out the background to the dispute, issued on 20 December 1995, the Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Salih, said that a German company had submitted an application to develop what he referred to as ‘an investment project’ on the Greater Hanish island at the beginning of 1995. The company, Konzeptbau, planned a £1 million hotel and scuba diving complex on the island. The com-
pany's request was granted, and work began in the middle of last year. Yemeni troops were also deployed on the islands.

This activity alarmed the Eritreans. There were reports of telephone conversations between the Yemeni President and the Eritrean President, Issaís Afeworki, and the Eritrean Foreign Minister, Petros Solomon, was despatched to San'a in late November to attempt to resolve the issue. Early in December a seven-strong Yemeni delegation, led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Dr Abdel Karim al Iryani, arrived in the Eritrean capital Asmara to try to take the matter further.

It was reported that they agreed to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) if they failed to resolve the issue bilaterally, but further progress proved impossible. The sticking point was apparently the terms which would govern any joint referral to the ICJ. Eritrea wished the future of the whole archipelago of some two hundred islands to be settled simultaneously. According to Eritrea, the Yemeni delegation insisted they had no mandate to discuss anything more than the future of Greater Hanish. The difference proved insuperable, and as a result it was agreed to postpone further negotiations until February 1996, after the month of Ramadan.

Exactly what took place then is a matter of dispute, but on Saturday, 16 December 1995, fighting broke out. Each side blames the other for initiating the conflict, but by the next day it was all over, leaving the Eritreans in control of Greater Hanish. A ceasefire was negotiated in a telephone call between the two Presidents, who agreed to establish a cease-fire monitoring commission consisting of one official from each country plus a member of the United States embassies in San'a and Asmara. Apart from an aerial attack on the Eritrean positions on the Monday, 18 December, the cease-fire has generally held.

Now attempts began to mediate between the conflicting parties. Despite the terms of the ceasefire agreement, the United States declined to become directly involved in a dispute between two of its allies in the region. Instead it called for other third parties to act. Egypt, Ethiopia and the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, have all stepped into this role, with visits to both capitals in attempts to reduce tension and find a long-term solution. On 8 January 1996 it was announced that France had appointed a diplomat, Francis Gutman, to continue the mediation efforts.

A Touch of Empire

A long-term solution will rely, to a considerable degree, on the historic claims of both sides, since the sovereignty of the islands has never been properly defined. In 1517 the Ottoman Turks conquered Yemen and the Red Sea coast of Eritrea and the port of Massawa. Although the subsequent history is immensely complex, the next key date was 1923. Having been on the losing side in the First World War, the Ottoman empire was stripped of its territories in the Treaty of Lausanne. Article 16 of the Treaty left the future status of a number of territories - including the Hanish islands - undecided. Britain, concerned about the safety of navigation through the Red Sea, maintained lighthouses on the islands, which had been captured from the Turks in 1915. This was undertaken from Aden, although it was always made clear that the islands were not part of the colony. In the 1930s, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands shared the cost of the maintenance, but this ended with Second World War.

Eritrea had been an Italian colony since 1889, and on 16 April 1938 in Rome Italy and Britain signed a treaty concerning the Hanish islands. This stated: 'Neither party will in, or in regard to any such island, establish its sovereignty, or erect fortifications or defences. Nevertheless, the two sides agree that Italy is allowed to have a
presence of Italian officials at Greater Hanish, Little Hanish and the Jebel Zukur for the purpose of protecting the fishermen who resort there.' On 20 December 1938 the Italian Governor-General for East Africa issued a decree establishing the territorial competence and borders of some districts in Eritrea, which states inter alia that 'the islands of the Hanish Zukur group continue to be part of the Commissariat of Dankalia and Aussa (Assab').

Red Sea Lights

This did not prevent Britain from continuing to maintain the lighthouses, and a new deal was struck in 1962 when governments agreed to contribute proportionally to the amount of shipping from each nation passing through the Suez canal. Article 8 of the Treaty of the Red Sea Lights stated: 'Nothing in the present agreement shall be constituted as a settlement of the future of the islands.' Britain was appointed as 'managing government', and from 1979 until 1983, when Britain ended its control over the lighthouses, the cost was met from dues levied on ships visiting British ports. Britain's role was subsequently assumed by Yemen.

Two further events played a role in the current dispute. The first relates to the Egyptian–Israeli war of 1973. Yemen maintains that during the conflict it was approached by Egypt for use of the islands. Yemen acceded to the request, and an agreement was signed between the two countries on 12 May of that year. As the Yemeni Foreign Minister pointed out in a message to the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Egyptian request was addressed to Yemen – not to Ethiopia, then in control of much of what is currently Eritrea. Eritrea responds to this claim by highlighting the close ties that existed at the time between Tel Aviv and Addis Ababa, precluding an Egyptian approach to Ethiopia.

For their part, the Eritreans point to the use of the islands by their forces throughout their long struggle for independence from Ethiopia. They maintain that at no time did Yemen question their right to use the islands, since they were part of their own territory. San'a agrees that the islands were indeed used by Eritrea, but says that this use was with their agreement.

The dispute has done nothing to improve Eritrea's relations with its Arab neighbours. Yemen used Eritrea's ties with Tel Aviv in its campaign against Asmara. During the fighting there were repeated Yemeni claims that Israeli military equipment and even Israeli instructors were participating on the Eritrean side. These claims were denied by Israel and dismissed as 'baseless' by Eritrea, which declared that it was infantile to continually see an Israeli hand behind every confrontation. Since the fighting died down, Eritrea has attempted to rebuild bridges, sending missions to its Arab neighbours to explain its position.

Despite the bitterness of the confrontation and the strength of rhetoric, the current dispute is very much against the trend in Yemeni–Eritrean relations. In the past these ties have been particularly strong. The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (the South) supported the Eritrean cause, providing a base for the Eritrean People's Liberation Front in the early 1970s. More recently, both countries have gone out of their way to resolve each other's difficulties. The Eritrean President visited San'a in April 1994 and attempted to settle the differences between North and South Yemen. When the civil war broke out, Eritrea allowed North Yemeni planes to fly to Asmara, to keep them from being destroyed by attacks from the South. A similar offer was reported to have been made to the South, but was not taken up.

Yemen has also attempted to resolve Eritrea's continuing dispute with Sudan,
and the Yemeni President attempted to reduce tension along the Eritrean-Sudanese border by visiting Asmara and Khartoum in December 1994. Although these efforts proved fruitless, they indicated Eritrean confidence in the impartiality of the Yemeni authorities.

**Setting Precedents**

Resolving the question of sovereignty of the islands will be no easy matter. It is bedevilled by the possibility that any decision in this dispute could set a precedent for the future of so many other indeterminate borders in the region. At the same time, the geography of the area means that such a decision would almost certainly impact on more than one state. For this reason, the Eritrean President has called for all border disputes to be dealt with at the same time, saying: 'Any demarcation of the Yemeni-Eritrean borders must absolutely involve Eritrea's maritime borders with Saudi Arabia and Djibouti.' Since Yemen and Saudi Arabia have had repeated clashes over their border, which has proved notoriously difficult to define, there can be little hope that resolving the maritime borders of so many different states will be an easy task.

In the face of these obstacles, any solution will be hard to achieve. Perhaps the mediators will have to allow time to pass to allow tempers to cool before attempting to resolve a conundrum that has remained outstanding for the best part of this century.

**Plant Genetic Resources Hold the Future**

*Maxwell Chivasa*

With today's prevalent droughts and the general decline in rainfall in arid and semi-arid parts of southern Africa, coupled with environmental degradation and neglect of indigenous food plant species, a wide range of plants are threatened with extinction.

Some plants used as food for animals and human beings and even medicinal purposes have disappeared. Southern Africa is rich in indigenous and introduced plant genetic resources but these are threatened by genetic erosion. Concerned about the possible total loss of a wide diversity of wild and cultivated, indigenous and exotic plant species and the inevitable desert encroachments, Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states have set up national plant genetic resource centres.

In southern Africa and globally, there is awareness of the dangers of the loss of weak plant species that cannot stand long periods of drought and have responded by setting up gene-banks where they can 'withdraw' seeds to repropagate when drought conditions improve.

Some member states of SADC have had foresight and set up programmes and policies for plant genetic resource centres, with the help of the main SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre (SPGRC) in Lusaka, Zambia. The centre runs a mammoth gene-bank programme for the region to conserve and promote use of plant genetic resources. SPGRC, set up by SADC member states in 1989, coordinates the inventory, collection, characterisation, evaluation, rejuvenation, multiplication and documentation of indigenous and exotic plant genetic resources in this region.

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Martin Plaut is an Executive Producer with the BBC World Service, London. © The World Today, London.
This programme, initiated by the Southern African Centre for Cooperation in Agricultural and Natural Resources, Research and Training (SACCAR) with financial support from the Nordic countries, has now assumed greater importance as it works with member states in the preparation of a southern Africa regional synthesis report on the state of plant genetic resources.

The SPGRC could not have been more important now when countries throughout the world are taking stock of plant genetic resources material to prepare sub-regional contributions to what will culminate into a Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and Global Plan of Action.

SPGRC has already secured funding to the tune of US$35.4 million with an estimated input of US$20.6 million from the Nordic donors and US$14.8 million in kind and cash from SADC member states during the first 20 years. Through bilateral funding between SADC member states and individual Nordic countries other funds will be available for the national plant genetic resource centres activities.

A number of sub-regional preparatory meetings have been taking place throughout the world to come up with sub-regional synthesis reports for presentation at the final worldwide conference, International Technical Conference and Programme for Plant Genetic Resources, Leipzig, Germany, from 17 to 23 June 1996. SADC member states' preparatory meeting for the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources for Southern Africa held in Kadoma, Zimbabwe, recently offered the opportunity for putting together one of the most comprehensive reports on plant genetic resources from this region.

The director of SPGRC, Dr G Y Mkamanga commented:

Some countries in Africa or in other continents are not as integrated in their programmes as we are in southern Africa and as a result will not find it as easy as we did in compiling such a report.

Dr Mkamanga warned that because of deforestation, land degradation, selection pressure and breeding, the SADC region is experiencing the erosion of plant genetic resources.

Some conservation measures have been started in order to reverse this trend. The SADC/SPGRC is coordinating all activities involving in situ and ex-situ conservation in the region through a network of national plant genetic resources centres.

Southern Africa's environment deteriorated due to deforestation for hardwood timber and for commercial and large scale farming. In some countries traditional smallholder farmers were relocated on marginal land on which human and livestock pressure also led to massive deforestation and land degradation.

The indigenous crops on which agriculture was historically based in the region were gradually marginalised, especially by crops from the new world such as maize, beans, groundnuts, potatoes, cassava and pumpkins.

The indigenous species like sorghum (adaptable), pearl millet, finger millet and bambara nuts were now grown on a very small scale mainly to maintain tradition and are in danger of genetic erosion as farmers resort to the high yielding varieties.

Other causes of genetic erosion are the frequent droughts, flooding, changes in land use, over-grazing and grasslands – especially in dry areas – and repeated bush fires.

For some it takes a lot of convincing that a wide variety of species can be lost totally,
but the SPGRC is not taking chances in conserving genetic resources for future generations who, without such a centre, might not see or use some of the plants being destroyed today.

Any recommendations from the international technical conference to be held in Germany in June, will also help strengthen and enhance genebanks for SADC countries and other regional groupings worldwide.

Maxwell Chivasa, Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC), Harare, Zimbabwe.

From War to Peace in Angola: Increasing the Chances of Success

Bill Minter

The following Briefing is a joint statement from Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA/UK), the Washington Office on Africa (WOA) and the Komitee Zuidelijk Afrika (the Netherlands).

Since the signing of the Lusaka Protocol in November 1994, Angolans have been living between war and peace. They are grateful for the cease-fire and peace process that ended the previous two years of unrestrained conflict. But they are concerned at repeated delays in implementation of the agreement. Despite many reasons for hope that things will be different, the spectre of 1992, when UNITA's leaders plunged the country into war after rejecting the results of the internationally monitored September election, has not yet been exorcised. Signs of hope include the higher level of UN engagement than in 1992, the high-level and energetic attention to the process evidenced in recent US policy, the willingness of donors in Europe and elsewhere to provide funding for necessary reconstruction projects, and the recent momentum gained by the Angolan government's flexibility on several disputed points and the quartering of the first substantial number of UNITA troops.

The UN Security Council's extension of the mandate for only three months on 8 February imposes pressure for substantial additional progress. The 1 March summit meeting in Libreville, Gabon between Angolan President Jos, Eduardo dos Santos and UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi produced new commitments to advance on both military and political provisions, including scheduling UNITA's entry into a new government of unity and national reconciliation in June or July.

The prospect of new pretexts for delay, however, is still significant. The agenda includes not only completion of the quartering of UNITA troops, but also many other critical issues yet to be implemented, including demobilization or integration into the national army of quartered troops, integration of UNITA recruits into the police, and incorporation of UNITA into agreed posts in the national government. UNITA has raised questions about the legitimacy of the national assembly after November 1996, when its initial four-year mandate will have passed.

Full implementation of the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol, originally envisaged to be completed with UN assistance by February 1997, is far behind schedule. The engagement of Angolan civil society in the peace process is weak. The right to freedom of movement, particularly in UNITA-controlled areas, is systematically violated, without an effective response from the international community.
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Full implementation of the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol, originally envisaged to be completed with UN assistance by February 1997, is far behind schedule. The engagement of Angolan civil society in the peace process is weak. The right to freedom of movement, particularly in UNITA-controlled areas, is systematically violated, without an effective response from the international community.
And, despite large-scale international commitments of humanitarian and reconstruction aid, the prospects for quick implementation of sustainable projects for reconstruction which could give additional momentum to peaceful activities are still hampered by government incapacity, UNITA fears of losing control over their population base, and the lack of sufficient local knowledge and problems of coordination among newly arrived agencies. There is a danger that well-intentioned 'best-case' thinking could inadvertently sweep under the carpet serious obstacles that could impose new delays or even sabotage the process entirely.

Speaking to Inter Press Service correspondent Chris Simpson after the Libreville summit, a 'senior diamond industry source' familiar with the volatile situation in Angola's northeast complained,

'It's dangerous as hell out there and the UN doesn't want to know. They're making exactly the same mistakes they made in 1992 [when the earlier peace pact fell apart].

Despite the increase in international involvement, the low profile of African issues in general has meant that recent discussion of policy options on Angola has only sporadically entered the public debate in foreign countries with key roles in the process. Both within Angola and with respect to the bilateral and multilateral agencies involved, the public has not been adequately engaged in dialogue with policy-makers and other officials responsible for the details of implementation. The policy framework that follows is intended as a contribution to a wider public debate. It is addressed in part to those, both Angolans and non-Angolans, who have direct official responsibility in the peace process — in the Angolan government, UNITA, the United Nations and the 'troika' of the US, Russia and Portugal. But it is also aimed at all others interested in increasing the chances of success in that process — Angolan and non-Angolan civil society actors including non-governmental organizations, businessmen and others, whether currently involved in Angola or contemplating such involvement.

The statement originated with the Washington Office on Africa (WOA) in the US and Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) in the UK, the successor organization to the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. Neither group has direct organizational responsibility in Angola, but each has long been engaged in public advocacy concerning the Angolan crisis, in all its stages from the period of resistance against Portuguese colonialism through the present. It reflects insights from recent visits to Angola by William Minter, Senior Research Fellow at WOA's affiliate Africa Policy Information Centre and by Ben Jackson, the Director of ACTSA, as well as consultation with other groups and individuals concerned with the peace process. The statement assumes familiarity with general background information, for which a short list of suggested sources is attached.

The statement is not intended as a comprehensive plan or set of recommendations for those involved in the process on a day-to-day basis, but rather guidelines which in our judgement all parties need to consider in order to increase the chances of success. In many cases, while implementation depends primarily on the official actors, others may be able to think of creative small steps which could aid, if only in a small way, in moving the process forward.

In the last two months there has been significant renewed momentum in implementing the latest peace agreement signed almost a year and a half ago in Lusaka. But on the ground Angolans are still suspended between war and peace, hoping against hope for success while still fearful that their hopes might be dashed.
as they were so brutally after the orderly, transparent and internationally recognized elections in September 1992.

We think it urgent that the international community continue to press for completion of the peace process, which will then give Angolans of all political persuasions the opportunity to engage fully in what will be a much more extended process of building sustainable democratic institutions and reconstructing their country. Recent advances are encouraging, but it would be a serious mistake to regard the process as already irreversible or to play down the many obstacles still to be overcome.

In Angola, the term esquema refers to the ingenious, creative and often devious 'schemes' individuals are forced to find to survive and, in the case of a few, to enrich themselves. In order for the peace process to succeed, both Angolans and their friends, official and non-official, will have to discover large- and small-scale esquemas for peace.

We are much encouraged by recent initiatives by the US and the international community in general to move the process along. But we are also concerned that the chances be minimized for repeating the mistakes of the past, in which the US government often disregarded African and non-governmental views to pursue its unilateral agenda in Angola, and in which multilateral agencies found themselves unprepared to respond to predictable breakdowns in earlier peace processes.

Members of the UN Security Council in particular, and major contributors to reconstruction such as the European Community, need to continue high-level involvement in maintaining the peace momentum as well as in implementation of particular projects. The specific policy recommendations contained in this statement are necessarily illustrative and suggestive rather than comprehensive. What will count most heavily for peace in Angola is what is done on the spot day-by-day. But it also requires sustained international attention to the substantive issues at stake, and open debate on what measures can most increase the chances for peace. It is in that spirit that we present the following guidelines.

**Guidelines for Increasing the Chances for Peace**

**Maintain Momentum on Multiple Fronts:** Since January there has been significant momentum in moving the peace process along, culminating in intense pressure on UNITA to move its troops to the agreed quartering areas. Although UNITA did not fulfil the pledge by its leader Jonas Savimbi to have 16,500 troops quartered before the 8 February United Nations Security Council meeting, by 6 March the number registered at the four quartering areas had reached 16,985, while the number of weapons turned in at the camps added up to 14,485.

The Security Council extended the UNAVEM mandate for three months, until 8 May, instead of the expected six months, and explicitly called on UNITA to complete quartering of their troops within this time period. Given past experience, there is no chance that this will happen without continued intense outside pressure.

According to the Lusaka Protocol, the next steps – selection of UNITA troops to join the national army and demobilization of excess forces – will not begin until the quartering process is completed. However, it is extremely unlikely that all the forces can in fact be quartered without simultaneous progress on integration into the national army, implementation of UNITA's agreed-on participation in the political process, and other confidence-building measures. The declared total of 62,500 UNITA military personnel to be quartered is possibly an overestimate, but the pace will have to quicken even to
quarter a more modest figure of 45,000 to 50,000. If pressure to complete the quartering is not combined with measures to advance on other fronts, and attention focuses primarily on the numbers game of how many have been quartered, there are likely to be significant additional delays as well as increased chances of cease-fire violations and other incidents provoked by idle soldiers in the quartering areas.

Other issues mentioned in the Security Council resolution of February 8 include calls to UNITA to release its remaining prisoners, as the government has already done, and calls to both parties, but in particular UNITA, to implement freedom of movement of people and goods and to cooperate fully with humanitarian organizations. Given the natural tendency to concentrate on the more easily quantified issue of the number of troops quartered, these points need additional attention and high-profile pressure, just as in January and February high-profile pressure was focused on the quartering exercise.

It is also critical that plans move forward as rapidly as possible on the specifically military issues of integration into the national army, demobilization and integration into the police of the agreed UNITA recruits. Because of previous delays and ongoing discussions among the parties involved, the Lusaka Protocol has in practice been repeatedly amended since it was signed in November 1994. Instead of waiting until after the full completion of the quartering process, as the letter of the protocol implies, every effort should be made to move ahead with the next steps for the soldiers already in the camps, which would also free up resources for dealing with new-comers as they arrive.

It is particularly important that details be finalized on the movement of UNITA generals into posts in the national army, so that they can accept joint responsibility for implementation of the remainder of the peace process from within rather than as commanders of a separate military force. It has also been evident that one of the flash points for incidents and for human rights violations is the practice of cattle rustling in the ‘neutral zones’ separating government and UNITA forces.

Off-duty soldiers of both sides, as well as free-lance bandits, have stolen cattle from civilians, leading to incidents of violence against civilians or clashes between the two armies. Until these areas are patrolled by forces which include recruits from UNITA as well as the existing government army, any government actions against banditry can easily turn into confrontations with UNITA.

Increase Transparency and Involve Civil Society

Discussion to date on these issues has tended to focus on the United Nations proposal to set up a UN radio, and on the difficult situation faced by an independent press sector facing both its own institutional weaknesses and opposition by some forces in the Angolan government to greater openness and freedom of the press.

Irrespective of the resolution or non-resolution of these issues, however, the fact is that large numbers of Angolans are traumatized, suspicious and mistrustful, based on their previous experiences of repression and lack of transparency. They are particularly marked by the false dawn of the 1992 election, which was followed by greater violence than in the previous decades of war. The fear to speak out and participate is not dissipated easily, particularly since their fear that the international community may abandon them to their fate in the case of failure is a fully rational response. Establishing public confidence in the process cannot be the task alone of the Angolan press. There are measures that the national and international parties involved in the process can
take to alleviate this lack of public confidence. But since all the institutions involved – multilateral organizations and foreign diplomats as well as Angolan political institutions – have well-established traditions of lack of transparency, this will require significant breaks with past practices. The best way to illustrate this point is with a specific example.

Considerable doubts have been raised, in the Angolan press and in private comments by Angolan government officials and others in Luanda, about the ‘quality’ of the quartering of UNITA troops to date. Talk is widespread about ‘child soldiers’ and obsolete weapons. Suspicions have been voiced in private, among UN officials as well as Angolans, that many of those quartered are actually civilians or untrained militia rather than soldiers. The number as well as the quality of arms turned in does not correspond to the number of soldiers. These are serious issues which cannot be glossed over.

While resolution of these points depends primarily on sustained attention within the Joint Commission involving all the parties, public confidence could be enhanced by more open dissemination of data, on such points as age ranges, types of weapons, and percent of weapons that are good, that is already agreed on among the parties.

The data collected and accepted by the parties in the Joint Commission is so far not sufficient to resolve all these questions, and is undoubtedly being supplemented by intelligence data collected separately by the parties. But from the data submitted to the commission, on the basis of birth dates collected by UN registrars, the widespread talk of ‘child soldiers’, for example, does seem to be exaggerated, facilitated by a confusion between children (under 15) and youth (15-17). Public release of such data could aid in confidence building by reducing if not eliminating unnecessary suspicion.

Once such raw data is agreed on by the parties at the Joint Commission, including the Angolan government, UNITA, UN, the troika of the US, Russia and Portugal, there seems no valid reason, apart from bureaucratic traditions of lack of transparency, that they should not be published in full in the Angolan press and made freely available to all those interested in the process. This would promote a more informed public debate, alleviate artificial uncertainties and allow a more precise focus on the genuine points of doubt, such as missing weapons and the level of training of quartered troops as compared with those not yet quartered. Angolan and international NGOs could facilitate the broad dissemination of such information, through organizational channels, word of mouth, publications and electronic means, thus facilitating the confidence building process and aiding in the formation of informed public opinion to which the official parties might hopefully feel some pressures to respond.

### Be Prepared for Failure

Perhaps the most disturbing remaining parallel to the fiasco of return to war in 1992 is the apparent reliance on ‘best-case’ scenarios, at least in the public statements of the international actors involved in the process. Whether or not it is appropriate to keep ‘worst-case’ scenarios private, for the purpose of lowering the temperature of the rhetoric and not inflaming the process with threats, it would be a serious error to neglect contingency plans for the event of either a return to war or indefinite delays on the part of one party.

In 1992, the international community (and indeed the Angolan government) did not take seriously UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi’s warnings that he would take an election loss as a priori proof of fraud, and deliberately turned a blind eye to the fact that the UNITA army had been kept virtually intact while the government
army had been reduced to a shadow of its previous strength.

While there have been and continue to be a variety of obstacles on both sides to implementation of peace, rooted in mistrust or practical political or administrative incapacity, the fundamental doubt continues to be whether the leadership of UNITA has the will to abandon its reliance on military strength (i.e. a separate army) and take its chances in the political arena, as both the 1991 and 1994 peace agreements demand. Most Angolans, as well as those of us who have followed events in Angola over a long period of time, tend to be more sceptical about new promises made at summits than many diplomatic optimists coming to Angola from other experiences. Hopefully, this time the optimists will prove right, and our doubts shown to have been unfounded. But the question is what combination of carrots, sticks and diplomatic initiatives will increase the chances of a positive answer to that question. Recent movement is encouraging, and all parties should be congratulated for the stepped-up pace of implementation in January and February.

But if the process should stall again, and again, the question of the potential alternative – the stick or threat of the stick – is unavoidable. And it should be thought out in advance. The explicit threat made by the international community is obvious – walking away, terminating the UNAVEM mandate and letting the Angolan parties resolve the issue by – at the extreme – a return to war. Such a threat does put pressure on all who favour completing the peace process over the alternatives of war or an indefinite state of neither war nor peace. But its effectiveness as pressure on the leadership of UNITA in particular depends directly on other factors – namely, the extent to which the military balance continues tilted against them, and whether they think that in the final analysis the international community will support the elected Angolan government. Every effort should be made to complete the process peacefully.

But just as signing the Lusaka Protocol in 1994 only resulted from significant military advances by the Angolan government, so its implementation depends on the credible threat of resuming those advances, with the endorsement if not the active support of the international community. The more credible that threat, the less likely it is that it will have to be implemented.

Two distinct conclusions follow directly, which are difficult but necessary to combine in practice. One is that restraint and flexibility on the part of all parties is needed not only to move the process along but also so that if it does finally break down it will be very clear where the responsibility lies. Thus, early this year, Angolan government withdrawal of foreign military advisors and rapid implementation of the quartering of the Rapid Intervention Police aided in increasing pressure on UNITA to begin quartering significant numbers of their troops in February. On the other hand, any such move must be considered carefully in terms of its implications on the military balance.

The Angolan government is understandably wary of repeating its mistake in 1992 of letting down its guard and trusting too much in the good faith of its opponent and in international rewards for an election victory. The international community should avoid the fallacy that ‘evenhandedness’ is always appropriate or the stance most conducive to peace. Objectivity is certainly appropriate in identifying and condemning violations of the accord or delays by either party. There can be no blanket endorsement of either side, in a confused situation of mistrust which requires patient confidence building and careful checking of a flood of conflicting reports. But it would be foolish and contrary to the facts not to
recognize that the will to implement the accord is still most doubtful on the side of UNITA – particularly when it comes to the critical points of integrating its military forces and surrendering the dictatorial control which it exercises over the population in the zones it occupies.

The government is also the elected and recognized authority in the country, and the Lusaka Protocol mandates integration of UNITA into government military and political structures, not the formation of new structures on an equal basis. That is why we think that proposals for an arms embargo on both sides, such as recently suggested recently by Human Rights Watch/Africa, however good intentioned, are mistaken. Such a move, if seriously implemented, would tend to increase the chances for war rather than for peace. Calls for restraint on both sides – whether in response to provocative incidents or in terms of new build-ups of military strength – are indeed appropriate.

We also agree with HRW/Africa's call for transparency in arms sales, particularly if it is applied with equal weight to Zaire. But planning for a renewed embargo should focus on direct or indirect measures to squeeze the supply of weaponry which UNITA obtains through Zaire in exchange for diamonds. While all arms traffic is hard to trace, those purchased by the government and entering through Angolan ports are probably easier to identify that those moving to UNITA illegally through Angola's northern neighbours.

In short, in this respect as in others, international and public pressure on both former belligerents is needed. But instead of being balanced equally, it should be proportional to the status of the parties as elected government and opposition force, and to the extent of the obstacles placed by either side to implementation of the agreed peace process.

**Make Haste Slowly**

While those directly and officially involved in the peace process must find the ways to go ahead on the principal agenda, a host of other efforts, in humanitarian aid, planning and beginning reconstruction, and private as well as public investment in economic recovery and transforming government structures are either under way or under consideration. The long-term success of these efforts depends on the peace process.

It is equally true, however, that short-term advances on these fronts can increase confidence in the prospects for peace and add to the incentives for former belligerents and other Angolans alike to invest energy in peaceful activities. The details of these issues – including economic reform, infrastructure development, de-mining, reform of government institutions – are beyond the scope of this statement. But two points are very clear.

On the one hand, major changes are absolutely necessary in Angolan institutions. On the other, no simple transplant of international models, without sensitive attention to local Angolan realities, will be sustainable. As in the peace process in the more narrow sense, Angolan ownership of the process of reconstruction is essential if it is to work. This means that urgency to implement specific projects must be combined not only with training but also with dialogue and open debate.

The quantity of international resources coming into the country to support peace and reconstruction, or into specific projects, as measured in dollars, is undoubtedly important. Even more important, however, will be the quality of the planning and implementation. The test for any project and program will be whether it successfully combines international expertise and resources with Angolan perspectives and knowledge of
the local reality, and whether it balances the urgent need for quick impact with the equally decisive imperative that there be some lasting result.

It is important to recognize that, in overwhelming numbers, Angolans survive not on charity or on food handouts, but on their own individual and collective survival strategies. In many cases poorly funded initiatives by Angolan non-governmental organizations have proved more effective than much more expensive efforts mounted by foreign governmental or non-governmental agencies newly arrived in the country and lacking local expertise. Respect for these strategies should be a fundamental pillar of aid strategies from the international community.

Yet, in some cases, there has been little effort to engage in dialogue with Angolans engaged in such efforts. The international community should be congratulated for its support for both relief and reconstruction efforts. These resources are a vital support for the peace process. But it is essential that those involved in such projects make every effort to learn from as well as work with their Angolan colleagues in civic society as well in governmental positions.

Despite the sincere desire for improved relations on both sides, the lack of mutual understanding stemming from different cultural realities as well as decades of non-contact and political hostility is still profound. Sustainable cooperation efforts, in support of the current peace process and of improved bilateral relations in many sectors, must take this previous history into account. It is also essential that mechanisms be developed for evaluation of the success of projects implemented by international agencies and foreign non-governmental organizations, including not only internal review but also eliciting feedback and evaluation from Angolan civil society.

Selected Sources for Background Information:
3) Angola: Country Profile (March 1995) is available from APIC (same address as WOA, below). A text-only version is available on the WWW at http://www.igc.apc.org/apic/index.shtml.
5) ADRA monthly chronicle, in Portuguese and English. From Action for Rural Development and the Environment (ADRA), P.O. Box 3788, Luanda, Angola. Tel: 244-2-395132; fax: 244-2-396683; e-mail: adra@angonet.gn.apc.org.
ACTSA, 28 Penton Street, London N1 9SA, UK; Tel: +(44) 171 833-3133; fax: +(44)171 837-3001; e-mail: actsa@geo2.poptel.org.uk.
Washington Office on Africa (WOA), 110 Maryland Ave. NE #509, Washington, DC 20010. Tel: (202) 546-7961; fax: (202) 546-1545; e-mail: woa@igc.apc.org.
Book Reviews


For a few years at the end of the 1980s and the very beginning of the 1990s, there seemed to be a real possibility of significant progress towards more democratic political forms and practices in North Africa. In Tunisia and Algeria in particular, the government responded to mounting popular protest (initially against the austerity measures imposed as a part of ‘structural adjustment’ and economic liberalisation, but increasingly against government policies more generally) with what were intended to be controlled political reforms. The governments of Morocco and Egypt, although both characterised by repression and human rights violations, emphasised their long-standing formal commitment to multi-party politics. Only in Libya was political opposition totally proscribed. In the words of Amnesty International,

all opposition political activities including the non-violent expression of conscientiously-held beliefs, are strictly banned by law in Libya, and the punishment for opposition political activities includes the death penalty and life imprisonment.

During the first half of the 1990s, however, continuing widespread dissatisfaction, not only with specific government policies and the government itself but with the very nature of the regimes which effectively limited both democratic expression and political accountability, generated growing support in all of the North African states for the Islamic militants who openly condemned both government and regime as illegitimate and ultimately ungodly. Over the last few years, the political terrain in North Africa has come, increasingly, to be contested in a three-way struggle: between more-or-less authoritarian regimes and governments, secular opposition movements (drawing on politically liberal or leftist traditions) and Islamic movements. As Algeria and Egypt experienced deepening political crisis and mounting violence towards the middle of the decade, the regimes of Morocco and Tunisia managed to maintain a semblance of political normality only by dint of heavy state repression and deft public relations. Libya remained a politically closed regime; but there too Islamic opposition had to be crushed. In the last few years, human rights violations — both by the state and by opposition movements — have become appallingly common and widespread across North Africa.

Susan Waltz’s study of the politics of human rights in three countries of North Africa — Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia (the Maghreb) — based on research undertaken between 1989 and 1993, is a useful appreciation of the role played by the indigenous (non-government-sponsored) human rights organisations that have emerged over the last twenty years (a Tunisian League of Human Rights was formed in 1977, two separate leagues emerged in the mid 1980s in Algeria, and the Moroccan Organization of Human Rights was established towards the end of the 1980s). Her book is divided into three parts: the first, an introduction to ‘Human Rights and the Politics of Change’; the second, a discussion of ‘The North African political context’; and the third, an analysis of ‘The Politics of Human Rights’. It is the last part which
provides the most interesting material for those concerned with North African politics.

Waltz's focus on 'human rights' leads her to over-emphasise the political significance of the human rights movements. She suggests, for example, that 'the appearance of indigenous human rights groups in the Maghreb is a political development equivalent to the emergence of nationalist political parties in the early twentieth century' (p. 134). There is no doubt that she substantiates her case that the indigenous human rights groups are 'significant political players'. The movements, however, remain circumscribed, in their objectives, in their methods and activities, and in the social composition of their membership: they are dominated by intellectuals and the professional middle classes and reflect the cautious reformist tendencies within these social strata. Their influence over politics in general remains limited, albeit significant. Even the claim that the human rights groups were essentially responsible for 'such [democratising - DS] changes as have occurred' (p. 237) in recent years, is debatable.

Her thesis that 'it is largely through their efforts that talk of human rights has emerged in political discourse throughout the region' is probably correct, but it could also be argued that it is the combination of a) brutal repression by the state, b) the growing threat of Islamic militancy, and c) the failure of socialist and even left-liberal parties to provide a credible alternative to the existing regimes or to Islamism, that has effectively focused the political discourse – at least among so many of the secular opponents of the current regimes – on human rights. That is, that the increasing emphasis on 'human rights' in the Maghreb as an issue is an indication of the failure of democratic movements as well as governments to make headway in conceptualising and effectively developing a broader programme of democratic reforms, rather than an indication of significant progress in this direction. It is also, arguably, an indictment of those Western governments which, at the end of the 1980s, trumpeted so loudly their support for a 'new world order' in which greater democracy was to be a necessary component of a wider process of transformation and which failed to make the commitment required to ensure that effective democratisation rather than cosmetic political liberalisation took place.

Susan Waltz argues that human rights groups contribute to the process of democratisation by challenging political practices that limit participation and reduce accountability (p. 219). This must be correct, but she herself admits that 'the marginal advantage enjoyed by human rights groups in the late 1980s has now waned, and hopes for structural transformation have faded' and suggests that '(t)he political advantage has shifted back to the status quo, and questions of structural transformation have receded from national agendas'. She also recognises that 'concern for security has risen across the region' (p. 235) with implications for the level of effective support given from outside to the process of democratisation – despite the continuing rhetoric of 'supporting democracy' Western governments have tended increasingly to give their approval to the actions of governments in 'maintaining law and order'.

Nevertheless, Waltz is convinced that '(a)lthough the opportunity for momentous change appears to have passed, more subtle pressures continue to be exerted and longer metapolitical effects are not to be discounted' (p. 222-23). Her final chapter, on 'the changing face of North African politics' is appropriately measured and cautious; but she concludes that human rights groups 'carve away at political practices that enshrine arbitrary powers' (p. 230) and, therefore, that they contribute, if only in limited
fashion, to the development of beliefs and practices which challenge authoritarian and repressive regimes.

A brief ‘epilogue’ starts with an account of the assassination of the President of the Algerian League of Human Rights in June 1994, but ends on an optimistic note:

even in the midst of growing concerns for security, human rights remains prominent in political discourse throughout the region, and in this sense at least, North African regimes have significantly changed (p. 237).

This is optimism indeed, particularly in the face of more recent political successes achieved by the Islamists across North Africa and elsewhere in the Middle East (e.g. Turkey) and of continuing human rights abuses in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt (all the subject of continuing concern by, for example, Amnesty International, which provides a regular commentary and pressure from outside).

But, whatever the limitations of their discourse and their activities, there is no doubt that the indigenous human rights organisations do have a role to play in sustaining a belief in human rights and in challenging the prevailing tendencies towards repression and violence; Waltz’s book is valuable in reminding us of their existence and of their heroic struggle to defend the values crucial to any civilised form of politics in North Africa.


The left’s critique of ‘development aid’ has generally been to expose the reality of self-interest behind the facade of altruism and beneficence. The very language used is itself, of course, a means of ideological obfuscation, with notions of ‘aid’ and ‘donors’ concealing the promotion of trade and geo-political interests and the benefits to both Northern governments and their corporate supporters. However, as Kevin Watkins asked in ROAPE 66, does that mean that the left should join forces with the neo-liberal right in opposition to ‘aid’, or should it build a case for a redefinition and reorientation of development assistance?

As representatives of northern development NGOs, the contributors to this alternative annual report on international aid no doubt place themselves in the latter camp, with a primary objective being to redirect aid to genuine developmental purposes, particularly poverty reduction. First published in 1993 by an amalgam of NGOs (ICVA, EUROSTEP and ACTIONAID), the 1995 Review is the third annual edition and has established itself as a valuable source of both up to date information and critical commentary on current issues of development cooperation. It provides a welcome antidote to the PR gloss of aid agency annual reports and the rhetoric of government ministers, exposing, for example, the reality of declining aid levels in the face of stated commitments to eradicating poverty. In addition it performs an important lobbying role both by providing ammunition for others and by itself pressing for reforms of development assistance practices.

The 1995 Review is in three parts. It combines country profiles of the aid programmes of 21 OECD nations plus the
European Union, with an examination of a number of key themes, plus facts and figures presented in comparative tabular form.

The country profiles are all written by development NGOs from the countries concerned. As well as statistical data, they provide well-informed commentary on the current developments in their countries, plus a critical examination of their government’s record on a number of common issues, eg commercial interests, women in development, poverty-focus etc.

The key themes addressed in the 1995 Review are three-fold: an overview of current issues; multilateral agencies and accountability; an alternative 'people-centred' development model. The Overview explores a range of aid issues including gender and poverty; tied aid and export credits; and economic and political conditionality. However the dominant issue in this latest report is that of budgetary cuts: 'For the first time in a generation, aid ... to the world’s poor has suffered a sharp drop' (p.vi). And the overall mood is bleak - 'the era of gradual growing assistance for the poor seems to have come to an end' (Ibid.).

What will be the impact on Africa, especially the most acutely aid dependent countries? Already the statistics (running at least two years behind) indicate falling aid volume. Aid per poor person in Africa fell from $80 in 1989 to $69 in 1992 (UNDP figures cited on p. 5), with no realistic prospect of compensation by the much-vaunted flows of private investment. A number of the donor country profiles also show a decline in bilateral aid to Africa, likely to accelerate in the near future, including from major donors like France, the US and the UK. For African countries not to suffer from the overall shrinking of the aid cake would necessitate a re-orientation of aid allocations to the poorest countries. However the evidence is not encouraging. In discussing how Northern governments continue to misuse aid for commercial and political purposes, the Review reports an increased share of aid from OECD donors going to East Asia, rising from 13.5% in 1980/81 to 21.5% in 1992/93 (p. 5). This directly correlates with, and is supportive of, the large increase in private investment flows to this region over this period. Commercial interests also override human rights concerns, with governments like those in Indonesia and China being 'treated with kid gloves by donors', whereas African states 'feel the full impact of economic and political conditionality' (p. 9). Notwithstanding the valid criticisms of much aid, its reduction can only mean an increase in human misery (also see Watkins 1995 for similar discussions).

Unfortunately, I found the brief attention given to the other two key themes to be somewhat wanting and incomplete. The multilateral agencies are widely (and correctly) perceived as lacking in accountability. However this issue is addressed here mainly in terms of their accountability to the national parliaments of the OECD nations. A broader examination of this question would also need to consider their lack of accountability to Southern countries, and the need for democratic reform of the decision-making structures of the World Bank and the IMF, currently based on voting power determined by financial contributions, and thus exclusively in the hands of the rich nations. A further aspect of non-accountability to developing countries involves the multilaterals removal of economic policy choice from national governments through the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes. The concept of accountability is an important component of democracy. Yet the practice of the multilaterals is in conflict with the democratic principle of popular control over decision-making processes, which includes government control over policy,
which the populace in turn influences both through regular fair elections and other ongoing mechanisms.

The short section by Bishan Singh Bahadur offers a critical view on aid as a lubricant of capital, reminiscent of a marxist critique: ‘Aid is nothing but a pre-investment cost. The benefits will be harvested eventually by the donor country’ (p. 24). In addition he stresses the economic base as the ‘bedrock’ of wider social change. However his vision of a new economy and how to achieve it diverts considerably from old-style socialism. He places faith in the pioneering work of social movements and NGOs in constructing alternative methods of production and distribution, using appropriate technology and sustainable practices, at first on a small scale but eventually becoming mainstreamed. But his own question of whether international aid should be used for such a transformation remains unanswered. Sceptics of views that smack of idealism, like myself, may need more convincing. Yet Singh’s short contribution, one of few from the South, remains a refreshing one. Perhaps future editions could include more Southern views and experiences.

In three years The Reality of Aid has consolidated itself as an important and most valuable source of both information and critical commentary for all those concerned with the articulation of North-South relations through official development assistance. Watch out for the 1996 edition about mid-year.

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Reference

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9. Weigert, Stephen L (1996), Traditional Religion and Guerilla Warfare in Modern...
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