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Editorial correspondence, including manuscripts for submission, should be sent to Jan Burgess, ROAPE Publications Ltd, PO Box 678, Sheffield S1 1BF, UK. Tel: 44 +(0)1226 +741660; Fax 44 +(0) 1226 +741661; E-mail: editor@roape.org.

Business correspondence, including orders and remittances relating to subscriptions, advertisements, back numbers and offprints, should be addressed to the publisher: Carfax Publishing Ltd, PO Box 25, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3UE, UK. Tel: 44 +(0)1235 401000. Fax: 44 +(0)1235 401550.

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ISSN 0305-6244

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Britain’s Africa Policy: Ethical, or Ignorant?

Chris Allen

In the dying months of the Conservative government in Britain, *L’Afrique Politique* published an article by Jonathon Styal on Britain’s Africa policy, entitled ‘Does Britain have an Africa policy?’ With the arrival of a Labour government and a Foreign Secretary (Robin Cook) seemingly intent on pursuing an ‘ethical’ foreign policy, one might have expected both more policy coherence and a stress on the promotion and defence of human rights and democratic freedoms as primary elements in policy towards African issues and regimes. Both in the larger sphere of foreign policy in general and in its African microcosm, this has proved a vain hope. Trade, as before, comes first, second and third in importance, even when it is a trade in arms; and human values, and coherence, come amongst the also-rans: according to a report in June by Saferworld, Britain’s new ethical government has issued over 2,000 licenses for arms exports to China, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe and other countries, few of them known for their principled defence of human rights.

The ‘need’ to promote exports is only part of the explanation for Labour’s behaviour in office, however. No less significant at the level of individual states are weaknesses in political analysis and understanding, made more acute in the case of Africa by an apparent lack of concern for the continent on the part of the Foreign Office. Hugo Young, writing in *The Guardian* last May on the ‘arms to Sierra Leone’ affair (see below), refers to “the pitiful indifference to African affairs that is to be found in the party of New Labour”, a charge well illustrated by attitudes to Nigeria. Equivocation over Britain’s already weak stance on Nigeria, following the death of Abacha arises in part from a failure to grasp the nature of military role and rule in that state, and the essential similarity of all of its military regimes within the slow but inexorable process of terminal spoils politics. A new voice on the radio, or new face in the official portraits, is only that. It does not indicate that the regime can suddenly afford to cease to be repressive, abusive of human rights or intolerant of criticism, nor that the senior military can take the risk of relinquishing their political power and allowing a popularly and freely chosen government to take their place and their grasp on power in general.

The ‘arms for Sierra Leone’ affair is more complex. The basic story would seem to be clear: in the period after May 1997 when the Sierra Leone Army, now allied with its former opponents in the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) seized power from the elected government of President Tejan Kabbah, a British mercenary firm, Sandline, contracted with Kabbah to provide training and subsequently thirty tons of weapons, to be used by a militia group, the Kamajors, despite a UN embargo on weapons supply. British officials were involved in this, in ways that became the subject of an enquiry under Sir Thomas Legg.
Superficially, and as the Labour Government has often argued, this appears to be a case of support for the restoration of a democratic freedoms in Sierra Leone, and to be in line with the current position of both the OAU and of ECOWAS (as least where Nigeria is not concerned), that the armed overthrow of elected governments should not be tolerated. Three issues arise, however: To what extent was the supply of weapons the decision of the appropriate Ministers, and to what extent was it an action taken or encouraged by relatively junior officials in the Foreign Office without explicit consent from a Minister? Who (in this case) made Britain's Africa policy? Was the action taken in defiance of a UN embargo? What consequences flow from the supply of arms?

It was the first of these that preoccupied the British press and Parliament, and thus was the focus of the Legg enquiry. Sandline had been involved in Sierra Leone before the 1997 coup, and had been approached by Rakesh Saxena, the new Indian owner of several bauxite or diamond companies in Sierra Leone, soon after the coup with a view to Saxena funding an armed attempt to remove the new military regime under Johnny Paul Koroma. Meanwhile Peter Penfold, the new British High Commissioner (Ambassador) to Sierra Leone had visited Branch Energy, a sister company to Sandline, soon after his appointment in March 1997, on Foreign Office advice. He was subsequently involved in much of what happened late in 1997 and early this year, though he denies having acted as intermediary between Sandline and Kabbah. Penfold kept officials on the Equatorial Africa desk at the Foreign Office informed, as did a Ministry of Defence adviser, and Sandline's boss, Tim Spicer; but only very late on, and after the arms had been dispatched, were ministers informed. The Legg inquiry thus argues that it was officials and not ministers who made policy in this instance.

In October 1997 the UN Security Council had passed resolution 1132, forbidding the supply of weapons to any of the parties involved in Sierra Leone. Both Penfold and the Foreign Office officials discounted this, acting as if the embargo referred only to the Koroma forces. In this they were reflecting the stance of more senior officials, and of the British government, as can be seen in the memorandum issued after the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh later that month, which describes the UN resolution as affecting only the military junta. This casual attitude to UN resolutions allowed Prime Minister Blair to dismiss criticism of Britain's role as 'bizarre', saying in May:

_We were restoring from a brutal military coup d'état to a democratically elected regime. The person in charge of doing that was the Foreign Secretary, and he did it brilliantly._

It was not of course 'we' who restored anything, but ECOMOG (the ECOWAS forces) which late in January began an attack on Koroma's troops that allowed Kabbah to return to Sierra Leone in March. By then the Sandline weapons (obtained from Bulgaria) were irrelevant to the removal of the Koroma junta, and Kabbah has since claimed that they were taken by ECOMOG on arrival and thus never used by the Kamajors. More seriously, Blair seemed unconcerned at the broader implications of supplying further weaponry into an area already heavily armed, and supplying them to a private militia. As Susan Willett stresses in her article in this issue, the ready availability of modern weapons in Southern Africa, and the large numbers of (former) soldiers and insurgents, helps create serious internal security problems and promote both individual and organised crime, as well as undermining political stability. Sierra Leone has been the locus of a particularly vicious internal war for most of this decade, with civilians the victims of horrifying brutality (mainly on the part of the RUF). The
different armed groups – the RUF, the Army, ECOMOG – have behaved in effect as warlord groupings, though varying in their reliance on child soldiers and terror, while the bulk of the recent killings and mutilations have been the responsibility of the residue of the Army-RUF alliance as it has fought against the ECOMOG advance.

The arms contracted for by Kabbah were for a fourth group, the Kamajors, originally made up of younger hunters, but turned into a private militia by Kabbah in the wake of the 1996 election. Not only were such private partisan militias a characteristic feature of the breakdown of multiparty systems and the growth of political violence in West Africa in the 1960s, but strengthening any armed group makes the long-term security of Sierra Leone less rather than more assured. Kamajor groups have been accused of human rights abuses (albeit by organisations themselves portrayed as partisan), and were involved in armed activity on their own account in the months after the 1996 election. The 1997 coup can itself be seen in part as a response by the Army to the fostering of a rival – and undisciplined – army 'owned' by the President. In the context of the presence of a large Ecomog force, it is hard to perceive the arming of the Kamajors as an essential step towards the elimination of the military government’s and the restoration of democracy, or even the promotion of a lesser degree of violence, and to the extent that these have occurred, it is Ecomog that has been responsible. Thus the reasons for wanting to arm the Kamajors would seem to lie much more in Kabbah’s need to secure and retain power in his own hands than to reverse an improper seizure of power.

Blair has justified British involvement in the events described as ‘helping the good guys’ and as restoring democracy. Had the weapons gone as intended to the Kamajors, the likeliest effect would have been the opposite: it would have given Kabbah a weapon over which there would been no constitutional control, and have increased the prospects of political violence in the longer term. This risk does not appear to have occurred to Robin Cook, his colleagues, or his officials, making their capacity to promote an ethical or a coherent policy in this area negligible, and the prospects for an effective Africa policy feeble at best.
Theories of how and why violent conflicts occur generally distinguish between structural factors on the one hand and accelerating or triggering factors on the other (Azar, 1990). Structural factors, which must be viewed as long term, include interrelated political, social and economic elements, such as the failure to meet basic human needs, population pressure, unequal distribution of wealth, depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation and ethnic tensions. Accelerating or triggering factors on the other hand, operate in the context of the above adverse structural factors but involve specific events, attitudes or decisions of dominant actors, which provoke or encourage violence. Triggering factors include the unequal distribution of power, the abuse of military power, the proliferation of small arms, ideological conflict, struggles related to natural resources. How these triggers activate violence depends heavily upon the specific context.

By examining the process of disarmament and demilitarisation within the southern African region, this article seeks to highlight the contradictions between treating the symptoms rather than the underlying causes of violence. In the final section some lessons from the region’s experience will be highlighted which might be pertinent to national and international attempts at establishing peace and stability in future conflict zones.

Introduction

In southern Africa, during the cold war, the adverse structural problems of systemic poverty, environmental degradation, authoritarianism and ethnic tensions were compounded by the triggers of violence embodied in superpower intervention in the region and the apartheid system’s policy of regional destabilisation. The resulting militarisation of the region was reflected in the proliferation of small arms, high regional military expenditures and the arming of over half a million people.

This lethal combination of structural and accelerating factors resulted in an estimated 1.9 million deaths from war and war-induced famine between 1980 and 1989 (Ohlson and Stedman, 1994). When the civil war in Angola resumed in 1992, the death toll reached one thousand per day. Although technically not at war, South Africa witnessed over 3,500 deaths that same year from internal violence, while within the region between 6-8 million people became displaced. At the height of the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique the situation exemplified Zartman’s notion of collapsing states defined as ‘a situation where the structure, authority (legitimate power), law, and political order have fallen apart’ (Zartman, 1995). These countries were not alone
in sharing the symptoms of state collapse; throughout the region there was a general
deterioration in central authority, a disintegration of social cohesion, widespread
corruption, ethnic strife, humanitarian disasters and militarisation reflected in high
levels of military expenditure and large numbers of people under arms.

Given this bleak picture of the region in the 1980s, the transformation which has taken
place since the end of the cold war and the collapse of the apartheid system is quite
remarkable. Negotiated settlements in Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique
successfully drew to a close years of armed conflict. Only the fate of peace in Angola
remains volatile, despite the efforts of the UN mission, UNAVEM III. Otherwise the
interstate and intrastate violence that once seemed so prevalent in the region is
gradually being replaced by new national and regional mechanisms designed to
manage conflict, restructure societies and instigate reconciliation within the region.
This process has been accompanied by a growing emphasis on sustainable
development, macro-economic 'prudence', multiparty democracy and regional co-
operation. These trends provide some cause for optimism about the transition from
war to peace within the region and serve as a testing ground for 'post-conflict peace
building'.

In *Agenda for Peace* Boutros Boutros Ghali argues that peace building seeks 'to identify
and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to
avoid a relapse into conflict' (Boutrous, 1992:32). Despite the broadly positive
progress in stabilising the region the early stages of peace building, notably the
disarmament and demilitarisation stages, have been fraught with adjustment
problems and have, in certain circumstances, been linked to the emergence of new
forms of violence and political instability. The widespread proliferation of violent
crime, banditry, illicit trading in arms and drugs, and the privatisation of security
functions, particularly in the form of mercenaries and vigilante groups, have
accelerated since the outbreak of formal peace within the region. The variety of
militarised actors who either challenge the state's traditional monopoly of force or
offer themselves as an alternative guarantor of security for some in society, suggest
that the process of transition from conflict to peace has been fraught with significant
shortcomings. Part of the problem has been that the peace-builders have prioritised
programmes that have focused on the symptoms of violence, notably militarism,
rather than the causes. In other words, attention has centred on the triggering
elements rather than the underlying structural factors which precipitated violence in
the first place.

**Militarism, Disarmament & Demilitarisation**

Following the signing of a peace agreement between adversaries, a major preoccupa-
tion of peace building operations have been with the disarmament and demilitarisa-
tion of a situation in order to avoid a potential return to conflict. Before proceeding
with the empirical evidence of demilitarisation and disarmament some explanation of
the concepts of militarism, disarmament and demilitarisation is in order.

**Militarism**

From the outset it is important to distinguish between the concepts of 'militarism' and
'militarisation'.

*Militarisation can best be described as an interactive process of increasing influence of the
military on all levels of society. One can distinguish a military level proper, at which the*
increase in the means to perform military action (such as fighting wars) can be measured: an economic level in which the increased costs of military sector can be measured; an ideological/cultural level, at which an increased importance is attributed to military values connected to the military (such as nation, security, honour, law and order) throughout society; and, finally a political level, at which increased political influence of the military is felt (Ohlson 1991:21).

Although a clear distinction would appear to exist between civil and military activities in democratic societies this is not always the case in highly authoritarian societies where there is an encroachment of the military into normal civilian spheres of influence. Enloe has vividly described the intrusion of the military into civilian lives as a process involving both material and ideological dimensions (Enloe, 1983). In the material sense it encompasses the gradual encroachment of the military institution into civil society and the economy. The ideological dimension implies the extent to which such encroachments are acceptable to the population and become seen as ‘common sense’ solutions to civil problems (in South Africa acceptable to the white minority) (Cock, 1989:2).

Empirical evidence suggests that the particular manifestations of militarisation are contingent upon the historical and cultural legacies of the country in question. In the South African context Cock emphasises militarisation as a social process involving the mobilisation of resources for war (Cock, 1989:2). This process emerged in response to the intensification of resistance to the apartheid state in the 1980s from both domestic and external sources. It was conceived and executed by the South African Defence Force (SADF) who subsequently expanded and extended the power of the military into civil society via their monopoly of key organs of the state and into the economy via the creation of a sizeable domestic defence industry. According to Ohlson the related concept of militarism represents

\[\text{a static phenomenon, consisting of three components a) a set of values and attitudes (an ideology); b) a social structure; and c) a behaviour. Thus, militarism in its purest form can be described as a set of attitudes and social practices, which regard war, and the preparation for war, as a normal and desirable activity. Furthermore, militarism implies a tendency to favour or to seek violent solutions to problems and conflicts (Ohlson, 1988).}\]

This approach to conflict resolution epitomised the policies of the apartheid state as it struggled to eradicate the contradictions and tensions of its own system.

**Disarmament**

Simply interpreted disarmament is associated with a reduction in arms. However, disarmament is a more complex and sometimes contradictory process which is not captured by this popular definition. There are many forms of disarmament, such as a reduction in military spending, reduction or destruction of the stocks of certain weapon systems, a ban or limitation on the production of some types of military equipment, reduction in the numbers of military personnel, limitations on arms transfers, control of defence R&D, and the monitoring and verification of weapon disposals and troop reductions (Hartley and Sandler, 1995:260-283). In southern Africa, disarmament has been predominantly equated with the collection and destruction of light weapons (micro-disarmament) following the termination of conflict between warring factions. In Namibia, Mozambique and Angola, disarmament has been overseen by international peacekeeping forces, while in South Africa the process has been self-managed.
A disarmament process usually implies a modification of a nation's military strategies. For instance, the reduction or abandonment of certain types of weapons or defence capabilities such as nuclear weapons, or inter-continental ballistic missiles, may constitute a conscious effort to reduce nations offensive capabilities, thereby reducing the tensions created by an arms race. There is, however, no automatic association between the reduction in the number of arms and the reduction in offensive capabilities. The present shift from large conventional forces, to smaller but high-tech rapid deployment forces, is a case in point.

Apart from the arms control dimension to disarmament, it also takes the form of a cost saving exercise through cuts in military expenditure. In southern Africa it has been anticipated that there will be long-term development gains from the cuts in regional military expenditures (OECD, 1996). Much of the quantitative evidence suggests that military expenditure imposes a substantial burden on economic development, particularly in developing countries (Dunne, 1991). Cuts in military expenditure are thus seen as economically desirable, but as a recent OECD report has stressed, the realisation of economic benefits from a regional 'peace dividend' is by no means an automatic process and requires careful management to optimise the long-term development gains (Willett, 1997). In the short-term there are many adjustment problems associated with military expenditure cuts. The re-allocation of resources that would have been spent on the military, produces distributive struggles about who gets what, when and how (BICC, 1997:27). In these struggles there are always winners and losers.

In post-conflict economies more often than not the peace dividend disappears into deficit funding, for war-torn economies are invariably debt-torn economies. The imposition of structural adjustment programmes leaves little opportunity to realise development gains from military expenditure cuts except in those countries fortunate enough to have avoided acquiring massive external debts during conflict. Ensuring that gains from a peace dividend are equitably distributed, rather than being concentrated into the hands of the already privileged is one of the major challenges facing the region.

It is worth a mention that disarmament predicated on the notion of cost-savings can often have the effect of increasing the efficiency of military expenditures, as military institutions try to find ways of producing the same level of output by eradicating waste, fraud and mismanagement (Fontanel, 1996). Merely constraining the allocation of resources to the military function is therefore insufficient to ensure that disarmament actually reduces the lethality or efficacy of the military. It is wrong to assume, as is often the case, that disarmament is synonymous with demilitarisation.

**Demilitarisation**

Demilitarisation includes disarmament in the cost-saving and arms control sense, but it is a more all-encompassing concept, which attempts to deconstruct the ideological and institutional structures of militarism and reassert civil control over the organs of the state and over the economy (Batchelor and Willett, 1998). It also implies the search for a new normative framework for conceptualising and implementing security at both a national and regional context.

The process of demilitarisation is most advanced in South Africa, where concerted attempts have been made to exert civilian authority over the military, increase openness and transparency in all areas of defence and security decision making, and
redefine the country's security doctrine from one based exclusively on military notions of security to a broad-based definition which places human security and development at the centre of the country's security discourse. Elsewhere in the region the underdeveloped nature of civil society, poorly developed institutional capacity and the lack of basic skills make the assertion of civil control of the military problematic (Willett, 1997).

At the level of the region a security discourse has evolved which places a strong emphasis on demilitarisation with a concomitant shift in emphasis towards dealing with chronic underdevelopment with its attendant problems of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, malnutrition and migration. According to the first Defence White Paper to be issued in the post-apartheid South Africa, these factors represent a more immediate and greater threat to the security of South African citizens than more traditional threats of military invasion (SA MoD, 1996). Stress has been placed on non-military mechanisms of security provision, a factor reflected in the statement that

*regional instability and underdevelopment can only be addressed meaningfully through political reform, socioeconomic development and inter-state co-operation in these spheres* (SA MoD, 1996:22).

The building of a regional security community to tackle these problems head on has become a priority for all states within the region, a move which has the tacit support of the international community.

**Regional Security**

The effective abandonment of the apartheid strategy in 1989 removed the major cause of destabilisation within southern Africa, while the end of the cold war brought to an end the ideological divisions that had both divided states and societies within the region. Although peace and democracy have been established in most of the region, their durability is by no means guaranteed while a wide range of structural problems continues to dominate the region. These include the mass migration of political and economic refugees, environmental degradation, the exhaustion of natural resources, the diffusion of small arms and proliferation of international crime syndicates dealing in drugs and stolen cars. These threats to stability and individual security all transcend national borders and require co-operative solutions if further violence is to be avoided.

Attempts to tackle these structural problems at a regional level are taking place through the Southern African Development Community (SADC). SADC was created in 1992 out of the old Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) which had been created by South Africa's neighbours with the express intention of reducing their economic dependence on the apartheid state. With its *raison d'être* removed following reconciliation with post-apartheid South Africa, it was logical to restructure the organisation as a forum for regional economic co-operation with the inclusion of South Africa. Initial areas of common interests identified as a catalyst for bringing the states of southern Africa closer, include the mutual development of water resources, conservation of soil and water, improved communications and the planning of a southern African electricity power grid, the promotion of regional trade and the eradication of cross border crime.

At the 1992 inaugural meeting, SADC also committed itself to regional co-operation on political, military and security issues. Moves towards regional security co-
operation were influenced, in part, by the formation of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA) in 1991, which in turn was modelled on the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE, now renamed OSCE) (Nathan, 1992). The CSSDCA stressed the critical relationship between peace and development on the African continent, as well as emphasising that the security and stability of each African country is inescapably connected to the security of all African states. CSSDCA adopted an integrated approach to security, grouping policy proposals in four 'calabashes': security, stability, development and co-operation (Kampala Document, 1991). The founding document of the SADC provided the following motivations for its mandate on political, military and security issues:

*War and insecurity are the enemy of economic progress and social welfare. Good and strengthened political relations among countries of the region, and peace and mutual security, are critical components of the total environment for regional co-operation and integration. The region needs, therefore, to establish a framework and mechanisms to strengthen regional solidarity and provide for mutual peace and security (SADC, 1992).*

The formalisation of SADC's security aspirations took place in January 1996, when SADC Ministers for Defence and Foreign Affairs met in Gaborone, Botswana, to agree the terms of reference for the setting up of a SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (SADC, 1996). The Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) established in 1983 under the aegis of the Front-Line States organisation has been rejuvenated and now forms part of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (Cilliers, 1995:41). The focus of the ISDSC's agenda with military related operations has produced an agenda which appears more manageable than one which promotes an expanded notion of security. This has had the effect of making the military's arguments appear more concise and its goals more attainable than the arguably more pressing concerns with human and environmental security which are far more systemic in nature and therefore more complex to resolve. Meanwhile progress towards building a collective security community based on humanistic norms and values has been constrained by the lack of established procedures and mechanisms and the absence of skills and techniques needed for conflict resolution and mediation.

In order to build a security community members need to share common norms and values and have a relatively high attachment to institutions which are perceived as legitimate. Moreover, social and political stability in a region are enhanced when there is a relatively high level of economic interdependence and when members perceive that the distribution of economic rewards are relatively favourable. This is illustrated at the inter-state level by the presence of Deutschian security communities (for example, Canada and the USA, Western Europe) which share many of the same attributes (Deutsch et al., 1968). Such communities have virtually eradicated the possibility of war between members. This level of cohesion exists between strong states. Such states are strong not because they possess powerful coercive capabilities but because they possess vertical legitimacy (where authority, consent and loyalty to the state are high) and horizontal legitimacy (where political and social relations are inclusive and do not exclude certain social groups) (Holsti, 1996:104; 82-98).

In weak states, such as those that exist in southern Africa where there is a general lack of vertical and horizontal legitimacy, the potential for a breakdown in the internal security community is ever present. The fragile nature of social cohesion, inequitable distribution of power between states, the absence of a shared normative framework represent shaky foundations upon which to build a security community. Moreover
there is a problem of resolving a common identity at the regional level. During apartheid, a common identity was forged between the Frontline States because of the existence of a common enemy, namely apartheid South Africa. With the demise of apartheid, it is questionable whether a binding force exists to sustain a collective sense of purpose any longer, beyond a loose alliance of nation-states bound in a common geographical space. The leading question is whether or not there can be a convergence and complementarity of South Africa's interests with those of its neighbours. Even with the best co-operative will in the world South Africa's national interests are likely to set the regional agenda because of the sheer magnitude of its presence vis-à-vis its neighbouring states. The rhetoric of regional integration and common purpose reflected in the SADC documents belies the reality of a highly fragmented agglomeration of weak and unequal states which have yet to solidify their internal cohesion and stability before they can effectively integrate on a regional level.

An alternative model is to build a security community around the hegemonic leadership of the dominant state. In structural interpretations of politics it appears natural that South Africa should adopt this role (Vale and Maseko, 1998:283). South African analysts of this persuasion have been eager to promote South Africa's experience of political transformation and marketisation as a model for the rest of the region. They have been encouraged in this task by notable African leaders such as Julius Nyerere who has appealed to South Africa to use its stature and international standing to the benefit of the rest of Africa (Nyerere, 1997). This entreaty has been reinforced by the wider international community who perceive in South Africa the only African state capable of leadership within sub-Saharan Africa. However, expedient this leadership role might be, and it has many advocates within South Africa itself, recent history denies the possibility of South Africa adopting such a role. For a country to lead, it must have willing followers and while residual fears about South Africa's hegemonic intentions exist and rivalry for regional influence continue, an underlying unease will remain within the SADC framework which acts to undermine the sense of common purpose (Solomon and Cilliers, 1996).

So far South Africa's bid for regional and continental leadership has had mixed results. Intervention in Nigeria in the crisis over the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni activists, found little support within SADC or the OAU for that matter. More successfully South Africa provided a solution to the impasse in the talks on the extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) held in New York from April-May 1995. The South African delegation's proposal for compromise helped to achieve consensus between the nuclear powers and the rest, proving that South Africa was able to improve its international standing. In the 1996/97 crisis with Zaire, however, South Africa initiated a unilateral exercise in peace-building which culminated in talks on a South African warship, but according to certain observers South Africa's objectives were very unclear (Vale and Maseko, 1998:272). The conflict lay in whether South Africa favoured Laurent Kabila's long march to victory - the preferred African outcome - or whether it supported the United States' preference to provide Mobuto Sese Seko with an negotiated settlement. Also unfavourable to South Africa's claim to regional and continental leadership have been the repeated scandals about illicit arms flows from South Africa to centres of conflict on the continent. South African built rifles and other small arms have turned up in Rwanda, Angola and Sudan, raising international condemnation and questions about the ability of the South African state to control the destabilising activities of certain notorious groups which operate within its borders (Endnote 1). For the most part South Africa's SADC partners have distanced themselves from South Africa's forays into preventative diplomacy. This is partly a reflection of the general
reluctance to accept South Africa as a regional hegemon but it also reflects Pretoria’s lack of experience in representing the collective will.

There are many other contradictions within the existing SADC approach to regional security, not least the question of who the primary referents for regional security are – the state or the people? (van Aardt, 1996:23-24). Despite a rhetoric stressing a broad interpretation of security which places the citizen at the heart of security concerns, in practice military forms of co-operation representing traditional neo-realist security concerns have become the most developed part of the SADC machinery. This can be explained by the fact that the military has at its disposal far more resources than other parts of the SADC mechanism. The role of the SANDF is particularly important in this respect. It has been quick to reinforce and support military forms of collaboration such as peacekeeping, military assistance and training programmes and disaster relief. In addition, the SANDF has encouraged exchanges of personnel and observers, combined exercises and has opened up its training establishments to military personnel from neighbouring countries. These practical measures have gone some way towards improving trust between former adversaries and building regional confidence and security, but it also reflects the way in which the South African military have been able to co-opt SADC’s security agenda and undermine its basic attempt to demilitarise security at a regional level.

Military Expenditure

A major indicator of the high degree of militarisation within the South African region in the early 1990s was the high level of regional military expenditures. The cessation of war and the implementation of peace processes have however encouraged a reduction in defence budgets. Regional military expenditure has fallen by 30 per cent since 1993, a year of peak expenditure. The scale of decline in regional military expenditure has far outstripped the aggregate levels of decline in global military expenditure calculated at 8% for the same period 1993-1995 (BICC, 1997:286). The totals presented in Table 1 capture the general downward trend in recent defence spending. Table 2 provides details of defence expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

### Table 1: Southern Africa Regional Military Expenditure Trends

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>107</td>
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<td>87</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,667</td>
<td>5,723</td>
<td>4,693</td>
<td>3,976</td>
<td>3,840</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Military Balance, various, IISS.
In supporting the process of disarmament, multilateral and bilateral donor agencies have encouraged a reduction of military expenditures by adding it to their list of conditionalities for aid. Although not a formal policy of the World Bank and IMF, both institutions have adopted 2% of GDP as a benchmark for acceptable levels of military expenditure in developing countries with budget deficit problems. The primary concern of the donor community has been to encourage the reallocation of resources to sustainable development goals, because southern Africa contains some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities on the African continent (UNDP, 1997). Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia have all reduced their military expenditures under bilateral and multilateral donor pressure. But so far there have been few development gains to be had from defence savings as most of the resources have been absorbed by deficit funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
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<td>13.0</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Average</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Calculated from IISS, Military Balance 1994/95 and Military Balance 1996/97, Brassey's for IISS. NB. These percentages may differ from those in the text as they have been calculated from other sources.

It is noteworthy that although South Africa's defence budget reductions are the largest in the region, decreasing by over 50% since 1989, it still accounts for roughly two thirds of regional defence spending. The size of its budget bestows on South Africa an overwhelming balance of military power in the region. Yet as a percentage of GDP South Africa's defence spending is well below the regional average of 3.6% of GDP in 1996.

Despite South Africa's overwhelming military balance of power within the region it is the one country where there has been a healthy debate about the relationship between disarmament, development, and security. In the early days of the Government of National Unity, measures were taken to consolidate a 'peace dividend' from military savings in order to enhance the countries development goals (Batchelor and Willett, 1998:167-190). The 1996 White Paper on defence argued that:

the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) is the principal long-term means of promoting the well being and security of citizens and, thereby, the stability of the country. There is consequently a compelling need to reallocate state resource to the RDP (SA MoD, 1996:5).

Identifying the resources required for the RDP involved a substantial shift of budgetary allocations from the military expenditure to other forms of public expenditure such as housing, healthcare and education (Willett and Batchelor, 1994).
However, in 1996 the RDP was abandoned in favour of the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy which represented a less interventionist and more orthodox approach to macro-economic management. While the adoption of GEAR appears to have put an end to the development and redistribution aspirations of the Government, the fiscal and monetary restraint that it demands has maintained the downward pressure on the South African defence budget.

A small group of countries in the region have bucked the regional trend by increasing their military expenditures in the last two to three years. These include Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia. Most of these increases are accounted for by outlays on new equipment. For instance in 1995 and 1996 Botswana embarked on an ambitious programme of arms acquisitions, including the placing of orders for 36 Scorpion light tanks from Britain and F-5 combat aircraft from Canada (Rakabane, 1997). In addition to these purchases, Botswana plans to increase its troop levels from 7,500 to more than 10,000 in the near future, and is building a hi-tech military air base in the south-west of the country with the support of the USA. This trend has raised alarm in neighbouring countries particularly Namibia, who has a territorial dispute with Botswana. It has reacted by increasing its defence budget in order to purchase Russian military equipment.

In Zimbabwe despite domestic and international pressure to cut military spending, President Mugabe has increased defence outlays in order to modernise the Zimbabwean Defence Force (ZDF) and pay for the costs associated with the demobilisation programme. This has had the effect of pushing defence expenditure up from 3.7% of GDP in 1994 to 5% in 1995/96. The government’s recent announcement of generous gratuity packages for retired and demobilised soldiers is likely to push the defence budget up even higher (Hawkins, 1997). There is speculation in some quarters that Mugabe has attempted to dilute growing discontent among ZDF officers, largely precipitated by defence cuts, by buying them off with generous concessions. The ZDF is not the only site of opposition to Mugabe’s monopoly of power. In the last two years the Mugabe government has faced increasing unrest from a population no longer prepared to swallow the bitter pill of economic mismanagement and structural reform (IISS, 1998A). At a time of growing internal stability Mugabe thus needs the military more than ever to ensure his long-term political survival. The experience in Zimbabwe suggests that adjustments to military expenditure cuts in the context of a weak state where internal cohesion is breaking down can be fraught with political risks if not handled with sensitivity.

Other countries in the region are also suffering from adjustment problems particularly where large-scale demobilisation and reintegration are taking place. Senior military personnel within the Mozambican Ministry of Defence have claimed that the scale of recent defence cuts has undermined the ability of the newly created army, the FADM, to transform itself into a professional army. It ostensibly lacks the resources to conduct training, equip troops, maintain bases, purchase fuel and even clothe and feed soldiers (Endnote 2).

External observers confirm the point that while a basic military structure is in place, it is not being maintained due to lack of resources (Endnote 3). The present lack of resources can partly be explained by the fact that a larger proportion of the security budget is being allocated to the police force who are presently confronting a huge crime wave. Not all observers are convinced, however, that the poor state of the military is due to the lack of resource allocation; they point to widespread existence of corruption amongst senior officers and politicians who have been siphoning off
resources for personal gain. This situation is likely to continue while Mozambique’s defence budgetary process lacks transparency and accountability.

Donors have begun to place increasing emphasis on transparency and accountability in defence budgetary processes, adding them to the list of conditionalities associated with ‘good governance’. While great strides have been made in this direction within South Africa where a healthy and active civil society has been largely instrumental in ensuring a commendable degree of both, other countries in the region lack a combination of political commitment to greater openness and accountability in military affairs and suffer from an absence of strong civil institutions and traditions which could challenge the military’s lack of transparency in budgetary affairs. Arguably the underdeveloped nature of civil institutions is a function of underdevelopment in general, and no amount of external pressure via conditionality can overcome this problem unless the problems of poor training and educational provision are treated at source.

**Demobilisation & Reintegration of ex-Combatants**

The poorer and the more war ravaged a country is, the greater the adjustment difficulties associated with cuts in military expenditures. Demobilisation and the reintegration of ex-combatants have proved particularly problematic. In 1993 the region had roughly half a million personnel under arms (Table 3). With the ending of apartheid, the wars in Namibia, Mozambique and (temporarily) Angola came to an end and a ‘negotiated settlement’ took place between former adversaries in South Africa itself. As a result of peace breaking out large numbers of ex-combatants have been under-going demobilisation within the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Personnel (statutory and non-statutory)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>177,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>10,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>93,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>8,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>105,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>49,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>46,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>523,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** IISS *Military Balance 1994-95*, and *Military Balance 1996/97* plus interview data. NB. These figures should be taken as very rough estimates, not as definitive, as defence statistics within the region are notoriously unreliable. They are nevertheless useful in as much as they indicate general demobilisation trends.

In South Africa, 30,000 soldiers are to be demobilised during 1997–2000, reducing its force levels from 100,000 to around 75,000. The cost of demobilisation will be born by the defence budget, which will ensure that the personnel budget will remain relatively high in the short to medium term. In contrast to many other countries in the region, the cost of demobilisation will be borne by the South African taxpayer with
little or no external financing. Fears have been expressed that the large numbers of black soldiers about to be demobilised will find it hard to secure employment in the civil economy despite the advanced training programmes and counselling that the SANDF is providing. This is because the black community currently experiences over 50% unemployment and prospects for future employment generation within black communities do not appear optimistic. There is not surprisingly concern about the implications of a growing number of disaffected ex-combatants within the already violent and lawless townships. In relative terms, however, the South African economy is better able to absorb large numbers of ex-combatants than some of its poorer neighbours.

The Zimbabwean government has implemented a demobilisation programme which is being phased over an eight-year period. Troops are being reduced from 51,000 in 1992 to 40,000 by the end of the century, although certain analysts argue that budgetary pressures are likely to force the government to cut the ZDF down to 25,000 (Rupiyah, 1996). Having learnt from an earlier period of demobilisation following the end of civil war in 1980 the government has chosen to phase demobilisation over a longer period to provide adequate training and support to ex-combatants so that they can secure gainful employment within the civilian economy. Following the first wave of demobilisation many ex-combatants ended up destitute, turning to crime (Rupiyah, 1995).

In Angola, the 1994 Lusaka Protocol required that government troops were to be disengaged and over 62,000 UNITA troops were to be confined to assembly areas and disarmed (Saferworld, 1996). UNITA’s weapons and those in civilian hands were to be collected and stored. Twenty-six thousand UNITA soldiers were planned to be incorporated into the newly created national army, which is to finally number 90,000 strong. Under the terms of the Lusaka Protocol, the 40,000 remaining UNITA troops were to be deployed in the unarmed ‘fourth arm’ of the FAA which is designed to utilise demobilised soldiers to carry out rebuilding and reconstruction work. Some 100,000 combatants, not incorporated into the new national army, were to be demobilised.

UNAVEM III, responsible for overseeing the demobilisation process, experienced enormous problems with the process due to lack of co-operation particularly from UNITA who consistently slowed down the confinement of its combatants. Under threat of sanctions by the UN, however, UNITA completed the quartering of 63,000 troops by 20 November 1996. However, about 7,000 of those registered were found to be under the age of 18. The Angolan Peace Monitor reported at the time that over 70% of those quartered were not combat troops (Angola Peace Monitor, 1996). The UN now accepts that Savimbi has retained his best troops in the strategically vital regions of Luanda and Cabinda. Due to the delays, soldiers in the cantonment camps became restless and desertions were commonplace. By November 1996 some 12,543 UNITA troops had deserted leaving 55,013 in the camps (EIU, 1996:10).

Apart from the delays and administrative short-comings of the demobilisation and reintegration programme the general state of economic collapse has become a direct threat to the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life as the economy, in deep crisis, is currently unable to absorb such large numbers of demobilised soldiers (Berdal, 1996). In addition, financial assistance for retraining programmes for ex-combatants failed to materialise from the international community. Consequently, the chances of large numbers of ex-combatants being able ‘normalise’ into civilian life
appear remote. Reports of increasing outbreaks of banditry in certain parts of the country tend to confirm observers’ worst fears about the breakdown of the reintegration process.

Despite these problems, for sometime the UN remained confident that the targets for demobilisation and reintegration could be met. By the end of 1997, however, the UN’s optimism was shattered by the recognition that Savimbi had retained his best troops in the strategically vital regions of Luanda and Cabinda. The UN finally conceded that the timetable set for the peace process was unrealistic, particularly in relation to the politically sensitive task of demobilisation and reintegration.

Shortcomings concerning the timetable for peace are not an adequate explanation for the breakdown in the peace process. Rather it is a failure to recognise and deal with the fact that the roots of the Angolan conflict lies in a fundamental struggle between UNITA and the MPLA for the control of national resources, namely oil and diamonds. On its third peace-building mission in Angola the UN still failed to address this issue and subsequently had to face yet another failure. It may be, of course, that there is no alternative than for violence to take its ugly course in Angola, and that the UNAVEM programme has merely provided Savimbi the time to renew his cause. With his control of the lucrative diamond mines in Luanda Province Savimbi has been able to retain his elite troops and continue to stockpile weapons in flagrant contempt of the most basic terms of the Lusaka Peace Protocol. Angola although nominally at peace, remains highly volatile and divided, and many observers fear there may yet be a return to war.

In contrast to the experience in Angola, the UNOMOZ operation in Mozambique has been hailed a great success. Some 93,000 soldiers were demobilised in Mozambique between 1992 and 1996 (EIU, 1996B). Until May 1996 the ex-combatants received demobilisation pay, from the UNDP, which helped pave a smooth transition. Small scale agriculture reportedly absorbed around half the ex-combatants, but apart from providing basic subsistence the agricultural sector provides little if any income for ex-combatants and their families (da Brito, 1996). It is unclear how the rest of the demobilised soldiers have been sustained; with the poor state of the economy and high rates of unemployment few of these ex-combatants have any formal employment prospects.

Without hope of employment certain groups of demobilised soldiers returned to the sort of banditry which regularly occurred in the lead-up to the 1994 election. This has tended to be geographically concentrated in urban areas. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the rise in crime in Maputo and Beira is linked to the large presence of demobilised soldiers, although others point to the fact that few criminals which are caught are in fact ex-soldiers. This difference of opinion reflects a broader disagreement about the success or failure of demobilisation in Mozambique. While there has certainly not be the level of anticipated banditry that some had predicted at the end of the war, it would be naive to assume that adjustment to civilian life has been unproblematic. AMODEG, the association for demobilised soldiers, have reported that many ex-combatants feel their interests have been overlooked in the post-war settlement. Demonstrations and roadblocks set up by ex-combatants are a regular feature along major roads and have become increasingly sinister. AMODEG has encouraged peaceful protests, but in some regions (Zambezia and Sofala provinces) there have been violent riots and mutinies. Internal instability of this nature disrupts local economic activity and inhibits the much needed foreign investment and aid for economic reconstruction.
The situation in both Mozambique and Angola highlighted a serious disjuncture in the international community's policies. The emphasis on the short-term objectives of peacekeeping operations (including demobilisation and re-integration) has existed to the exclusion of policies designed to ensure long term economic and political stabilisation of a country emerging from protracted war. As the problems associated with the failures of reintegration have emerged, there has been a growing awareness that assistance in post-war economic reconstruction is essential if ex-combatants are to be reabsorbed into civilian life.

Few would argue with the statement that demobilisation and reintegration are prerequisites for internal stability and development in post-conflict societies. Yet in southern African economies, the ability to reintegrate ex-combatants has been highly dependent on achieving macro-economic stability and broad economic expansion. In cases such as Angola and Mozambique where war has caused such extensive destruction and dislocation, this can only be achieved with external support from the international community. Moreover, the experience of Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe suggest the need to avoid expeditious mass demobilisation so as to reduce the risks of creating a large pool of disaffected ex-combatants, who quickly become involved in crime, banditry and localised violent confrontations.

There is of course a trade-off in slowing down the pace of demobilisation as it limits the scope for reducing military expenditures in the short-run and therefore of improving budget deficits, or opportunities for development. But unless political stability is achieved, economic viability cannot be secured. Donors who are pressurising countries in the region to make deeper military expenditure cuts need to balance short-term economic stabilisation objectives against long term stability gains in what can only be described as a highly sensitive transition process.

**Restructuring of Armed Forces**

The formation of an integrated army composed of former adversaries is crucial for the process of reconciliation in deeply divided societies and for the assertion of long term stability. Creating such a force is a delicate procedure and in Southern Africa the process has benefited from the mediation of politically neutral professional advisors such as the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT) who have assisted in the integration of previously hostile forces in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia.

BMATT's assistance has consisted of the training and restructuring of armed forces, the creation of efficient decision making structures, the inculcation of a sense of professionalism and the introduction of a system of values and norms compatible with the role of the military in democratic societies. In this context they have attempted to tackle the delicate issue of human rights violations by the armed forces. Numerous incidents of human rights abuses by security forces within the region have been well recorded by Africa Watch, Amnesty International and the US State Department. Britain is almost unique in providing this kind of support, as most donor countries have proved reluctant to deal with the politically sensitive task of restructuring foreign military forces. Not withstanding the efforts of BMATT, attempts to restructure military forces have had mixed results. The cases of South Africa and Mozambique illustrate experiences at different ends of the regional spectrum.

In South Africa the integrated forces consist of the former South African Defence Force (SADF) together with the defence forces of the homelands, Transkei,
Demilitarisation, Disarmament & Development in Southern Africa

Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC), and the opposition forces of the ANC (Umkonto we Sizwe) and the Pan African Congress (Azanian Peoples Liberation Army, APLA). Total personnel, including civilians, in the newly integrated forces has been put officially at 130,000, representing a 30% increase over pre-integration levels; in reality, personnel numbers are thought to be lower as a result of desertions and failures of non-statutory forces to register at assembly points. Integration was completed in 1997 after which the demobilisation of around 30,000 soldiers commenced over a three year period. Already several thousand ex-combatants from APLA and the MK have been demobilised on a voluntary basis.

Despite the often claimed success of integration within the SANDF, it has not been without teething problems which tend to reflect deeply ingrained mistrust between racial groups. Fears have been expressed that the ethnic composition of the SANDF, which improved significantly with integration, may deteriorate once demobilisation gets underway as it is thought that the majority of the 30,000 demobilised troops will be from the former non-statutory forces which were predominantly black. Such fears are linked to resentment about the continued domination of whites within the military hierarchy. In the near future, more than half the handful of senior black officers above the rank of colonel will be retiring. The attempts to ‘fast track’ black officers through the ranks have created deep resentment amongst white career officers towards what is perceived as unfair affirmative action. Voting with their feet, many white officers have take advantage of the offer of generous severance pay and left the force. In the long-run the problems of racial tension within the armed services are only likely to resolve themselves with careful management and sensitivity towards the issue.

In contrast to the problems being experienced within the new Mozambican army, the tensions within the SANDF pale into insignificance. Under the Rome Peace Accord, it was agreed to create a new national army in Mozambique, the FADM, by integrating 30,000 FRELIMO and RENAMO combatants. Diplomatic sources estimate that in effect only about 8,000 to 11,000 troops have volunteered, and a large proportion of these are officers rather than other ranks, making the armed forces very top heavy. It is thought that low pay and the demobilisation package offered to ex-combatants, combined with combat fatigue, created strong disincentives to volunteering for the armed services.

As the military point out, however, under existing budgetary allocations they can hardly feed and barrack the existing number of soldiers, let alone train and equip them to become a professional army. Certain donors such as Britain, Portugal and the US have expressed concern about the plight of the Mozambican military, not least because as presently constituted they would be unable to fulfil even the most basic of tasks such as disaster relief and back-up to the police in the fight against crime. Both donors are contributing some resources for training and restructuring. The state of the police force is perhaps even more worrying than the plight of the military given the rapid increase in banditry, drug and weapons trafficking and car highjacking that has occurred since the end of the war. Poor pay, low morale, corruption and inadequate training make for an inept and inefficient force. This makes Mozambique a soft target for the operations of international crime syndicates.

**Disarmament**

Domestic and internationally sponsored programmes to disarm ex-combatants, remove excess or unlicensed arms from civilians and destroy or safely dispose of
surplus stocks of arms or confiscated illicit weapons have, for the most part, been under-resourced and only partially effective. The outcome of partial disarmament has been the widespread diffusion of light weapons throughout the region which has fuelled violent crime and banditry. There is no universally accepted definition of light weapons; however, analysts generally describe them in terms of conventional weapons that can be carried by a soldier or affixed to a light vehicle. They include assault rifles, machine guns, light anti-tank weapons, small mortars, grenades, landmines and shoulder fired missiles, as well as ammunition and explosives.

The proliferation of light weapons and illicit arms trafficking in southern Africa poses a major threat to peace, security and development in the region (Saferworld, 1998:4). Although arms do not in themselves cause conflict and criminal activities, their widespread availability tends to escalate the level of violence. The growth in non-state forms of violence has impeded the development of social stability, democracy and good governance. The presence of excessive and destabilising light weapons has contributed a new dimension to the disarmament and arms control agendas in the post cold war era. The fact that small arms flows involve for the most part non-state actors means that the challenge to the international arms control community is qualitatively different from that of the traditional control mechanisms of the conventional arms trade or of weapons of mass production (Laurance, 1997).

Past failures of the UN to implement effective micro-disarmament programmes has not prevented it from recognising the growing problems associated with light weapons proliferation. The UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms has recommended a number of practical measures to reduce the quantity of weapons in circulation and to curb future acquisitions, including establishing a regional information-sharing network: providing assistance for democratic internal security forces and assisting post-conflict initiatives in related to disarming and demobilising regular and irregular forces (IISS, 1998B). In May, 1998 a UK government sponsored conference entitled 'Developing Controls on Arms and Illicit Trafficking in Southern Africa' examined ways of developing an regional action plan aimed at controlling light weapons proliferation and diffusion; the programme is to be supported by the EU. While such initiatives are welcome if somewhat overdue, it will be sometime before their results can be assessed.

**Sustainable Development and Conflict Prevention**

Many of the problems experienced with the disarmament and demilitarisation programmes in the southern African region can be linked to the underlying structural problems of under-development and poverty. Without combining demobilisation programmes to longer-term development objectives, demobilisation programmes, will at best, be only partially successful as in the Mozambique case, or at worst, will end up like Angola where the spoils of war outweigh the advantages of peace.

The OECD has recognised that the root causes of insecurity and conflict are due to the failure of development to take hold (OECD, 1997:12). The relationship between poverty and conflict is evident in recent figures supplied by the OECD. In 1998 of the 34 poorest counties in the world, five were engaged in conflict, (Afghanistan, Cambodia, Congo Democratic Republic, Sierra Leone and Somalia), while sixteen (Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, and Yemen) have been undergoing the fragile process of transition from conflict to peace (OECD, 1998). Not
only does the failure of development lead to conflict, but conflict results in missed developmental opportunities (Ball, 1997:607) and erodes a country or region’s development potential, as people are killed or maimed, populations are dislocated, production is abandoned, infrastructure is destroyed and scarce resources are used up for the war effort. Stressing the importance of development for conflict prevention the UNDP has argued that:

*Future conflicts may often be within nations rather than between them – with their origins buried deep in growing socio-economic deprivation and disparities. The search for security in such a milieu lies in development not in arms. More generally it is not possible for the community of nations to achieve any of its major goals – not peace, not environmental protection, not human rights or democratisation, not fertility reduction not social integration – except in the context of sustainable development that leads to human security ...* (UNDP, 1994:50).

Sustainable development is a wide ranging concept referring to a simultaneous improvement in the sustainable economic output of a country, the advancement of employment opportunities, the promotion of social well-being, the eradication of poverty and the protection of the environment. Sustainable human development as advocated by the UNDP is intrinsically related to the creation of social stability by virtue of the fact that it seeks to remove discriminatory factors within an economy (sources of conflict) by providing opportunities for all members of society to enrich their socio-economic potential. In this sense sustainable human development provides an ethical and normative framework that conforms with certain fundamental universal moral values about the right to life and freedom of choice and can be viewed as a tool for conflict prevention and local, regional and global security.

The goal of sustainable human development should not be confused with neo-liberal strategies that prioritise neo-classical growth strategies. Although there is a clear correlation between material wealth and human well being, this relationship is noticeably absent in many developing societies which have adopted classical growth strategies. The UNDP has found that relatively high GDP per capita growth in developing societies is often accompanied by low levels of life expectancy, poor levels of literacy and high levels of infant mortality due to highly inequitable patterns of wealth distribution (UNDP, 1997).

The neo-liberal idea that somehow the benefits of economic growth will ‘trickle down’ to the world’s poor has clearly been seen to have failed in the poorest of the world’s economies (UNDP, 1997B). The resources required to eradicate poverty are a mere fraction of the resources available globally. Yet the rich countries of the North appear increasingly reluctant to respond constructively to the plight of many in the third world. Poverty reduction is being left up to the market, as observed by the noticeable decline in donor support for development programmes. But the Special Advisor to the UNDP Administrator has warned:

*The cost of accelerated action must be measured against the cost of allowing poverty to grow – that is against continuing political conflict and instability, poverty and disease and affronts to human sensibilities* (UNDP, 1997B).

Tragically the plight of the poor, the marginalised and the displaced are only taken seriously when they become a *threat* to the perceived global order or where the scale of humanitarian disaster becomes so great that it is no longer possible to ignore. It is not surprising to find that African countries which are, or have recently, experienced
protracted conflict such as Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mozambique, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Zaire (now Republic of Congo) are among the poorest countries in the world. Widespread economic collapse undermined the social cohesion of most of these societies exposing the fragility of their states and their inability to retain internal stability in the face of socio-economic crisis (Zartman, 1995). Long-term sustainable development is thus required not just to alleviate poverty, but as a key strategy for conflict prevention and political stabilisation.

Currently peace-building missions ignore sustainable development at their peril. They concentrate on short-term goals which tend to deal with the symptoms (military expenditure, demobilisation, micro-disarmament) rather than the cause of conflict (poverty, marginalisation, inequality, environmental degradation). Marshall Plan support for Germany and Japan after World War II formally lasted ten and seven years respectively, during which time the reconstruction of the basic economic infrastructures and democratic institutions occurred allowing for the emergence of stable societies. Current peace-builder missions are given neither the time frame nor the resources that were necessary to get Japan and Germany on their feet again, yet they are expected to achieve similar results in contemporary post-conflict societies. (Paris, 1997)

Financial constraints are cited as the reason why peace missions and donor support cannot be extended, but scrimping on peace-building is a false economy if political instability endures as a result of neglecting the causes of conflict. The issue at stake is not so much the lack of resources; if the political will existed in the international community to support Marshall type economic reconstruction plans, resources could be found. Rather, the problem lies in the international community’s strict adherence to neo-liberal economic ideology which strongly opposes any form of state or supra-state economic intervention. The idea that the market alone is capable of rehabilitating war shattered economies begs belief, particularly when so much empirical evidence points to the opposite.

The economic liberalisation programmes instigated by the IMF and to a lesser degree the World Bank have exacerbated instabilities in the war shattered states of the sub-continent by increasing poverty and widening distributional inequalities (Paris, 1997; Willett, 1995). This is not to argue against the necessity of economic reforms particularly in the distorted and stagnant economies of Africa, but it is imperative that economic reforms become more sensitive to their potential of provoking renewed political and social instability in war torn societies.

Currently the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) – the IMF, the World Bank and regional development banks – play a proactive role in many economies which are vulnerable to conflict and in others which have recently emerged from long and destructive wars. Yet the IFIs have not traditionally viewed conflict prevention as part of their economic mandate (Boyce and Pastor, 1997). Rather they concentrate their efforts on macro-economic stabilisation and sectoral policy reforms, together with project lending and the promotion of growth strategies. The reluctance of IFIs to integrate conflict prevention into their economic mandates can partly be explained by their traditional ‘apolitical’ stance. For example the World Bank, in its Articles of Agreement, is instructed to arrange loans with due attention to consideration of economy and efficiency and without regard to political and other non-economic influences or considerations. The end of the cold war has, however, made it possible for IFIs to address more openly the political dimensions of their lending policies. The
emergence of new states in Eastern Europe and their adoption of free market principles has encouraged the IFIs to acknowledge the challenge of institutional development. As a result, the mandates of the IFIs have recently evolved to include the promotion of good governance and the reduction of unproductive expenditures the latter being an oblique reference to military expenditures.

IMF pressure to reduce military spending in developing countries has produced few development gains as the primary concern of IMF structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) is with debt-servicing and the reduction of balance of payments deficits. In fact, SAPs have been found to exacerbate the problems of poverty and underdevelopment as they divert resources away from public investment in health, education and water and sanitation programmes in order to repay creditors. The social costs associated with such adjustments have been born disproportionately by the poor, and in a growing number of cases this has led to social unrest, rising violence and challenges to the authority and legitimacy of many adjusting governments (Haynes, 1997:66).

Violence seriously dampens economic development and growth and can thus undermine the attempts at economic reform and growth. Thus it would seem appropriate that conflict prevention should be a central part of the IFI’s working brief, particularly when they are involved in countries where violence seems likely to erupt as a result of growing tensions over the inequitable distribution of wealth in society (Gayama, 1993).

Until such adjustments are made by the IFIs, economic ideology will find itself at odds with the international community’s search for peace and stability through international peace-building operations. If this disjuncture is allowed to continue unchallenged, we can expect a continuing retreat from international peace-building as more and more international interventions are seen to have failed. For fragile states emerging from protracted war this can only mean collapse, with the subsequent descent into the new forms of ‘medievalism’ and post-modern conflict as various social groups resort to violence in a bid for basic survival and security which the state is no longer able to provide or guarantee. There are some signs that measures are being taken to rectify this anomaly in the international community’s dealings with post-conflict and conflict prone societies. The recent adoption of a ‘security first’ approach, for instance, focuses on improving assistance to regions experiencing or recovering from conflict. The concept is based on the recognition that traditional development assistance goals such as economic growth and good governance – are more complex in the context of war and political instability. One cogent assumption is that security should no longer be considered discrete and unrelated to other spheres of foreign policy but should instead form part of an integrated approach by donors.

**Conclusion**

Militarism *per se* is not the cause of war, it is rather a symptom of conflict which finds its roots in the deeper systemic problems that confront the southern African region. Unless these systemic problems are dealt with, peace-builders will find that attempts at disarmament demobilisation and demilitarisation are only likely to secure temporary or limited success in the long-term pursuit of peace and stability. Much greater effort, therefore, needs to be made to link disarmament and demilitarisation programmes to the broader goals of post-war economic reconstruction and sustainable development.
So far the international community’s response has been to meet the immediate human costs of war through humanitarian assistance programmes, while neglecting the long term development costs necessary to overcome the devastation of war and internal conflict. The test for the international community in the future is whether it can transcend the limitations of its traditional political and economic paradigms imbued as they are with short-termism and ideology and develop longer-term commitments to ensuring the durability of peace and security in the region and the African continent at large. If these issues are to be challenged head on, the international community needs to build a more integrated approach towards the issues of economics, security, disarmament and development and one that is grounded in a new culture of peace and security.

Sue Willett, Senior Research Fellow, COPRI, Denmark.

Endnotes

1. The most recent scandal involves the shipment of arms to UNITA in Angola in defiance of the UN arms embargo. The continued support of UNITA by former SADF officers in South Africa has lead to a cooling of relations between Pretoria and Luanda. See ‘Fragile Angola. Undermined by SA’s arms,’ Electronic Mail and Guardian 30 April 1998.

2. This problem was raised in an interview with Colonel Bange from the Mozambique MoD and was confirmed in interviews with Mike McKinley from the US Embassy, Maputo,(20 November 1996) and Jeff Livesey from the UK High Commission.

3. This assertion is based on the eye witness account of Jeff Livesey, the Deputy British High Commissioner, who has travelled extensively around the country visiting army bases. Such accounts were confirmed by US embassy officials

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This article examines the relationship between progressive academic economists and anti-apartheid social movements in the period that has come to be known as South Africa's decade of liberation, roughly the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. It does so through a critical examination of the interaction of progressive economists with social movements in South Africa since 1985, an interaction which occurred in the main via policy research networks and think-tanks. The article also explores the major trends in the relationship between progressive economists and social movements over the decade of liberation and attempts to provide some tentative answers to the controversial question of why many of South Africa's progressive economists underwent a sea change in their economic thinking by the mid-1990s. The argument is that South African academics and intellectuals (like those elsewhere) are far from independent; they are the creatures and creations of their time. Their positions depend upon their shifting circumstances and the demands placed on them. Ultimately, the explanation for the change in economics thinking rests on the politics of the transition itself, although other factors may contribute to explaining why the shift was so extreme and so pervasive.

Introduction
Progressive academic economists (Endnote 1) have played a significant role in support of the efforts by anti-apartheid social, labour and political movements to develop alternative economic policy ideas and strategies for post-apartheid reconstruction. But that role has also been a changing, dynamic and complex one. This article examines the relationship between these progressive academic economists and the anti-apartheid social movements in the period that has come to be known as South Africa's decade of liberation, roughly the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. The article begins with a brief background on the role of intellectuals in processes of social and political change before the mid-1980s. I then examine the interaction of progressive economists with social movements in South Africa since 1985. This interaction occurred in the main via policy research networks and think-tanks such as the Economic Trends Research Group, the Industrial Strategy Project and the Macroeconomic Research Group. Thereafter I examine the role that these academic economists played in the formulation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, the RDP White Paper and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy.
The following section sets out the major trends in the relationship between progressive economists and social movements over the decade of liberation. I then attempt to provide some tentative answers to the controversial and complex question of why many of South Africa's progressive economists, underwent a sea change in their economic thinking by the mid-1990s. In the penultimate section I advance some thoughts about the role that progressive academic economists could play in contemporary South Africa in relation to social movements and the institutions of the democratic state, before concluding briefly.

**Background**

Mike Morris has argued powerfully that:

> One of the basic structuring principles of cultural life in South Africa is the lack of a deep-rooted tradition of intellectual independence. Intellectuals, whether from the right or the left, have been squeezed between the powerful forces of Afrikaner and African nationalism, both of which have been highly suspicious of intellectuals, and have tended to accord them acceptance through incorporation and subordination rather than through promoting their independence (1996:256).

The issues Morris raises here form a central aspect of the discussion and argument of this article. However, a preliminary issue relates to the question of which academics participated in policy-making processes before 1985. With few exceptions, progressive and liberal scholars, both in the social and natural sciences, and housed mainly in the English-speaking universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand, Natal and Rhodes, eschewed participation in research which fed into policy-making processes during the apartheid era as these were inevitably linked into or funded and supported by the state.

The National Party, which assumed power a few years after the end of the Second World War, had set up its own exercise in social engineering. The Party drew on right-wing, apartheid-supporting academics in the Afrikaans-speaking universities, especially at Pretoria and Stellenbosch, as well as those in state-funded research think tanks such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), to provide academic justification for some of its key plans and policies.

By the early 1970s progressive scholars were notably absent from national-level, policy-making processes, especially in the social and economic fields. The success which the apartheid state achieved in crushing anti-apartheid political, labour and civil society movements, especially after Sharpville in 1960, had the effect of hemming in the spaces for progressive academic interaction within these sorts of organisations. The emergence of a progressive, nonracial trade union movement in the early 1970s, changed this picture somewhat.

Progressive South African social scientists and economists played an important part in the birth and early development of the nonracial trade union movement, both just before and after the milestone Durban strikes of 1973. White intellectuals, at that time, Johan Maree points out in an article which draws on ideas advanced by Gramsci and Hobsbawn (1989:66),

> played a key role in helping the unions consolidate themselves and in building up their organisational strengths. They also all shared in common the intention of building up democratic trade unions with control ultimately residing in the hands of workers.
Maree argues, however, that while white intellectuals were committed to, and facilitated the emergence and growth of the unions in the early to mid-1970s, 'their contradictory class location, the cultural cleavage between them and African workers, and ultimately the political context, impeded the process of democratisation' (1989:58).

Another strand of work undertaken by progressive intellectuals at the time, but not always in direct interaction with social movements, focused on popular and academic critiques of various aspects of apartheid policy and practice. In the early to mid-1970s, a significant part of this research explored the historical and contemporary relationship between capitalism and apartheid. Much of this research was initially undertaken by progressive South African scholars who were, for one or other reason, based in the United Kingdom (Wolpe, 1972; Legassick, 1974, Davies et al., 1976). By the early 1980s South African-based progressive scholars began to get more involved in this type of critique-driven research work (see for example the series, South African Review, which has been published regularly since 1983).

The move from a level of involvement with social movements based largely on organisational issues, service-type work and an historically-grounded critique of the apartheid state to economic policy issues, from about the mid-1980s and early 1990s, has not been an easy one. Cloete and Muller have remarked that progressive intellectuals, both individually, as well as those operating through research networks, were impelled more ‘by the evident need than by any clear idea about how to move into progressive reconstructive work’ (1991:29). Overcoming legacies of race and gender imbalances in the research and policy process; coping with the dramatic changes in global and local economic and political conditions; and coming to terms with a rising African nationalism, have been some of the key challenges which the progressive academic community in South Africa have had to address. The following section explores these and other developments, trends and complexities over the decade of South Africa's liberation as they relate to some of the better-known forms of interaction between progressive economists and labour, social and political movements.

Progressive Academic Economists & Social Movements (1985-96)

The Early Years
The mid-1980s was a time of risk, excitement and opportunity for the progressive, anti-apartheid academic community. Political mobilisation and activity reached new heights following the Johannesburg-based township turmoil which began in November 1984. The nonracial trade union federation, COSATU, was formed in December 1985. Internationally the sanctions campaign had intensified, culminating in the US Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act of 1986. These and other developments combined to stimulate the establishment of many new research networks and organisations.

These research networks focused on providing support to progressive social movements which were beginning to carry the anti-apartheid struggle to new heights. One central theme of this work related to studies into the impact of sanctions on the South African economy. Other work related to issues such as housing, health and safety, and pensions. Although hugely underdeveloped, the foundations of the socio-economic ideas that were advanced in these early exchanges were unmistakably neo-marxist and socialist in character.
These progressive research networks were harassed by the security police and were sometimes forced to work under conditions of secrecy. They were led by young, progressive social scientists and economists, mainly white and male. Many had just returned to South Africa from studies overseas. Some worked from within universities and linked up with non-academic research networks; others set up and worked within, largely externally-funded, research and service centres outside the universities.

In the mid-1980s in the United Kingdom, a group of British left-wing economists, together with the ANC's Department of Economic Planning (DEP), formed a research consortium called Economic Research on South Africa (EROSA). EROSA produced a number of papers on the South African economy which went beyond a critique into areas of policy recommendations. This included work on the minerals-energy complex, the savings-investment constraint, and the financial market (Fine, Personal Communication, July 1997). Although EROSA related to the ANC-in-exile through activists like Max Sisulu and Pallo Jordan there is little evidence that the policy options generated there fed into ANC economic thinking in any systematic way.

The development of academic-led think tanks focusing on economic analysis and policy issues was boosted by some milestone international conferences in the second half of the 1980s. The first major conference of this kind was held at York University in England in September 1986 and was entitled ‘The South African Economy after Apartheid’. The conference brought together a group of liberal and progressive economists opposed to the apartheid state. South African participants were closely vetted by the ANC in London. Selected papers from the conference were published in a book entitled After Apartheid: The Renewal of the South African Economy, edited by Landeg White and John Suckling.

A veritable flood of economic, social policy and other ‘anti-apartheid’ conferences followed: these included Beijing (1986), Amsterdam (1986), Boston (1987), Freiburg (1987), Harare (1988, 1990), Paris (1989), and Lausanne (1989). Progressive South African social scientists and economists were able, at these conferences, to make constructive contact with one another, and to meet (many for the first time) with high ranking members of the still-banned ANC, SACP and SACTU.

**The Economic Trends Research Group (ET)**

ET was initiated at the request of COSATU in late 1986. It is important in the light of subsequent developments to point out that although COSATU had joined the Congress fold at its launch in December 1985 it had at the time virtually total autonomy from ANC, SACP and SACTU structures. ET was initially located within the auspices of the Labour and Economic Research Centre in Johannesburg. ET began its work for COSATU, with a membership of 8 researchers based in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. By late 1990 membership had grown to 21 (Gelb, 1991:x1). By this stage all but two of ET’s members were white and only two were women. When the project began key members of the group were based in institutions outside universities but by 1990, nearly all had tenured university positions. Of the Group, Dave Lewis and Mike Morris had extensive experience as union organisers or officials, and Doug Hindson was an editor of the *South African Labour Bulletin* in the [then] recent past.

The driving forces behind ET were its national co-ordinator Stephen Gelb and Alec Erwin, who led the COSATU delegation to ET meetings. Membership to ET was by
ET’s initial work on behalf of COSATU was to examine the likely impact of sanctions on the economy. However, it soon became necessary to broaden the scope of ET’s work to understand the nature and origins of the crisis that had beset the South African economy since the early 1970s. That work culminated in the publication of a major report to COSATU in 1989 and in 1991 to a book, *South Africa’s Economic Crisis* edited by Stephen Gelb. The theoretical foundations of the research were located in terms of an adaptation to South African conditions of the French Regulation School, what Gelb described as racial Fordism (1991:13). While the rhetoric of ET discourse and ideas was socialist, a variety of analytical and policy positions from socialist to right-wing social democratic were accommodated within its loose Regulation framework – a framework which was arguably more useful for historical context than policy analysis.

The ET report and book were primarily analytical and critical in nature although there was some preliminary consideration of policy options. Mike Morris has pointed out that ET’s failure to produce a fuller set of alternative policy prescriptions was, at least in part, because this was not ‘initially viewed with much favour by trade unionists’, although it is not clear why they adopted this position.

One of ET’s main claims to fame was that, despite initial difficulties, it managed to forge an effective, productive working relationship, linking mainly university-based researchers to a major national labour movement, perhaps the first on this scale in the history of this country. However, the links between ET and COSATU, even in its most developed phase, were neither highly structured, nor as deep and strong as many believe.

Even as late as September 1989, there was an intense debate about whether to extend ET’s reach more formally into the union federation, and, if so, how. Alec Erwin argued passionately for ET members to relate more closely to the new structures which some of the unions had set up to deal with economic policy issues. ‘This is a time of acute political change’ he argued. ‘Organisations and intellectuals need to engage. Let’s not establish a broad bank of knowledge first, then intervene, but get into research and policy formulation, learn from other experiences and press on’. But this plea met with resistance from some of the researchers, who felt that the theoretical issues which were preoccupying ET at the time would be beyond the understanding and reach of union officials (ET Minutes, 1989).

Weak links with the ANC can be explained, partly, by the fact that in the early years of ET’s existence, the ANC was still banned from operating in South Africa. Although some attempt was made to establish links between ET and the ANC-supported EROSA in London, this led only to the one-off participation of EROSA members Laurence Harris and Ben Fine in two different ET meetings. Relations with the ANC-aligned Centre for Development Studies (CDS) within the country was strained, despite heroic, but unsuccessful, attempts by ET leaders to get the economics component of CDS to work.

Poor relations between ET and the ANC can also be explained by the strong hostility which leading ET members from the ‘workerist tradition’ felt towards the ANC and the SACP, and by COSATU’s disagreement with the ANC over the question of the
labour federation’s ‘accountability’ to SACTU, the official labour arm of the movement. These complexities were picked up by the 1991 IDRC Mission Report which observed that the absence of a closer relation with ANC structures, could be explained ‘by the reticence of some members of ET to have their research associated directly with the political movement’ (1991:11).

Despite this, and the very obvious wariness with which some exiled ANC members viewed the ET leadership at the time, ET played an important, even leading role in the Harare Conference in April 1990 when, following the unbanning of the ANC, progressive economists and economic think-tanks from South Africa, London and Lusaka met to consider economic policy options for post-apartheid South Africa. That conference represented something of a turning point in the relationship between progressive economists and the ANC-SACP alliance.

Late in 1989 ET co-ordinator Stephen Gelb resigned from the project, and plunged ET into something of a crisis. Following months of tension and conflict the headquarters moved from the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Durban Westville to the Development Policy Research Unit at UCT’s Economic History Department.

The Industrial Strategy Project (ISP)
ET’s Phase Two entitled ‘Economic Prospects for South Africa’ which was aimed at elucidating a framework for macro-economic policy did not get off the ground. ET swiftly moved into a narrower focus in Phase Three in 1990, a body of research around industrial restructuring and trade policy, again at COSATU’s suggestion. The unbanning of the ANC, the shift to negotiations politics, COSATU’s open alliance with the movement and the ‘certainty of the immediate accession to power of COSATU’s political ally’, combined to create a very different and more open, yet far more intense, environment under which research work for social and political movements occurred and also ensured that work such as that of the ISP focused more closely on policy (Joffee et al., 1995:xii).

The ISP was led by four co-directors, all university-based political economists or sociologists: Dave Kaplan and Dave Lewis of the University of Cape Town, Avril Joffe of the University of the Witwatersrand and (former South African) Rafael Kaplinsky of Sussex University’s Institute for Development Studies (IDS). The arrival of Kaplinsky to co-direct the ISP helped to consolidate ‘post-Fordist thinking in South Africa’, an approach which emphasised the creation of international competitiveness, supply-side intervention, skills upgrading, technological and work place re-organisation and the like (Bond, 1996:24).

Twenty-three (mainly university-based) researchers and administrators began work on the ISP. Sixteen were involved in detailed studies of one or more key sector of South African manufacturing. In ET Phase I, the participating academics’ teaching and research commitments limited their participation in ET work and most academics drew on their own research projects and post-graduate theses as a basis for their ET research. However the ISP, needing substantial new work in often unexplored areas in a short space of time, decided to buy-out its university-based academics for the duration of the project.

In another significant departure from ET Phase I, the ISP also engaged in training largely at the insistence of the Canadians who had poured unprecedentedly large
amounts of money to set up and run the ISP. ISP researchers were also expected to consult regularly with the relevant COSATU affiliate, and research results were made available to COSATU on an ongoing basis. All in all the ISP had a much clearer, better structured and more effective relationship with COSATU (and the ANC to some extent) than ET did in Phase I. But there were good reasons for this improvement. Nevertheless the ISP’s work remained that of an independent research collective, its relationship with COSATU being described on the completion of the project by COSATU President John Gomomo as still an ‘arms-length’ one (Joffee et al., 1995: Foreword).

A noticeable feature of the ISP, it has been argued, was its embrace of key economic policy options advanced by some sections of South African capital and by the advance guard of the World Bank team. The ISP ‘developed a great ideological fondness’ for the Nedcor/Old Mutual Scenario planning proposals, which was championed by Bob Tucker and was based on ideas developed by the conservative economic philosophy of his Harvard Business School collaborator, Bruce Scott (Bond, 1996:24). Tucker had in turn been highly successful in selling these ideas to the ANC leadership. The ISP also recorded its agreement ‘with most of the World Bank’s proposals for trade reforms and saw positive signs in other World Bank proposals such as those relating to aspects of land reform (Padayachee, 1993:198/9). In general, a strong, centrist corporatist dimension (evident to a lesser degree in some sections of ET) came to the fore in the ISP, sweeping aside any last vestiges of militant syndicalism, associated with earlier ‘workerist’ thinking and strategy.

One aspect of the ISP’s work culminated with the publication of a book edited by its co-ordinators entitled *Improving Manufacturing Performance in South Africa*, which appeared only in 1995. The ISP also published many interim reports and papers and a series of rich, sectoral and cross-sectoral studies of specific industries. The ISP’s policy recommendations represent a distinct shift away from a national, demand-side, developmental approach to a more global, supply-side strategy for economic reconstruction.

The ISP experience throws up a number of intriguing issues and questions which go to the heart of any proper understanding of the role of progressive economists in policy-formulation for post-apartheid South Africa. Can the noticeable shift evident in ISP thinking be explained entirely by changes in global economic conditions? Why was COSATU happy to go along with the broad thrust of the ISP’s approach when some aspects of this approach (for example, on trade policy) were antithetical to worker interests? And, finally how does one explain some significant departures between the analysis and recommendations of some sector studies and those in the final ISP book? (on this see Valodia, 1996:61).

These questions need a fuller treatment than is possible here. Whatever the answers one thing is clear: industrial and trade policy in the immediate post-apartheid era bore the unmistakable stamp of the work of the ISP, and behind that achievement, if you like, lay the efforts of some of South Africa’s most well-known political economists and social scientists, who had been linked to COSATU and the left within the country.

**The Macro-economic Research Group (MERG)**

During a visit to Canada in June 1990 [then] ANC President Nelson Mandela raised the issue of the ‘urgent need for a better understanding of economic policy issues in
South Africa within the anti-apartheid movement as it prepares for forthcoming negotiations’ (van Ameringen, 1995:2). The Canadian government moved in to offer tangible support. A team of Canadian and African economists (headed by Gerry Helleiner and including John Loxley and Benno Ndulu) was appointed to make recommendations to the political leadership about how to improve the movement’s capacity to formulate economic policy. Their work was co-ordinated by the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

The IDRC Mission to South Africa found that the economic policy capacity of the movement was both underdeveloped and unco-ordinated. Even where capacity existed (for example, among local university-based economists who were sympathetic to the movement) their research often duplicated other work, was not sufficiently focused on policy, and was poorly linked to the ANC’s DEP, which had by now relocated from Lusaka to Johannesburg. The DEP in turn was understaffed, poorly organised, and its leadership appeared to have made little or no effort to mobilise the sources of relevant experience available at some of the universities. They called for the establishment of a network-based Macro-economic Research Group (MERG), to ‘stimulate and co-ordinate policy research and training in the identified priority areas’. The most urgent priority, they argued, was the development of a ‘macro-economic policy framework’ within whose terms and parameters various policy options could be tested and economic policy-making take place.

MERG was set up in November 1991 and the research project was launched at a conference in Johannesburg in January 1992. Top international economists, including Americans Lance Taylor and Bill Gibson, were contracted for lengthy periods to train (or support) South African researchers, especially in areas such as macro-economic modelling, where South African expertise was deficient.

By late 1992 little by way of working papers on policy options had been produced by the MERG research teams. In December 1992 the ANC-leadership requested the newly appointed MERG co-ordinator to accelerate the process of producing the Macro-economic Framework, as negotiations at the World Trade Centre, suggested that a political settlement was close at hand.

MERG’s macro-economic policy framework was presented to the democratic movement at a formal media launch on 3 December 1993. It was simultaneously published by MERG as a book entitled *Making Democracy Work: A Framework for Macro-economic Policy in South Africa*. Although the book came out under the MERG label, the editors were Ben Fine, Laurence Harris, Vishnu Padayachee and John Sender. The macro-economic modelling was done by Australian economist, Peter Brain. The overall project co-ordinator, was Vella Pillay. In addition 45 research papers and reports were produced by MERG researchers over two years. Altogether 64 university-based economists, both South African and international, were involved in varying capacities in the MERG process. While only a handful were women, as many as 20 were not white. A significant number, though not all, of the South African economists involved in MERG were also integrally involved in both ET and the ISP.

The theoretical foundations of the MERG policy framework lie, in what I would characterise as a Cambridge or Post-Keynesian approach (in the tradition of Keynes, Robinson, Kaldor and Kalecki) where effective demand failures and the possibility of under-full employment equilibrium, are recognised as key problems. MERG envisioned a two-phase, ‘crowding-in’ approach to South Africa’s development, a state-led social and physical infrastructural investment programme as the growth
driver in the first phase, followed by a more sustainable growth phase which would see private sector investment kick in more forcefully as growth picked up (MERG, 1993, Chapter 1).

The MERG process also throws up many intriguing questions. Was the MERG approach as outdated in contemporary global conditions as some have argued? Why did the relationship between some research team leaders and the MERG administration deteriorate so dramatically over the course of two years? Why was the relationship between the MERG administration and the ANC's Department of Economic Planning characterised by so much rivalry and bitterness? Why did SANCO which was an integral part of the MERG structures since its launch in March 1992 chose not to attend any of MERG's meetings and workshops?

And why did some of South Africa's progressive economists view the participation of foreign economic experts in MERG with such suspicion? Stellenbosch economist and MERG researcher Servaas van den Berg made his disquiet on this matter known to DEP head Trevor Manuel, 'complaining that not since colonial days had South Africa's economic policy been drawn up by foreign economists' (Kentriderd, 1993). I have attempted fuller answers of these questions elsewhere (Padayachee, 1995).

Although these kinds of problems may have slowed down and complicated the MERG process, they did not compromise the coherence and relevance of MERG's output. The MERG Report was widely acknowledged as being an important contribution to the formulation of an alternative macro-economic strategy for post-apartheid development, a challenge to the previous government's Normative Economic Model. Business Day, on the eve of the MERG launch, noted in a leader-page article that 'the MERG framework, for all its faults, presents a serious challenge to the government's approach' (1 December 1993). Foreign donors paid high tribute to MERG's achievements while not failing to comment critically on some of its administrative shortcomings. Numerous positive academic reviews of the MERG book were published in international journals. In the International Review of Applied Economics (1995:108), British economist, Chris Edwards argued that:

"... it is hard to see a peaceful or prosperous society emerging from the application of the 'orthodox economics' of the NEM. In comparing MERG and the NEM in the light of the appalling legacy of apartheid, it seems clear that there is no alternative to an approach modelled on that of the MERG."

Despite this, the MERG macro-economic framework and recommendations were dumped by the ANC almost before it was launched. Why did this happen? SACP Deputy Secretary-General, Jeremy Cronin has argued that the absence from the South African economic debate of MERG's 'outstanding British economists' contributed to the project's marginalisation. I doubt the value of this explanation. It would be more accurate to argue that the ANC leadership, under pressure on many fronts, had by this time all but abandoned the idea of developing an alternative progressive macro-economic framework to the late-apartheid neo-liberalism of the previous government's Normative Economic Model. I shall return to this point later.

The Reconstruction & Development Programme (RDP)

One of the most exciting trends in South African academic life during the late 1980s and early 1990s - at least in the English-speaking universities and some of the HBU's - was the rise of the policy expert and policy advisor to social, labour and political
movements. The most significant comment that can be made about the formulation of
the ANC-alliance's RDP, in so far as the theme of this paper is concerned, is that this
trend was not reflected in any serious role in the RDP. There were a few exceptions of
course: a Wits economist co-ordinated the writing of the RDP's Chapter 4 on 'Building
the Economy'; UCT's Energy and Development Research Centre assisted with the
technical advise about electrification (Chapter 2); a UWC social welfare expert drafted
the welfare sections of Chapter 2; and this writer, from a UDW base made extended
technical comments on the whole of the penultimate draft. But no organised
academic-linked think tank, ala ET, ISP, or MERG lay behind the formulation of the
RDP. Instead, as Patrick Bond has observed:

... several dozen praxis intellectuals from the NGOs and labour drafted the document,
partly I think because they had close working relationships with the Democratic Movement
social forces who mandated the drafters to move in this or that direction (Personal
Communication, July 1997).

Part of the process of finalising the RDP involved holding 4/5 workshops which were
attended by about 100 members each from democratic movement structures, making
it arguably the most democratic process by which an opposition economics document
was formulated. But that process did not involve the participation of many academics
in any organised sense. Why was this? It cannot be argued that most progressive
academic economists were otherwise engaged in MERG, for that process was almost
complete by the time most of the RDP was being put together.

The answer appears to be that the more grass roots trade union and civic leadership of
the movement which were charged with driving the RDP either did not trust or have
much faith in what they may have perceived to be the more theoretical/intellectual
approach of academic economists and social scientists. That may also explain
SANCO's absence from MERG. One result of all this was that MERG results did not
effectively feed into the RDP's formulation. Those relatively more senior movement
leaders, who did have a better history of relating to progressive academics, mainly
because of ET, ISP and MERG, and were champions of the RDP, such as Alec Erwin
and Jay Naidoo, were fighting mainly on the political front to secure the ANC
leadership's formal acceptance of the state-led, interventionist RDP-framework as
official policy. That formal endorsement was made, after intense internal lobbying,
just weeks before the April 1994 elections. It has subsequently become even more clear
that the RDP was viewed by the ANC leadership as just a mobilising tool for election
purposes.

The RDP White Paper (WP)
The RDP (WP) published in November 1994 and the Growth, Employment and
Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) published in June 1996 are the two most important
macro-economic policy documents of the post-apartheid ANC-led government. Their
production, in many ways reflected the very different political context of the new era.

The GNU, not unnaturally, turned to economists within its own institutions and
departments to develop the RDP Green Paper, for instance, the draft of the WP. These
included Ismail Momoiat of the Department of Finance and Andre Roux of the
Development Bank, among others. However, both were appointees of the new
government. Roux a former UWC Economics Professor was a leading member of
MERG's Fiscal Project. The Green Paper was severely criticised by some leading
members of the alliance. Jeremy Cronin for one wrote a trenchant critique of it. New
Progressive Academic Economists in South Africa

authors, including Sanco's Patrick Bond, were brought in to work on the White Paper, under the political direction of ex-COSATU leaders Jay Naidoo, Bernie Fanaroff and Howie Gabriels, by then Ministers or senior bureaucrats in the GNU. Significantly, and again reflecting the new era, businessmen too were part of the re-drafting team. The team did most of its work between 30 August and 6 September 1994. Eighteen different drafts were circulated within the state, but social and labour movements only saw versions of it towards the end of September.

A careful reading of the WP reveals significant departures from the underlying economic framework and thrust of the RDP itself. Despite re-assurances from new Ministers that only the language of the WP had changed to reflect a wider constituency of interests, it has been argued that the WP represented a significant compromise to free-market principles and to the economic preferences of the old regime.

**The Growth, Employment & Redistribution Programme (GEAR)**

Sometime late in 1995, it became known that the GNU had assembled a high-powered team to draw up a new, modelled, macro-economic framework. The publication in February 1996 of the South African Foundation's 'Growth for All' document, followed shortly thereafter, by the Labour Movement's 'Growth and Equity' document, together with the dramatic collapse in the value of the Rand in the first quarter of 1996, appears to have forced the GNU, to accelerate the production of its macro-economic framework document, in part to reassure jittery international financial and currency markets of its fiscal prudence. And so on 14 June 1996, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, unveiled 'The Growth, Employment and Redistribution' Strategy with the announcement that it was 'non-negotiable'. Despite his position as Head of the ANC's Economic Transformation Committee, Labour Minister Tito Mboweni, was not a central player in its formulation. So who were the central players?

GEAR acknowledges the contribution of a 'technical team' which assisted with the document. That team consists of 17 technical experts, of whom 16 were white, and 16 were men. Six were economists drawn from South African universities: 3 from UCT, 2 from Stellenbosch and 1 from Durban-Westville. Three worked at the Development Bank of South Africa, two at the World Bank, and two at the South African Reserve Bank. There was one representative each from the departments of Finance, Labour, Trade and Industry, and the Deputy-President's office. It was this team that drove the GEAR research process.

Was there much continuity here with former policy processes of the movement? Of the 'progressive' economists, Stephen Gelb, Dave Lewis, Alan Hirsch and Brian Kahn, all participated in think-tanks from ET Phase I or II, via MERG to GEAR. Lewis and Hirsch were also involved in the ISP. Andre Roux was involved in MERG, the RDP (WP) and GEAR. Dirk van Seveneter from the DBSA and Servaas van den Berg from Stellenbosch were involved in aspects of MERG's work.

GEAR's foundations and policy recommendations have been severely criticised by progressive and even mainstream economists. Asghar Adelzadeh (1996) has argued that all indications suggest that the GEAR model was in fact the same model which underpinned the apartheid regime's, neo-liberal Normative Economic Model. Nicoli Nattrass (1996:38) has pointed out that there are
so many parameter shifts in GEAR’s integrated scenario projection that its technical status is severely compromised. The growth and employment outcomes [she argues] are in large part the product of a set of optimistic guesses about the likely effects of the economic policy package.

Edey Rogers’ consultant, Edward Osborne, is even more forthright:

the GEAR policy document is bogus and fraudulent. It compromises litanies of policy measures that could have been taken from the IMF manual, but sanctified with the word ‘integrated’ [1997:1] ... And GEAR’s entire approach has been rejected by the ANC’s alliance partners, Cosatu and the SACP, and been criticised, albeit guardedly, from within the ANC itself.

Given all this, it is instructive to remind ourselves that GEAR was led politically by ANC Ministers and bureaucrats and that its research team included so many key members of ET, the ISP and MERG. It has since become clear from their public statements that these ‘progressive’ economists support and defend GEAR with pride and no small amount of arrogance.

The GEAR process, poses many more questions. Why is there still so much secrecy about GEAR’s formation and research methods, and specifically about the kind of model that was used? Was the announcement of ‘non-negotiability’ just the normal way in which policy documents will now be produced by the GNU? Is Tito Mboweni correct, when he claims that better consultation and discussion within the movement would have taken care of many of the tensions and conflicts now surrounding GEAR? And what should one make of President Mandela’s statement to the 1997 Cosatu conference that even the ANC did not discuss GEAR until it was ‘too late’?

Economic modelling, especially since MERG and GEAR, has become an important instrument in the tool-kit of progressive economists. But a caution about modelling from one of the economics profession’s most celebrated mathematicians and a Nobel Prize winner, Wassily Leontief, brings this section of my address to a close. Leontief complained in a 1970 address to economists that

the mathematical-model-building industry has grown into one of the most prestigious, possibly the most prestigious branch of economics. [Unfortunately] uncritical enthusiasm for mathematical formulation tends often to conceal the ephemeral content of the argument (in Jacoby, 1996:159).

While models and modelling are undoubtedly important, their limitations need to be understood, and they should not be fetishised as some South African progressive economists, recent converts to modelling, appear now to be doing. Good economic ideas, backed by theoretical rigour and substantive arguments, and informed by a real concern for the lives of ordinary people, should still matter.

**Major Trends over the Decade of Liberation**

What trends can one disentangle from the above account? There are of course a host of issues which can be analysed more fully: issues of race, gender, and foreign influence, amongst others. However the remarks already made on these issues, will have to suffice. Two more general comments will be developed, one related to changing organisational relations with the social movements, the second to the changing nature of the policy advice offered by progressive economists.
Progressive academic economists in South Africa

The first trend in the complex process set out in the previous section is that of small, fragmented groups of mainly white, male progressive economists and networks from the English-speaking universities working with a number of different social and labour movements in the mid-1980s, gradually merging by late 1991 into a co-ordinated national and international economic research, training and policy-think tank, the Macro-economic Research Group, in order to develop a macro-economic framework for one major client, the ANC-led alliance. Of course some economic think-tanks continued to exist independently, but many, including the ISP, fed their research into MERG. A gradual process of organisational coherence in the relationship between academics and social and political movements characterised the decade of liberation.

Progressive academic economists who were involved in ET, ISP, and MERG, also faced new choices after 1994. Many have left universities to accept full-time positions in key state departments such as Finance, and Trade and Industry, an option which did not exist for this community before. Others have remained within universities but relate to the state in various ways. Some have severed links with the state for one or other reason. Only a few academic economists continue to relate in any structured way to social movements in civil society.

A second major trend is that of the fairly rapid, albeit uneven and complex process through which the theoretical foundations of the economic analysis and policy advice advanced and developed by progressive economists, in interaction with social and political movements, disintegrated over the decade of South Africa's liberation. From Neo-Marxism and the pursuit of a socialist alternative in the mid-to late 1980s, to an essentially social democratic version of Regulation Theory by 1990, to MERG's 1993 post-Keynesian approach which championed a major developmental role for the democratic state, to the ISP's mid-1990s corporatist strategy and post-Fordist vision of global competitiveness, and finally, in and through the RDP (WP) and GEAR, to neo-liberalism. All this, in the remarkably short time span of a decade.

Of course, there was nothing straightforward and unilinear about the processes of change either in the organisational form of this relationship or in the economic ideas advanced. Thus, although half a dozen leading economists were involved in nearly all of the policy think-tanks from ET to GEAR, different coalitions of progressive economists led each of the economic think-tanks that I have discussed. Not all have succumbed to neo-liberalism. What I would assert is that the 'fulcrum' or centre of gravity of the ideological or theoretical foundations of the policy-advice of this community of progressive scholars undoubtedly shifted to the right over the last 10 years.

Explaining the Changing Content of Progressive Policy Advice

How can these changes in economic policy advice coming out of this group of progressive economists be explained? A variety of initial factors come to mind. The normal process of growing 'conservatism' that accompanies aging, is one. The 'young' progressive economists of 1985 are now 10 years older. The speed of the South African transition, it can be argued, caught many people, including progressive economists, by surprise, forcing a policy response for which they were ill-prepared. Some may even argue that they eventually 'saw the light', that neo-liberalism is the only answer in contemporary global circumstances. Other academic economists may suggest that pragmatism, practicing the 'art of the possible' is what it is all about. In this article, however, I would like to suggest a number of other, sometimes mutually reinforcing, explanations.
1) The engagement of progressive academic economists with social movements in South Africa coincided with a global political and intellectual swing to the right, a trend which began in the UK and US in the late 1970s and gathered momentum in the wake of the collapse of Soviet and eastern European style socialism in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Washington Consensus, the belief that ‘free markets and sound money are the key to economic development’ (Krugman in Bell, 1997:84) and that there is no alternative to this approach in contemporary conditions, was the hegemonic view that was powerfully propagated in South Africa after 1990 by the IMF and the World Bank, with differing degrees of tact and diplomacy. Many progressive economists succumbed to the Washington Consensus all too easily. Part of the reason for this capitulation lies in the relative intellectual weakness of this progressive economics community, judged by international standards.

2) Fine and Rustomjee have observed that social sciences in South Africa have been ‘insulated or cushioned from intellectual developments elsewhere’. Although some intellectual ideas were imported from time to time, differing from discipline to discipline, ‘economics has been underdeveloped even from orthodox perspectives and political economy had tended to be practised more by those originating in other disciplines’ (1996:248). These factors, coupled with relative isolation, the absence of a rigorous debating tradition, bitter personality conflicts and power struggles left them vulnerable to the neo-liberal juggernaut, when these right-wing ideas, backed by powerful, global institutions and resources, entered South Africa in a big way after 1990.

3) The defeat, emasculation or disappearance of many civil society organisations in the 1990s, and the decision by many others, including COSATU, the SACP and SANCO, to accept the leadership of the ANC in the anti-apartheid struggle of the 1990s, effectively removed them from the policy world, as independent constituencies. As a result many progressive academic economists lost direct touch with the dynamic and more radical traditions of these mass-based labour and social movements. Progressive academic economists found themselves relating more and more to the ANC’s elite leadership, whose concerns and agendas were increasingly being set by conservative forces and institutions. They followed the current into what Mike Neocosmos refers to as the ‘corporatist statism’ of the 1990s. Many already conform to Mahmood Mamdani’s characterisation of African intellectuals as ‘state fetishists’ (Neocosmos, 1997:53).

4) South African capital and the media also exerted huge pressures on the progressive economics community. Their influence on the economists worked via their increasingly successful lobbying of, and impact on, the ANC leadership. Many key progressive ideas advanced by the academic community, which business and the media opposed, were rapidly shelved by the ANC leadership after 1983. One example illustrates this very well. ISP researchers who had pushed hard for an effective competition policy to break-up the power of the (white-dominated) South African conglomerates have been silenced by the ANC’s about-turn on this issue. The change in ANC thinking has, in part, been influenced by the growth of a black business elite, closely aligned to it, who are rapidly buying into the corporate world. Now one hears nothing about the dangers of economic concentration from economists who made this one of the central themes of their work as recently as the mid-1990s.

5) Although the ANC itself has never articulated an economic policy framework that can be called radical by any stretch of the imagination, many economic ideas that were
being discussed within the Congress movement as whole in the early 1990s were progressive in character. The commitment to a real transformation of the South African economy in some quarters within the movement was a genuine one. However, most of the factors discussed above (the global swing to neo-liberalism, the influence of the international financial institutions, the power of South African business and the establishment media) also directly impacted on ANC economic thinking, especially at leadership level between 1990-94. Noted Berkeley sociologist, Michael Burawoy (1997:1), sets out the context within which the change in ANC economics thinking occurred:

*Without a critical stance toward Soviet socialism, having never partaken in the debates about the meaning of socialism – real and imaginary – the liberation movement in power found itself without a cognitive map to navigate the enormous problems of national reconstruction. An ‘exodus without a map’, as Adler and Webster call it, became vulnerable to a neo-liberal redemption, especially when the entire globe is spell bound by the magic of the market.*

Whatever else was happening within the Congress movement, it was the ANC leadership’s slide into neo-liberalism (most noticeable from around early 1993) which arguably made the most dramatic impact on the decisions and choices of South Africa’s progressive economics community. The main reason for this, I would contend, lies in the attraction to power, and loyalty to political patrons, that academics have displayed for most of this century and which many progressive scholars from Julien Benda (1980) to Edward Said (1994) have so brilliantly captured. Said points out that, although writing as early as 1927, Benda had sensed how willing intellectuals had been to respond to governments who recognised the importance of having:

*as their servants those intellectuals who could be called on not to lead, but to consolidate the government’s policy, to spew out propaganda against official enemies, euphemisms and, on a larger scale whole systems of Orwellian Newspeak, which could disguise the truth of what was occurring in the name of institutional ‘expediency’ or ‘national honour’ (1994:5).*

A similar point was made by right-wing commentator Paul Johnson (1988:342), who reminds us that intellectuals

*far from being highly individualist and non-conformist people, follow certain regular patterns of behaviour ... they are often ultra-conformist within the circles formed by those whose approval they seek and value*

For South African left economists in the 1980s ‘power’ (and ‘legitimacy’) rested with the socialist-oriented workers’ movement, and in particular with COSATU. In the early 1990s power shifted to the multi-class, nationalist-oriented ANC; after 1994 it shifted again (out of the party) and into the Government itself. Some of the country’s leading progressive economists adjusted both their organisational loyalties and ideological views to stay close to where they perceived power to lie. From being independent and critically-engaged partners (even leaders) in the economic policy making process, they have become pragmatic and fiercely loyal followers. Ironically, what is distinctive here is that many display an ambiguity towards power, wanting desperately to be close to power and to shape events whilst retaining some degree of their ‘independence’ – a dilemma which is most apparent in the post-1994 context.
Progressive Economists in the New South Africa

I would contend that the exciting, albeit problematic era, in which university-based academics played an integral, often leading role, as policy advisors and experts to social, labour and political movements, and through which both academics and social movements leaders pushed one other to the outer limits of their roles and responsibilities, has come to an end. What role can any remaining older and younger progressive economists play in relation to social movements and the democratic state in our new context?

Radika Desai’s (1994:64) comments on the role of progressive intellectuals in the current British context is instructive. Conditions in post-Thatcherite Britain, she argues, demand a different role for intellectuals, than that played by both the Thatcherite think-tanks, or indeed by the Fabian socialist intellectuals in an earlier era. She goes on:

> How exactly this [role] is played is still an open question. Gramsci, for one, attempted to envisage a role for an ‘organic intellectual’, yet the concept was always more programmatic than analytical. For the left today, an intellectual practice which could intersect with social forces, giving them shape and direction, seems distressingly unreal. In our contemporary over-institutionalized intellectual life, this remains nevertheless the real Gramscian imperative.

This is also the challenge that progressive South African economists and academics need to engage with in the post-apartheid context. Any such engagement forged with civil society movements would not (in my view) at this stage necessarily imply disengaging from participating within the structures, commissions and forums of the democratic state. South Africa’s transition to democracy and development is far from complete. That is one reason why I would maintain that progressive economists should seek actively to re-build relationships with modernising social movements in civil society, while at the same time, wherever possible, critically to exploit and expand the new spaces opened up at the level of the state by the triumph over apartheid oppression.

A dynamic engagement between South African progressive academics and establishment institutions such as the democratic state, and indeed the business community, may well be important and beneficial to wider constituencies. Such engagement may also force universities to develop new and creative research and funding links within the society, as Eddie Webster has suggested (see earlier). But I would argue that progressive academics in the new South Africa should resist the temptation to respond to the technological and developmental demands of the state and business in narrow and technicist ways, for instance, in ways which runs counter to the ethos and culture of university life. Universities are, after all, one of the few remaining sites for a critical and humanistic engagement with contemporary social issues, and care should be exercised that the pursuit of these values and traditions are not compromised.

I would concede that two problems are beginning to emerge in regard to giving effect to the approach I have just proposed. One is that the organisational capacity of most civil society organisations have been badly affected by aspects of the transition. Their capacity to relate to the academic community and absorb its policy ideas in dynamic interaction, like the unions did in the second half of the 1980s, have deteriorated. Neither should one assume that social movements are all that desperate or willing to reach out, even to progressive academics in our new context. Such relationships may only be re-built through new struggles.
A second is a sense I have that the spaces for progressive engagement with the state may soon close up rapidly. The government has consolidated a new, highly loyal and pragmatic economic and technical elite, drawn in part from the former progressive economic community, and from the rump of the old apartheid state machinery. Even technical economic assistance and advice from academic economists may no longer be that sought after.

**Conclusion**

In examining the interaction between progressive economists and social movements, my inaugural address has focused consciously and primarily on process issues. Ultimately however, as Ben Fine insists, the debate about the role of progressive economists, networks and centres in the new South Africa, must be carried forward through being tied to the specific and central substance, context and reality of the corresponding policy issues'. How, he argues, can one express the dilemma which progressive economists face – of both participating within and being independent of government – without reference to the powers of private capital and the Reserve Bank, among others? Indeed, as Fine (1996:54) warns,

> it is precisely the capacity to hold on to such realities which is at the greatest risk when critical gives way to constructive, constructive to compromise, and compromise to capitulation – as the imperatives of politics and pragmatism come to the fore.

In addressing such substantive economic policy issues in our new political context, I would urge, along with John Bellamy-Foster (1990:286), that progressive economists strive:

> to advance a politics of the truth; to avoid easy compromises; to address the immediate and long-term needs of the mass of the population and of those who suffer the most severe forms of oppression; to search for the common ground of that oppression; to resist ideological claims that 'we are all in the same boat' in this society; to reject what Mills called the 'crackpot realism' that makes the status quo into a kind of inescapable second nature and closes off the future; to fight market fetishism. In short, to avoid making what Raymond Williams called 'long-term adjustments to short-term problems'.

**Vishnu Padayachee**, Centre for Social and Development Studies, University of Natal, Durban, South Africa. I was over the period of this study a member of many of the economic policy think-tanks discussed below, including the Labour and Economic Research Project, the Economic Trends Research Group, and the Macro-economic Research Group. I was also involved to some extent in the final stages of producing the Reconstruction and Development Programme. I have since May 1996 been a state-appointee on the Board of Directors of the South African Reserve Bank. Many of my observations on the role of progressive economists in South Africa, are therefore at least in part, made as an 'insider'. I accept the constraints these positions place on 'objectivity'.

**Endnote**

1. By progressive academic economists, I mean those actively involved with anti-apartheid social movements, who were (at least initially) also opposed to the dominant neo-liberal economic policy framework. Most were based at the historically white, English-speaking universities, and the leading historically-black universities of Western Cape and Durban-Westville.
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Design for Equity: Linking Policy with Objectives in South Africa’s Land Reform

Ruth Hall

The question posed in this article is why do land reform policies aiming at equity regularly result in inequitable outcomes? The question is examined in relation to the new land reform policy in South Africa (DLA, 1997), and with emphasis on the commitment to gender equity contained in this policy. Four points are made. First, planning for development needs to be realistic about the context of social relations within which the programme will take place. Second, policy objectives and criteria should not be contradictory. Third, equity considerations need to permeate all aspects of policy and not be limited to statements of vision and objectives. Fourth, the resource implications of policy should fit within existing resource constraints. These are some of the points of slippage which may result in the sacrifice of equity objectives in practice. The challenge at the level of policy is to anticipate and counteract the likely maldistribution of the benefits of land reform.

Introduction

Experience with land reform elsewhere in Africa has shown that efforts to redistribute rural land to ‘the disadvantaged’ or to the ‘rural landless’, have tended to reinforce existing forms, and given rise to new dimensions of inequality within beneficiary communities (Endnote 1). The gap between vision and reality is a regular and patterned trend in rural development and land reform programmes. It appears to be a systemic problem. The extent of the disjuncture between aim and effect cannot be explained merely as shortfall from projected targets but must be understood as a failure of the policy itself. The questions this raises are: will this happen in South Africa, if so why, and in what ways could this be avoided?

The Redistribution Review Summit hosted by the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) in February 1997 indicated that there is early evidence of a fall-off between policy objectives and policy impact. This can be seen in relation to the DLA policy’s commitment to gender equity as a guiding principle of policy. What is clear already is that very few women are being able to gain direct access to the land acquisition grant (Lund, 1997: personal communication).

This article explores some perspectives on how we might explain this tendency by looking at policy rather than at implementation. How might the very way in which policy is conceived of, and designed, allow the intended vision of land reform to be diminished and diverted? What can be done at the level of policy making to minimise these effects?
Synopsis of the Argument

In this article I argue that the key challenge in the design of equitable policy is to anticipate and counteract the maldistribution of the costs and benefits of land reform and to build a recognition of likely maldistributive trends into the policy itself. There are four components to the answer:

1) Development planning in general tends to overestimate the potential for policy to induce change in society and the economy, and to underestimate the impact of resistance and subversion of policy measures by those who have the interest and the power to do so. Policies need to be realistic and modest about the room for manoeuvre within which land reform can induce social change.

2) A policy which aims to promote both equity and productivity should identify how these can work together. It also needs to state how conflicting criteria to promote these objectives should be reconciled in practice. The DLA policy does not do this; instead, equity appears to be seen as a cost to productivity. The tendency to see equity and productivity as necessarily hostile to one another precludes opportunities to advance productivity through equity.

3) Explicit commitments to combatting inequities in land rights should be followed through into workable policy instruments to promote these objectives. A policy committed to gender equity, for example, should have strategies, policy instruments and implementation methods which are consistent with this objective. If this is not the case, equity considerations are apt to remain at the level of rhetoric and the objective remain unrealised.

4) The resource implications of the policy should fit within the constraints of the institutional, human and financial resources at the disposal of the state. If the resources available are inadequate to meet the requirements of policy, priorities will be made in the course of implementation. While flexibility and adaptation in the light of experience are important, the urgency to transfer land may cause equity considerations to be lost or rationalised.

This article is offered in a spirit of constructive criticism. For each of the four problem areas, perspectives are offered which may be useful in the construction of a policy which mitigates against the likelihood of equity considerations being sacrificed, marginalised, lost or subverted. These suggestions are put forward in full recognition that the problems set out in this article are deeply intractable and that there are no simple or straightforward solutions.

The Nature of Policy

The record of failure in the implementation of development policies in general constitutes a telling history of the implications of certain approaches to 'planned development'. Lessons derived from comparative experience with land reform centre on the use of particular policy instruments in a state-centred development process, rather than on how to reorient our understanding of the possibilities and limitations of policy-induced change in general. It appears that very little learning about the limits of policy to bring about social change has occurred.

The experience of failure elsewhere prompts some basic questions about the nature and role of development policies. How do policies interact with existing structures and processes? In what ways, and to what extent, are social relations of production
and reproduction, domination and subordination, intractable? In what ways are these relations susceptible to change through the manipulation of the conditions in which these relations are acted out? Is policy inherently inadequate to bring about change towards equity?

Robertson (1984:86) observes that ‘planning is an attempt to reach forward and gain some kind of control over a future which must always remain inherently uncertain’. Since policy is concerned with ideals and the translation of ideals into reality, it is ‘both a normative and a technical process’, a symbolic and a political gesture (Robertson, 1984:86). Part of the political task of development policy is to engender collective optimism about the possibility of attaining development goals. In doing so, perhaps the most ‘conspicuous failure’ of development planning is that it has not ‘anticipated the probability of its own failure’ (Robertson, 1984:98).

In exploring the ‘room for manoeuvre’ in public policy, Clay and Schaffer (1984:2-12) emphasise the need to be conscious of the limitations of policy approaches and to resist the temptation to ‘block off’ or deny these possibilities. If policy-making is presented as a ‘merely scientific, technical and rational search for alternatives’, then these alternatives might prove to be ‘escape hatches into irresponsibility’ (Clay and Schaffer, 1984:192). As Lewis (in Robertson, 1984:98) has claimed, planning does not originate in arithmetic, but in ‘the light of a general philosophy of how development takes place’.

Development planning implicitly carries its own ideology which is intrinsic to the assumptions of policy: about the potential for state-driven social change, the nature of state-society relations, the causation of poverty and inequality, and their susceptibility to change. This involves an uneasy marriage between an understanding of the nature of the problem as embedded in social relations, and the assumption that changes can be induced through policy instruments, independently of ongoing social processes. As Williams (1996:7) has put it,

*the key issue may not be how do we, whoever ‘we’ are, plan to change things but what processes of change are under way ... (and) how might we expect these processes to be affected by specific policies?*

It is important, then, for a policy to situate itself within ongoing processes of change in the economy and society. Without this, a policy is premised on a static characterisation of ‘targets’ which are assumed to be relatively inert. There may be significant advantages to engaging in modest planning, in which the aim is to augment social processes such that the space for marginalised actors to engage beneficially with markets and institutions is expanded. This represents a shift from planning for arrival at an end-point, to planning for ongoing social change.

**Contradictions and Tensions Between Policy Objectives**

The relations between the objectives set out in the DLA policy are tenuous. First, equity and productivity become conflicting objectives in the absence of any rationale for how equity might lead to productivity. Second, there are logical contradictions among and between objectives and criteria which are likely to result in the privileging of some over others in practice. Third, the dualism between equity and productivity is particularly problematic in a demand-led policy, where the onus rests on potential beneficiaries to articulate and lobby for claims.
The Dichotomy of Equity and Productivity

Two sets of objectives run through the policy: equity and productivity. The equity or poverty focus 'is aimed at achieving a better quality of life for the most disadvantaged' (DLA, 1997:7) and supporting access to land for the 'landless poor, including women' (DLA, 1997:46). The productivity objective is to transform the agrarian structure by supporting the emergence of a viable new sector of black commercial farmers (DLA, 1997:13). Although these may not be mutually exclusive objectives, they may prove to be antagonistic in practice.

These objectives can be traced throughout the policy documents produced by the DLA. The rationale for equity is premised on arguments about social justice, while the rationale for productivity is grounded on assumptions about growth in the rural economy being brought about by the emergence of entrepreneurial black farmers in commercial agriculture; there appears to be no causal link drawn between the two. The dualism of objectives within the policy is mirrored by the divide among actors in land reform, between 'welfarists' and 'productionists'. These have been used as derogatory terms used to denote, on the one hand, an unrealistic, irrational and romantic pursuit of social justice, and on the other, a hard-nosed economistic denial of the necessity to address social justice.

This dichotomisation of the objectives of land reform is both misleading and destructive. It points to a flawed understanding of equity as inimical to productivity. Equity can promote productivity, not the other way round. This is, at its simplest, the rationale for land reform in the first place: to avoid landlessness, to secure tenure arrangements, and to ensure that those who work the land have a sufficient stake in its produce to invest in it, and to manage it sustainably. These conditions are those most likely, according to the DLA itself, to lay the foundation for a viable rural economy which meets the needs of rural people and can provide for equitable growth in the national economy.

Competing Criteria

The DLA policy states that 'redistribution projects will give priority to the following':

• to the marginalised and to women in need;

• to projects which can be implemented quickly and effectively (DLA, 1997:ix).

These criteria are not necessarily compatible with each other. 'The marginalised' and 'women in need' are precisely those who are least likely to know about available opportunities and mechanisms to lodge claims. They are least likely to have access to the information, literacy, education and knowledge necessary to produce a business plan, and to negotiate with lenders to borrow money.

This problem is acknowledged in the policy: 'unorganised communities are not able to express a realistic demand for land' (DLA, 1997:23). 'Quickly' and 'effectively', though, presupposes a certain level of organisation in the claimant group. 'The marginalised' and 'women in need' are not likely to predominate among those whose projects can be implemented quickly and effectively, or to provide leadership to claimant groups. By default, Murray (1995) argues, those who already have resources, particularly political and commercial contacts, 'will win out every time' (Murray, 1995).
These tensions between criteria, in the absence of clear guidelines, are left to be resolved by implementing agents, as well as by the differential power of potential beneficiaries and their uneven relations to land, credit and output markets. While the commitment to equity is stated and restated, the need for land reform to deliver speedy and tangible results is likely to override this commitment in practice.

Markets are Not Friendly to Disadvantage

What is the significance for equity of adopting a demand-led policy? Most importantly, the state can set criteria, but does not direct the distribution of benefits. Those who are structurally most marginal are therefore also least likely to be able to take advantage of the policy provisions. As anticipated by Pearce (in Wixley, 1995:1-2), market-based redistribution requires that beneficiaries have some money and this means that ‘as a rule women will be excluded’. This would exclude many poorer men as well (Njobe in Land Update, 1994:18).

Experience thus far has corroborated the view that a demand-led reform policy does not promote a poverty focus. In practice, vocal and well resourced groups predominate among those who take advantage of the opportunities to benefit from land reform (Redistribution Review Summit, 1997). Allocation procedures may be biased by the tendency for the most marginal to self-select themselves out of the pool of candidates (Blalock, 1991:11).

The result of the contradictions and tensions within policy objectives and beneficiary criteria, especially in a context where market relations are allowed to operate largely unchecked, is the creation of an implicit hierarchy. Equity becomes seen as a cost, rather than a contribution, to the overall programme, and productivity considerations, implying a preference for emergent entrepreneurs, are likely to gain priority. There is an undeniable urgency to get things done, to ‘deliver’, which is likely to allow the prioritisation of certain objectives over others.

By shifting focus from observed inequalities back to biased allocation procedures, we can make the ‘intellectual leap from product back to process’ (Blalock, 1991:8). It is necessary to account for the conflict between objectives and to discuss how difficult trade-offs of equity and productivity will be made in practice. Such a discussion would need to define what is meant by equity and productivity, and identify how each might or might not be efficient in relation to the resources they require. It should also include an outline of the procedures by which institutional and allocational decisions will be made, and the overriding principles which will guide them.

Dealing with Inequity

This section discusses the nature of the DLA’s commitment to gender equity. The way in which the problem is conceptualised is examined, and the likely stumbling blocks to its realisation, are evaluated. The ways in which policy may be tailored to promote gender equity are: policy instruments which can be expected to further this objective; consistency between the problem and the ways policy proposes to address it; the integration of gender as problematic rather than the adding on of women into an otherwise ungendered policy; and avoidance of relying on the household as the primary unit of allocation.
Vision Without Policy Instruments

The goals and vision of the DLA policy argue that land reform must address the need for a more equitable distribution of land ownership (DLA, 1997:7). This objective is elaborated in the guiding principles for land reform, which include a poverty focus which gives priority to ‘particularly marginalised groups in need of land, including women, evicted and existing labour tenants and landless farm workers’; and a gender equity focus aimed at bringing about ‘equitable opportunities for both women and men ... (by) giving priority to women applicants’ (DLA, 1997:12)

An analysis of the location of references to gender in the text of the policy is revealing. Gender issues are clustered in the first sections of policy, largely in the statements of the vision for and objectives of land policy. Gender is mentioned in relation to the redistribution and tenure reform programmes, and not in relation to restitution. The first four chapters of the policy mention either gender inequity in land as a problematic for land reform, or the need for the programme to promote greater equity by promoting women’s access to land. Subsections which deal specifically with gender are:

- Eliminating discrimination in women’s access to land (DLA, 1997:17);
- Discrimination against women (DLA, 1997:34);
- Addressing gender equality (DLA, 1997:50);
- Gender equity in tenure reform (DLA, 1997:67).

Gender is scarcely dealt with, if at all, in the sections of the policy which deal with strategies, policy instruments and institutions. Mention of gender is entirely absent from the chapters on Land Development and Institutional Arrangements. It is also not included in crucial sections such as the Land Restitution Programme, Economic Arguments for Land Reform, Access to Financial Services, and Land Reform Delivery.

Reference to gender in the DLA policy appears to be erratic and unsystematic. ‘Gender’ and ‘women’ are conflated and used as interchangeable terms. Men do not feature explicitly in the policy, but are everywhere in the genderless categories of farm workers, labour tenants and emergent farmers, which are contrasted with ‘women’. There is no evident rationale for why gender is mentioned in some sections of policy, and not in others.

Concepts and Mechanisms

The sections on gender raise many of the issues which policy needs to deal with in order to avoid the tendency for land reform benefits to accrue largely to men. While recognising this tendency, the policy does not actually say in any detail what will be done in order to ensure that it does not happen. The policy argues that ‘discriminatory customary and social practices are largely responsible for these inequities’ (DLA, 1997:17) but does not follow this observation through into a discussion of how the policy will address these.

The policy aims to address gender inequity in land by (1) removing legal restrictions on women’s rights to land, (2) using gender-sensitive participatory methods, and (3) allowing for joint title in the registration of land assets (DLA, 1997:ix). The analysis of the causes of gender inequity, and the ways in which the policy aims to address the problem, do not fit together. There are multiple and interlinked factors which may
inhibit ‘the landless poor and women’ from obtaining land through the programme. Treating constraints separately, as is done in the policy, may not deal with the ways in which these factors interact with and reinforce one another. Inequity is dealt with as an additive outcome of discreet obstacles which are unrelated to one another. It is assumed that gender inequity is directly amenable to change through the removal of legal barriers, and an incremental process of state support to women in gaining access to the general provisions of policy. The conclusion on how to eliminate discrimination in women’s access to land states:

Specific strategies and procedures must be devised to ensure that women are enabled to participate fully in the planning and implementation of land reform projects. These have yet to be adequately formulated (DLA, 1997:17).

If we read ‘women’ as ‘black people’, the inadequacy of such a statement in the framework document for the whole land reform programme becomes strikingly obvious. The statement suggests that gender equity in land is peripheral to the main thrust of land reform, and can be dealt with somewhere other than in the main policy.

The ‘... and Women’ Phenomenon

Many of the references to women and gender in the policy are contained in lists of groups which will be prioritised in land reform. For example, the programme will assist ‘labour tenants, farm workers, women, as well as emergent farmers’ (DLA, 1997:38). The listing of groups also tends to incorporate phrases such as ‘including women’, ‘particularly women’, or ‘and women’.

The inclusion of women is important, but what does it mean? Where women are added on as a group apart, the other beneficiary groups mentioned appear ungendered and innocuous, stripped of internal power relations. These categories remain, according to Walker (1994:353), ‘fundamentally though surreptitiously gendered – male – in the official South African lexicon’. ‘Women’ becomes a residual category, easily added onto a list.

The removal of women from categories based on kinds of activity obscures how women in families of labour tenants, farm workers, and emergent farmers will be able to benefit from land reform. The challenge is not simply to give women land, but to address the gendered nature of rural social relations of production. Attention must be paid to the ways in which women’s labour is tied into production, especially in agreements between male landowners and male labour tenants and farmworkers. The aim must be to create the space for both women and men farm workers to engage in and benefit from equity-share schemes, women and men labour tenants to access more land and better wages, and women and men emergent farmers to establish commercial enterprises, access credit and marketing facilities, and control the income they derive from sales.

Later in the policy, we find these lists recurring, but this time women are not there. For example, in the guidelines for leasing state land, implementors should ‘give preference to people with farming experience, including farm workers, labour tenants and small farmers’ (DLA, 1997:88). One must wonder: where have the women gone? Are they now implied in these categories? Were they ever really there?

The contrasts drawn between different kinds of beneficiaries are disconcerting. The full spectrum of clients who may seek to obtain land are expected to range ‘from the poorest, especially female-headed, single parent families to emergent black entrepre-
neurs’ (DLA, 1997:39). The intimation appears to be that female-headed single parent families are not expected to enter into entrepreneurial activity, while entrepreneurs will be not the poorest, not female and, perhaps, individuals rather than families. Similarly, ‘land is needed by farm workers, labour tenants, and women who need to grow food to feed the family’ (DLA, 1997:28). Again, women are an other-than group, and one which is expected to pursue family interests and subsistence cultivation as opposed to entrepreneurial commercial activity.

There is no rationale for why gender equity is crucial to the success of land reform as a whole. It is not established, for example, that most of the people who constitute the ‘landless poor’ in rural South Africa are women.

**What or Who is a Household?**

The Settlement/Land Acquisition Grant is the major policy instrument for the implementation of the redistribution programme. This grant is intended for households, defined as a unit comprising two adults who are married or habitually cohabit, or a single adult with proven financial dependants (DLA, 1997:71). When describing the practicalities of how the grant system will work the policy switches to describing the beneficiary as a single actor: procedures will ‘allow individuals to access the Settlement/Land Acquisition Grant in order to meet their land needs’ (DLA, 1997:45). The assumption underlying the treatment of a household as a person is that household heads will be claimants and beneficiaries and that benefits will ‘trickle down’ to other family members.

Households are not unproblematic categories, and are not spheres of resource pooling and joint control (Endnote 2). ‘Household’ access to land does not necessarily benefit women, yet the policy relies extensively on the household as a unit of allocation. As Hamman (1996:4) among others has noted, reliance on such problematic categories is a major weakness in the policy: ‘given power relationships at household level, women will not directly benefit from the grants’.

If households are to be the primary beneficiary units for land redistribution, then it must be acknowledged that this will privilege men’s access to resources. If policies are to avoid this outcome, then ways of enabling women to gain direct access to land and services will have to be found. If women gain independent rights to land, two further issues arise: (1) how formal rights to land can be translated into effective control of land and the income derived from it, and (2) how rights of succession and inheritance may signal the reversion of women’s land to exclusively male ownership and control (Endnote 3). If women obtain land, will it be for one generation only?

**Lack of Fit Between State Capacity and Resource Implications**

The limits of state capacity for land reform are recognised within the policy. The DLA has identified itself as being understaffed and underbudgeted for the purposes of the reform programme: ‘without a substantial increase in personnel for this important work, the land reform programme will not be able to meet existing demands or long-term targets’ (DLA, 1997:21). If these constraints are not substantially altered – and it is unlikely that they will be – parts of the vision will need to be sacrificed.

The result of an ambitious policy with high resource implications, which the policy certainly is, and insufficient state capacity to implement the programme to its full extent, is a gradually diminishing optimism about land reform. How will difficult
choices be made in the context of a squeeze on financial and institutional resources? The tendency to aggregate the effects of land reform may cause the prioritisation of overall effects at the expense of the distributional effects. This would justify an emphasis on ensuring the land is transferred, at the cost of establishing to whom the land is transferred and whether this is consistent with the equity principles of the policy.

In attempting to weigh up the value of prioritising certain aspects of policy for the limited resources for implementation, we may be faced with sets of costs and benefits which cannot be seen as equivalents. If social costs and benefits are seen as externalities, they are regarded as beyond the sphere of economic computation. Where the very purpose of the intervention is to generate social benefits – ‘supporting the most marginalised, including women’ – economic calculations of the merits of investing in equity may be inappropriate. How, then, can one assign value to the promotion of social equity? How can this be distinguished from the interests of ‘society at large’?

The problem of aggregation is central to asserting priority for equity considerations in policy. The ‘welfare of something as complex and amorphous of “society” cannot be reduced to simple, aggregated, quantitative indices’ (Robertson, 1984:124); in the planning and evaluation of development programmes it regularly is. It is arguable that ‘a plan is ultimately judged in terms of its measurable effects on the economy at large, an aggregate assessment in which the failure of particular projects ... may be excused’ (Robertson, 1984:104). In the case of land reform, this will hinge substantially on the amount of land which changes hands: a quantitative rather than a qualitative measure. If the state chooses to prioritise equity considerations in land reform, it needs redefine what is meant by success.

Aiming at welfare-in-general allows ‘a good deal of latitude for policy analysts and administrators ... to impress their own particular values on the shape and direction of policy’ (Bell in Robertson, 1984:124). But more important than the possibility of actors intentionally subverting policy is the possibility of the unintentional whittling away of equity objectives, due to the urgency to deliver and the squeeze on resources.

**Lessons for Equity in Land Reform**

Where new opportunities for land access have been opened up through policy, most beneficiaries tend to be men. The overall impact of land reform in other countries has frequently been to aggravate or, at best, perpetuate existing gender inequality in access to land title, usufruct rights, and control over income from land (Agarwal, 1994; Davison, 1988 and Mackenzie, 1990).

In the DLA policy, there appears to be an uneasy fit between the analysis of the nature and causes of gender inequity, and the mechanisms proposed to promote gender equity. Unequal gender relations are not dealt with in a consistent manner. The policy does not identify strategies, including policy instruments and implementation methods, which might be expected to realise this objective. While gender equity is presented as a guiding principle for land reform, the policy itself demonstrates that it is not guided by this principle.

There is a curious implication in the DLA policy that women’s increased access to and control of rural land, and greater equity in gender relations, will flow from the general provisions of land reform – in particular, the availability of the land acquisition grant.
and the training of implementing agents to be sensitive to gender issues. The policy contains a highly voluntaristic understanding of social change. It also negates the politics of gender relations, as a site of ‘struggles over meanings and resources’, over identity and livelihoods. It actively evades gender politics in the demand for land, and does not engage with the question of how policy measures could augment (or might weaken) existing processes of change and struggle.

Gender inequity in land appears to be a particularly intractable problem: it is the product not only of legal impediments, but also of social, cultural, political and economic structures and norms. Gender equity cannot be expected to be a positive spin-off from a redistribution programme.

**Beyond Explanation: Building Equity into Policy**

The challenge, I argue, is to use the window of opportunity created by major policy changes to create mechanisms which favour women’s access to land, minimise the power of those institutions which obstruct women’s access to land, and expand the space for women to challenge norms and to claim resources at the level of the household, the community and from the state. It is precisely at the point at which the danger of reinforcing inequity is greatest, that there also exists the possibility of improving equity.

It is necessary to build systematic checks into policy to mitigate against the tendency for the powerful to use their power to resist and subvert a policy which aims to bring about a changed distribution of power and wealth in society. This requires that the explicit priority to equity considerations be consistent and sustained throughout the policy. If this is not done, the net result is likely to be the sacrifice of equity in practice.

In order to minimise the fall-off between policy objectives and policy impact, a land reform policy committed to gender equity should (a) provide a rationale for why gender equity is necessary for the success of land reform; (b) integrate the commitment to gender equity into the policy instruments and implementation methods, including criteria for the selection and prioritisation of beneficiaries and information fields for monitoring and evaluation; (c) anticipate and account for the potential impact of all aspects of policy on gender relations; and (d) anticipate potential blockages in implementation and set up mechanisms to deal with these.

An ‘index for gendered land policy’, contained in Appendix A, is a checklist by which the extent to which gender has been incorporated into policy planning may be assessed. As a flexible means of assessing the nature of the problem, and the adequacy of strategies in promoting equity, an ‘index for gender analysis in the design, implementation and evaluation of land reform’ is contained in Appendix B. Together with the perspectives on the nature of policy, and the link between policy and social processes, these may assist in making gender equity a driving rationale for land reform, in such a way that it permeates the logic of the policy as a whole.

This article calls for attention to ‘the centrality of side-effects’ (Hirschmann in Robertson, 1984:125). At what point do we cease to see the distribution of the costs and benefits of land reform as a problem which requires some tinkering, and identify the problem of distribution as central: as the problem of policy?

Experience to date indicates that while presenting new opportunities for people to gain access to resources they were previously denied, the land reform programme in
South Africa may not be able to deliver on its promise of gender equity in land. The DLA policy provides necessary but by no means sufficient means for women to claim their land rights and to exert greater control over productive resources in rural areas.

**Ruth Hall**, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, UK.

**Endnotes**

1. See for example the discussions in Downs and Reyna's (1988) collection, especially the introduction and the chapter by John Bruce, on how land reform has created new landlessness through market transactions, eroded secondary tenure rights and prompted the growth of new elites – the 'modern big men'.

2. See the discussions by Guyer (1981), Roberts (1991) and Whitehead (1984) on the problems with viewing the household as a unitary entity, and as a unit of coterminous production, consumption, cohabitation and joint control. These authors argue that intrahousehold relations are more accurately described as a set of negotiated contracts between members with unequal power and control of resources.

3. I owe this insight to Rosalie Kingwill, via Gavin Williams.

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APPENDIX A: An index for gendered land policy

Conceptualisation:
- gender is mentioned
- gender inequity is problematised
- gender equity is conceptualised
- gender is linked to other markers of differentiation
- there is a rationale for the objective of gender equity in land tenure

Operationalisation
- the situation analysis is explicitly gendered
- the commitment to gender equity is operationalised
- policy instruments incorporate criteria which are explicitly gendered
- the implementation strategy is explicitly gendered

Implementation
- implementing agents are advocates of gender equity
- information dissemination is targeted to counteract gender bias
- there are incentives to vest community land equitably in women and men
- gender cross-cuts monitoring and evaluation information fields
- gender equitable outcomes are part of the definition of good practice
- gender conflict is anticipated
- mechanisms to deal with gender conflict are part of a conflict resolution strategy

APPENDIX B: An index for gender analysis in the design, implementation and evaluation of land reform (Rao et al., 1991).

Activity profile: what do women and men do? a gender-based division of labour:
- production of goods and services
- reproduction and maintenance of human resources

Access and control profile: what resources do women and men have command over?
- type of resources – for what purposes? where do these conflict?
- type of tenure – what level of security? contingent on what factors?

Analysis of factors influencing activities, access and control:
- economic conditions and the distribution of deprivation
- institutional structures
- demographic factors
- sociocultural factors
- community norms
- legal parameters
- training and education
Sudan: International Responses to War in the Nuba Mountains

Mark Bradbury

More than a decade of war in the Nuba mountains between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) is threatening the way of life and very existence of the Nuba people. Responsibility for the tragedy in the Nuba mountains lies squarely in the hands of successive Sudanese governments who are accused of human rights atrocities, creating famine conditions, war crimes and even genocide. The silence that surrounds the plight of the Nuba, however, also attests to the failure of the international community to secure protection and assistance for war-affected populations in Sudan's civil war.

Introduction

Examining the nature of the war in the Nuba mountains, Sudanese state policy and the international aid regime in Sudan, the article argues that this is more than a case of negligence. The Nuba, it argues, are paying the price for the international community sustaining its wider humanitarian policy and conflict management strategy in Sudan. This raises fundamental concerns about the nature of the current international engagement in Sudan.

First, the article argues that the failure of the international community to uphold the provisions of international humanitarian law and to defend the entitlements of war-affected peoples, reflects the selective application of humanitarian principles, and their subordination to international political concerns. Second, it challenges assumptions made about the function of aid in conflict management, and in addressing the causes of armed conflict. The government of Sudan’s military campaign in the Nuba mountains is intricately linked to a virulent and exploitative development process – a process that the international community and the United Nations not only fail to address through humanitarian programmes such as Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), but one in which they are also complicit by supporting government development plans. Rather than enhancing prospects for peace, international developmental interventions in the Nuba mountains are effectively supporting government disaster – producing policies that are threatening the very survival of the Nuba peoples.

The Nuba

Nuba is the common collective name given to more than fifty tribal groups who live in and around the range of massifs known as the Nuba mountains in South Kordofan, central Sudan. Numbering over one million people, some Nuba tribes have an
ancestry that has been traced to the eighth century BC Kingdom of Kush, making them amongst the oldest indigenous peoples of Sudan.

Inhabiting the so-called ‘transitional zone’ between the Arab north and African south, the Nuba have always had an ambivalent relationship with the Sudanese state. Historically subject to slaving, the word ‘Nuba’, denoting ‘black people’ to Arabs and Egyptians, has derogatory and racist overtones, and the Nuba have long suffered discrimination in economic, political, and civil rights. This ambivalent relation with the state was reinforced during the colonial administration when the Nuba mountains was for many years a ‘closed district’. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Nuba mountains were again ‘closed’ to the outside world by the National Islamic Front (NIF) government of Sudan as they pursued their war against the southern insurgents.

War and Famine

War came to the Nuba mountains in July 1985 following a raid by an SPLA unit into South Kordofan, and two years after the resumption of civil war in southern Sudan. Over the subsequent years, tens of thousands of Nuba have been killed, and thousands more forcibly displaced from their homes and villages. Civilians have suffered human rights violations by both parties to the war. However, there is incontrovertible evidence that since 1989, when the current regime took power, the government has been waging a campaign of terror and persecution in the Nuba mountains. Government military strategy has followed a pattern familiar to that employed against southern political movements and populations: the arming of surrogate tribal militia (murahaliini), buying off political and religious leaders, the systematic abuse of civilian populations – including rape, the military conscription of children, mass arrests and selective killing of Nuba intellectuals – and attacking the social structure of Nuba society through the forced separation of families, the relocation of populations to government protected ‘peace villages’, and an aggressive policy of Islamicisation which includes the prohibition of cultural expressions of identity. The systematic nature of the persecution against Nuba peoples since 1989 has led some to describe the campaign as ‘genocide by attrition’ (African Rights, July 1995).

Significantly, many of the policies pursued by the NIF government were initiated by the last civilian government of Sadiq el Mahdi. These include the arming of the murahaliini – later legalised as Popular Defence Forces (PDF) by the NIF – and ‘peace camps’ first conceived of by the el Mahdi government as a counter insurgency strategy. Also significant is the fact that for years the war in the mountains went largely unnoticed by the internationally community, and was ignored in the April 1989 ceasefire in the civil war which led to the creation of the relief operation OLS. In fact, 1989 saw an intensification of the war in the Nuba mountains. This followed the arrival there in January of the New Kush SPLA Division which took control of large areas and begin to establish a civil administration, and the seizure of power by the NIF in Khartoum in June.

By 1991 the destruction of villages, disruption of trade and displacement had led to the onset of famine. Sudan’s experience of the 1984-5 drought-famine in Kordofan and Darfur, and analyses of the war-famine of 1987-89 in Bahr el Ghazal (Keen, 1994), lends evidence to the assertion that the famine was politically induced (African Rights, 1995). In 1989, the then regional governor of South Kordofan, a backer of the NIF coup, had closed international NGO operations in South Kordofan. Humanitar-
Sudan: International Responses to War in the Nuba Mountains

The government's military campaign reached a peak with the declaration of a *jihad* in the Nuba mountains in January 1992 by the governor of Kordofan State and the head of the PDF. The *jihad* had support at the highest levels of government, with President General el Bashir proclaiming the *Imam al Jihad* (African Rights, 1995:110). In the name of holy war a major military offensive was launched against SPLA positions in the mountains with a force of over 40,000 *mujahadiin* and regular army troops backed by military aircraft. The military assault was combined with the mass relocation of Nuba from South Kordofan. The relocations were described by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Sudan as 'enforced displacement' (Secretary General, 1993:24). Others described them as 'ethnic cleansing' (Africa Watch, 1992; Amnesty, 19 February 1993; Survival International, 1993).

Mass relocations proved expensive and politically embarrassing within Sudan and internationally, attracting protests from international human rights organisations. Failing to defeat the SPLA militarily, the government redirected its policy towards the transfer of populations to 'peace villages' under the auspices of the Peace and Rehabilitation Administration of South Kordofan. Responsibility for relief assistance was assigned to Islamic relief agencies, and parastatal bodies such as the National Development Foundation and the Nuba mountains Islamic Development and Guidance Authority. By September 1992, the government of South Kordofan announced that it had formed 91 'peace villages' with over 160,000 people (Secretary General, 1993:19), with plans to resettle a further 500,000. Presented by the government as reception centres for 'returnees' from rebel areas, some witnesses have described the 'peace villages' as little more than 'concentration camps' (Karim et al., 1996); an observation corroborated by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights. Peace villages or peace camps serve three functions: as a counter-insurgency strategy; to create a captive labour pool for mechanised farming schemes; and a captive population for Islamic re-education and military conscription.

Although the *jihad* was reaffirmed in a publicly declared *fatwa* in 1993 (African Rights, 1995), the failure to pacify the region militarily compelled the government to modify its approach. Since 1993 its strategy has comprised three elements: the 'popular mobilisation' (*nafir el sha'abi*) of Nuba forces to fight the SPLA; a political programme to achieve 'peace from within' (*salaam min al dakhat*) by enticing Nuba leadership to join the government; and a low intensity military campaign known as 'combing' (*tamshit*) that continues the destruction of villages and the relocation of populations to 'peace camps'.

The policy of 'peace from within' has achieved some success for the government. In April 1996, the Southern Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM) and the Bahr el Ghazal faction of the SPLA signed a Peace Agreement with the government. A Nuba faction joined in July. However, while peace was being negotiated the government...
also launched offensives against SPLA forces in the transitional zone, including the Nuba mountains. By 1997 the government had gained the upper hand militarily. The government continues to maintain a tight embargo on humanitarian assistance to SPLA/M held areas of the Nuba mountains. However, following the adoption of federal system of government for Sudan in 1994, the government of South Kordofan State has sought to facilitate international NGOs and United Nations agencies to support development and welfare programmes in government held areas once again.

The War Behind the War

Ostensibly a campaign against southern insurgents, the government’s war in the Nuba mountains involves the continuation, by violent means, of a virulent and exploitative development process. Beside the Nuba, South Kordofan is the home for Sudanese Arab cattle herding tribes (Baggard), Arab traders (jellaba) and Fellata farming communities. The region’s fertile lands have long been a focus for tensions between these competing resource users. Historically managed through economic exchange and inter-marriage, in the past three decades local resource disputes have been exacerbated by drought, the commercialisation of Sudan’s agrarian economy and expansion of mechanised farming, and the discovery of commercial oil deposits in the southern reaches of South Kordofan. Inter-tribal tensions have been manipulated by successive civilian and military governments in a struggle to control and exploit South Kordofan’s agrarian and mineral assets.

One of the most fertile rainfed areas in northern Sudan, South Kordofan, since the late 1960s, has been a focus for the development of mechanised agriculture in Sudan’s drive towards export-oriented production. From the 1960s until the mid-1980s, the government owned Mechanised Farming Corporation (MFC) was at the vanguard of agrarian policy in South Kordofan receiving substantial finance from the World Bank, the European Union and other institutions (Prendergast, 1995:120). Dismantling the rural subsistence economy of South Kordofan has been a prerequisite for the expansion of capital-intensive mechanised farming. This has involved altering the bio-diversity of indigenous cultivation by introducing hybrid (and less nutritious) varieties of grain, displacing integrated sustainable farming practices with mono-cropping practices, and replacing communal labour (known as nafir) with wage labour. Critical to this process has been a change in land tenure. Amendments to the 1925 Land Registration Act in 1961 and 1990 removed all customary title to land, thus enabling the mass expropriation of land from Nuba farmers, and peasant farmers elsewhere in the Sudan (African Rights, 1995:51).

In the immediate wake of the 1984/85 drought, the activities of the MFC in South Kordofan were curtailed amid concerns about the environmental impact of mechanised farming in Sudan’s rainfed areas. Powerful stakeholders, however, have ensured the expansion of privately owned mechanised schemes. These include the jellaba and the military-controlled commercial enterprises established by President Numeiri in the early 1980s (Keen, 1992:17; de Waal, 1996:9). Other groups such as the Fellata from eastern Sudan are reported to be interested in moving into the area (Nafir, 1996). In the Nuba mountains the development of mechanised farming and government military strategy converge. While justified on the basis of supporting progress to national ‘self-reliance’, the expropriation of Nuba land for mechanised farming is intricately tied to the commercial interests of Sudan’s military and political elite. As one Sudanese aid worker commented:
The situation in the Nuba mountains is worse than in the South because of the land issue. The North wants the Nuba's land.

The decimation of the traditional rural economy of the region has been complemented by a heavy investment in infrastructure. In the past decade the town of Dilling, for example, at the northern end of the Nuba mountains, has acquired a TV station, an airport, a new football stadium and a 'university'. Little more than six kilometres away in the Niymang hills, villages have been destroyed and populations uprooted in fighting (Africa Watch, 1992). Economic development processes continue in the midst of war.

The Other Side of 'Ethnic Cleansing'

The availability of cheap migrant labour has always been critical to the commercial transformation of Sudan's agrarian economy (Duffield, 1990). The precariousness of subsistence farming due to the commercialisation of agricultural production has historically resulted in the out-migration of people from the Nuba mountains. Reinvestment by migrants was minimal, commonly through help organisations such as 'youth clubs' in support of community projects in their villages. In 1992, out-migration of Nuba from South Kordofan was replaced by mass relocations, when the Sudanese government launched its jihad in the mountains.

While this violence cannot simply be interpreted as a calculated policy of labour formation, the displacement of populations in Sudan is not just a by-product of war. It has been a strategy employed by the warring parties to control territory, resources and peoples (Keen, 1994). In Kordofan, the end product, is a destitute and asset less population whose labour can be drawn upon for the commercial exploitation of the region.

Oil deposits in Hijlij in South Kordofan further fuel government commercial and security interests in the Nuba mountains. Control of the mountains and the people is important to protect oil piped from South Kordofan to a refinery in El Obied.

A Human Rights and Humanitarian Crisis

The scale of the humanitarian crisis in the Nuba mountains is difficult to ascertain, given the closure of the area and lack of international witnesses. Exact numbers of war-displaced and 'relocated' Nuba from the mountains are unknown. In 1992 the official government figure for war-displaced from the mountains was 250,000 (Sudan Update, 1992). Other estimates put the total number as high as 450,000. Between June and August 1992 alone it was reported that 40,000 people were moved from Kadugli to North Kordofan, while camps in Dilling were reportedly holding some 33,000 people (African Rights, 1995).

Similarly, information on the scale of humanitarian distress is scant. Statements that 'tens of thousands' died in the 1990-1993 (Ibid.) famine are difficult to verify. In July 1992, however, mortality rates in displaced camps in Umm Ruwaba were reported to be as high as 5 to 10 day per day in a population of 5,500. In October 1992 USAID/OFDA estimated malnutrition rates among children under five to be 60-80% in El Obied and Bara (Ibid.).

What is indisputable is that from early 1985 to the present, Nuba in South Kordofan have been subjected to systematic human rights abuses, as consistent human rights
reporting attests. While the SPLA have not been spared criticism, cumulative evidence points to successive Sudanese governments as the primary offenders. At best, the government has clearly failed to create the 'enabling environment' to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid, as laid down in the international conventions to which it is a signatory. At worst it is held responsible for creating famine conditions, for war crimes and genocide.

Like other war-affected populations, the Nuba are entitled under international law to protection from famine, displacement, killings, abduction and rape, the threat of land mines, and asset depletion. Despite public exposure of the human rights and humanitarian crisis in the Nuba mountains, the international community has failed to secure access to defend the rights and entitlements of Nuba in non-government areas of the mountains. Provisions within the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols allow for the international community to implement sanctions against parties responsible for war crimes. The international community, while admonishing the Sudanese government for its human rights record, has not taken legal action against those accused of 'war crimes' against the Nuba peoples. The consequences of such inaction are potentially grave, as the following comment on international humanitarian law suggests:

'These articles lay before the conscience of the world the list of especially grave violations of the Conventions and the Protocol which, were they to remain unpunished, would signify the degradation of human values and the regression of the entire concept of humanity.'

Reasons for the apparent dereliction of international responsibility in the Nuba mountains lies at two levels. The first relates to the political nature of the humanitarian aid regime in Sudan. The second, lies in the failure of the international community to grasp the nature of the war in the Nuba mountains.

**Operation Lifeline Sudan**

Since 1989, international humanitarian aid policy in Sudan has revolved around the work of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), the United Nations humanitarian programme charged with assisting and protecting war-affected populations in Sudan's civil war. Launched in response to war-induced famine and displacement in southern Sudan, OLS established an important precedent in international humanitarian policy and conflict management. Under OLS the United Nations obtained the agreement of Sudan's warring parties to provide humanitarian assistance to war-affected populations on all sides of the war. Over time this has resulted in a conditional transference of sovereignty to the United Nations in rebel controlled areas of the south.

In the immediate post-cold war years, a period which saw the downgrading of the principle of absolute sovereignty, the precedent set by OLS informed humanitarian interventions in Angola, Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda. Although these later interventions incorporated military protection for humanitarian operations, in Sudan the military option was only briefly considered. Instead, the United Nations has sought to condition the actions of the warring parties through diplomacy and sanctions, and the development and application of a set of agreed 'humanitarian principles'.

The OLS agreements (only formally signed by the warring parties in 1994) were founded on a set of principles for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. These
included neutrality, transparency and accountability, and the provision of assistance on the basis of need. In the south, UNICEF, as lead agency, has sought to reinforce this humanitarian framework through a set of Ground Rules and the dissemination of humanitarian principles (Levine, 1997). Adapting the Geneva Conventions and Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Ground Rules seek to sustain the importance of humanitarian principles in a war situation by stressing the right of unconditional humanitarian assistance. Signed by the two largest southern movements (SPLM and SSIM) in 1995, the Ground Rules are one of the few examples of international agreements made with non-state entities.

The Ground Rules exist only in the south. In government-controlled areas of northern and southern Sudan normal United Nations government relations pertain. Here the government regulates the provision of humanitarian aid through a tight legal and contractual environment. It is only since the 1996 Review of OLS that the United Nations has sought to establish some conditions on humanitarian assistance in government-held areas, through a minimum set of operational standards (MINOPS). However, the principle of sovereignty retains primacy over humanitarian principles.

Under the original OLS agreements, the Nuba mountains were designated part of the ‘transitional zone’, to be served from the northern sector of OLS. On several occasions the United Nations has sought agreement from the government on humanitarian access to the Nuba mountains. In September 1992, at the height of relocations in South Kordofan, and at a time when OLS was in crisis, the Director of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs raised the issue. The outcome was a strengthening of OLS agreements, but no access to the Nuba mountains. In 1993 and 1995 the United Nations Special Envoy to Sudan again sought agreement from the government to extend OLS to the Nuba mountains (Traxler, 1996). The 1996 Review of OLS recommended that the Nuba mountains be included within the remit of OLS. The government has remained intransigent. Over time, ambiguity in the OLS agreements have enabled the government to redefine war-affected populations as war-affected areas (Karim, et al. 1996:26-28). Claiming the Nuba mountains to be under their control, the government deems the area to be outside the war zone and thus outside the remit of the southern sector of OLS. The SPLA/M have also refused to countenance OLS access overland from the north. Fearing to jeopardise the fragile autonomy of its southern operations the United Nations has backed down. No humanitarian assistance has been provided through OLS agencies to SPLA/M areas of the mountains. In other words, the Nuba (and other war-affected populations in northern Sudan) are paying the price for the primacy of sovereignty, and the maintenance of the international community’s wider humanitarian policy in Sudan.

**A Convergence of Objectives**

The failure of the international community to secure access to the Nuba mountains highlights the limitations of humanitarian policy in Sudan. It reflects also a selective application of humanitarian principles. For example, the government embargo on humanitarian assistance to SPLA/M held areas of the mountains has not prevented the United Nations in northern Sudan from undertaking OLS needs assessments or expanding its development programmes in government-held areas of South Kordofan; thus discrediting the OLS principle of neutrality. Humanitarian policy is further undermined, however, by the role increasingly assigned to the international aid system in conflict management. The linking of peace and development in northern
Sudan has lead to an uncomfortable convergence in the policy objectives of international aid agencies and the Sudan government.

Having failed to pacify the Nuba militarily, the Sudanese government under the rubric of 'Peace from Within' (salaam min al dakhat) is actively encouraging displaced Nuba to return to South Kordofan. Although opportunities for displaced families to resettle in their original homes rather than 'peace villages' are limited. This new policy coincides with the adoption in 1994 of a new federal system of government. The new South Kordofan State government has lifted the earlier blockade and is facilitating international United Nations agencies and NGOs to become operational in areas under government control. (The International Committee of the Red Cross is also not operational in the Nuba Mountains. Since 1995 some international NGOs have been providing covert relief programmes in SPLA/M-held areas of the Mountains, although they do so strictly outside the framework of OLS). In seeking to engage international agencies in social welfare programmes to support its particular social and economic development policies in the Nuba mountains, the government has largely found agencies ready and compliant.

By early 1996 UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were operational in South Kordofan. Two international NGOs were also operational in the area with others preparing to take the 'opportunities' offered by the relaxation of government restrictions and the availability of finance to commence work there.

UNICEF have explained their presence in the South Kordofan as a strategy to obtain access *de facto*, since they had not be able to secure it *de jure* through OLS. The expansion in aid programming, however, is taking place on an ad hoc basis, and outside the framework of principles established by OLS. The activities of UNDP and UNICEF are formally part of their country development programmes rather than the OLS humanitarian programme, although evidence suggests that some resources raised for OLS are being utilised to part fund them (Karim et al., 1996). International NGOs are also individually negotiating agreements with the central and state governments for the provision of aid. Without a common policy framework on assistance and protection, and in the absence of principles on which to ground their work, there is a danger of United Nations and NGOs being co-opted to support the disaster producing policies of the government, the consequences of which they are supposed to ameliorate.

A common position among international NGOs and United Nations is that their presence will limit further abuses against the Nuba. This view is challenged by Nuba in SPLA/M held areas. They allege, for example, that WFP food for 'peace camps' is drawing civilians to government-held areas, thus supporting government military and economic strategy in the mountains. The dilemmas this poses aid agencies is well articulated by one NGO aid worker:

> We have to question whether our work is pulling people from the other side. It bothers me that we are only working on the government side. I know what we are doing is supporting a government programme, building up peace villages and supporting the Popular Defence Forces. There has to be a balance on the other side. We are doing good work, but there are bigger political issues that need addressing (cited in Karim et al., 1996:216).

The assertion that the presence of international agencies in the Nuba mountains will limit further government abuses has not been demonstrated elsewhere. Their
presence in Khartoum over a number of years has done little to mitigate the insecurity and vulnerability of Khartoum’s displaced populations (Karim et al., 1996). Given what is known about government control and regulation of aid, it is naive to believe that things will be any different in the Nuba mountains. Government control in South Kordofan is as strong as anywhere. External assistance is formally required to pass through the hands of the State Peace and Resettlement Administration and government sponsored Islamic NGOs. The hunger, ill-health and malnutrition faced by the Nuba in ‘peace villages’ is a direct result of policies established at the highest levels of government. The causes of vulnerability and humanitarian stress are political. The assertion, therefore, that aid agencies can limit further abuses would only be justified if United Nations agencies and international NGOs demonstrated that they were addressing these issues in their work. There is little evidence of this.

UNICEF, for example, has been supporting some 200 ‘Child Friendly Village’ schemes in Kordofan since 1995 (UNICEF, 1995). At a village level these are integrated projects aimed to ‘empower’ and ‘mobilise’ community participation in the provision of basic services. Nationally, the Child Friendly Village Initiative (CFVI) is implemented in partnership with communities, councils and state governments (UNICEF, 1995). The CFVI is illustrative of the politically naïve nature of many international development programmes in Sudan. That UNICEF can contemplate the possibility of fostering a village that is ‘child friendly’ in a war zone, where families are forcibly separated, girls raped and boys conscripted into paramilitary forces, at best indicates a certain lack of reality in UNICEF programming. That the schemes are planned with state governments, however, suggests there is cooperation on the government’s development goals.

### Linking Peace and Development

The implications of this convergence in the objectives of international aid agencies and the Sudanese government are perhaps most stark in UNDP’s proposal for an Area Rehabilitation Scheme (ARS) near Kadugli, South Kordofan’s largest town (UNDP, 1996). This is one of three such rehabilitation projects proposed by UNDP for war affected areas of Sudan, the others being in the southern towns of Juba and Wau. ARS are adaptations of Area Development Schemes (ADS) supported by UNDP outside Sudan’s war zones. As ‘grassroots’ poverty alleviation programmes, integrating food security, environmental protection, capacity building and community empowerment interventions (UNICEF, 1996), the ADS are considered model UNDP projects, and ‘among the best in the world’.

The focus of the ARS in war zones is agricultural development and food security, the immediate objective being to ‘reduce dependence on emergency assistance in areas affected by civil strife’ (UNDP, 1996). Through the ARS UNDP also explicitly aim to establish the basis for a *developmental solution to Sudan’s war, combining poverty alleviation and conflict resolution*. Indeed an direct link is made by UNDP between the ARS and the process of proximity meetings between Sudan’s factions supported by UNDP and the UNESCO Culture for Peace Programme (UNDP 1996). As such the ARS are illustrative of a trend in aid policy that seeks to link peace and development. UNDP’s notion of ‘human security’ which identifies poverty as a ‘root cause’ of conflict provides the conceptual basis for this (UNDP, 1994). By alleviating poverty through development, it is argued, peace can be rebuilt. As a model initiative for linking peace and development, however, the ARS in Kadugli is fundamentally flawed, both on a conceptual and a practical level.
In line with current developmental discourse and practice, the Kadugli project is couched in the language of sustainability and self-reliance (UNDP, 1996). It is debatable, however, to what extent, and on whose terms, ‘sustainable development’ or ‘self-reliance’ is feasible when, in the words of one aid worker:

*The population in South Kordofan is primarily women and children and old people. The modern structure of government is breaking down, as are the traditional structures (cited in Karim et al., 1996:217).*

The developmentalist rhetoric of the project document disguises the political nature of development in Sudan. In Sudan generally, and South Kordofan in particular, ‘development’ has largely been associated to the expansion of mechanised agriculture, and social welfare and infrastructural programmes geared to support this. The project document states that the project will learn from past aid programmes (UNDP, 1996). And yet with the development of mechanised agriculture as a core component, the project ignores the entire history of mechanised agriculture in South Kordofan and its role in the war. As such, the project indicates that UNDP is ready to accommodate itself with plans to expand government development schemes in the war zone. In fact, little reference is made to the war in the project document. The main security concerns are:

*disputes between transhumant and sedentary communities over damage to crops, use of water, access to range and migratory routes (Ibid:10)*

Insecurity is simply accounted for by ‘tribal tensions’. That these ‘tribal’ tensions are a consequence of the expansion of mechanised farming and the government’s arming of tribal militia is conveniently ignored. Furthermore, the ARS offers support for the resettlement of displaced in ‘peace villages’. The project document states that the activities of the Peace Administration and Resettlement Administration of South Kordofan are ‘similar to those envisaged for this project’. Among others, these include receiving ‘returnees’, to:

*resettle them in peace villages and then promote agricultural development to strengthen their attachment to land (Ibid:10, emphasis added).*

Given that the Nuba have been dispossessed of their land, this statement is, at best, illustrative of a *prima facie* case of ‘functional ignorance’ (Duffield, 1996:17), whereby UNDP is incapable of understanding the context in which it is operating. At worst, of a cynical disregard for the context.

The fundamental flaw with the UNDP ARS lies in an analysis that identifies poverty as the cause of conflict in the Nuba mountains. On the contrary, South Kordofan has significant agrarian and mineral wealth. It is access to and the control of these assets that is key to the conflict. Development and poverty alleviation programmes that ignore issues of unequal land tenure, lack of political entitlements and lack legal protection among the Nuba, are inherently unsustainable. Furthermore, as the peace theorist Galtung (1990) might argue, such structural inequity or ‘structural violence’, cannot provide the basis for peace. In this way the ‘victims’ of internationally financed parastatal development and the victims of war would become the victims of an unjust peace.
Accommodating Violence

After a decade of war the Nuba remain marginalised in Sudan's politics. The 1997 Peace Agreement between the government and southern movements makes no reference to the Nuba mountains (African Rights, 1997); self-determination for the Nuba and other minority groups in the north is non-negotiable. Likewise, the December 1994 Chukudum Agreement between the SPLA and the Umma Party, and the 1995 Asmara Declaration and formation of the National Democratic Alliance have left the future status of the Nuba ambiguous in any war settlement.

The war in the Nuba mountains has entailed one of the most systematic and sustained campaigns of human rights abuse in Sudan, by a regime with a notorious human rights record. The failure of diplomacy and negotiation to secure humanitarian access to non-government held areas of the mountains or to mitigate human rights abuses, attests to the enduring inadequacy of international humanitarian policy in Sudan as exercised through OLS. The United Nations has been reluctant to press the issue for the sake of preserving its own tenuous autonomy and humanitarian access elsewhere in the south. The professed impartiality of OLS, however, is undermined by the fact that United Nations is currently operational only in government-held areas of the mountains. Herein lies the dangerous paradox at the heart of international engagement in Sudan. It is an engagement that is at once supporting the disaster producing policies of the government, while at the same time purportedly providing succour to the victims of those policies. In pursuit of misconceived developmental solutions to Sudan's civil war, the international community through the United Nations is prepared to accommodate itself to the violence and human rights abuses perpetrated against the Nuba peoples of Sudan.

Mark Bradbury, London.

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Briefings

Mohamed A Babu died on 5 August 1996. The following lecture was given as part of a series in memory of Babu - writer, revolutionary and statesman - organised by the Babu Memorial Committee, University of London on 22 September 1997. We still miss him.

The First Babu Memorial Lecture
Samir Amin

Thank you dear friends, sisters and brothers. It is with much emotion that I respond to the honour of being invited to speak at this first Babu Memorial Lecture. For me, speaking about Babu is speaking, not only of a comrade and an elder but of a personal friend whom I knew right from the post-war period the whole of our generation in Africa. Babu was someone with whom I shared most political views for something like 40 years. For me, Babu's main characteristic was that he was always critical to systems and his criticisms were always from the left. He never shifted to the right and he was always critical even of regimes which he considered, and I think rightly, represented a step ahead in the long liberation struggle.

I think the political life of Babu can be divided into three periods: before 1955, before Bandung - the glorious project for the liberation of Africa and Asia crystallised as the Non-Aligned Movement; then the Bandung years; then the period of recolonisation of Africa. It was in London, in 1952, that we first met. Babu was then, like me, a young student, was elder to me by a few years which at that point of time seemed a considerable difference; later, of course the difference lost most of its meaning.

We were both very active among African students in Britain and France trying to start a unified movement, or unifying various movements, of students from various African and Asian countries. Babu was connected to the East African anti-colonialist committee, but there was also WASU (West African Student's Union) which was very active, particularly the Ghanaians. They were thinking of establishing a magazine, and it was Babu and some others, in 1954, as far as I remember, who started the first African magazine in London. I was involved on the other side of the channel with a union called Etudiants Anticolonialistes (Anticolonial Student's Union) which brought together students from Asia (Vietnam), the Middle East, and Africa. We also had a newspaper, and in working together we discovered that we had the same views. These views could be summed up in the questions - who is going to lead the struggle for national liberation and to do what? Is it purely and simply national liberation to get independence and be part of the capitalist system?

National liberation cannot have any meaning if it is not led by a communist party, by Marxism and socialist forces associated with it. We were among the first readers of Mao Tse Tung's New Democratic Revolution which was published in French and English in 1950 or 1952. There were clearly two lines: the Indian line presented by Nehru and the Congress Party (which was similar to and came
from the same tradition as the Egyptian position) – national liberation or the struggle for independence with a view to participating on a more equal footing in the same global capitalist system; and the Chinese line which was followed by the Vietnamese and other countries of South East Asia. There was of course a sharp difference between the two lines. Most of the organisations we belonged to – particularly the Africans and the people from the Middle East – were of the Nehru line. We were a minority but we had a strong impact and Babu played a major role. Our position was that national liberation cannot be separated from socialism because no other social forces than those with an objective interest in going beyond capitalism into socialism could achieve national liberation. Perhaps we were exaggerating (as history has proved) because the role of the bourgeoisie had not completely ended, but I think looking back after 40 years that we were not fundamentally wrong. I had the opportunity of discussing this with Babu comparatively recently and we agreed that view was not wrong, even if history was a little different.

In the second period – the Bandung period, called after the conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, at which Nehru, Sukarno, Nasser and Chou en-Lai met and established an enormous societal project for the liberation of Asia and Africa. The African liberation project, particularly the tendency represented by Kwame Nkrumah, was also a major force in that conference, along with many other organisations and forces. I’ll come to Zanzibar in a moment.

The point was: national liberation under the leadership of the Communist Party had achieved its goals in China in 1949, was achieving its goals with a compromise (division of the country) in Vietnam in 1954, but elsewhere the communist guerrillas had been defeated – in Thailand, earlier in Indonesia, and in Malaysia. The bourgeois of India, Egypt and a number of other countries of Asia and the Middle East had achieved national independence but curiously instead of being supported by the imperialist system had found themselves in conflict with it on major issues such as the cold war or with respect to internal problems related to multinational companies’ property – mining, trade etc. The bourgeoisie, contrary to what we had thought before, was able to achieve something, at least with respect to national liberation, and could be anti-imperialist. Babu and I (and many others like ourselves) thought that the Bandung line should be supported and that we should reflect on our previous analysis, not that it was wrong but that perhaps the objective conditions had changed and that there was a bourgeois national societal project, a nationalist project, with shades of course, which could be qualified differently from one country to another. There was gradually a radical line which developed which Babu and I came to qualify later as nationalist populist (populist: not socialist). It represents not only the bourgeoisie but operates in alliance or with the support of popular classes. But where does it lead? Where can it lead?

At that point (the 1960s) there came the independence of a number of African countries south of the Sahara and the radicalisation of the struggle in Algeria in 1954 with the war which was to end in 1962. As a result, independent Africa was divided into two camps – the Monrovia group which appeared to us to follow a neo-colonial line, and the Casablanca group which was very small (neither Tanganyika nor Zanzibar belonged to it at that point). The contradictions between the two groups were suddenly reduced at the end of the war in Congo and they merged into the Organisation of African Unity in 1963. Since that moment there have been two approaches on the left to the question of national populism: those who believed that not only should it be supported but that it would lead to national liberation and even to social
transformation, and those who were critical. The first group supported the idea that the contradictions between national liberation and imperialism can lead to socialism. There was a whole ideology and political analysis which was produced as a non-capitalist road to socialism. Again there was a minority among the left – and not a small one – in Africa, in the Middle East, and in Asia which did not look at that nationalist populist experience in that way but regarded it as so full of contradictions and historical limitations that it would not be able to go very far; that the contradictions would radicalise the popular classes and would lead to new revolutions among African and Asian people; or if the power system is able to maintain itself and strengthen its position, it is going to reintegrate itself further into the global system (reintegrate further because of course it had never delinked) and keep well away from the idea, the possibility, the potential for delinking with more radical internal changes into socialism.

That was a debate which started very early, almost immediately after Bandung in 1955. It was reflected in the Chinese-Soviet debate which started two years later. Among other things there was the question of the so-called non-capitalist road, or was it a capitalist road with its own specificities, its own contradictions with other capitalist roads and interests but belonging to the family of capitalist roads? When I met with Babu to discuss precisely these problems – what position should we have? what analysis should we think of? We found ourselves (with others) to be of the same type of view – critical, and critical from the left: that is, even if those contradictions create the conditions in which we can consider the regimes anti-imperialist and therefore support them in their struggle we should not forget that they are very strongly aware of the danger that is represented by an autonomous organisation of the popular classes. And this is what forms their approach vis-à-vis the trade union movement, the Communist Party, independent social movements – trying to control the movement and limit its capacity to go beyond. The Soviet Union was supporting them and the Soviet Union was right from an overall perspective of a major struggle – East – West, the cold war but also capitalism vs. socialism in general; but you need to qualify them as nationalist bourgeois, nationalist populist, nothing more, with all the internal contradictions implicit in this. I was at that point very critical of Nasserism and it created some problems for me for quite a long period. Babu did better than I because he was able at that point to participate in the creation of objective forces in his country (Zanzibar) which led to a revolution in January 1964, which potentially at least could go beyond nationalist populism.

I knew of course what Babu thought of all this. We had been on the board of a magazine, Revolution, which was published in 1962/63 that is, just before the Zanzibar revolution and at a crucial point in history at least from the Egyptian point of view, after the radicalisation of 1956 but before the defeat of 1967, a time of close Soviet-Egyptian relations. It was also the glorious time of Ghana with Nkrumah, of Guinea with Sekou Toure, and the victory of Algeria. In other words, there were a number of points in the map of Africa where there seemed a potential for radicalisation going beyond nationalist populism. We worked, both of us, with others on that magazine, to look at precisely this question. Is it possible and if so under what conditions for nationalist populism to move to the left? Not because the leaders move to the left by themselves, not because they develop a socialist rhetoric from time to time, not because the Soviets gave them a certificate of socialism, but provided the popular classes organised independently go into conflict with the system and go ahead. Babu tried to do this in Zanzibar with some success, Amrit Wilson wrote a book some time later which has estab-
lished that the imperialists were afraid of that small country and thought that the best way to limit the danger was to merge Zanzibar with Tanganyika to form Tanzania (Amrit Wilson (1989), *US Foreign Policy and Revolution: The Creation of Tanzania*, London: Pluto Press). And if we look at what happened later as a result partly of that (partly of course it was for reasons internal to Tanzania and Zanzibar), we have societies which were not allowed to move much beyond national populism. Soon after the merger in 1967, came the Arusha Declaration.

We see some countries of Africa moving from a very neo-colonial pattern chosen by another set of countries into a more radical national populism with a socialist rhetoric and in some cases social transformations. Whether as in North Africa and Egypt this took the form of land reform or in other countries nationalisation – even where there was very little to nationalise; or attempting to modernise through industrialisation with a view to catching up – in conflict with the logic of the global capitalist system of that time. So there appeared to be a potential and most people were very happy with the Arusha declaration and considered that by itself it was almost a guarantee that Tanzania was moving towards socialism. Babu was critical, critical from the left. He said that there are a lot of conditions which are not provided by the very logic of that system, by the patterns of ruling the country which reduce the chances of its moving beyond nationalist populism – and he was right; history has proven that he was right. And he was not alone, we were right; fortunately there were many of us – but we were still a minority. A minority moreover which had no very strong capacity to convince the popular classes through organisations of autonomous political forces.

In my opinion it was because he was critical and for no other reason, that Babu was arrested, and was critical again, after six years of prison, from 1972 to 1978. In 1972 we organised a big meeting in Dar Es Salaam – liberation movements of South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe but also from independent Africa – North, West, Central and East Africa, whether from the radical nationalist populist regimes – parties speaking in their name, or from other political forces within those countries. We debated exactly this point: that accepting that we are on a capitalist road, under what conditions may we move from that road to another line. The meeting did not please everybody and he was regarded while he was still a minister as a potential danger to the system.

Now things started moving faster than we ever imagined to the sad conclusion that we had more or less forecasted. In the mid-1970s, there was the so-called proposal of Boumedienne of a New International Economic Order after the oil shock of 1973. This was totally rejected by the West and was the start of the erosion of nationalist populism. The rates of growth and industrialisation which were not too bad a relatively short time before, moved towards growing difficulty and the power system was confronted with a challenge. To move beyond would require more power for the popular classes, and if this did not happen then the conditions would be created for an imperialist counter-offensive – a successful imperialist offensive and the dismantling of the broad alliances that were led, if not by a bourgeoisie, at least by a potential bourgeoisie (a ruling class) which would aspire to becoming a neo-comprador bourgeoisie and would shift to the right. It happened in Tanzania, Egypt, Ghana, everywhere in Africa at that point in time.

I could not meet Babu because he was in jail. But with other brothers, sisters, comrades, we started thinking of a new set of discussions: now that nationalist populism has gone to its limits, has started to erode, what else? how to analyse the next phase of the struggle?
We established the Third World Forum in 1975; Babu was in prison but he was a member from the very start. And when he came out in 1978, he was very active in promoting the idea.

Then we entered into the third period of recompradorisation of Africa. From the 1970s till now it has been continuously going on along with the same erosion of the attempts to build socialism elsewhere. I have in mind the Soviet Union but also China. As I said earlier, in the debate of the early 1960s about the non-capitalist road our criticism, from the South, of the Soviet Union probably started in 1957 and continued till the early 1960s. It was over the labelling of certain regimes as 'socialist' by the Soviets, purely for diplomatic and political reasons. We did not relate it at that point to a critique of the Soviet system itself, but that came very quickly when Maoism addressed this in a critique of the Soviet Union and Soviet socialism, analysing it not as a socialist road but a capitalist road – what I have described as a way of building capitalism without capitalists, with the same ruling class (which was a non-capitalist ruling class) becoming a capitalist class in the last chapter of that evolution.

When we think of the historical limitations of nationalist populism and Soviet socialism we realise that in the two cases where we have a vision of capitalism without capitalists, the target is to reproduce a society which is very close to the reality of a capitalist society with a view to ‘catching up’ or reducing the historical gap which is a result of imperialism and unequal development till it is reduced to the point of the countries becoming equal partners; and a qualitative change in the power structure and the economic system to having normal capitalism with capitalists. And if it is normal capitalism, we in Africa are bound to be more mediocre, because for historical reasons, the West and particularly Europe has maintained us in the old role of the periphery. We are still producing raw materials, agricultural and mineral, and not moving into industrialisation at the very time when parts of Asia, either through communist leadership or through bourgeois leadership (India and South East Asia), and with different historical reasons Latin America, are moving into industrialisation more or less successfully – in terms of the capacity to be competitive. The recompradorisation proposed for Africa is the road to marginalisation in the global system. I remember discussing this with Babu more than once – one occasion was when we were invited by the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Group in the 1980s for a series of meetings and discussions with a number of comrades.

This latest chapter in the history of Africa has come to such a disastrous point that it has led to the crystallisation of such things as ethnicity, civil war, religious illusions etc.

I did not have the opportunity to discuss this with Babu but it would have been useful to have his contribution to the analysis of what has been changing in southern Africa in the last few years. There have been a series of important changes – I call them victories in the long liberation struggle. First in South Africa the end of apartheid, which of course is the beginning of 50 years more of struggle to move from that society which is perhaps the ugliest in the world into something acceptable from a human or a socialist point of view. Changing that microcosm of a world system in which you have the maximum inequalities which you can find anywhere in the globe within the boundaries of one country, into something else. But the first victory and a major victory was the end of the political system of apartheid. Now in the meantime even before there have been changes and continuing struggles, there have been the first changes in the same direction in Zimbabwe, the continuation of armed struggle in Angola and Mozambique, the change in Uganda with Amin...
and Obote replaced by Museveni, and then last but not least the fall of Mobutu in Congo.

These changes are not the end and in my understanding they have not moved out of the pattern of compradorisation of Africa. But they have mobilised political forces which for sure have objective interests and a feeling that the system is not delivering what they expect. And for the first time in this current period we see those forces, whether organised or not, reappearing on the stage.

We have to regret very strongly that someone of the calibre of Babu is not with us to contribute to those changes – not only analysing those changes but also defining an alternative strategy. Some of us, mainly academics, try to analyse those events and some speak of a renaissance of Africa and a new world. I think Babu would have analysed not only where we stand today but on what conditions national liberation can move ahead – recomprador-isation can be destroyed and replaced by a popular democratic alliance of forces. Babu had started during the multi-party elections in Tanzania to play that role. I think in addition to the friendship we all have for him, for his enormous personal qualities, we all regret deeply that he is not with us to continue the debate.

* * * * *

The lecture was followed by questions:

Q. Given the current political and economic situation in Africa today, what do we have to do to move the situation forward?

Q. My question is about the balkanisation of Africa, if we become petty nations, do these nations have the capacity to advance the cause of Africa?

Q. Are you pessimistic or optimistic about the future in Congo?

Samir Amin: I think all the questions are related, and the first one really sums it up: what strategy should we put forward from where we are. That is the most important and relevant issue. I do not have a blueprint for that and shall not try to offer one but – assuming that the overall analysis of the global capitalist system at this point in time is correct – then what can we do?

First, one must never resuscitate the past; things have changed. It is not that the experiences before have failed, I do not think that failure or success is a correct way of analysing things; rather that it has provided changes and reached historical limitations and entered a new phase. The system is changing and the challenges are changing. One can never respond to new challenges by trying to reproduce the responses which had their efficacy in a previous period. If we look at what I think are the challenges, we ought to develop the struggle at all levels: national – meaning the boundaries of the state (a political reality); regional and sub-regional; the South – with all the internal limitations and contradictions; and at the global level.

At the national level I would stress fundamental principles which have always been true, even if it is under different conditions: the autonomy of organisation of the people, of popular classes, as far as is possible – that is the meaning of democracy. Democracy should not be reduced as the west wants it to be to a formula with multi-party elections or pseudo-elections, not necessarily absolutely fabricated but without much meaning – and in some cases meaningless! Low intensity democracy and nothing more. Long live democracy provided it changes nothing! The market changes by itself so if you move this way or that way the result is the same if you are powerless. Therefore the question is how to relink democratic demand to social progressive change. And it is a very complex problem with cultural di-
dimensions – how to democratise the society, not only the higher strata of political management of society. That is crucial! more than ever before because at earlier stages, national populism could indeed achieve something – not now. In the struggle for independence and in achieving independence it created upward social mobility through education – which has been the way of creating non-democracies or pseudo – or caricature-democracies. Now we need to link democratic change to social progressive change. That is the challenge. There is no blueprint as I said, we have to take into consideration the concrete conditions which are different from one country to another and from one period to another.

But although we all have a responsibility to even the smallest and weakest countries, we have also to take into account that this has to be reinforced by action at regional level. That is why the ideology of Pan-Africanism or Pan-Arabism, while not negative, are not enough by themselves. It is not useful to repeat a general wishful thinking rhetoric of Pan Africanism or Pan Arabism. Here we have to look at the challenge of regionalism in another way: that the bourgeoisie – at the global level or the compradors at various levels in Africa and elsewhere – look at the problem of regionalisation in terms of common markets and we should be very critical of this view. It is presented as follows: that if even the Europeans with strong national economies need to unite by building a common market, we should do the same. In fact they have different problems and I think they have to go beyond a common market even from the European left point of view. I think that the European problem will find its limitation very soon and dangerously. I think that what we had in the past, since the industrial revolution – classical imperialism – was a polarisation on a global level. This was more or less synonymous with industrialised countries (America, countries of western Europe, central Europe, Japan) and non-industrialised areas (the rest). The vision of catching up was logically modernisation, and therefore regionalisation (whether de facto, with a large country – multinational like the Soviet Union – or with a number of countries medium and small like we have in Africa and South East Asia) would mean supporting further industrialisation through more integration and common markets with a certain degree of protection. I think now we are moving towards polarisation no longer based on industrialisation vs. non-industrialisation, but on the five monopolies of the centre: the monopoly of science and technology; the monopoly of controlling finance systems at the global level; the monopoly of access to (not ownership of) the resources of the globe; of communication, and through communications interfering in politics, culture, etc; and the monopoly of armaments. In that framework a number of countries of East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, Latin America – and in this way you get more than half the population of the globe – are moving and quite successfully into industrialisation and towards the capacity to be competitive in the global market. But they will face polarisation, they will continue to be a periphery to the advantage of the centres of the five monopolies. Therefore we should look to regionalisation as a means of fighting bourgeois policy and reducing its impact which is nothing to do with a common market. In the political dimension of regional security, the question of armaments is very important; the cultural dimension – the monopoly of communications is very important. But there are also other dimensions.

That is the pattern of regionalisation around which we should organise. Not that I have disrespect for the rhetoric of Pan Africanism or Pan Arabism but it is not enough by itself. It may turn into a pure rhetoric with little effect if it is not accompanied by a vision of the region very different from the dominant vision – which includes the vision of intellectuals on the left, nationalists, progressive peo-
ple of Africa people like ourselves. We also need to fight on a global level (this is not an answer but a comment on the collapse of the Soviet Union). We have tasks and responsibilities and there are not only reactionary but also progressive forces everywhere, including at the centre, who also have their responsibilities. We have to be internationalist and look at how to link progressive struggles in the North and South. I don't think it is surprising that with the internationalisation of capital, people should respond with more local nationalism – whether it is national chauvinism, ethnicism, or culturalism of one sort or another. Therefore there is a struggle we have to develop at a global level, we have to take up the challenge to open serious and continuous debate between progressive forces of North and South. So, we should be active at these three levels and the alternatives will crystallize.

The last question was about being pessimistic or optimistic. I don't want to be either. Put the question another way: not whether Kabila is bad, but what conditions can bring a step ahead towards crystallisation of an alternative – i.e. the problem is the strengthening of democratic forces within the Congo. The future will depend not on who is Kabila but on how Congolese people organise, develop, and potentially impose democratisation and not the low intensity democracy which the West is asking. They are asking Kabila to organise elections which they never asked Mobutu to do. But it does not mean we do not need democracy in Congo. If we put the question in that way, we get out of the issue of whether the reality leads us to be pessimistic or not, we should ask ourselves what are the conditions and what is our responsibility in that.

Q. Africa will not move forward without a global Pan African movement and a restoration of African culture. In asserting that agenda, Africa needs to draw on its best minds.

Q. What are your ideas on the Green Book?

Q. Congratulations for capturing so succinctly what Babu stood for. A few years ago when I spoke to him, he was very suspicious about what was going to happen in South Africa. There was a distinction between fighting to overthrowing a system and working towards an alternative. His feeling was that in South Africa we have not clearly demonstrated what the alternative would be. I would like to link that with another issue you have raised about an African ‘renaissance’. For example in the Orange Free State, the grassroots people decided who should be the Prime Minister but the powers that be decided who actually became the Prime Minister. The question then is – how viable is this African ‘renaissance’ and what is your reading of South Africa?

Samir Amin: In answer to question one, I would tend to disagree with you, certainly Africa needs Pan Africanism but I don't think the cultural rhetoric on Pan Africanism will do the job. It has to be supportive of meeting the real challenge: actually existing capitalism, not European culture but actually existing capitalism. That is the challenge; we need to discuss it in terms of programmes but not exclusively in terms of culture. I tend to think there is not an African culture. There are African cultures, in Europe there are European cultures; we should look at moving from our cultures towards universal culture, the universal dimension of the future we want for all humankind.

On the second question, I have a very poor opinion of the Green Book. It is nationalist populism of a very moderate quality.

Now, what has happened in South Africa? Contrary to the opinion currently developed, particularly in Britain, that apartheid was conflicting with the logic
of capitalism as though capitalism was synonymous with democracy and anti-racist at least in principle.

No, capitalism is much more complex than that. Apartheid has been very useful for capital accumulation but it has reached its limits because of the struggle of the African people of South Africa. The project of capital accumulation in South Africa, in the language of the World Bank, has failed (in the sense that it has been unable to build a competitive export industry). It is as bad as the Soviet Union, as bad as Egypt. Of course the apartheid regimes were not socialist, nor were they blacks or Arabs (if they fail it is normal!); they were good whites, capitalists. They failed because the slave labour – almost slave labour – resisted. The result was a microcosm of the global system. You have everything that exists anywhere and usually the worst of everything! You have strata with the level of consumption of developed capitalist countries, but not the average productivity of those countries.

Elsewhere there is an industrial third world, hardworking people with high productivity but low wages; and a fourth world too – the poorest people of Africa in the erstwhile Bantustans. All that is in one country. Now the target from any progressive, not even socialist but progressive, perspective should be reducing inequalities and within 50 years creating a normal capitalist society with classes. This means land reform, redistribution of the population – enormous changes. Between 1990 and 1992, I had feared that a pseudo-federal Constitution would be adopted which would reinforce the capacity for unequal development. Fortunately the Constitution is not too bad on that point, but the main problem now is overall strategy. What the World Bank is suggesting (and all governments of the West support this and the government of South Africa at present accepts it) is the vision of becoming competitive on the global market. It is suggesting capitalis-

ing on the so-called advantages of South Africa compared to other African countries, industrialisation etc., to become more competitive. This choice maintains the unacceptable inequalities. Even if there is a black bourgeoisie, and already there is one, it could be part of what could be called a ‘semi-imperialist’ role of South Africa within Africa. I think the other countries and peoples of Africa will not accept it and it will not go very far even from the point of view of that capitalist vision. The alternative would be to focus more in the short term, that is, the next 50 years on, dramatic internal social changes and to bring the question of external relations (what to export, what to import) to the service of changing the social pattern of society inside the country. What the World Bank has said is adjust your internal – development – for global constraints/forces, I am saying try as much as you can to adjust your external relations to internal perspectives. I am relatively optimistic; South Africa has proved that it will change in the long run.

Q. What can Africa do to deal with International Financial Institutions?

Samir Amin: International Financial Institutions should not be looked at as the major forces we are up against. They are just institutions at the service of dominant capital – the G7 if you like. Their vision of globalisation is in my opinion a utopian vision, the capitalist utopia – that you can run the world not as a market but as a supermarket and very little more. It is a utopia, it is stupid but it is the natural utopia of capitalism. Capitalists adjust when they have an enemy who compels them to adjust. But when they feel they can run unilaterally, it can produce the maximum chaos in the shortest possible time. It does not solve the problem or even move the system out of the crisis but it moves into a spiral going down with relative stagnation, low growth, relative excess of capital which does not find a way of expansion and deepening of the
productive system and for which financial outlets have to be created continuously. It is not that the technocrats of the IMF or World Bank have thought of the system, they do not think of anything, they just implement. That is why we must create social and political forces which compel the system to adjust.

Guinea-Bissau: Military Fighting Breaks Out

Lars Rudebeck

At 5 o'clock, in the early morning of Sunday, 7 June, shooting was heard from the military installations at Santa Luzia in north-eastern Bissau, capital of the West African republic of Guinea-Bissau, governed under multiparty constitutional democracy since elections held in 1994. Fighting spread quickly to the military base at Brá, near the international airport, in the north-western parts of the city. In a radio broadcast the same day, president João Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira held former commander-in-chief, brigadier Ansumane Mané, responsible for an armed revolt against the legal government.

Two days later, on 9 June, spokesmen of Ansumane Mané announced that a military 'junta' had been formed. It demanded the resignation of the president in order to create proper conditions, according to the rebels, for democratic elections to be held within sixty days. As the holding of elections before the end of the year was the stated ambition also of the legal government, the real causes and motives behind the uprising did not stand out very clearly at this stage.

The initial impression conveyed by international media, based largely upon officious declarations from Bissau, was that this was a mutiny by a disgruntled group of military men that would in all probability be put down quite rapidly. There was also sincere surprise and consternation, both inside and outside Guinea-Bissau, that something like this could happen under the democratically elected regime which had recently begun to show some signs of good governance and economic efficiency.

Conflict Rapidly Regionalized

Very soon, however, the situation appeared considerably more complex. As early as on 9 June, the very day of the rebels' initial declaration, 1,300 soldiers from Guinea-Bissau's northern neighbour Senegal, were already in place in Bissau on the president's demand to support the few loyalist troops, who did not even have access to munitions. On the following day, the Senegalese were joined by 400 soldiers from Guinée-Conakry, the neighbour in the south. Thus the conflict was almost immediately regionalized.

Legality vs. Political Legitimacy

Quite soon, too, it became clear that the image of a simple mutiny against the legal, democratically elected government was very far from the whole truth. Legality and political legitimacy appear in this case to be far apart. Constitutional democracy reigns in Guinea-Bissau since 1994, true enough. But dissatisfaction with the corrupt presidential power and the harsh conditions of life is rampant, both among common people and within the power apparatus, not least the military. After the first days of the war, the president appeared politically isolated and abandoned by most of his army, reduced to relying on the military force of the Senegalese army to remain in office, and thus totally dependent upon foreign troops.
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Military & Diplomatic Stalemate

As the sixth week of war began, the image conveyed by well informed observers and the Lisbon daily _O Público_, with several journalists on the spot, was that the rebels were still in military control around the capital, including the international airport. President 'Nino' and his government remained confined to the more central parts of the city – and even this thanks only to the Senegalese troops, the number of which had increased by some hundreds since the first days. As far as the rest of the country was concerned, the situation was less clear. Governmental forces seemed to have made some advances to the north and north-east of the capital.

No military solution was within sight. Efforts at mediation – by the bishop of Bissau, the foreign minister of Gambia, and the Portuguese and Angolan foreign ministers acting together – had so far failed to bring the belligerents together. The rebels declared themselves ready for talks, but demanded the withdrawal of the Senegalese troops. The president still insisted that the rebels would have to lay down their arms without conditions.

The ministers of foreign affairs and defence of the member states of the West African organization for economic cooperation (ECOWAS) met in Abidjan, the capital of Côte d'Ivoire, on 3-4 July. They decided that ECOMOG ('peace-monitoring group') – the regional military force under Nigerian leadership which has intervened to stop the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone – would have its mandate extended to Guinea-Bissau. The conditions under which this could be realized remained unclear.

The European Union, on 8 June, voiced worries about abuses of human rights in the Guinea-Bissau war. On 11 June, the Commissioner of the European Union for Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, the Portuguese João de Deus Pinheiro, declared that a military coup against a democratically elected government could under no circumstances be accepted. What could be discussed was how such crises should be avoided in the future. No declaration or action had, until that date, been forthcoming from the Security Council of the United Nations.

Catastrophe for the People

In the meantime, about five-sixths of Bissau's 300,000 inhabitants are reported to have fled into the countryside and thousands have fled into Senegal. Between one and two thousand people, mostly foreigners, have been evacuated by sea, as well as most of the diplomatic corps except the Portuguese and French ambassadors. A Danish volunteer has provisionally been charged with official responsibility for Swedish aid activities. Many people have been killed, although no certain account of the death toll exists. The city of Bissau has been shelled by artillery. Apparently credible reports tell about Senegalese troops acting as harsh foreign occupants rather than as forces of the legal government. The rainy season is on. The food and sanitary situation is rapidly getting precarious for tens of thousands of people in overcrowded towns and villages, while international aid convoys are stopped by the Senegalese and Guinean authorities. A tragic catastrophe is underway for the Guinean people and their development efforts.

Complex Background

What happened? What is happening? The questions are multi-dimensional. It is still much too early for any certain answers to be attempted. The outcome is still open, nor very hopeful for the near future. Some facts are however known, and some provisional judgements may be a bit more well-founded than others.

Brigadier Ansumane Mané is a veteran of Guinea-Bissau's anti-colonial liberation war (1963-74) where he served with
president ‘Nino’. He was suspended from his post as commander-in-chief of the armed forces in January 1998. The alleged reason was negligence in regard to controlling the illegal sale of Guinean arms to the rebels struggling for the independence of Casamance, the southern-most province of Senegal, across Guinea-Bissau’s northern frontier. The Casamance rebellion has gone on with varying intensity since the first half of the 1980s. The Senegalese government has for long been worried by the easy flow of persons and, as it seems, arms between Guinea-Bissau and Casamance. Furthermore, the majority of the people of Casamance, the diolas, are culturally and historically close to important groups of people in northern Guinea-Bissau. This is thus a sensitive issue in the relations between the two countries. It goes far toward explaining the heavy military involvement of Senegal, with French support, in the current crisis.

There are, however, no clear indications that the issue of arms trafficking as such can be traced specifically to Ansumane Mané. After his suspension in January, a parliamentary commission with multi-party representation began to investigate the charges under great secrecy. The results of the investigation were to have been presented to the parliament and the public on Monday, 8 June. But on Friday the 5th, only a few days before the scheduled discussion of the report, a new commander-in-chief, Humberto Gomes, was suddenly designated by the president, five months after the suspension of Ansumane Mané. On Sunday morning the 7th, fighting broke out near the domicile of the latter at Santa Luzia. This chain of events has caused many people in Bissau to suspect that there is more to the story than a simple mutiny of disgruntled soldiers. Who wanted, at any cost, to stop the public discussion of the parliamentary report? This is the question raised. As yet, no documented answer is available. The absence of any noticeable support for the legal government is an indication of what many Guinean citizens may think.

**International Responsibilities**

The tragedy, at the moment of writing this briefing, is that a destructive war is dragging on with international involvement. Senegal is tempted by the apparent chance seen to impose its peace, including an end to the Casamance rebellion. It is highly unlikely that this could be happening unless actively condoned by the French government. In so doing, Senegal and, behind the scenes France, offer the Guinea-Bissau government an illusory opportunity to refuse negotiations with the rebels rather than meeting them constructively.

Will there be enough international interest in a small West African country and its people to press Senegal and France to force president ‘Nino’, in his turn, to the negotiation table – before things really fall apart, with Guinea-Bissau and Casamance bogged down into interminable regionalized conflict? By the time this reaches ROAPE’s readers, parts of the answer may be available.

**Lars Rudebeck**, Uppsala, Sweden. This Breifing is based on the reports of international media, most importantly the Lisbon daily *O Público* up to 13 July 1998, as well as on direct reporting to the author by a few close and knowledgeable observers of the events, coupled with the author’s previous knowledge of Guinea-Bissau.

African Debt Hoax

Joseph Hanlon

In April 1998 the World Bank proudly announced that Mozambique had received unprecedented debt relief and that this would ‘free budgetary resources and allow Mozambique to broaden the scope of its development effort’. This was under the World Bank and International Monetary Fund Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative.

But debt relief is calculated in secret. Executive directors of the IMF and World Bank who approved the package on 7 April were not told what the actual debt relief would be, and had to accept claims from officials that Mozambique would receive a good deal. In fact, Mozambique gained almost nothing; debt service post-HIPC will be little less than it was before. More than $2bn in debt HAS been written off. But it was debt that Mozambique would never have paid.

Debt Cycles

The debt crisis of the 1990s is not a unique occurrence. Economist Charles Kindleberger wrote a book whose title, Manias, Panics and Crashes, captures this view of the cycles. He points to the tulip mania of 1634, the South Sea bubble of 1720, the cotton and railway booms of the 1830s, and so on. Kindleberger says that in each cycle, there is a period of growth involving a rise in profits and a rapid expansion of bank credit. Eventually money growth outstrips production and money goes into speculation. This is often linked to fraud and swindles, as speculators look for ever more profitable investments. This is the period of bubbles or what Kindleberger calls ‘manias’, and usually involves international lending. Eventually the bubble bursts, prices fall, and investors try to sell or to collect on their loans. This is the period of ‘panic’ as investors all rush for the exit. The panic feeds on itself, leading to the ‘crash’. We can look at the past four long cycles (each of which had short cycles within them): 1) growth 1780-1820, mania 1820s, crisis 1830s & 1840s; 2) growth 1850s, mania 1860s, crisis 1870s & 1880s; 3) growth 1893-1913, mania 1920s, crisis 1930s; 4) growth 1948-1967, mania 1967-1979, crisis since. (See, for example: Barry Eichengreen & Peter Lindert, The International Debt Crisis in Historical Perspective; William Darity & Bobbie Horn, The Loan Pushers).

Both the 1870s and the 1930s saw major international depressions. Each mania involved an international lending boom which overlapped with the end of growth in domestic economies of the then developed countries, as lenders were forced to look abroad for higher profits. The discussion of cycles leads to a point about the current crisis made by many authors. Extra lending in the 1970s was not created by the 1973 oil price boom, although it did create a further surge in lending. Rather, international lending was already into the ‘mania’ phase and the oil price rises can be seen as attempts by the oil producers to cash in on the speculative bubble. Kindleberger stresses that a panic is inevitable, but the trigger of each panic is different. It seems likely that the second (1979) oil price rise, followed by the 1982 Mexican default, burst the bubble and caused the panic.

Loan Pushing

After each cycle, there have been retrospective complaints of reckless lending and of ‘loan pushing’—banks and lending agencies encouraging foreign governments to take loans they do not need, and encouraging borrowers to live beyond their means. Toward the end of the mania, borrowers are encouraged to take new loans simply to repay old ones. With the panic, lending suddenly stops, borrowers cannot repay, and they default. Kindleberger comments:
Boom loans are undertaken on the upswing, defaulted at the peak, and refunded on the next upswing, which may also lead to new borrowing.

In 1973 the US Federal Reserve Governor Andrew Brimmer noted that 'the main explanation' for the sharp rise in lending to less developed countries is the 'failure of demand for loans from borrowers in developed countries to keep pace with the expansion of credit availability'. This caused 'the Eurocurrency banks (especially in London) ... to push loans to the developing countries with considerable vigour' (quoted in Darity & Horn, 1988: p. 8). Brimmer cites a particular form of loan pushing, which involves as drastic softening of terms (Darity & Horn, p. 15). This is like a drug pusher offering cheap heroin in order to create addiction. In the mid-1970s, international loans had a negative real interest rate — that is, in real terms, poor countries had to repay less than they borrowed. Loan pushers in the mania phase stressed that they were, literally, giving money away. But loans were on variable interest rates, and in the early 1980s those rates jumped dramatically — setting off the threat of default and fuelling the panic. In the 1970s the real interest rate was -3.4% (world inflation averaged 11.4% while Libor — the London Interbank Offer Rate — was only 8%). By contrast, real interest rates for 1981-84 exceeded 12% (Cardoso & Dornbusch, 1989).

This occurred as the industrialised countries and particularly the United States tried to resolve their own crises with an attempt to move more money from the south to the north. This involved falling terms of trade for poor countries as well as the rapidly rising interest rates. Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, and claimed to be a free marketeer, but he organised a huge subsidy by the south of the US economy.

Taking into account all aid, investment and debt, there was a net transfer of $28 billion from developed to developing countries in 1980, this soon reversed and in 1987 the poor south (developing countries) transferred a record $12.4bn to the rich north (developed countries). Debt service payments exceeded new loans by $34bn, and this was only partly compensated for by $13.5bn in aid grants, which went directly home again to repay debts. Thus huge withdrawals of money from poor countries could not continue, and by 1989 there was a small net flow toward the south. But aid was still being used to pay off debts and it was 1992 before new loans exceeded total debt service. During this period, despite the huge debt repayments, the poor country debt snowball grew rapidly — from $603bn in 1980 to $1600bn in 1992 and $2200bn in 1997 (all figures World Bank ‘World Debt Tables’ and ‘Global Development Finance’ various years).

Cold War & Apartheid

For Mozambique, the looming global debt crisis was made much worse by Reagan’s intensification of the cold war. Under the government of president Jimmy Carter, the US had joined with Europe to find a non-communist alternative to apartheid, and had promoted the founding of the then Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) to try to reign in the claimed marxist governments of the region; Ronald Reagan reversed this. Under the policy of ‘constructive engagement’ the US backed the apartheid regime in South Africa as an anti-communist ally, which was licensed to attack the neighbouring states which were seen as communist allies of the Soviet Union.

With the end of the cold war, there was a string of elections in Namibia, Angola, South Africa, Malawi and Mozambique and in every one, the former US ally was defeated. Peace came to all parts of the region except Angola. But the cost of being a cold war battlefield was high. In a decade of war in Mozambique, 1 million
people died, 5 million had to flee to other parts of the country or to neighbouring states, and material damage exceeded $20bn (UNICEF, 1989).

This had a catastrophic effect on the Mozambican economy. South Africa and its Renamo terrorist movement attacked roads, railways, and export crop production such as sugar and tea. Exports fell from $281m in 1981 to $94m in 1984; port and railway earnings for transporting goods from neighbouring countries fell from $93m to $34m in the same period.

In 1984 Mozambique defaulted on its debts. Total debt was less than $2bn, of which only $285m was overdue (Hanlon, 1991). After Mozambique agreed to join the IMF and World Bank and impose structural adjustment, the ‘donors’ gave Mozambique new loans to survive against the apartheid onslaught and to pay off old loans. By 1997, debt exceeded $7bn — still less than half the damage caused by apartheid — of which one-third was to Russia (for arms, consumer goods, and oil), one-third to the industrialised countries (particularly France, Italy and Germany) and the rest to smaller countries (such as Algeria for oil) and international agencies like the World Bank and IMF.

By the early 1990s, Mozambique was one of the poorest countries in the world, according to World Bank figures, with a per capita income of less than $100. IMF figures showed that Mozambique was making debt service payments of $113m per year in the period 1994-97, compared to only $100m a year that it was able to spend on health and education. Yet Mozambique was paying only 30 per cent of the debt service actually due (IMF, 1998). This was becoming embarrassing to the international community and could not continue.

**HIPC & Debt ‘Relief’**

In previous cycles, debtors simply defaulted, and international banks bore the cost. In the 1930s the depression largely affected the industrialised north, and Latin America actually prospered. In that sense, the post-1979 crisis has been more carefully managed to prevent widespread default and to ensure that the costs are borne by the poor south and not the rich north.

If one accepts the theory of debt cycles as set out by Kindleberger and others, then it can be argued that in the crisis phase lenders do not actually want the debts repaid, because they have no use for the capital. What they want is: 1) for debts to remain on the book and be serviced, if possible; 2) for an orderly exit if debts will not be serviced; and 3) to use the existence of the debts for maximum leverage over the debtors.

This has been done largely through the role of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, who have become the international debt collectors. All foreign ‘aid’ and all debt relief is conditional on countries that have Fund and Bank programmes. These involve structural adjustment to reduce consumption in order to release funds to repay debts, as well as a string of other conditions which open southern economies and lower the prices of southern exports. Thus, even if many debts are eventually written off, having had those credits will have forced open southern economies.

An important task has been to prevent an international banking crisis, and this has been done in two ways. First, many of the loans pushed by banks onto poor countries have been taken over by the Bank and Fund (normally by providing new loans by the Bank or Fund – which must be repaid as part of conditionality – to repay earlier loans by private banks on which governments might have able to default). Second, the Bank and Fund have worked with creditors for an orderly and shared cancellation of some unpayable debt, slowly taking this debt off the books in ways which does not disrupt the
banking system. In recent years some government-to-government debt has also been written off. For some countries, the Bank and Fund looked likely to become the biggest creditors. Despite various write-offs, many countries, including Mozambique still had a massive unpayable debt which they were not servicing. This finally led to in 1996 the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, from the World Bank and (reluctantly) the IMF, which called for a substantial cancellation of debt of about 40 of the world poorest countries, which they said would lead to what the World Bank has repeatedly called an ‘exit’ from the debt trap. For the first time, the Bank and Fund agreed to cancel debt, and all creditors would share the burden equally. This set an important precedent.

This raised two key questions. How much debt would be cancelled, and how was the burden to be shared. On the latter point, the accountants had a field day and decided that the ‘net present value’ of all loans would be calculated and used for comparison (NPV is the amount that would have to be put into the bank at present interest rates to repay a loan on schedule; World Bank loans with concessional interest rates have an NPV below face value, while export credits at commercial rates have an NPV above face value. Using this system, the Bank and Fund cancel proportionately less of their loans than if face value had been used).

After much haggling, the Bank and Fund announced that debt would be considered ‘sustainable’ if it was likely to be repaid without defaulting, and that this level was considered be a total NPV debt between 200 and 250% of annual exports and annual debt service payments between 20 and 25% of export earnings (known as the ‘debt service ratio’). No justification of this figure has even been given, and rumour from inside the Bank and Fund has been that these levels were chosen by the need to cap Bank and Fund spending. Indeed, all other evidence is that these ratios are substantially too high.

In 1994 the World Bank actually wrote that debt-to-export ratios of over 200% have ‘generally proved unsustainable in the medium term’ (World Bank, *World Debt Tables 1994-95*, vol. 1, p. 40). Germany provides an important historic lesson. In the 1920s reparations payments were considered so high that they were one of the factors that brought the rise of the Nazis yet they were equivalent to only 13-15% of exports. In 1953 in the London Agreement, the allies agreed to a substantial cancellation of German debt. Initially they asked for a debt-service ratio of 10% but the German negotiator said this was ‘impossible’, so the creditors settled for 3.5%. Britain reached a debt settlement with the United States in 1944 which called for a debt service ration of 4%. When General Suharto took power in Indonesia in the late 1960s, after killing 700,000 alleged communists, he was rewarded with debt relief - the west specifically said 20% was unsustainable and settled on a debt-service ratio of 6% (Hanlon, 1998).

The World Bank and IMF have simply defined as ‘sustainable’ a level of debt which historically has been seen as unsustainable. Germany and Japan have been the strongest resisters to any better terms – yet Germany has never explained why poor countries of the south are able to pay six times as much as Germany did 45 years ago.

The most important difference is that 45 years ago, the cold war had started, and debt service payments for Germany were specifically calculated to allow enough money for rapid reconstruction and development to provide a contrast to the new socialist Germany. Today, development and post-war reconstruction criteria do not enter – ‘sustainability’ is only defined in terms of ability to repay, if squeezed hard enough.
The Secret HIPC Black Box

What has proved striking about this whole process is the way it has been obfuscated and mystified. This includes the use of net-present-value and obscure ratios which require the Bank and Fund to make estimates of exports well into the next century - estimates which cannot be more than a thumb-suck and which are normally highly inflated. Then press statements are issued saying that agreement has been reached to cancel some huge amount of debt, and that debt service payments will now be much less that previously scheduled debt service.

Even the IMF admits that 'scheduled debt service is a misleading indicator in countries like Mozambique' which are paying such a small portion of scheduled debt service. Instead 'a more meaningful measure is the actual debt service paid' (IMF, 1998).

Yet these are the figures given to executive directors when they must take a decision. The HIPC Final Document, which was the only document that IMF and World Bank Executive directors had on which to base their decision, did not ever contain the 'more meaningful measure', namely 'actual debt service paid' - nor could it be calculated from the paper. Directors really were being kept in the dark.

And it is clear why. In April shortly after the decision, the IMF's Anthony Boote did a television interview in which he claimed that 'actual debt service paid' for Mozambique would fall by $70m a year, and that we were wrong to criticise HIPC.

I was able to use other confidential papers to estimate debt service to be paid post-HIPC, and in late April 1998 in a press release I initially suggested that debt service would actually increase for Mozambique (as it had for Uganda). This finally provoked the IMF on 1 May 1998 to send to me and a few other activists the first ever figures for any HIPC country showing actual debt service paid. This showed a 50 per cent INCREASE in debt service between 1997 and 1999, followed by a fall. The pre-HIPC average debt service payment (1995-97) was $113 million per year, and the post HIPC debt service payment (1998-2002) was also $113 million per year. No saving at all! A parliamentary question gave the same response from the UK Treasury on 12 May 1998: $113m before and $113m after. This was the first ever published figure, and was apparently based on figures supplied by the IMF.

Suddenly the IMF said that both the Treasury and I were wrong to interpret their original phase 'debt service paid' to actually mean "debt service paid", and that in certain years those words actually meant something else. For the first time ever, the IMF published figures on their web site on 14 May 1998, which lowered the projected payments for 1998 and 1999. This brought the post-HIPC average down to $100m per year – a saving of $13m per year.

Two points are striking about this debate. First, how it is possible for an agency with as many economists as the IMF to give figures of 0, 13 million, and 70 million within weeks of each other? Second, with such a huge range of figures, how can the executive directors have possibly taken an informed decision?

But a final point is much more important. It does not matter if the saving is 0 or $13 million per year. The World Bank lied when it said HIPC would free budgetary resources. Indeed, it is clear that the accountants have said that what is 'sustainable' for Mozambique is what it has already been paying, so debt service payments are kept at that level.

For the poorest country in the world, debt service payments will continue to be at the same level of spending as health and
education combined. Universal primary education has been deferred until 2010 due to lack of resources. The health and education systems are crumbling – in part because of widespread corruption because teachers and nurses are paid wages which are, by UN definition, below the poverty line. Shifting money from debt service payments to teachers and nurses salaries would dramatically improve education and save lives – and promote development.

One quick calculation shows what this means. UNDP in its Human Development Report 1996 (page 113) calculates that

\[ \text{a 1 percentage point increase in average share of GDP invested in health and education is estimated to reduce ... the child mortality rate by 24 percentage points.} \]

In simple terms, increasing spending on health and education by 2.5% halves child mortality. Mozambique’s debt service payments are over 6% of GDP, so applying half of the debt service payments to health and education would halve under five mortality. That would save the lives of 115,000 children per year – in other words, 300 children die every day so that Mozambique can make ‘sustainable’ debt service payments.

IPC has proved to be a hoax – a shell game in which the IMF pretends it is possible to win but the reality is kept hidden.

Joseph Hanlon is a writer on southern Africa and a visiting senior research fellow at the Open University. His most recent book is Peace without profit: How the IMF blocks rebuilding in Mozambique (Oxford: James Currey, 1996).

Bibliography


Conflict, Civil Society and Peace-building in West Africa

Stephen Riley

In the 1990s, most African conflicts are intra-statal rather than interstatal, although they do have a much broader impact by fuelling regional parallel economies in light arms and assets, generating displaced refugee populations, and creating exile communities. Most African conflicts are thus becoming highly internationalised: both in their effects and in the efforts of various parties to prevent, manage or resolve them. They reflect the fragility and artificiality of the state system bequeathed to Africa by the departing colonial powers.

The continuing civil unrest in Guinea Bissau which started on 7 June with a mutiny by elements of the armed forces, is an illustration of this new impact of conflict, as the revolt is linked to separatism in the Casamance region of Senegal, and the illicit trades in arms and cannabis. It has also involved diplomatic and
education combined. Universal primary education has been deferred until 2010 due to lack of resources. The health and education systems are crumbling – in part because of widespread corruption because teachers and nurses are paid wages which are, by UN definition, below the poverty line. Shifting money from debt service payments to teachers and nurses salaries would dramatically improve education and save lives – and promote development.

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The continuing civil unrest in Guinea Bissau which started on 7 June with a mutiny by elements of the armed forces, is an illustration of this new impact of conflict, as the revolt is linked to separatism in the Casamance region of Senegal, and the illicit trades in arms and cannabis. It has also involved diplomatic and
military intervention by various parties, including Senegal and ECOWAS, the sixteen member regional organisation of coastal and hinterland west African states established in 1975.

An ECOWAS Regional Forum in Burkina Faso in early July reflected upon events in Guinea Bissau and focused upon the available options for regional action in creating greater security rather than simply pursuing the traditional goal of economic integration, as modified by the impact of the new regionalism, of the 1990s and donor priorities for market-friendly development (Riley, 1998).

The Regional Forum was attended by military officers, journalists, politicians, NGO representatives, academics, and governmental officials, and met in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 8-11 July to address issues relating to ‘Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution: the role of ECOWAS’ and to draw up a general declaration of principles. It was organised as a consultative meeting prior to ECOWAS decisions on conflict management.

The ‘Ouagadougou Declaration’, highlighted civil society and media initiatives on conflict prevention and resolution and pushed forward with the ECOWAS agenda of creating a security mechanism to prevent future conflict. The Declaration called for the creation of an effective unit within the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat for conflict prevention, management and resolution. In addition it was hoped that a ‘Peace Observatory’ research unit, gathering and evaluating information on potential conflicts, would be established. It would act as an ‘early warning’ system.

Much discussion in Ouagadougou concerned the effective resolution of the civil conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, claimed as successes for regional action. Both the ECOMOG Commanders in Liberia and Sierra Leone gave papers. Major General Tim Shelpidi argued that the ECOMOG force in Monrovia needed clearer direction now that the conflict had been resolved. It required steering on the disposal of arms and ammunition from ex-combatants, needed additional external assistance to help rehabilitate the former fighters, and there were practical problems relating to the envisaged transformation of ECOMOG into a Standing Regional Military Force.

Brigadier General Max Khobe, the ECOMOG Commander in Sierra Leone, claimed that the immediate causes of the 25 May 1997 mutiny, which brought Major Johnny Koroma to power as head of a AFRC/RUF hybrid regime, were the impact of economic reform combined with indiscipline in the armed forces and grievances by rumour-prone, poorly-educated junior soldiers (Riley, 1997; Zack-Williams, 1997). Charles Taylor’s NPFL in Liberia had played a continuing role in the civil war in the 1990s by determining the character of the RUF and supporting it by providing fighters and weaponry; it was continuing to help the remnants of the AFRC/RUF (perhaps a 1,000 fighters strong) who were now at large in northern Sierra Leone.

The Ouagadougou Declaration also reflected the contributions from various civil society groups in its additional emphases upon community approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, the creation of a culture of peace by teaching human rights in educational institutions, and the encouragement of greater involvement by women. It hoped to ensure the ‘strict application of provisions designed to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women’ particularly in relation to conflicts.

The poor working conditions of the West African media in conflicts was also pointed to by Kabral Blay-Amihere of the Ghanaian Standard, a spokesman for the West Africa Journalists Association
The average salary of a Liberian journalist was US$10 a month and there was currently only one press which printed all Liberian newspapers. In most conflicts, there was a kind of journalistic neo-colonialism where the coverage was dominated by western journalists, and West African journalists simply reflected what the western press said. Responsible coverage of conflicts, training of West African journalists, and better access to the military were all required.

The Declaration ‘reaffirmed the role of civil society’ in the economic and social reconstruction process, although the conference spent little time on aspects of this issue, such as the problem of armed militias, the rehabilitation of child soldiers, and youth politics. There was also no real discussion of the role of irregular, or mercenary forces, what some now call ‘Private Military Companies’ (Shearer, 1998; Sheppard, 1998).

Some issues – such as impartiality in external interventions by NGOs and peacekeepers, and respect for human rights – were briefly discussed in relation to the ECOMOG interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. International Alert’s involvement in the civil war in Sierra Leone was an example which was highly controversial and much discussed (Sorbo et al, 1997).

Napoleon Abdulai (of ACCORD, South Africa, and formerly of International Alert) spoke of the need for preventative diplomacy and the creation of confidence-building measures. Conflicts were dynamic, highly complex, social and political events. There was no magic formula to prevent conflict, but early warning systems, and good governance, were the key to conflict management.

The Regional Forum recommended ‘the creation of a permanent peacekeeping force built around the framework of ECOMOG’ and recognised the inadequacy of the various ECOWAS Treaties and Protocols regarding conflict. There was much criticism of inaction or slow action when conflicts erupted. The delegates at the Forum also supported Mali’s initiative to prevent the importation, manufacture and exportation of light arms. Finally, and realistically, the Forum also recognised that a major problem was funding: very few member states were up-to-date in their subscriptions, perhaps only four states of the sixteen. In sum, the Forum generated a series of new ideas on the prevention and management of conflict, and emphasised a broader role for ECOWAS: creating a civil constituency for peace. It also added to the favourable climate for diplomatic and institutional action by ECOWAS, coming just after the 1998 OAU Summit in Burkina Faso, when Nelson Mandela had called for external intervention on human rights grounds. Nevertheless, the key question is: does ECOWAS have the collective political will to act, particularly given the current uncertainty over Nigeria’s future and its role in the region?

Stephen Riley teaches Politics at Staffordshire University.

References


Angola: The Peace is Not Yet Fully Won
David Simon

The ongoing war has exacted a terrible toll on Angola and its people. Potentially one of Africa's richest countries, with diverse natural resources and agro-ecological zones suited to the growing of a wide range of food and cash crops, it has been reduced to abject poverty. Several million people – over a quarter of the estimated total population of 11-12 million – have been displaced from their homes, often losing all their possessions and means of livelihood. Many have fled to the major cities or across the borders to neighbouring countries; still others have found refuge in other rural areas or have been taken captive by UNITA.

For ordinary Angolans, real peace therefore cannot start soon enough. The challenge for reconstruction and development will be enormous in the short, medium and long terms. Social and physical infrastructure will need rehabilitation, reconstruction and much new construction; the re-establishment of basic health and sanitation services and education in war-affected areas is a major priority. The whole spectrum of civil society will have to be re-established and strengthened.

Angolan oil production may reach 1 million b/d (barrels per day) by the turn of the century or shortly thereafter, as the new ultra-deep water fields being explored and exploited with new drilling technology come on stream. Several exciting finds made since late 1996 are under development, while prospects for further discoveries in the near future are good.

Rehabilitation of diamond mines and the bringing into production of new deposits should boost government revenue from that source provided that the Cuango Valley and other key areas in Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul remain secure; a recent UNITA raid has raised some concerns in this regard. Nevertheless, foreign concession-holders have begun or resumed exploration, and De Beers announced the discovery of two new kimberlite pipes at the beginning of June.

Elsewhere, the gradual rehabilitation of infrastructure and progress with demining should enable iron mining, and agriculture to resume in a piecemeal manner. The government anticipates that rehabilitation of the northernmost of Angola's three railway lines, linking Luanda with Malanje, will be completed by mid-1998; by the beginning of the year passenger trains had already resumed services between Luanda and Dondo. Rehabilitation of the southern port of Namibe and the railway line from there to Matala and Menongue has cost US$400m to date, while work on war-affected zones of the key Benguela Railway linking Lobito with the Copperbelt in the DRC and Zambia is scheduled to start later this year. Rehabilitation of the coastal stretches near Lobito and Benguela has already commenced. The total bill is likely to exceed US$500m. As soon as the security situation permits, a joint Angolan-Namibian project to repair and upgrade the trunk road from their mutual border at Oshikango to Lubango can commence.

Given the centrality of peace and security, this Briefing focuses first on progress to date with the much-delayed process of demobilisation and disarmament in terms of the Lusaka Protocol signed in November 1994. This is then followed by an overview of prevailing economic and social conditions, which are quite literally of crisis proportions.

Implementation of the Peace Process
UNITA (the Union for the Total Independence of Angola) quickly gained the ascendency when it resumed the war
following its failure to win power (and Savimbi’s failure to win the Presidency) in the 1992 elections. Having cached vast quantities of weapons and retained key fighting units intact despite claiming to have complied with demobilisation and disarmament procedures under the Bicesse Accords, UNITA forces quickly gained control over 70% of the country. Through an effective rearmament and mobilisation process, the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)-dominated national army, the FAA (Angolan Armed Forces), gradually recovered lost ground and inflicted some telling defeats on UNITA in many parts of the country by late 1993 and 1994. Most observers agree that UNITA could have been vanquished as a fighting force in late 1994 or early 1995 had the war continued. However, western diplomats, led by the US, pressured the government of President Dos Santos to declare a ceasefire in terms of the Lusaka Protocol, signed in November 1994. Their rationale was that Savimbi would be more likely to agree and then comply if he retained some military, credibility and dignity. The US has consistently supported and promoted Savimbi, despite irrefutable evidence of his bad faith and the most horrendous atrocities committed against the civilian population by his forces.

Progress towards Disarmament, Demobilisation & Peace

After the Lusaka Protocol, Savimbi was able to regroup his forces and rearm via Zaire. This option fell away with the ousting of President Mobutu in May 1997, thereby significantly weakening UNITA’s military options despite large quantities of concealed arms within Angola and their delays and inadequate compliance with the terms of the demobilisation process. This was clearly an important factor eventually impelling him to move forward with the process in early 1998.

An important but little-known fact is that Angolan government forces played a substantial role in Laurent Kabila’s military campaign against Mobutu. This involvement had been motivated by the prospect of cutting off the rear bases and support infrastructure which UNITA had long enjoyed in Zaire courtesy of Mobutu and his US backers. Similarly, Angolan forces intervened in neighbouring Congo Brazzaville in October 1997 to aid ex-President Denis Sassou Nguesso’s coup against the democratically elected President, Patrick Lissouba. Lissouba had assisted UNITA and FLEC guerrillas seeking independence for Cabinda from Angola. At the time, the motivation behind Angola’s intervention was not generally understood abroad, and it was portrayed as irrational or opportunistic in most western media reports. Threatening unilateral action if unheeded, Angola has also recently warned Zambia to do more to prevent arms and supplies from reaching UNITA from Zambian territory, and to prevent people in Angolan refugee camps in north-western Zambia from using them as bases for attacking Angola. As a result, a joint Angolan-Zambian military operation was promptly launched along their mutual border to investigate the claims and secure the border area.

While the overthrow of tyrants like Mobutu may gain widespread international support, participation in a coup against a democratically elected leader like Lissouba is more problematic. However, these two interventions provide evidence of the complexities of cross-border conflicts even in the post-cold war era. It appears that the Angolan government, so long frustrated in its generally sincere efforts to bring peace and development to its country, eventually resorted to threatened and actual military action in neighbouring states in order to secure its own territorial integrity and remove the sources of support in neighbouring countries for rebel movements. Notwithstanding, these mounting pressures, UNITA’s compliance with the de-
mobilisation process has been subject to frequent delays, misinformation and outright contradiction. The laying of landmines certainly also continued after, and in violation of, the Lusaka accords; Human Rights Watch has documented new mine laying activities as recently as 1997, while attacks during May 1998 have provided ongoing evidence of this. High level pressure from the UN and US failed to hasten Savimbi’s pace, eventually resulting in the imposition of much-delayed UN sanctions at the end of February 1998.

Implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is overseen by the Joint Commission, a body comprising representatives of the Angolan government, UNITA and the so-called Troika of observer states which oversaw the Lusaka agreement, namely Russia, the US and Portugal. It is chaired by the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative in Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye. The ‘final’ timetable agreed by the Joint Commission on 9 January was due for completion on 28 February 1998, more than a year behind the original schedule. On account of the subsequent delays, the Security Council has been compelled to extend MONUA’s mandate several times, most recently to the end of June.

By 28 February none of the nine specific stages - including demobilising residual forces, legalising UNITA and formalising Savimbi’s ‘Special Status’, extending the state administration into areas previously held by UNITA, disarming the population, and installing the UNITA leadership in Luanda – had been completed. On 11 March they were therefore rescheduled for completion by 1 April after UNITA had rejected MONUA’s proposal of 15 March so as to pre-empt the UN Security Council from imposing further sanctions on UNITA for non-completion of its demobilisation.

In March 1997, some 50% of Angola’s territory was still under UNITA control, although 80% of the population were in government-held areas. Altogether 344 localities were to be returned to the government by UNITA under the Lusaka Protocol. By 8 January, 239 had been handed back; by 20 February the figure had risen by only 33 to 272. Among the areas still being occupied on the 1 April deadline were several strategically important localities in Kwanza Sul, Lunda Norte and Malanje Provinces, apart from the UNITA headquarters of Bailundu and Andulo. According to the UN Secretary-General’s report to the Security Council on 21 April, 60 localities had then still not been handed over by UNITA. He also warned that ‘further procrastination in this regard would not be acceptable’.

In some areas returned to government control, the police were accused by UNITA of using excessive force to disarm civilians; consequently the Joint Commission called on the government in January to halt such disarming, despite popular criticism that the process was proceeding too slowly. Given prevailing conditions, human rights abuses are likely to occur regularly; an Amnesty International mission to Angola in October 1997 obtained details of a number of cases of torture and extrajudicial executions by both UNITA and government security forces. Violations by the police were widely felt by local people to be the most pressing human rights problem in areas under government control. Corruption and involvement in crime are common; people are beaten for non-payment of extortion monies and often detained on very flimsy evidence. Such events are so common and the chances of redress so slim that victims seldom bother to report them.

The ‘Final Timetable’

Progress in implementing the ‘final timetable’ under the Lusaka Protocol during March 1998 was smoother, but it again failed to meet even the revised deadline, and so continued into April. The main features of the process were as follows:
UNITA formally declared its demobilisation complete, although some remaining troops and Savimbi's 400-strong bodyguard would be demobilised by mid-March.

MONUA formally declared that UNITA had demilitarised.

Angolan government announced that UNITA was now a fully legal political party (only possible once its armed wing had been demilitarised).

President Dos Santos replaced the MPLA governors of Uige, Lunda Sul and Cuando Cubango provinces with UNITA nominees, and named seven deputy Governors, in terms of the Lusaka Protocol.

Savimbi's bodyguard was demobilised at Andulo and reconstituted as an official body in terms of the Lusaka Protocol. Their numbers are to be reduced to 150 over nine months.

The senior UNITA generals were duly demobilised in a ceremony at Bailundo.

The Angolan Government announced the formal granting of ‘Special Status’ to Savimbi as UNITA President. This entitles him to official residences, a bodyguard, salary and access to government ministries.

A UNITA delegation headed by Vice-President, Antonio Dembo, returns to Luanda to arrange the transfer there of the party's HQ.

UNITA announced the closure of its Radio Vorgan (or Voice of the Black Cockerel) in terms of the Lusaka Protocol, and its replacement by a commercial station to be known as Despertar.

Notwithstanding these developments, UNITA has continued to give contradictory signals and even to launch new armed attacks. Several towns, villages and communes in Uige, Moxico Malanje and Lunda Sul provinces previously handed over to the government were retaken by UNITA soldiers. Other settlements in Benguela, Bengo, Cuando Cubango, Huambo, Malanje, Huila, Cabinda, Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul provinces were raided during March, April and May, when properties were destroyed and local administrators expelled or abducted. Such attacks increased in both frequency and severity during May, with at least two state administrators recently installed in towns handed back to the government being murdered. In terms of casualties, the most serious incidents involved ambushes on vehicles in a manner long favoured by UNITA. Seven Angolan police officers, including the local commander, were killed in this manner in Casseque (Benguela Province) on 2 May and eleven people, including a local police commander, were killed in Cuango (Lunda Norte) on 15 May.

UN helicopters ferrying officials into areas where bridges have been destroyed were fired on in Malanje Province on 18 February and 24 March, but without causing casualties. However, a UN translator was killed in an ambush near Calandula village in Malanje Province on 21 May; two peace monitors and a senior policeman were also wounded.

The FAA and Angolan police have also regularly seized weapons and uncovered a number of substantial arms caches. However, most of UNITA’s heavy arms and artillery, which have not been surrendered to the UN under the demobilisation process, remain unaccounted for. These events indicate a continuing UNITA military capability, whether authorised or freelance, in almost every province of the country. The UN Secretary General’s report to the Security Council on 13
March stated that a total of 27,291 UNITA soldiers had by then deserted from demobie is highly likely that, as reports have suggested, at least some of the attacks cited above have been carried out by such deserters, who have not always been adequately fed and have become frustrated with long, confinements without the anticipated civilian retraining or redeployment. Crucially, however, at least 8,000 and perhaps as many as 20,000 of UNITA's best soldiers are estimated never to have participated in the demobilisation process, and therefore remain a potentially potent fighting force spread around the country. This represents one of the major shortcomings of the UNAVEM/MONUA process. Under the terms of the Lusaka Protocol, following, UNITA's and MONUA's declarations that the UNITA demobilisation is complete, the FAA is now free to attack any remaining soldiers, as these are deemed 'armed bandits' (bandidos armadas). To date, the army has acted with restraint but it is entirely possible that pursuit and armaments recovery operations may give rise to significant clashes in the near future. In late May, the Angolan Government warned explicitly of this as a result of the growing catalogue of raids.

The overall political uncertainty has been increased by the impact of Savimbi's paranoia and autocratic rule within UNITA. There is a long history of bright and able comrades, including those who had been together with him from the very earliest days, being murdered or expelled lest they threaten his position. Such defections, out of such fear or frustration with Savimbi's tactics and constant breaches of faith, have continued throughout the last few months.

Savimbi has still not returned to Luanda as required, citing a string of excuses relating to security fears or alleged non-compliance by the Government with its requirements under the Lusaka Protocol. The fact that Savimbi refused to sign the declaration of demobilisation on 6 March, sending his deputy, Antonio Dembo instead, also precipitated speculation. On several previous occasions, senior officials sent to sign such agreements – including the 1994 Lusaka Protocol itself – were subsequently arrested or worse, while Savimbi then abrogated or defied the agreements. However, Dembo has so far survived, heading the UNITA delegation which returned to Luanda on 1 April. Savimbi eventually sent the delegation in order to avoid further sanctions and because of his apparent concerns that the parliamentary deputies and others in Luanda were impatient and contemplating a split in order to enable progress with the peace process. They had recently defied Savimbi's orders to oppose the budget by abstaining. Clearly, Savimbi's character is such that he will continue to loom large over the country's political future so long, as he remains alive and well.

Foreign encouragement to the process continues, symbolised by a series of high-level visits. In late March, the Portuguese Defence Minister visited Luanda, while President Dos Santos met US President Bill Clinton during the latter's African tour. The President of the Australian lower house of parliament, Bob Halver-son, and the President of the Development Commission of the European Parliament, Michel Rocard visited in mid-April, while President Chirac of France is expected during June.

However, by early June the balance between persuasion and pressure appeared to be shifting again as a result of mounting frustration with the rising level of armed attacks and number of casualties, and the failure yet again by UNITA to comply with the latest Joint Commission deadline for the return of remaining strongholds to state administration by the end of May. Alioune Blondin Beye has threatened to resign if this intransigence continues, and on 12 May expressed his crowing, impatience in unusually forthright terms, saying that:
We are, unfortunately, witnessing an escalation of violence, of acts carried out here and there which are beyond simple acts of banditry. These are serious acts of rebellion and acts of military nature which cannot fail to be noticed by anyone.

The politico-military situation therefore now appears more uncertain and precarious than at the end of April.

A Social & Humanitarian Crisis

Some of the small towns in the far south were destroyed during the South African invasions of 1975 onwards, but the ‘war of the cities’ in 1993 and 1994 resulted in the almost total destruction of most provincial capitals and other large centres like Huambo, Cuito and Malanje. The principal exceptions were Luanda itself and the coastal cities of Lobito and Benguela. However, these have been swollen by vast influxes of displaced people. As a result, physical and social infrastructure have been totally overwhelmed. Luanda has a population estimated at over 2.2 million in 1995 and realistically probably 2.5 to 3 million today, in a city designed for less than 1 million but in which most services and infrastructure barely function and most buildings are crumbling. Luanda therefore now accommodates roughly 20-25% of the national population. Some rehabilitation has commenced in the last year or so, but this is tiny relative to the scale required. At the height of the resumed war, over 1,000 people were dying each day, both directly from military action (including landmines) and indirectly from the resulting effects of famine and lack of medical care.

Table 1 provides some indicators of the severity of conditions. The 1997 UNDP Human Development Report ranks Angola 157th out of the 175 countries in its tables on the basis of the Human Development Index (HDI) for 1994. The HDI is a compound measure of economic and social conditions. Angola’s HDI rank is 24 places lower than its rank on the basis of real GDP per capita, adjusted for purchasing power parity. This indicates that access to social services and the quality of life are substantially poorer than the relative size of GDP. The relative robustness of GDP is due almost exclusively to the value of oil and oil products, from which Angola has derived approximately 95% of export earnings since the early 1990s. Real GDP per capita of US$1,600 in 1994 (cf. $1,351 for Nigeria) is totally misleading; the vast majority of Angolans live in severe poverty. Even experienced professionals working for the state cannot live on their official salaries and are forced to undertake private work to cover the bulk of their needs.

Although life expectancy at birth is higher than in 1960, this has deteriorated since the early 1980s as a result of the destruction of clinics, hospitals, schools and the complete breakdown in services in many areas, both rural and urban. The same applies to the infant mortality rate and most other social indicators such as the adult literacy rate. This trend is all too clearly borne out by the fall in gross educational enrolment of 6 to 23 year-olds, from 54% in 1980 to only 31% in 1994. Less than one-third of the population has access to potable water; perhaps ironically, this figure has increased since the late 1970s as a result of the concentration of displaced people in cities and refugee camps.

By mid-1995, the health service was in crisis. The government brought in Vietnamese and Korean doctors to try to compensate for the haemorrhaging of local staff, but these foreigners do not speak Portuguese. Equipment and medicines have been virtually non-existent in many areas, apart from those provided as part of particular local projects by foreign NGOs like Save the Children Fund and Medicines Sans Frontieres. Diseases once well controlled, like leprosy, tuberculosis
and sleeping sickness, spread easily under prevailing conditions and reached epidemic proportions in the northern provinces. Malaria is epidemic across much of the country, while the incidence of TB and leprosy has been rising markedly in Luanda. During the first four months of 1998, over 1,000 cases of TB and 40 of leprosy were recorded in the capital.

The State of the Economy
Economically, the war has also been devastating. Industrial production in non-oil sectors is still far below the levels achieved just before independence in 1975. The exodus of nearly all skilled and semi-skilled Portuguese, coupled with the removal or sabotage of factories and plant, dealt the new state a cruel blow, from which it has never recovered. Coupled with the dislocations of the war, this explains the very modest changes to the sectoral employment of the labour force, especially in industry, over a 30-year period (Table 1). Diamond mining continued until UNITA's capture of the most lucrative mines in Lunda Norte, depriving the government of up to US$350 million per annum in revenue which was used instead to fund UNITA's arms purchases. In recent years, the state has received only US$90 to 100 million from diamond mining, although new prospecting ventures have been underway. As mentioned above, virtually all the diamond mines are now once more under Government control. Commercial agriculture also collapsed after 1975; coffee and cotton production is still insignificant.

Official corruption in the war economy governed by shortages – but with vast riches in the oil trade – has become widespread. In January 1998, the government revealed that more than three-quarters of the 40,000 supposed veterans of the independence war who had been receiving state benefits (mostly MPLA supporters), were fraudulent claimants. Most people survive via *candongo*, the informal or parallel economy. Even since the Lusaka Protocol, the state's capacity to provide services and pay salaries has continued to collapse as a result of disillusionment, bankruptcy, corruption, the endless delays in the peace process and return of UNITA areas to government control and the like. The government has resorted to devaluation of the Kwanza as a crisis management tool, resulting in high inflation rates which peaked at 31.5% per month in 1995. However, the 'New Life Programme' introduced in 1996 with the objective of balancing the budget, succeeded in bringing down inflation dramatically, to a manageable 6% in December 1996. IMF data suggest an annualised 92% by June 1997. However, a further devaluation of 25% in July 1997 still failed to close the gap between the official and parallel exchange rates, and seemed to revive the previous vicious spiral. The fall in the oil price during April and May 1998 will squeeze government expenditure further and probably renew inflationary pressures.

It is only the steady recent expansion of oil production that has kept the country vaguely afloat, and which holds the key to the future. The government has accorded the highest priority to safeguarding oil installations and the security of investments by foreign companies. Output rose from roughly 350,000 barrels per day (b/d) in the mid-1980s, to 500,000 b/d in 1993 and some 760,000 b/d by 1997. This level is comparable to that of Argentina or India, but less than half of Nigeria's 2 million b/d. The major producer companies in Angola in 1997 were Chevron (roughly 57%), Elf Aquitaine (26%) and Total (15%). However, new entrants to the Angolan fields, including BP and BHP Petroleum, are diversifying the industry and in time will dilute the historic dominance of US and French companies. The state oil company, SONANGOL, retains a 4% stake in all concessions by means of production sharing contracts,
and from 1998 is taking a 20% stake in all new concessions as a full partner.

Virtually all Angola’s output is exported, some 70% of it to the US, although earnings have been depressed by the current low world market price of crude oil. Since Angola is not a member of OPEC, that organisation’s recent agreement to cut production in order to boost the price is unlikely to have any effect on Angola’s output. Nevertheless, the Riyadh Pact of 22 March 1998 immediately heralded a modest price recovery, but this fell back to $14 per barrel by late May, cutting projected annual revenue to the state by $1bn and heralding another major public expenditure squeeze.

Notwithstanding the oil boom, Angola’s foreign debt built up rapidly, from negligible levels in the early 1980s to US$11bn in 1995. The trade deficit in the same year was estimated at US$3.2bn. However, estimates vary: the Economist Intelligence Unit puts the 1995 figures at US$13.742bn and US$892m respectively; its provisional estimates for 1997 are US$11.050bn and US$700m respectively.

The US is Angola’s principal trading partner, purchasing oil and exporting US$270 million of consumer and capital goods to Angola in 1996. By virtue of the oil industry, the US is also the largest foreign investor in Angola. Portugal, the former colonial power, remains the most important source of Angolan imports (c. 25%). Outside of Europe and the US, Brazil is Angola’s largest trading partner. Trade with China has risen rapidly in the last few years, more than doubling from 1994 to 1995, and reaching approximately US$300m in 1996. Over 80% of this bilateral trade represented oil sector exports to China. By contrast with the high debt and trade figures, official development assistance (foreign aid) in 1995 totalled a modest US$423 million, or US$40 per capita (Table 1). During 1996 and 1997, aid fell well short of humanitarian requirements and those needed to support the peace process, thereby exacerbating the plight of displaced people and retarding the ability to retrain and resettle demobilised soldiers. This was a major contributory factor to the high level of desertions from demobilisation quartering areas mentioned above.

| Table 1: Angola: Economic & Social Indicators |
| --- | --- |
| **Estimated population** | 1994 | 10.5 million |
| **Life expectancy at birth** | 1960 | 33.0 years |
|  | 1994 | 47.2 years |
| **Total fertility rate** | 1994 | 7.2 |
| **Infant mortality rate** | 1960 | 208 |
|  | 1994 | 120 |
| **Adult literacy rate** | 1994 | 42.5% |
| **Gross educational enrolment ratio** | 1980 | 54% |
|  | 1994 | 31% |
| **Real GDP per capita (PPPS)** | 1994 | 1,600 |
| **UNDP Human Development Index** | 1994 | 0.335 |
| **Country rank of (7) minus country rank of (8)** | 1975-80 | -24 |
|  | 1990-96 | 17% |
| **Population with access to safe water** | 1960 | 81 |
|  | 1990 | 75 |
| **Percentage of labour force in agriculture** | 1960 | 8 |
|  | 1990 | 8 |
| **Percentage of labour force in industry** | 1960 | 6 |
|  | 1990 | 12 |
| **Percentage of labour force in services** | 1960 | 17 |
|  | 1990 | 17 |
| **Total net official development assistance** | 1995 | US$423m |
|  | per capita | US$40 |

*Source: UNDP (1997), Human Development Report*
On a more positive note, the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs launched its 1998 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Angola on 13 February, with the objective of addressing immediate humanitarian and social integration needs. It is seeking a total of US$91.2 million, to be targeted at the one million Angolans most severely affected by the war. The priorities are:

- basic emergency needs, especially for vulnerable groups;
- support for resettling and reintegrating displaced people, returnees and demobilised soldiers;
- extension of demining and mine-awareness activities;
- strengthening government capacity and
- maintaining a rapid response capacity within the UN system.

Similarly, in late April the World Bank announced a US$5m Learning Innovation Loan for a Post-Conflict Social Recovery Project to help reintegrate displaced people and revitalise rural communities at the level of municipios (local administrative units of 70,100,000 people). In a separate move, Spain recently announced US$200m in concessionary aid, in addition to US$400m in commercial credit already extended.

**Concluding Comment**

Assuming that the war does not intensify once again and that reconstruction and development are able to proceed relatively smoothly in future, it will be important for Angolans to be more assertive and to take the initiative in all spheres. This will help to avoid the establishment of dependency and neocolonial-type relations as has occurred in Mozambique, where many aid agencies and foreign NGOs have established autonomous spheres of operation beyond the control of local people or the state. Co-ordination between NGOs and official donors (both bilateral and multilateral) is imperative in order to maximise the effectiveness of resources. Efforts should ensure that the Angolan government or NGOs take over activities as soon as they are able. This is an important aspect of longer terms sustainability. Useful models already exist in the health sector (e.g. the Development Workshop in Huambo), but the experience to date of agencies like Save the Children Fund and Oxfam is mixed.

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**Ethiopia/Eritrea Conflict**

We have all associated ourselves from the 1980s with the long struggle of the Eritrean people for self-determination and of the Ethiopian people against a repressive, military regime. We are, consequently, especially saddened and shocked by the outbreak of armed conflict between the two present governments.

Our anguish is the greater because we have followed with interest the brave and potentially instructive political and social initiatives that each has taken since 1991: their shared commitment to a more open form of government, free of corruption and seeking to promote development that would benefit more than just the privileged few; the differing constitutional and political paths they have charted to pre-empt future outbreaks of political conflict in their countries. There has been the prospect of a model of politics for Africa that sacrifices the long-term well-being of the people and even their lives and security, for short-run calculations about power. The various arrangements for economic cooperation between the two countries, and their political collaboration with each other and in regional peace-keeping mechanisms have also been exemplary.

We have been horrified by the deaths, especially of civilians, that have occurred in the armed clashes and air attacks, but we are also saddened by the concern that these incidents, which can still be considered relatively mi-
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nor, may have already done irreparable harm to those encouraging developments of the 1990s. Even if peace can be negotiated without further escalation, the fragile trust between peoples as well as governments that was replacing thirty years of war has been dealt a severe blow. The prospects for development of each state - dependent on markets and supplies of food, of refined oil and other essentials from each other, on trade routes and on cooperation - may have been decisively impaired. The tragedy is Africa-wide: two of the small number of countries offering hope of a ‘renaissance’ have lost their appeal.

In these circumstances, we urge all the participants to build on the present agreement to end bombing strikes, to use the good offices of genuine international peace initiatives and seek all means that resolved the real ‘border’ disputes and other tensions through negotiations. We believe that, with the right will, the differences are not so basic that they cannot be resolved by political means.

We remain fervently committed to the causes of the liberation and development of the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea, and to peace.

The following documents, reports and comments are only a few that we have received. Comments, letters and continuing feedback from our readers would be welcome and published in the next issue.

The Editors

The war that has broken out between Eritrea and Ethiopia has surprised everyone, as it is not caused by ethnic, religious or tribal strivings for power. It is the old style of conflict between two States about the demarcation of a frontier which has claimed almost a thousand lives since mid-June. After the spectacular failure of the US attempt at mediation, the bordering States are worried about a conflict that threatens the stability of the whole of the Horn of Africa.

Why has the territorial dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which has been contained for a number of years (see article below) suddenly broken out into a murderous war about frontiers? During the first weeks of the conflict the two capitals were giving explanations that were different, but seemed similar. At Asmara the irredentism of the state of Tigray is seen as being responsible for the increasing efforts, over the last few months, to make irreversible the occupation of the area recognised as ‘contested’ by the two central governments. On 6 May, in response to an incident that had caused the death of an Eritrean a few days previously, General Gerzgigher Tesfamariam, the Eritrean commander of the Badme zone, decided to punish the local militia of Shire by forcibly occupying all the land up to the frontier. But Asmara did not expect that Addis Ababa would react publicly. It was felt that, as in the past, this must remain ‘a family quarrel’. Mr. Issayas Afewerki, the Head of State, was moreover visiting Saudi Arabia at the time ... At Addis Ababa, this demonstration of force was resented as yet one more example of the insufferable Eritrean ‘arrogance’ that had created an economic altercation between the two countries for several months, after the monetary union had been dissolved.

The alliance between the brothers in arms, forged against Mengistu, had seemed solid enough, as the two regimes established in 1991 both benefited considerably from it. However, apart from similar foreign policies, ranging from the American alliance to participation in the bloc of the ‘African renaissance’, Asmara and Addis Ababa have followed very
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Guerre absurde entre l'Ethiopie et l'Erythrée
Jean-Louis Péninou,
©Le Monde Diplomatique

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different paths, which could be seen from outside as becoming potentially antagonistic.

First as regards politics. Independent after so many years of warfare, Eritrea threw itself into constructing a unitary State: a Jacobinism accentuated by the military heritage of the maquis, which tolerated only one party, and by the character of a charismatic president, who is admired by his own people, but who is authoritarian and sometimes a solitary figure. All the big decisions on internal policy taken since 1991 secularism, the introduction of national service, the absence of official languages, the administrative boundary changes – have been motivated by the concern to make irreversible the internal unity that had been forged during the war of a ‘mosaic’ country, which is almost as ethnically, religiously and linguistically different as is neighbouring Ethiopia. The only real ideology of the Eritrean regime is an undeviating nationalism. The favourite emblem of the new State is the geographical map of the country (Endnote), rather than the flag (which was initially only that of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front – EPLF), or the camel (which is the official symbol of the country since 1991).

The policy of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in Ethiopia has been radically different. The 1995 Constitution established an advanced ‘ethnic federalism’, which has given birth to veritable small states within Ethiopia. This daring construction, which goes quite against Ethiopian history, has collided with the simultaneous refusal of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) which represent barely one-tenth of the population, to share its power. The regime of Mr. Meles Zenawi, which was already the target of the fury of the old elites, often of Amhara origin, hostile to federalism and traumatised by the ‘loss of Eritrea’, has had to deal with the armed opposition of other ethnically-based movements who have been distanced from power. This fragmentation was accentuated when Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was unable to prevent the development of a secret struggle within the TPLF itself, with the more nationalistic Tigrayans being ill-disposed towards Eritrea. He removed them from Addis Ababa, leaving them the control of the regional state of Tigray.

Then there was the question of economic policy. The dream of the Eritrean experts is Singapore: financial liberalism, production for export, distrust of uncontrolled foreign aid. The dream of the Ethiopians is South Korea: control of trade, extensive investments and maximum foreign aid. The two visions are very different from one another, although based on a common reality, one of devastated infrastructures, and of peasants and livestock herders permanently on the edge of starvation.

The decision of the Eritreans to introduce their own currency, the nacfa, in November 1997, in order to be able to control their foreign financial transactions, has upset the coexistence of these two policies. The two countries agreed, at the end of the war in 1991, to establish free trade between themselves, as well as free access of Ethiopia to the ports that had become Eritrean. The breaking up of the monetary union suddenly made the ‘frontier’ a concrete reality, especially between Tigray and Eritrea. In addition the new need of the Ethiopians to conduct their trade in dollars has made the use of the ports of Massawa and Assab very expensive for the Ethiopian importers, as also the cost of food supplies for the Eritreans. An acrimonious climate has thus been developing for several months between the two countries. Mr. Meles Zenawi has constantly been accused by his opponents of favouring Eritrea at the expense of Ethiopia and he thus seized the opportunity, in the economic field, of showing that he was indeed the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and not only the Secretary-General of the TPLF.
The sudden rupture in the Asmara-Addis Ababa axis will obviously have serious consequences in the region as a whole. Apart from the Sudanese officials, who cannot get over their good luck, the situation is worrying for everyone. Each and everyone is rushing in to offer their good offices in this 'absurd conflict', from the Libyan Muammar Khadafi to the Djiboutian Hassan Gouled, not to mention Italy, Egypt, Rwanda, the United States and Zimbabwe. The spectacular failure of the American mediation, which was carried out on the spot as from 16 May by the under-secretary of State of Africa, Ms. Susan Rice, showed up the fragility of the 'American bloc' in the region, constituted by new authoritarian, but enlightened rulers and exemplified by the meteoric campaign of Mr. Laurent Désiré Kabila in 'democratic' Congo. Ms. Rice's inexperience also contributed to the lack of success of these efforts. In the Horn, perhaps more than elsewhere in Africa, the local actors use the big powers even though they are their clients. The compromise proposed by the United States and Rwanda on 31 May (a retreat from the Eritrean position on 6 May, further discussions on the borders based on the colonial demarcations) seemed a fair one, but it was too vague, or was completed too soon. Neither Ethiopia nor Eritrea could afford to lose face before the United States; but once the war was declared, neither Mr. Meles Zenawi nor Mr. Issayas Afwerki was able to lose face vis-à-vis their own respective publics.

What is one of the most dramatic consequences since the start of the conflict is that in the short space of a few short weeks, there has been a virulent outbreak of passion, especially in Tigray and Ethiopia, but also in Eritrea, although to a lesser degree. The potential victims of this regression of hatred are clear: the hundreds of thousands of Eritreans who are living in Ethiopia, especially in Addis Ababa, and the tens of thousands of Ethiopians, especially Tigrayans, who work in Eritrea.

The urgent mission of the different mediators is to put a stop to the spiralling warfare. Italian diplomacy managed, on 15 June, to obtain a cease-fire in aerial attacks. But, humiliated by their military defeats over the last few weeks, the rulers at Addis seem tempted to rush headlong into an effort, for example, to reconquer Assab and the Eritrean Dankalia. Apart from getting 'access to the sea', this would perhaps gain support for them from some of their opposition. But then there would be total war between the two countries. The internal political situation of the Ethiopian prime minister is so precarious that the mediators must try to press for a solution which does not lead to the downfall of his regime in Addis Ababa.

Origins of a Conflict

For the past two years, the two governments had formed a secret committee to solve the destiny of the 'contested areas', but it hardly got beyond listing the points of dispute. On paper, the Eritrean case looks more convincing: the declarations of 14 and 20 May 1998 only claim the 'colonial frontier', in other words the line drawn at the beginning of the century between the kingdom of Italy and the empire of Ethiopia. The line was verified in several international agreements which took place after the defeat of the Italian troops at Adua in 1896. The main one was a tripartite treaty between the British, the Italians and the Ethiopians, dated 15 May 1902, and it demarcated the western and central part of the frontier, where the recent incidents took place. From west to east, starting at the Sudanese frontier at Khor Urn Hagger, the demarcation follows the river Tekezze (Setit) until it joins the river Mereb then, in a straight line it goes north to the river Mereb again, where the latter is joined by the river Ambessa. It then follows the Mereb along much of the central plateau and then, towards the east, its tributary the Melessa and finally the river Muna.
There is no indication of the Ethiopian government contesting this demarcation line, which has not been changed since 1902. It is reproduced in all the Ethiopian tourist and administrative maps, including those which were supplied to the foreign embassies on 19 May by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Addis Ababa.

But the Eritreans accuse the local authorities of Tigray of using another map, published in 1997 at Makelle, the capital of the province. This map attributes to Ethiopia small pockets of territory situated to the north of the Melessa-Muna line (Tserona, Belissa, Alitenia) and a rather larger one, which is to the west of the straight line between the Tekesse and the Mereb: the area of Badme, site of the incidents which brought things to a head at the beginning of May.

Virtually no one lived in the Badme area in 1902 and the name was given to a plain that was traversed by the frontier. Situated below the Abyssinian plain, it prolonged a zone of low-lying, semi-arid land which stretched to the west as far as Sudan, as part of the Gash-Setit region of Eritrea.

During the last decades, the region has become increasingly populated by peasants coming down from the Eritrean and Tigrayan high plateaux, as well as from Kunama villages, whose inhabitants were the oldest occupants in the area. When Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia by the United Nations in 1952, the 1902 boundary was no longer important and Ras Mengesha, Lord of Tigray, was not over concerned about it, developing agricultural estates along the frontier which were administered by the Tigrayan district of Shire. Since then the area has been subject to periodic disputes. In 1976 and in 1981, for example, the guerrillas of the Eritrean Liberation Front and those of the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front clashed with each other in this area.

But the two rebellions were allied against the regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam and, after the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front took over control of the Eritrean maquisards, the question was provisionally shelved, although the Mengistu regime complicated it still further in 1987 when it changed the administrative borders.

At the end of the war, in 1991, the Tigrayans continued to consider this area as their own, even though the soldiers of both countries were patrolling it. The intergovernmental committee thus found that the situation was clear on paper - the two States, as well as the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations, officially accepted the 'colonial' demarcation of the frontiers - but it was very confused on the ground itself. All the more so that the 1902 treaty had amended this self-same region as it had been defined in a 1900 treaty, specifically incorporating into Eritrea all the territory belonging to the Kunamas, who however had obviously not been concerned about an imaginary straight line traced across the plain.

In the central part of the frontier, the same situation of administrative ambiguity has prevailed since 1991 in the small pockets of territory that had been claimed in the programme of the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front in the 1970s. But at least this western and central part of the Eritrean/Ethiopian border is clearly defined on paper. The same cannot be said of the eastern frontier, all along the Red Sea coast that separates Eritrean Dankalia from the Ethiopian Afar region down as far as Djibouti. The 1908 treaty, which marked out this frontier, laid down that it should run parallel to the coastline at a distance of 60 kilometres, stipulating that a joint commission should demarcate it on the spot at some future time. But when the United Nations opened up the case forty years later, it found no trace of any demarcation line.
Locally, the limits between the former Italian colony and Ethiopia are known well enough, but several points have been contested. This is especially so at Bada Adi Murug, occupied last year by the Ethiopians, where the frontier passes through the middle of a small fertile region dominating from afar the gulf of Thio, as well as at Burie, on the route to Assab.


Many thanks to Le Monde Diplomatique (July 1998) for permission to use this article and to Victoria Bawtree for her unofficial translation.

Why? The Eritrean-Ethiopian Conflict

The Institute for African Alternatives is an independent research institute working, among other things, on conflict and conflict resolution across the continent. Having monitored events in the Greater Horn for many years, we were caught completely off guard by the sudden outbreak of hostilities along the Eritrean-Ethiopian border. On 1 July 1998 IFAA hosted a meeting and discussion. The following are excerpts from that discussion. The full text is available from the rapporteur, Axel Klein at IFAA.

We have here representatives of NGOs, members of the Eritrean and Ethiopian communities in London, scholars and journalists and others with an interest in the region. I would like to thank you all for coming and look forward to your contributions to the discussion tonight.

The meeting has two objectives: first, to address the actual outbreak of hostilities itself. We hope that the speakers and the debate can deepen our understanding of the root causes of the conflict, of long standing grievances and underlying tensions between the two countries. The second objective is to explore the possibilities for a peaceful resolution, and the mechanisms by which this can be achieved. We hope that a clear, objective account of the causes can help in formulating instruments by which a settlement can be reached.

Ragnhild Ek, TV Producer: I came back two weeks ago from producing a series of news feature covering both sides in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea for Channel 4 News. We went out on the Saturday 6th of May, on the day after the bombing of Asmara airport and of the school in Makalle itself. We interviewed Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, went north to Tigray to see the school in Makalle where 48 people were killed by cluster bombs, and on to Adigrat in Tigray before returning to Addis Ababa. We then continued to Eritrea where we interviewed President Issias Afewerki to get the Eritrean position and went to the frontline in the disputed border areas around Badme.

There is currently a stalemate in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea: the Ethiopians won’t talk unless the Eritreans withdraw their troops from the positions they took in May and the Eritreans will only withdraw if international observers are in place. Attempts so far to find a peaceful solution to this conflict have ranged from the USA to Rwandan effort as facilitators to visits by an OAU delegation, the Italians, the Egyptians, President Kabila in person, and now the Dutch.

As we speak, an OAU mission of ambassadors from Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Djibouti are en route to Asmara to investigate the reasons for this unexpected and tragic war, to collect information about the disputed areas and to establish the facts of the events over the past year leading up to the outbreak of fighting in May.
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The theories which are put forward as reasons behind the conflict, range from that of the most obvious, a straightforward border dispute of where the borders are and where they should be, to speculations about economic agendas and different internal problems.

The Ethiopian claim that their country was invaded by Eritrean forces is denied by Eritrea. As a newly independent small state, its government maintains the importance of its colonial boundaries, and it maintains that it is not making any territorial claims further than the beyond colonial borders, making it a test-case for the OAU, stressing the need for demarcation and delineation wherever needed.

What is evident is that there has been a series of unresolved issues under the surface that many outsiders were not always aware of. More than a war between Eritrea and Ethiopia it appears to be a war between the old brothers in arms, the Eritreans and the Tigrayans.

The things that we found disturbing and surprising not least in the context of having been visiting the region regularly for the past 15 years were the propaganda levels, which was particularly high in on the Ethiopian side. There was a clear difference in attitude on the two sides. The language in the Ethiopian media was very much the language used during the Dergs time. The television was pushing out stories about the enemies, the Eritreans, with highly inflated claims of their own victories such as the figure of 11,000 injured or killed Eritrean soldiers during one single weekend. This would mean that three entire brigades have been almost wiped out in one go. The Eritreans, on the other hand, did not give much away by way of figures, or of their opinion on the Ethiopians, and particularly the Tigrayans.

The accusations against the Eritreans were similar to the ones used in the past by the Tigrayans against the Amharas. In Tigray, there was a lot of old anti-Eritrean feelings running deep, as Tigrayans accused them of everything form arrogance to exploitation. The Tigrayan-Eritrean friendship has changed to enmity.

Hence, the most disturbing element were the signs of ethnic cleansing which seemed to be underway. This very morning the UN High Commissioner for Human rights, Mary Robinson issued a statement deploiring the expulsion of Eritreans from Ethiopia. Several thousands have been picked up from the streets, from their cars, or their homes, taken to camps and expelled. They are given notice to sell their business within three weeks for which there are no buyers - and say they have their bank accounts frozen. Their passports are stamped Never to return. The Ethiopians claim it to be a sort of retaliation for what happened in Asmara in 1991, when Derg collaborators were forced to leave the new country, and the authorities are accusing those being expelled of being spies, and of financially supporting the Eritrean war machine.

The tragic consequences are potentially enormous on a personal and individual level for the Eritreans, but also for Ethiopia and the region as a whole. We used to talk about the ‘New Beginning’, of an ‘African Renaissance’, on a political but also an economic level. Many of those expelled were running successful small businesses. As late as in March 1998 a very big investment conference was convened at the Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa, with some 600 people discussing investment opportunities in Ethiopia as well as in the wider region. Hopes ran high as debates centred on how to invest and how to move towards a bright and wonderful future. This is now being jeopardized.

The importance of having a speedy resolution to this conflict cannot be overstated. Not only because this is a war which should never have happened. Not only because war is horrendous on hu-
manitarian level. But also because of the political and economic consequences for the entire region, and the renewed risk of destabilisation in a region which was finally gearing itself for economic take-off.

Patrick Gilkes, writer & broadcaster: In May 1991 the EPLF (now the Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice, PFDJ) took over in Asmara, and Eritrea achieved de facto independence (formal, de jure independence came in May 1993, after the referendum). That same month the EPRDF took power in Addis Ababa. There was a general, not unreasonable, assumption that Ethiopia and Eritrea were entering upon a new and friendly relationship. The war was over, Mengistu was gone, and the close relationship between the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) the central and controlling element of the EPRDF, and the EPLF indicated the possibilities of a new relationship.

Agreements that were made in 1991 and 1993 allowed for the reciprocal rights of citizens, for Eritrea's use of Ethiopia's birr for an amicable division of assets, regulated Ethiopias use of Assab to minimize the effects of its loss of a coastline, and so on. Any friction appeared to be minor and certainly solvable with goodwill. Those in Ethiopia who remained opposed to Eritrea's independence appeared cowed or, at the least, grudgingly acceptant.

It is now clear that this was somewhat illusory, and in fact, the relationship of the TPLF and EPLF was always rather more fraught than had been allowed to appear publicly. The EPLF, of course, had played a significant role in setting up the TPLF in the mid 1970s, supplying advice, arms, training and even some personnel. This was gratefully received. Less satisfactory was the assumption by the EPLF that it was the senior partner in any relationship, and that its views should take precedence. Indeed, TPLF irritation at being patronised by the EPLF, and the latters assumption of superiority, have remained an active irritant to many in the TPLF.

In the mid-1980s a problem arose over ideology, largely revolving around the practicality of how to react to the USSR. This became apparent after Meles' rise to authority and the setting up of the TPLFs ideological inner party, the Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray, whose roots lay in the links with Albania and China. The MLLT established links with Eritrean marxist groups, notably the Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Eritrea. These links remain active, and the DMLE and ELF central leadership which has similar ideological persuasions, were allowed to continue to have centres in Tigray until about two years ago (much to the annoyance of the EPLF/PFDJ). As the relationship deteriorated, the EPLF refused to allow relief supplies to pass through EPLF territory on the way to TPLF held areas. Many Tigrayans have found this hard to forgive.

Relations improved sharply in 1987-88, after the EPLF victory at Afabet and the TPLFs success at Enda Selassie. It became clear that Mengistu could be defeated militarily and ousted; there was the real possibility of taking over Addis Ababa. As a result the TPLF, where Meles authority was by then fully established, took the pragmatic decision to moderate its ideological stance, and to restore its alliance with the EPLF. EPLF units played a significant role in the final overthrow of Mengistu's army inside Ethiopia and the capture of military bases near Addis Ababa, entering Addis Ababa with the TPLF.

The renewal of the relationship and the alliance was founded on pragmatic and political decisions based on the events of 1987-921, and almost immediately ran into difficulties. Indeed, the independence of Eritrea, whether de facto or de jure, produced an entirely new set of problems, partly because it appears that nei-
ther the strategic nor the economic effects had been properly thought through. For Ethiopia, there was the real or, equally, the perceived effects of having about half a million Eritreans continuing in Ethiopia with free access to jobs, at a time when a claimed 150,000 Ethiopians were abruptly expelled from Eritrea in 1991 and 1992.

The Ethiopian governments failure to protest over the expulsions was much resented. There was a general, and largely accurate, belief that there was nor real reciprocity over access to employment, and that it was Eritrea and Eritreans who had largely benefited at the expense of Ethiopia. Eritrea was seen as obtaining a significant trade advantage by the continued use of Ethiopias birr, acquired in the shape of loans at independence, which were then used to export Ethiopian produce, notably coffee and obtain hard currencies, for Eritrea rather than Ethiopia. According to recent Ethiopian claims, Eritrea has made little or no efforts to meet any of the repayment schedules, possibly regarding the loans as reparations. A growing Tigrayan middle class has been showing some unease over this apparently pro-Eritrean economic policy and over Ethiopia's relationship with Sudan. This is widely perceived for Eritrea's benefit rather than Ethiopia or Tigray. Certainly, one effect has been to nullify the value of Tigray's acquisition of an international border with Sudan and the constitutional changes of 1995.

In Eritrea, there have been a number of similar issues that have caused irritation and concern, from the original refusal of Ethiopia to provide any reparations (though it left significant assets behind), to the wrath of industry in Tigray, which has effected fledgling industries in Eritrea. Border controls have effected food supplies into Eritrea, and Ethiopia's decision to import refined oil products and essentially limit its use of the aging Assab oil refinery, while commercially defensible, caused financial loss to Eritrea. Most recently there has been the introduction of the new currencies, the nakfa in Eritrea, and the new birr note in Ethiopia. Ethiopia's subsequent insistence on the use of letters of credit and hard currency in virtually all commercial exchanges destroyed the main value of the operation for Eritrea, which had hoped to use the introduction of the nakfa to solve its shortage of currency reserves; the major source is overseas remittances.

It is against this background that the highly complicated set of border problems should be seen. There are several points of disagreement along the border: Om Hager/Humera in the west; Badume and the Yirga triangle around Sheraro, between the Merab and the Takazze rivers; Tserona and Zalembessa north of Adigrat; Alitiena and Irob; Badda and the northern Dankalia depression; and Bore on the road to Assab. The most serious clashes have been in the Yirga triangle, around Zalembessa and Alitiena and in Bore.

The situation in each of these is different, and complex and neither maps nor historical background can necessarily be relied upon to provide solutions. For example: Alitiena is certainly shown by most maps as a part of Eritrea, but it is also usually identified as part of the district of Irob. Irob has always been administered from Ethiopia, and was traditionally a part of Agame, back to 16th century at least. The three main lineages in Irob are largely Christian, though they have at times paid tribute/taxes to Afar sultans; and most certainly consider themselves Tigrayans. Irob has some significance because of its salt, which is exported through Eritrea; and also because of its position. Whoever controls Irob can dominate Badda down below in the depression, and Badda has the best land/water in the northern depression. To complicate the issue, this is an area of interest to the Afar Revolutionary United Front (ARDUF), which has been and is still, fighting for the unity of Afars within Ethiopia and Eritrea, a
policy which brings it into conflict with both the EPLF/PFDJ in Eritrea and the TPLF in Ethiopia.

The issue at Badume, and in the Yirga triangle is complicated by the fact that the areas has been settled over the past two or tree generations by Tigrayans from central Tigray regions; and by Eritrean farmers from the Hamasien. However, Much of the area was previously inhabited, and is still used, by the Kunama whose main centre is Barentu, further north in Eritrea. Historically the Kunama, were resistant to the idea of an independent Eritrea, and fought for the Ethiopian government against EPLF and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) during the war. A significant number of Kunama now live around Axum inside Ethiopia; there is also a Kunama organisation, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Gash and Setit, operating, on a small scale, inside Eritrea. With both central Eritrea and Tigray region suffering from land shortages, and the possibility of gold exploitation in the area, the possibilities for dispute are considerable.

The additional dimension in this area is that after 1961 and the start of the Eritrean struggle this was always an ELF operational area. When the ELF were ousted from Eritrea in 1981, with the TPLF assisting the EPLF, it was the TPLF which took over in the Badme areas, making Sheraro a major base, though the EPLF did keep a presence at Shillalao. There were discussions between the TPLF and the EPLF over these areas even before the expulsion of the ELF, in the late 1970s. Meles critics claim he agreed then that the area was Eritrean. There may be some doubt over the reliability of this claim, but certainly there were agreements to solve any disputes after the war, indeed a boundary commission was set up in 1993.

It wasn't the first time that there has been a boundary commission, but none of the previous agreements have proved satisfactory, partly because the status of the boundary has changed several times.

There were agreements in 1900, 1902, 1908 but one quote from the 1908 agreement underlines the resultant problems of interpretations: ‘the boundary proceeds in a southwesterly direction parallel to and at a distance of 60 km from the coast until it joins the French possession of Somalia’. There have been alternations made following political changes. In 1936/7 the Italians redefined the administrative boundaries within its East African Empire. After 1941 when Britain administered Eritrea under a UN mandate, the former Italian/Ethiopian boundary, with all its imperfections, was restored. This was presumably the line used in 1952-62 to define the border during the Ethio-Eritrean federation. After 1962, the border was by definition, an Ethiopian provincial boundary and, in practice subject to changes at the whims of the Eritrean governors, particularly Ras Mengesh Seyoum in Tigray region. The further changes made in the 1980s when colonel Mengistou made Assab an autonomous region and a separate administrative area. This was deliberate decision to try and gain Afar support and weaken support for the EPLF in southern Eritrea. It had a considerable impact on Afar politics and as the appearance of ARDUF demonstrates, the effects remain. Now, of course, the border is an international boundary again, with all the previous imperfections still unresolved.

It is hardly helpful to talk in terms of who started the actual fighting. It is, however, pertinent to note that a separate military logic of mobilisation and political necessity took over almost immediately after the original clashes, rapidly replacing desire for settlement despite continued protestations by both sides that they were moderate, non-aggressive, conciliatory and that conflict was unthinkable and unacceptable. Similarly, the issue of who dropped the first bomb remains difficult to disentangle, though if Ethiopia made the first air attack, it was Eritrea which appears to have aimed at civilians rather than at military targets. Its strike on the
primary school did much to fuel Ethiopian anger and led to strident demands in Ethiopia for retaliations, it is, perhaps, worth making the point that the reason for any moratorium on air attacks would appear would have little to do with any regret for casualties, or with pressure from outside powers. There is every reason to believe neither airforce was in any position to carry out any more operations due to shortages of technical support and pilots as well as functional aircraft.

Almost everyone has attempted to mediate: the US, Rwanda, the UN and the OAU, Djibouti, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and others. It was perhaps the US/Rwandan effort, which came nearest in the first weeks of the crisis, but significantly, it failed at the hurdle of persuading the Eritreans to withdraw their forces to positions held before 12 May, and reinstate the administration in place before 12 May. This was not acceptable as it meant Eritrea was backing down, and a central point in this crises is that neither Prime Minister Meles Zenawi nor President Issayas Aferworki of Eritrea can afford to be seen to back down. Both are rather weaker politically than they have been and both have seen this crises as a valuable way to tap into national feeling and regain support slipping away because of other factors. Meles has been under heavy pressure even within the TLF, as well as in the EPRDF, to prove his Ethiopian credentials. He is seen and he would indeed deny his position as architect and the chief proponent of a strongly pro-Eritrean/Ethiopian foreign policy. There has, however, been growing opposition to this going back several months. A number of individuals within the TLF have made their doubts clear. Some have positioned themselves to take advantage of the crisis, and possible repercussions within Ethiopia can not be discounted.

Similarly, Issayas has been facing a series of problems over the economy and over food shortages, as well as growing criticism of the governments land policy and over such issues as democracy and pluralism, Islam, corruption and the governments continued and strident anti-Sudanese policy. There have even been some rumbles of discontent in the army. The immediate political weaknesses of both leaders have arisen from economic disagreements and longer terms unresolved boundary disputes, play a major role in pushing both sides into conflict. Again, the logic of conflict has already exacerbated the problems and will continue to do so, with resentment building up over the cancellation of flights, Ethiopia's diversion of ships from Assab and Massawa, and the stopping of cross border food trade. This affects both Tigrayan farmers and Eritrean consumers, but it has particular significance for Eritrea, which has a structural food deficit and needs to import some 80% of food needs. It has already been affected by the 1996 monetisation. Introduced without sufficient consultation with donors, it seriously affected food aid in 1997, Eritrea received some 320,000 tons, but the 1997 pledges only reached 79,000 tons. Another immediate effect has been the displacement of thousands of people, over 180,000 according to Ethiopia; and the expulsions on both sides, providing both countries substantial opportunities to exaggerate both the treatments of their nationals and the brutality of the other.

Longer-term effects should be mentioned briefly which will not easily disappear. There will be an obvious effect on the GDP of two of the poorest countries in the world, and it is likely that the conflict will also effect rates of investment unfavourably, lead to higher rates of inflation, the depreciation of exchange rates, dwindling foreign exchange reserves, increased unemployed, and an ill-affordable increase in defence expenditures.

There is one other point which should be mentioned briefly, the wider strategic dimension, and the associated if unspo-
ken rivalry, for regional hegemony which both would like to achieve. This is not the first time Eritrea has been involved in a border dispute. It had problems with Sudan in 1993/4, though this subsequently escalated into something more following Eritrea's support for Sudan's opposition; with Yemen over the Hamish islands in 1995, a dispute which went to international arbitration and over which the court is due to reach a decision later this year, possibly in October; with Djibouti in 1996 over a narrow strip of land which, like the Hamish islands, commands the Baeb el Mandeb straits in the Red Sea; and now Ethiopia.

The disputes with Yemen and Djibouti have clear ramification in terms of Red Sea security and Israel's role in the region. Israel is a close ally of Eritrea, as indeed with Ethiopia. In the case of Sudan, of course, Eritrea's policy reflects US concerns and aims in containing Islamist policies, rather than Eritrea's own immediate needs. Indeed, many of Eritrea's neighbours see this dispute as part of a pattern of trying to solve political problems by military means, a deliberate policy to establish Eritrea's position in the world, to increase awareness that Eritrea is now an independent country. It is a point that was underlined by President Issayas vigorous, if highly undiplomatic, and to many offensive denunciation of the OAU when he first addressed it in 1993, and his almost equally critical approach to the UN, as well as by his insistence on Eritrea's position vis-à-vis the UNHCR, ICRC and other international agencies. Similarly the government still insists, as it did during the independence struggle, on the inaccurate but politically necessary claim that Eritrea is self-sufficient.

One effect of past arrogance is that Eritrea now has to look for friends rapidly. It has been finding it rather harder than expected, with the US appearing to favour Ethiopia; and Israel has kept a very low profile; Arab states have been ambivalent despite receiving delegations from both sides. By July both countries were sending delegations to Europe in their search for international support.

Inevitably, with tens of thousands of troops in place along the border, there is a serious risk of further conflict, if only because soldiers do like to use their weapons. The build-up has continued; the rhetoric hasn't scaled down; there are strong political pressures for victory; both sides need to win. It suggests that no quick end is likely, if real war breaks out. Neither leader is likely to back down; neither will find withdrawal easy to survive politically. President Issayas has said the problem is now a matter of 'tradition, prestige, and pride'. These are not categories conducive to a negotiated settlement or peaceful solutions.

Consul Afewerki Abraha, the Eritrean Embassy: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak briefly and outline the current crises between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Let me introduce myself, I was on of those people to be transferred straight from the field to a post in Addis Ababa, and then to the Eritrean embassy at Addis as consul. So I was part of all the process that was going on in Ethiopia. It is very difficult now to talk of the relationship between the EPLF and the TPLF, and the triangle between those and the Ethiopian government. But as you are aware, from 1975 when the TPLF was founded, the TPLF was one of the organisations that contributed to the EPLF, and we have been working together to oust Mengistu, and at the end we were liberated and a new government established in Asmara. Now, people write in the newspapers that Eritrea was awarded independence for the help it provided in ousting Mengistu.

I would like to say to that the Eritreans fought for their independence for more than 30 years, all alone, against all the odds and it is amazing to hear that we were awarded independence because we
helped the Ethiopians to oust Mengistu. It is not that; we fought for our independence and we succeeded militarily and politically.

The relationship between the governments in TPLF dominated government in Ethiopia, and the Eritrean government was very close. This incident, I mean the border conflict, was very minor compared to what we have been trying to do together in terms of integrating our economies, trying to change and influence the region. I was a bit astonished to hear what Patrick Gilkes had to say about the government of Eritrea. Until recently it was part of the 'Renaissance of Africa', with motivated leadership, new African states who are trying to fight corruption, those who have been fighting mismanagement, bad governance – all this was said about this new leadership in the two countries. I can not say that we were having the same policies, the same understanding on all the political, social and economic issues.

But the tradition had started during the war of liberation, so we tried to coordinate to fight poverty, to fight backwardness, we tried to coordinate our foreign policy to try to upgrade the status of the region. Some people say that it is economic problems that triggered this crisis. No, it is not economic problems. Some people say that its is the issuance of the nakfa that created this problem, but it is not.

We and the Ethiopians wanted to achieve full integration as time went on, and to become more similar. Of course we tried to convince the Ethiopians that the issuance of the nakfa was for the benefit of both Ethiopia and Eritrea but later on when they wanted to have hard currency, the US dollar, as means of international exchange, we accepted it. This was not the cause of the conflict. On the other hand, the border conflict did not start in the last six months; during the war of liberation there were claims on land in the border region, but at that time it was not considered a big issue, as we had to find a common enemy.

After liberation, minor border conflicts in the Badame areas and elsewhere took place. From the Eritrean side we thought this could be handled amicably, and locally. And there were a series of meetings with the leadership of the TPLF to solve this border issue. For us what was shocking was the declarations of the TPLF on the 12th of May, and then the cabinet ministers of Ethiopia, and then the parliament declaring that 'Eritrea is the aggressor, that they have occupied Ethiopian territory and that unless they withdraw their forces unconditionally they will use all the means they have in their capacity'. This was shocking for Eritreans, and even for the parliament itself because we always thought that Ethiopia and Eritrea were close friends. And we can see how they tried to blow up this minor border incident into a big issue. The first was to cut all sea and air connections with Eritrea. Ethiopian Airlines, giving technical reasons disconnected all flights. All ships diverted their cargo to Djibouti. At the same time telecommunication between Asmara and Addis Ababa were cut off. Well, to be brief, the bombing of Asmara, the launch of military offensives on all the front lines, and last, the forceful expulsion of Eritreans who have been living in Ethiopia for so many years. They have not committed anything; they are not a security risk, it is only because they are Eritreans. All the inflammatory propaganda campaigns, all the fabrication of lies, to cover this military adventurism. These lies are even unmatched by their predecessors.

On the Eritrean side, there are no inflammatory campaigns against the Ethiopian people; we know that this crises can be solved, but it is really horrible to try to play on the emotions and passion of the Ethiopian people, to stir hatred and passions between the Ethiopian and the
Eritrean people. And with all these efforts until now, we are ready to withdraw from the contested areas, if only if neutral observers can come to monitor; then we can start dialogue, negotiation and demarcation of the area. All this is the basis for solving this minor boundary crisis. And what I have no time to go into now is the importance of the acceptance and adherence to the colonial border, otherwise it is a Pandora's box, open to all third world countries. This has been supported and accepted by the UN and OAU charter. Eritrea, Ethiopia and the entire third world boundaries have been demarcated by the colonisers and this has been accepted at different international meetings as the boundaries between the states. That is why we have been confident that the areas we are occupying have never been part of Ethiopia, and are Eritrean territory.

**Consul Osman Beshir from the Embassy of Ethiopia:** I am going to talk on the problems between Eritrea and Ethiopia, very friendly countries until this interruption. The problem is a border problem, which was created very recently. These two countries have been in cooperation both economically and politically because they are both members of IGAAD. Now the existing problem, the border problem, the area now occupied by the Eritrean government really belongs to Ethiopia.

Our request is, and we will continue proposing this, that the Eritreans withdraw from the areas they occupied. Then, let's negotiate, let's discuss, that's what we have to focus on. This proposal is supported by the US, Rwanda, and the OAU. But the Eritrean government remains stubborn, and then there are clashes, border clashes; that is a pity. The problem lies in the border. Let us negotiate. This proposal has already been accepted by the OAU and the Security Council of the UN.

**The Debate (a few contributions):**

Patrick Gilkes has given a very detailed account of events in the Horn but he has left out entirely the involvement of the western world, particularly with regard to making borders, dismantling borders and causing lots of problems in the whole of Africa.

**Participant from Oxfam:** My understanding was that the UN Security Council has just endorsed a peace initiative [see Appendix], which was has been accepted by the Ethiopian government last weekend. I would like to ask the speakers whether the two governments are supporting the new initiative.

**Lionel Cliffe:** Many of you may remember that during the 1980s I was prepared to stand up and support the Eritrean cause as just. I want to make it clear that I do not want to make declaratory statements like that today, first because I don't think that they are appropriate, second because I am not well enough informed. Those of us who are concerned about this region and have looked to both these governments for new things, and saw in them important possibilities for Africa, should try to see if our contributions and report can help in any small way to bring this conflict to an end. I also think that it is not in fact a contribution to assert 'rights'. To resolve this problem without bloodshed requires a difficult process of negotiation, and probably neither side will be totally happy with any real solution.

It seems to me important to recognize that the requirements for negotiated peace as a far more important reality than any abstract notion of 'rights'. Like the two speakers I have been terribly disturbed, and also unable to fully explain these events. I suppose like them I would ask, what is the real border issue? but although there are complexities about these several bits of border I disagree with Patrick Gilkes' view because there is also a simplicity about this. There are simply
two rather different principles. There is no real conflict about what were the international borders. I have a map in my office from the Addis Ababa map office dated 1994, which draws the border as an international border exactly as the Eritreans claim. What we have is a problem of two definitions. One of an international colonial one, the other of various administrative arrangements that have changed over various periods. It is not a fuzzy border, but a *fuzziness of principle of how* the present border should be defined.

In saying that there must be more to it than a border dispute and citing such factors as the resentment felt by the TPLF, or the resentment that Eritreans have about paying for imports in dollars, I still find that approach inadequate on two counts: first, it is not general resentment by the populace at large that causes war but that of their leaders, so we must focus much more on what those elite processes are. Second, if there are causes of resentment such as the superiority of Eritreans or the treatment of traders along the border, does that justify bombing, the deployment of 200,000 troops on both sides of the border? It is that jump from a felt resentment to all-out war that I find not just difficult to explain but far more difficult to justify.

It may help to get some sort of proportions here if we recognise what are the potential costs, not only in terms of lack of investment. The long term prospects for development will be damaged, not only if there is a war, but even with this degree of conflict the possible trust for economic cooperation is severely damaged. Moreover, in most parts of the Horn, conflicts have been fueled, not caused but fueled, from the outside. The previous Ethiopian government fueled the Somalia opposition; the Somalis fueled the movements in Ethiopia. But this pattern of mutual interference had changed in 1991. Indeed for a time even included Sudan in non-interference and that survived through the cooperation of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Now we must conclude that even if there is no more fighting then there will be round after round of mutual interference in each others politics. We will be returning to the era of suspicion and intervention. In this respect it is a tragedy for the Horn. But it is also an African tragedy. The 'African Renaissance' is in question here. And if one addresses the possible price it is hard to imagine that any of these factors, certainly not tradition and pride, warrant the enormous price that is being paid.

**Responses:**

*Rag Ek*: Though this may indeed be a border issue, history has shown us that simple border issues can pull the trigger to bigger wars, so these are potentially very dangerous issues. If a simple border conflict cannot be resolved, the price in development terms is tragic. These various efforts and the UN Security Council Resolution in asking for support for the OAU mission. The important thing about the OAU is that they have asked for a demarcation of the border, but also for a investigation into the causes, so we now have ambassadors from the OAU going into the boundary issues, and the UN have asked its members to support the demarcation and investigation efforts. And it is important to have the investigation into the outbreak in addition to the demarcation. I also wanted to say that regarding the western role, that this is a test case for the OAU to establish whether the colonial boundaries are acceptable or not. And when it comes to leaders, my feeling is that this could be very much part of a miscalculation, the escalation of this war with more than three brigades being sent to the border by the Eritreans; we don't know how many were sent by the Ethiopians prior to the 12 May. Also, the sudden air strikes are part of a miscalculation that the other side will not strike back in quite such a massive way.
Patrick Gilkes: Whatever level you take them at, whether you talk in terms of colonial, international, provincial, or whatever, you are going to have a problem. I would think everybody would be far better off if you started thinking about the people in the areas concerned. This would actually be a very good opportunity to discover what the Afar would actually like to do in terms of their part of the world. The Afars have a legitimate claim to be an independent state of their own by any normal standards, something that Eritrea or Ethiopia might want to consider. Ethiopia technically has a constitution, which would allow for secession. My personal view is that nothing on earth would move Meles Zenawi to let any part of Ethiopia go, to form a state and has never any intention of implementing that if the issue arose, but that is another matter, the same old apply in other areas. People in some of the areas where the clashes occur have very strong views on where they ought to be, and it might be worth taking into consideration, not something politicians usually do, of course.

The other point I would like to raise quite strongly, and I agree with Lionel (and I certainly think Lionel should be given this talk and not me in any case), I am not as surprised as Lionel is about African implications. I would not share an assumption about the 'African Renaissance', new African leaders and things of this kind. I do not see, I didn't in 1991 and I do not see it today, a real change between the present leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea and the ones that preceded them. I would argue very strongly, and there is plenty of evidence for it that human rights in Eritrea and Ethiopia have deteriorated steadily in the past five years and is continuing to deteriorate. I see no sign that you can really see a new style of government. There is a lot of talk about it, but the actuality on the ground I do not see. I don't think that there is a great deal of foreign influence on either country because the main allies or western allies in the region, and that applies to both countries as the US is close to Eritrea and Ethiopia, and Israel similarly. The Americans have actually tried to do something in terms of mediation, the Israelis have lied very low indeed, there isn't any sign of active interference, possibly if any country is actively interfering it is Egypt, but that is a regional interference. Because Egypt and Ethiopia are currently at loggerheads on a number of issues, notably Somalia. You can discuss a conspiracy theory, but I don't think there is any sign of outside influence pushing these countries into conflict.

Participant: I am from Nigeria and it distresses me to hear about what is going on in these two countries. Up until last month we had 133 wars in Africa. Since then we have 134. Africa does not need another war. We had a war in Nigeria, the Biafra war thirty years ago. And up to now we can feel the wounds. So what I am doing now is begging that you, the people from Eritrea and Ethiopia who are here in this meeting, have the opportunity to show that you can be friends.

Rag Ek: It should be clarified where we are right now with regard to peace initiatives. It is not correct that Eritrea has rejected the peace initiatives. They have said that they want these efforts to be undertaken and they will not leave unless another neutral voice comes in their place. It is not rejection as such, but in fact a demand. What has been established by the UN is information gathering: who has been living there, who has been administering.

Mohamed Suleiman: I work at IFAA. We have been working on what may be called the African crises for the past 13 years. During the past three or four years we were hopeful about the re-emerging Eritrean and Ethiopian regimes, looking upon it as a promise of hope for the end of the African crises - this is why we are so deeply disturbed by these events. We do not understand the technical details about
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Chair: I would now like to give the two consuls a chance to point the way towards where peace may perhaps be coming from, Consul Abraha.

Consul Abraha: thank you, I am indeed aware of the bitterness of war, we have been fighting for 30 years, and this is important. You can compare the two declarations of the government and see what the Ethiopians declare; they declared war on Eritrea. The Eritrean government from the outset has said we have to achieve peace by negotiations, by dialogue. If the Ethiopians are demanding the withdrawal of the contested areas the Eritreans are ready to withdraw, but at the same time this is an area at the core of this conflict, which must be monitored so that we can reach a sustainable and long-lasting solution. And the next point is to track the course of these events. The Ethiopians always say that 'you have occupied our territory, if you don't withdraw unconditionally we will use force'. And they have been using force, as in the air raid on Asmara on the 4th of June. The Eritreans have never had a policy of targeting civilians, we are very sorry for that. But the sole consequence of this war will rely on the Ethiopian authorities.

The other point I am addressing to my Eritrean and Ethiopian friends. You have been fighting for the last 30 years wars of liberation. You do not know the horrors of an ethnic war. You have been fighting against the Derg, but now the Eritreans are fighting the Ethiopians and vice versa. This is why it is so important to contain this conflict, to manage it and resolve it. If we leave it, the 'ethnic genie' will come out of the bottle, and it will be difficult to bring it back. You should be wary of that, or you will have something like a south-north war as we have in the Sudan. It took me personally and many of my friends 30 years to stand up and say we are wrong, the north is wrong. We were all swept away by the feeling of having to defend our northern Arab nation against the African Christians but in the end we have all lost quite a lot, we have diminished our humanity. And now by looking things squarely into the face, and to admit that we have been wrong for so long, that we have committed as the government of the North so many atrocities in the South, that they should have whatever they demand, they have suffered enough. It would be a tragedy for you as nations, and for you as individuals, if this conflict should ever degenerate into an ethnic conflict.

We are saying from the beginning 'lets demilitarize the entire border area'. That means withdrawing the Ethiopian militia. Somebody said that this area was not militarized. But the main cause of this
conflict was the Ethiopian militia along the border, which were armed and have been harassing the Eritreans. So the suggestion that the militia be left there and the area placed under Ethiopian administration, we don't accept that. We do accept demilitarization, we accept withdrawal, and at the last Security Council meeting we included all out concerns and we are ready to cooperate, and in fact it was very important that the Security Council expresses its support for the US/Rwanda initiative. We have to explain that OK, the border area can be negotiated, we are more flexible than that. But we can't just leave it alone, our people there, the area which is legitimate Eritrean territory, so we will cooperate with the UN Security Council, and the Ethiopians will have to reject or accept.

And I want to mention one thing in reply to Patrick Gilkes' point about human rights being worse now than under the Ethiopians. He referred to the Afar liberation front, which I never heard about. We are talking about a border conflict between two sovereign states and this kind of speculation adds fuel to the conflict.

Consul Beshir: Ethiopia is not for war. The best solution for both countries would be to start negotiations now. The Ethiopian government has fully accepted the resolution by the UN Security Council. This is how the conflict should be resolved. Thank you.

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The following material has been obtained from IRIN, a UN humanitarian information unit, but may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN IRIN Tel: +254 2 62 21 23 Fax: +254 2 62 21 29; e-mail: irin@dha.unon.

Appendix A:

Statements of the position of the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments on the current conflict, and a background update from the UN's Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) in Nairobi, and the text of the Security Council resolution on the conflict.

From the Embassy of Eritrea, Washington, DC.

1. The crisis between Eritrea and Ethiopia is rooted in the violation by the Government of Ethiopia of Eritrea's colonial boundaries, and to wilfully claim, as well as physically occupy, large swathes of Eritrean territory in the southwestern, southern and southeastern parts of the country. This violation is made manifest in the official map issued in 1997 as well as the map of Ethiopia embossed in the new currency notes of the country that came into circulation in November 1997.

2. Ethiopia went further than laying claims on paper to create a de facto situation on the ground. The first forcible act of creating facts on the ground occurred in July 1997 when Ethiopia, under the pretext of fighting the Afar opposition, brought two battalions to Bada (Adi Murug) in southwestern Eritrea to occupy the village and dismantle the Eritrean administration there. This unexpected development was a cause of much concern to the Government of Eritrea. Eritrea's Head of State subsequently sent a letter to the Ethiopian Prime Minister on August 16, 1997, reminding him that 'the forcible occupation of Adi Murug' was 'truly saddening'. He further urged him to 'personally take the necessary prudent action so that the measure that has been taken will not trigger unnecessary conflict'. A week later, on August 25, 1997, the Eritrean Head of State again wrote to the Prime Minister stressing that measures similar to those in Bada were taken in the Badme (southwestern Eritrea) area and suggesting that a Joint Commission be set up to help check further deterioration and create a mechanism to resolve the problem.

3. Unfortunately, Eritrean efforts to solve the problem amicably and bilaterally failed as the Government of Ethiopia continued to bring under its occupation Eritrea's territories that it had incorporated into its map. Our worst fears were to be realised when on May 6, 1998, on the eve of the second meeting of the Joint Border Commission, the Ethiopian army launched an unexpected attack on Eritrean armed patrols in the Badme area claiming that they had transgressed on areas that Ethiopia had newly brought under its control. This incident led to a series of clashes which, coupled with the hostile measures that were taken by the Government of Ethiopia, resulted in the present state of war between the two countries.

4. Ethiopia's unilateral re-drawing of the colonial boundary and flagrant acts of creating facts on the ground are the essential causes of the current crisis. In light of these facts, Ethiopia's claims that it is the victim of aggression are obviously
false and meant to deceive the international community. Indeed, Ethiopia to this day occupied Eritrean territories in the Setit area in the southwestern part of the country.

5. Ethiopia’s blatant act of aggression is clearly in violation of the OAU Charter and Resolution AHG/RES 16(1) of the First Assembly of the Heads of State and Government held in Cairo in 1964. Unless rectified without equivocation, Ethiopia’s refusal to abide by the OAU Charter and decisions, and its continued occupation of undisputed Eritrean territory will open a Pandora’s box and create a cycle of instability in the region. The acceptance of Ethiopia’s logic will not only affect all African States but will indeed backfire against Ethiopia itself, since its sovereignty over much of its territory, including on the Ogaden, is based on the same principles of international law.

6. A simple border dispute has assumed this level of conflict because of Ethiopia’s continued escalation of its hostile and provocative acts. Among these are:

- the declaration of war by Ethiopia’s Parliament on May 13, 1998;
- the launching of an air-strike by Ethiopia on June 5, 1998, on Asmara;
- the imposition of an air blockade and maritime access blockade to Eritrean ports through the threat of incessant and indiscriminate air bombing;
- the mass expulsion and indiscriminate arrests of thousands of Eritreans from Ethiopia.

7. In spite of all these, Eritrea has been restrained and committed to a peaceful solution of the dispute. In this vein, it has already presented constructive proposals (attached). The proposals center on:

i) the demarcation of the entire boundary between the two countries on the basis of colonial boundaries established by colonial treaties;

ii) the demilitarization of the entire border area pending demarcation; and,

iii) the establishment of appropriate ad hoc arrangements for civil administration in populated demilitarized areas in the interim period. In addition, considering the state of war that exists between the two countries, the Government of Eritrea has been calling – and continues to call – for:

i) an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities; and,

ii) the start of direct talks between the two parties in the presence of mediators.


Attachment: Proposal for a Solution Submitted by the Government of Eritrea

1. Principles

The Government of Eritrea and the Government of Ethiopia agree that they will resolve the present crisis and any other dispute between them through peaceful and legal means. Both sides reject solutions that are imposed by force. Both sides agree to respect the clearly defined colonial boundaries between them. In this respect, both sides further agree that the actual demarcation of the borders will be carried out by a mutually acceptable technical team. In the event that there is some controversy on delineation, both sides agree to resolve the matter through an appropriate mechanism of arbitration.

The demarcation of the borders shall be effected speedily and within an agreed time frame.

Both sides agree to be bound by this agreement.

2. Implementation Modalities

2.1 The UN Cartographic Unit, or any other body with the appropriate expertise, shall be charged with the task of demarcating the boundary in accordance with existing colonial border treaties.

2.2 The time frame for the demarcation of the boundary shall be six months. This time frame may be shortened or prolonged subject to justifiable technical reasons. This requisite time frame shall be designated as an interim period.

2.3 The demarcated boundary shall be accepted and adhered to by both sides.

2.4 If there are segments in the boundary whose delineation is under controversy, the matter shall be resolved through an appropriate mechanism of arbitration.

2.5 The technical details relevant to the practical implementation of the demarcation process shall be annexed to the agreement.

3. Demilitarization as a measure for defusing the crisis and expediting the demarcation of the borders so as to ensure a lasting solution shall be accepted and adhered to by both sides.

3.1 Demilitarization shall begin by the Mereb-Setit segment; proceed next to the Bada area and be implemented throughout the entire boundary in accordance with this phased
3.2 DEMILITARIZATION shall be implemented through the involvement and monitoring of observers. The team of observers shall be composed of the forces and commanders from the facilitators as well as representatives of both sides.

3.3 DEMILITARIZATION shall be completed within the time frame of one month.

3.4 The issue of civil administration in populated demilitarized areas shall be addressed through appropriate ad hoc arrangements that will be put in place for the interim period.

3.5 When the INTERIM period comes to an end following the completion of the demarcation of the entire boundary between the two countries, the LEGITIMATE AUTHORITIES shall regain full jurisdiction over their respective SOVEREIGN TERRITORIES.

3.6 The details regarding DEMILITARIZATION and its implementation modalities shall be included in the main agreement as an annex.

4.0 A full INVESTIGATION of the incident of May 6, 1998, shall be conducted in tandem with the demilitarization process.

5.0 This COMPREHENSIVE agreement, signed by both parties, shall be deposited in the UN and OAU as a legal agreement so as to ensure its binding nature.

Appendix B:

Statement on the security council resolution and Eritrea’s response

It must have been very obvious to all those who have been following the crisis imposed on Ethiopia by the Eritrean authorities through their aggression, that Ethiopia’s preferred option for resolving the crisis has been, and remains to be, the peaceful way. This, despite its prerogative under international law to exercise its legitimate right of self-defense.

Ethiopia’s unequivocal acceptance of the U.S-Rwanda proposal is a confirmation of this Ethiopian commitment to peace and its resolve to seeking a peaceful resolution of the military confrontation. Ethiopia’s full and unreserved acceptance of the proposal by the facilitators should, in this context, be understood for what it really means. Ethiopia accepted the proposal not because it has no quarrel with everything contained in the proposal — a fact that can easily be overlooked — but because peace demanded that Ethiopia must do whatever is necessary, short of accepting that which would reward the aggressor and humiliate Ethiopia and its people.

On Eritrea’s part, its response to the peace initiative was negative from the outset. It refused to co-operate with the facilitators who happened to be mutual friends of the two countries and whose good offices were accepted by both, willingly and with no reservation. Eritrea refused the proposal by the facilitators for one reason only, because it failed to give blessing to Eritrea’s illegal occupation through aggression of Ethiopian territory.

Then came the decision of the 34th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU which unequivocally endorsed the proposal of the facilitators and appealed to Ethiopia and Eritrea to accept the proposal and implement it. True to form, the Eritrean reaction was negative and the Asmara authorities once again made it clear that peace was not their interest.

It is under these circumstances and following Eritrea’s rejection of the appeals of both the facilitators and of the OAU, at the highest level, that the United Nations Security Council was made to be seized with the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea. There was virtually no stone unturned and no trick left unutilized by Eritrea — including pure and simple fabrication of stories and other diversionary tactics all unprecedented in the annals of diplomatic history — to prevent the Security Council from being seized with the issue, most particularly to prevent the Council form coming out with a just verdict.

But Eritrea failed to succeed and the Security Council did adopt a resolution on 26th of June, 1998, whose key elements gave endorsement to the OAU decision and, ispo facto, to the proposal by the facilitators.

Ethiopia has accepted this resolution by the Security Council in its entirety, without picking and choosing and with no Ifs and Buts.

On the other hand, Eritrea’s response has been no more than gimmick. The Eritrean authorities have found it necessary this time around to conceal their lack of commitment to peace. They could not afford to be seen to always reject appeals for peace, all the more so because this time the appeal was being made by the Security Council. Accordingly, the Asmara authorities decided to let it be known that they would go along with the resolution of the Security Council,
but — and this is the key — on the basis of a selective reading of the Council’s decision and of picking bits and pieces from the resolution which is calculated to ignore its key elements.

The international community, and the Security Council in particular, cannot, and we are confident will not, allow the Eritrean Authorities to get away with possibilities for prevaricating and for being disingenuous. They should be pinned down on whether or not they are prepared for a peaceful resolution of the crisis which hinges on their acceptance of the proposal which requires them to vacate Ethiopian territory that they have occupied through aggression. This is one of the key elements of the resolution by the Security Council and Eritrea cannot say yes to the decision by the Council, and then in the same breath pretend that it is not required by the same resolution to accept the proposal of the facilitators one of whose Key elements is Eritrea’s withdrawal from Ethiopian territory. Eritrea should not be allowed to succeed in this attempt at fudging the issues involved which is transparently disingenuous. This again is a reflection of the underlying unwillingness of the Eritrean authorities to accept and implement the proposal of the facilitators which they know perfectly well is the only viable and realistic basis for avoiding the option which Ethiopia has refused resorting to because of its commitment to a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Now that the Security Council has spoken in clear terms in support of the proposal already on the table, Eritrea should be denied all possibilities for creating confusion and should be required to implement the provisions of this important Security Council resolution without Ifs and Buts. On this depends whether or not the slim chance which might be available for a peaceful resolution of the crisis would be used properly. Here again, as it has always been since the beginning this crisis, the ball is in Eritrea’s court.

In this context, the international community has the responsibility of continuing to put pressure on the Eritrean regime to withdraw its troops from Ethiopian territory on the basis of the proposal made by the facilitators and endorsed by the OAU as well as now supported by the Security Council.


Appendix C:

ETHIOPIA-ERITREA: New Peace Efforts Amid Claims of Civilian Abuses

NAIROBI, 3 July 1998 (IRIN) A team of African diplomats under the auspices of the OAU left Addis Ababa for Asmara in renewed peace efforts this week, news agencies reported. The group represents the four-nation team mandated by the OAU summit on 10 June in Ouagadougou. The OAU-mandated mediation mission which ended on 19 June failed to break the deadlock and did not succeed in advancing the US-Rwanda peace plan which included a call for Eritrean forces to withdraw. Rwanda yesterday announced its withdrawal from the team to try to break the deadlock, news agencies report.

A UN source told IRIN today the original team’s room for manoeuvre was “limited” by the OAU’s endorsement of the US-Rwanda plan. It is as yet unclear what new proposals the current mission carries. Another mediation effort from Democratic Republic of Congo leader Laurent-Desire Kabila on Friday was also fruitless, news agencies said. Ethiopia has reiterated its insistence on the four-point US-Rwanda plan, while the Eritrean Assembly last week repeated Asmara’s proposals for demilitarising the border area and beginning direct talks between the two sides. New initiatives by the governments of Libya and the Netherlands was reported by media in recent days but no further details are yet available.

The UN Security Council on Friday condemned the use of force in the dispute between the two former allies and demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities. The resolution (1177) also supported the OAU’s efforts to defuse the crisis and called on both parties to take confidence-building steps such as ‘guaranteeing the rights and safety of each other’s nationals’. AFP reports suggest only two minor clashes have taken place since 11 June.

However, while actual conflict seems to be on hold, little visible progress has been made in bringing Ethiopia and Eritrea back from the brink of renewed conflict, and the war of words conducted in the media shows no signs of letting up.

In the humanitarian sphere, the focus in both countries has been on displacement and the treatment of expatriate civilians. An unknown number of Eritrean civilians have been displaced from their homes within Eritrea, while two UN inter-agency teams assessed the situation in the clash-hit Tigray and Afar regions last week. UN
sources told IRIN it was hard to establish exact numbers of displaced people, as people are being taken care of in communities, but that people were still moving out of their areas. Most of the Ethiopian displaced people have been housed in local communities as the government is opposed to the creation of camps, humanitarian sources say. The official Ethiopian Herald however reported that makeshift camps had been set up in some areas. Host communities and social services are under stress in coping with the influx of displaced. The international humanitarian community is expected to give only a ‘measured’ response to needs in Ethiopia, given the extensive response of local communities and institutions, sources close to the team told IRIN.

The Eritrean government has again protested against the alleged mistreatment of its civilians in Ethiopia, while Ethiopia makes similar protests about expulsions, detentions and confiscation of property of Ethiopians in Eritrea. Eritrea’s ambassador to the UN on 15 June called for humanitarian intervention to protect the ‘safety and well-being’ of Eritreans in Ethiopia, claiming that thousands of Eritreans were being rounded up.

Another inter-agency assessment is planned to leave Asmara to check on the humanitarian situation in the country. Two inter-agency UN teams are to assess the humanitarian situation in Eritrea, visiting the contested Zala Anbessa and Badme areas this weekend. Eritrea is unlikely to make any early appeal for international assistance for an unknown number of displaced people within its borders, UN sources say.

A spokesman at the Ethiopian embassy in Nairobi this week claimed that 600 Ethiopians were being held in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, while 4,000 had been expelled. An Eritrean news agency report, received by IRIN yesterday suggests that 6,000 Eritreans have been expelled, and over 1,000 are in detention in Ethiopia. An ICRC spokesperson told IRIN today that the organization has regular access to interned Eritrean civilians and prisoners of war in Ethiopia. She added that requests for access to Ethiopian detainees or prisoners of war in Eritrea had not yet been successful.

Humanitarian sources stressed to IRIN today that it was important not to lose sight of ongoing humanitarian needs in Ethiopia, in particular the fate of four million people faced with serious food shortages. A senior aid worker told IRIN today humanitarian assistance could be potentially beneficial for the overall economy, but ‘nobody wants to support the war effort’. He stressed the situation was currently under control, but there was a risk of continued or increased displacement as well as disruption to ongoing drought-related relief operations. The capabilities and experience of both governments in managing relief efforts means that a big international presence is unlikely, aid workers said. Support for the war-displaced would be more a case of ‘plugging the gaps’, one relief official told IRIN.

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Appendix D:


United Nations: Expressing grave concern at the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and its implication for the region, the Security Council this afternoon urged the two States to exhaust all means to achieve a peaceful settlement of their border dispute. Unanimously adopting resolution 1177 (1998), the Council condemned the use of force and demanded that the parties refrain from its further use and to immediately cease hostilities. It welcomed their commitment to a moratorium on the threat of and use of air strikes.

The Council called upon the parties to avoid any steps which would aggravate tensions, such as provocative actions or statements, and to take steps to build confidence between them, including guaranteeing the rights and safety of each other’s nationals.

It expressed strong support for the decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 10 June 1998 to dispatch a mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (embodied in document S/1998/494), and called upon the two countries to cooperate fully with the organization. The Council urged the OAU to follow up as quickly as possible. (By that decision, the OAU Assembly dispatched a delegation of heads of State and government of the member States of the Central Organ of OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, led by the current OAU Chairman, to Ethiopia and Eritrea for talks on the conflict.)

By other terms of today’s resolution, the Council asked the Secretary-General to make available his good offices in support of a peaceful resolution of the conflict and said it stood ready to consider further recommendations to that end. The Secretary-General was also to provide technical support to Ethiopia and Eritrea to assist
in the eventual delimitation and demarcation of their common border. Towards that end, the Council established a trust fund and urged all Member States to contribute to it. The meeting, which was called to order at 12:40 p.m., was adjourned at 12:45 p.m. Resolution Adopted

The text of the resolution is as follows:

The Security Council

• Expressing grave concern at the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, its political, humanitarian and security implications for the region, and its effect on the civilian populations there,

• Affirming the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia and Eritrea,

• Affirming the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes and stressing that the use of armed force is not acceptable as a means of addressing territorial disputes or changing circumstances on the ground,

• Noting that the official statements by the Government of Ethiopia and the Government of Eritrea pledging to discontinue the threat of and use of air strikes in the conflict have contributed to the continuation of the efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict, reduced the threat to the civilian populations as well as the economic and social infrastructure, and enabled the resumption of normal economic activity, including commercial transportation,

• Noting the strong traditional ties between Ethiopia and Eritrea,

• Welcoming the official statements by the Government of Ethiopia and the Government of Eritrea pledging to discontinue the threat of and use of air strikes in the conflict that they share the ultimate goal of delimiting and demarcating their common border on the basis of a mutually agreeable and binding arrangement, taking into account the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), colonial treaties, and international law applicable to such treaties,

• Noting the resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers of the OAU in special session on 5 June 1998 (S/1998/485),

• Commending the efforts of the OAU and of others, in cooperation with the OAU, to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict,

1. Condemns the use of force and demands that both parties immediately cease hostilities and refrain from further use of force;

2. Welcomes the commitment of the parties to a moratorium on the threat of and use of air strikes;

3. Urges the parties to exhaust all means to achieve a peaceful settlement of the dispute;

4. Expresses its strong support for the decision of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU on 10 June 1998 (S/1998/494) as well as for the mission and efforts of the Heads of State of the OAU and urges the OAU to follow up as quickly as possible;

5. Calls upon the parties to cooperate fully with the OAU;

6. Also calls upon the parties to avoid any steps which would aggravate tensions such as provocative actions or statements and to take steps to build confidence between them including by guaranteeing the rights and safety of each other’s nationals;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to make available his good offices in support of a peaceful resolution of the conflict and stands ready to consider further recommendations to this end;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to provide technical support to the parties to assist in the eventual delimitation and demarcation of the common border between Ethiopia and Eritrea and, for this purpose, establishes a Trust Fund and urges all Member States to contribute to it; and

9. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

Appendix E:
Four-Point Proposals To Resolve Ethiopia-Eritrea Dispute; June 5, 1998

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (PANA) - Following is the summary of the Rwanda-United States recommendations to defuse the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia:

1. Both parties should commit themselves to the following principles: resolving this and any other dispute between them by peaceful means - renouncing force as a means of imposing solutions - agreeing to undertake measures to reduce current tensions - and seeking the final disposition of their common border, on the basis of established colonial treaties and international law applicable to such treaties.

2. To reduce current tensions, and without prejudice to the territorial claims of either party: a small observer mission should be deployed to Badme. Eritrean forces should redeploy from Badme to positions held before May 6. The previous civilian administration should return and there should be an investigation into the events of May 6.
3. To achieve lasting resolution of the underlying border dispute, both parties should agree to the swift and binding delimitation and demarcation of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border. Border delimitation should be determined on the basis of established colonial treaties and international law applicable to such treaties, and the delimitation and demarcation process should be completed by a qualified technical team as soon as possible. The demarcated border should be accepted and adhered to by both parties, and, upon completion of demarcation, the legitimate authorities assume jurisdiction over their respective sovereign territories.

4. Both parties should demilitarize the entire common border as soon as possible.

Monsanto, the US developer of Astro-turf, acrilan, NutraSweet and Agent Orange (the defoliant used by the US government to impose a 'scorched earth' policy in Vietnam) has used it's high profile £1 million campaign in the UK this summer to convince the British consumer that genetically modified food is safe, and 'green'. There are fears that Monsanto's potential stranglehold on food production in the guise of a massive spending spree acquiring three major seed companies and which bode well for it's share prices with an almost 600% rise since 1994 are only just the tip of the iceberg. As it was with Rachel Carson's, 'The Silent Spring', it is only now that the long-term effects of too hasty decisions regarding quick-fix and profit are clear.

Monsanto's muscle is reknown in the biotechnology field; in just three years it has secured 30 per cent of the US soya crop and 15 per cent of the maize crop. It is one of the largest businesses in the world — worth a massive $96 billion! Many organisations are actively engaged in what can only be seen as a 'David & Goliath' battle with Monsanto; a partial listing can be found at the end of this Briefing.

The Increasingly Contentious Debate About the Impact of Patenting of Life Forms and Genetic Engineering is extremely important to all humanity: This is especially true for developing countries, rich in biological resources and the traditional practices which have generated this diversity for centuries. It is this resource, called 'green gold', which is now being explored and exploited by global transnational corporations.

Traders have appropriated other people's resources, including human 'resources' and territories, as free goods for centuries, usually by buying-off misinformed, unsuspecting or corrupted nationals. Biotechnology and patenting of life forms is now the new frontier for conquest, and Africa ought to be wary because a history of colonialism and exploitation is beating itself.

Implications of Patenting Life Forms

The original purpose of patenting and the laws governing the regime were developed to apply to machinery and industrial inventions, Justice now demands that new laws be agreed, through a democratic and open process, to address the new developments in biotechnology. This is especially important when transnational corporations seek to use this technology to justify their claim for monopoly rights on living materials. Corporations are trying to appropriate life through the same rules which have governed the world of business and profits in the past. Industry has in fact already managed to gain private monopoly rights (patents) on some living materials, by distorting the original concept and intention of patenting — as life is obviously not
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The Link Between Patenting of Life Forms, Genetic Engineering & Food Insecurity

Wangari Maathai

The increasingly contentious debate about the impact of patenting of life forms and genetic engineering is extremely important to all humanity: This is especially true for developing countries, rich in biological resources and the traditional practices which have generated this diversity for centuries. It is this resource, called 'green gold', which is now being explored and exploited by global transnational corporations.

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an invention. This distortion has been deliberately created by blurring the meaning of invention so that corporations can obtain private monopolies on mere 'discoveries' of biological materials and their properties, such as umbilical chord blood cells and basmati rice.

This issue is critical because patenting is being applied to seeds which are the basis of societies' food systems. Corporations claim that they can mix and match genetic material through the, new genetic engineering technology, to make better seeds. However, to recuperate their investments, they also claim that they need to obtain a private monopoly fight (patent) on the genetic material which they use. In fact this is to stop others from developing products with the same characteristics, and it effectively blocks the, development of other options from the patented material.

Patenting of living material is also being called 'biopiracy' because corporations get genetic material from the farmers and local communities, who are constantly developing new combinations and characteristics. This old tradition has increased biodiversity, productivity and innovation over the centuries, without using genetic engineering technology or claiming private ownership of such resources, which are considered a common heritage.

The idea that African farmers should have to buy seeds developed from their own biological materials, from transnational corporations, because such companies have given themselves the exclusive rights to those seeds, is outrageous. The rights and the capacity of communities to feed themselves would be, completely undermined, if industry managed to assert its self-given rights. In the US, farmers are punished for re-using patented seeds. Industry is trying to force farmers to buy seed each season, which makes them totally dependent on the corporations (1).

Until recently the corporations ability to enforce their self-given rights in Africa and other developing countries was limited by many factors including distance, the large number of farmers, and lack of legislation in favour of corporate monopoly. It is precisely in order to control the traditional freedom of farmers to develop, use and exchange seeds, that the agrochemical industry has now developed what has been dubbed the 'terminator technology'. This genetically engineered technology ensures that seed injected with the 'suicide gene' does not germinate after harvesting. This means the farmers will have to buy seed each season, and cannot develop their own seed. This the corporations themselves admit through US scientist Melvin Oliver, the primary 'inventor' of the new patent-protecting 'terminator' technique:

> the need was there to come up with a system that allowed you to self-police your technology, other than trying to put laws and legal barriers to farmers saving seeds, and to try and stop foreign interests from stealing the technology (2).

Under these circumstances, if we thought that slavery and colonialism were gross violations of human rights, we have to wake up to what is awaiting us down the secretive road of biopiracy, patenting of life arid genetic engineering. Genocide from hunger, such as we have not yet seen, becomes a haunting possibility.

Creating Food Insecurity

This lethal use of genetic engineering biotechnology threatens the food security of this and future generations. It destroys the very basis of the livelihood systems which our ancestors have developed for centuries, finely adapting to the diverse ecosystems in which they have evolved. The development and control of farmers' own biodiversity is an inalienable right and the basis upon which food security is achieved, What the transitional corpora-
tions and their government allies are advocating undermines, the life style, values and ethics of farming communities. It is indeed a violation of their right to food and to natural justice.

History has many records of crimes against humanity, which were also justified by dominant commercial interests and governments of the day. Despite protests from citizens, social justice for the common good was eroded in favour of private profits. Today, patenting of life forms and the genetic engineering which it stimulates, is being justified on the grounds that it will benefit society, especially the poor, by providing better and more food and medicine. But in fact, by monopolising the ‘raw’ biological materials, the development of other options is deliberately blocked. Farmers therefore, become totally dependent on the corporations for seeds; market monopolies create pricing structures which make biotech products inaccessible to the poor, in whose name they are promoted.

In fact the poor cannot access these markets. Instead they are persuaded, coerced and sometimes forced, to grow cash crops like coffee, tea, cocoa, french beans and flowers rather than growing for household consumption. They have to do this to generate the cash, to buy the seeds and associated chemical inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides from the corporations. In addition they have no control of the pricing of the cash crops nor of the food they have to buy as a result. They are at the mercy of the fluctuations of the commodity markets, and so are their governments which get into debt to buy the food they need to feed their people.

This distorted process has been engineered by the ‘free’ trade ideologies, so that corporations can generate their ever-growing profits, which cannot be made if people feed themselves and control their local economies. The process also ensure that international debts, incurred by national governments so that they can buy commodities from international markets, are serviced by local communities which are thereby kept in perpetual debt bondage and poverty.

Why Genetic Engineering will Not Feed the World

At present the transnational biotechnology industry is aggressively persuading the resisting European consumers that genetic engineering will feed the growing populations in developing countries.

It is now widely accepted that food security for local communities means the capacity to access, develop and exchange seeds and to produce enough food for the households, only selling the surplus to the market. Likewise, national food security means the capacity for a country to produce enough seed and food for its citizens and only the surplus should be sold to the commodity markets abroad. However, for the corporations, food security means growing numbers, able to buy seed and food from the commodity markets they control, which is what makes it inaccessible to the poor.

Indeed, only northern consumers can afford goods from these markets, which is why the biotech industry has to persuade the resisting Europeans – through coercion if necessary – that genetically engineered food will feed the world. Thus transnational corporations would begin to harvest unjust profits at the expense of local food security.

The resistance must continue to grow, North and South, in solidarity, in order to avoid the old tactic of divide, and rule.

Notes:

1. ‘Monsanto Rounds Up Farmers’ Seedling (March 1998, Vol. 15 No. 1), GRAIN.
Let Nature's Harvest Continue

African Counter-Statement to Monsanto

An invitation to stand in solidarity to resist gene technology, from Delegates to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on Plant Genetic Resources.

During the past few weeks European citizens have been exposed to an aggressive publicity campaign in major European newspapers trying to convince the reader that the world needs genetic engineering to feed the hungry. Organised and financed by Monsanto, one of the world's biggest chemical companies, this campaign gives a totally distorted and misleading picture of the potential of genetic engineering to feed developing countries.

We, the undersigned delegates of African countries negotiating at the FAO on farmers rights, access and benefit-sharing, strongly object that the image of the poor and hungry from our countries are being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology that is neither safe, environment friendly, nor economically beneficial to us. It is time to look at some of the facts about the company behind this campaign.

- Monsanto is one of the world's largest pesticide companies. During the past two years only it spent over US$6,000 million to take control over other seed and biotechnology companies and is now the major industrial player in this field. Its major focus is not to protect the environment, but to develop crops that can resist higher doses of its best-selling chemical weedkiller 'Roundup'.
- Rather than stretching a helping hand to farmers, Monsanto threatens them with lawsuits and jail. In the USA, the company employs tactics to find and bring to court those farmers that save Monsanto soybean seeds for next year's planting. Backed by patent law, the company demands the right to inspect the farmers' fields to check whether they practise agriculture according to Monsanto conditions and with Monsanto chemicals.
- Rather than developing technology that feeds the world, Monsanto uses genetic engineering to stop farmers from replanting seed and further develop their agricultural systems. It has spent US$18,000 million to buy a company owning a patent on what has become known as 'Terminator Technology': seed that can be planted only once and dies in the second generation. The only aim of this technology is to force farmers back to the Monsanto shop every year, and to destroy an age old practice of local seed saving that forms the basis of food security in our countries.

In the advertising campaign Europeans are asked to give an unconditional green light to gene technology so that chemical corporations such as Monsanto can start harvesting their profits from it. We do not believe that such companies or gene technologies will help our farmers to produce the food that is needed in the 21st century. On the contrary, we think it will destroy the diversity, the local knowledge and the sustainable agricultural systems that our farmers have developed for millennia and that it will thus undermine our capacity to feed ourselves.

In particular, we will not accept the use of 'Terminator' or other gene technologies that kill the capacity of our farmers to grow the food we need.

We invite European citizens and colleagues from the South to stand in solidarity with Africa in resisting these gene technologies so that our diverse and natural harvests can continue and grow.
We agree and accept that mutual help is needed to further improve agricultural production in our countries. We also believe that Western science can contribute to this. But it should be done on the basis of understanding and respect for what is already there. It should be building on local knowledge, rather than replacing and destroying it. And most importantly: it should address the real needs of our people, rather than serving only to swell the pockets and control of giant industrial corporations.

Additional Statement by Zimbabwean Delegate:

Africa should not be used as a testing ground for technologies and products which have been developed elsewhere. We reserve our sovereign right to test these technologies ourselves, examine their effectiveness and compatibility to the environment in our region.

Signed in support and solidarity by:

Action Aid
Austrian Mountain Farmers Association Baby Milk Action
Basque Farmers Union
Banana Link
BUKO Agro
Catholic Institute for International Relations
Centro Internazionale Crocevia
Coordination Paysanne Européenne
Christian Aid
CSA (Comitato Scientifico Antivivisezionista).
Farmers Link
FIN (Fondo Imperatrice Nuda contro la Sperimentazione Animale)
Find Your Feet
Friends of the Earth
The Gaia Foundation
Genetic Resources Action International
GeneWatch
Greenpeace International
The Green Party
The Green Party Agriculture and Food Working Group.

The Green Group of the European Parliament
GEYSER Organization, France
ITDG
Dr. Nicola Tosti, Instituto di Miglioramento Genetico Vegetale
Dr. Paola Tavianil, Instituto di Miglioramento Genetico Vegetale
Dr. Piorelia Pimpinelli, Instituto di Miglioramento Genetico Vegetale
Dr. Beatrix Tappeser, Institute for Applied Ecology, Freiburg
Ecoropa
The Pesticides Trust
World Development Movement
Women's Environmental Network
WWF-Italy and Fulco Pratesi (president)

Wangari Maathai, Coordinator, The Green Belt Movement, Nairobi, Kenya

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Campaigns (the full listing is in the August 1997 issue of New Internationalist)

CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL, 24 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RX, UK; e-mail: consint@consint.org.uk

EARTH FIRST!, Box 1415, Eugene, OR 97440, USA; e-mail: earthfirst@igc.apc.org

GENETIC RESOURCES ACTION INTERNATIONAL (GRAIN): Girona 25, pral. E-08010 Barcelona, Spain; e-mail: grain@gn.apc.org

GREENPEACE: Greenpeace House, Canonbury Villas, Islington, London N1 2PN, UK; Net: http://www.greenpeace.org
'Dictated Trade: The Case Against the Africa Growth & Opportunity Act'

William Martin, ACAS

President Bill Clinton and the U.S. Congress should be applauded for seeking to define a new US foreign policy toward Africa that recognizes the demands from the continent for political, social and economic change. ACAS also welcomes the legislation's intent to strengthen U.S. ties with the continent. The current draft of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act pending before the Senate, however, is worse than no bill at all.

While this trade and investment legislation has won the enthusiastic support of some African governments, and the more lukewarm support of others (note President Nelson Mandela’s dissent), other African social movements and analysts have long argued that the policies promoted by the bill will result in yet greater hunger, poverty, and foreign control over the continent [for more information see the Public Citizen web site. The Act does break new ground: it proposes to shift our relationship with Africa from aid to trade and investment. In fact, this month as the trade legislation is being debated, the Senate is also proposing cuts in foreign aid that will result in a 20% to 30% reduction in foreign aid to Africa according to the Clinton administration.

The legislation offers a series of rewards for countries pursuing IMF style market-led economic reforms, including expanded duty free access to American markets for certain products, equity and infrastructure funds to support US investment, and the establishment of a mechanism to promote and review trade policy toward Africa.

Promoters of the Act, however, have been unable to demonstrate how African pro-
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Promoters of the Act, however, have been unable to demonstrate how African pro-
producers will benefit, beyond slight increases in textile exports. How producers of other manufactured goods, much less raw materials-and particularly oil which is 70% of US imports from Africa—might gain is not at all evident. It is no surprise that the most industrial and powerful African government has found the bill’s provisions, in the words of Nelson Mandela, ‘unacceptable’.

Those who will benefit are obvious. As one South African business magazine reported: ‘the prime beneficiaries of the Clinton African plan are the major American corporations.’ Hundreds of millions of dollars in guarantees are allocated to insure US investment, subsidizing firms who reap the rewards of the forced privatization of African telecommunications and infrastructure. While the bill’s promoters speak of assisting Africans, African-Americans, and women, the primary group targeted for assistance are the multinationals who control Africa’s trade and access to rich markets.

The bill’s sponsors argue there are no conditionalities contained within this legislation. A review of the text of the bill passed by the House, and the legislation pending before the Senate, reveals however an attempt to force African government to prioritize the following policies:

- severe cuts in government spending;
- fire sales of government assets;
- new rights for foreign investors to buy African natural resources and state firms without limitation;
- deep tariff cuts;
- imposition of US monopoly and patent rules;
- binding membership in and adherence to all World Trade Organization regulations;
- compliance with all International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions’ rules;
- avoidance of any ‘activities that undermine US national security or foreign policy interests’ [HR 1432].

The US President alone is to apply these eligibility rules, using ‘quantitative factors’ to monitor compliance.

These policies not new: in one form or another international financial institutions and multinational corporations have been seeking to impose them upon poorer African, Asian, and Latin American states for over twenty years. Where they have been implemented in other countries, the outcome is not only a loss of African states’ sovereignty, but documented increases in income inequality, poverty, malnutrition, and increasingly unstable economies [see the valuable summary in the TransAfrica letter, signed by 28 prominent African Americans. These outcomes have led directly to widespread opposition to IMF, World Bank, and related programs by African trade unions, democratic movements, church groups, women’s organizations, etc.—and often riots as food prices rise, and health clinics and schools close.

Never however have these policies and conditions been gathered together as in the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, and then applied to a whole continent. This portends a bleak future, as Africans are stripped of their democratic right to make the most basic of economic policy decisions, while foreign states and firms dictate trade and investment rules.

If we want to open the door to a more prosperous and democratic future for citizens of both the US and Africa, we need to forge a new relationship based on mutual needs and open public discussions with democratic African governments and movements—and not unilateral and private interests as in HR 1432 and S. 778. In its current form, the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act should be roundly rejected.

July 20, 1998; Contact: William Martin, Co-Chair, ACAS (Association of Concerned African Scholars), Tel: 217 333 8052; fax: 217 333-5225/359-0949; acas@prairienet.org
Statement from Civil Society & Religious Organisations of East & Central Africa Regarding the Escalating Violent Conflict in the Great Lakes Region

The great weight of the tragedies of mass murder and war in the Great Lakes region and beyond continue to burden our minds and our hearts. We therefore call out to the Heads of State, parliamentarians and community leaders of the countries of East, Central and Southern Africa, as well as the OAU, SADCC and the UN to express our collective cry and request concerning the unjust suffering of our people.

We want to register our collective and absolute condemnation of the killing and maiming of innocent civilians and non-combatants which has become a normal method of warfare in these political power conflicts.

We ask all governments, Heads of State, Political leaders, Parliamentarians, Opposition Groups in the Great Lakes Region and the leaders of the OAU and SADCC to publicly condemn the killing of our people by the different armies, militias, and security forces and diligently create the means and ways to foster peace, productivity and respect for human life.

We beseech and demand that the leaders of armies, militias and security forces operating in the region take immediate and urgent action to order those under their command to cease and desist from these brutal and heinous actions against the children, women and men of Africa.

We note and bring to the attention to the leadership, that escalating conflict, xenophobic attitudes and micro-nationalism emerging from these conflicts coupled with the poor socio-economic conditions of our people is resulting in growing polarization of our communities and the different states of the region along ethnic and class lines. We therefore point out the need to prevent the rise of ethnic persecution and the re-emergence of hate media/propaganda.

There is an overall disintegration of democratic institutions and the rule of law, both customary and statutory. Public institutions like the judiciary and the church are also being polarized along the same lines of ethnicity and class. All of this has combined to cause the political, cultural, social and moral environment on our continent to descend to the lowest levels of abject debasement.

This situation and the appalling social conditions that it produces causes the suffering of the most impoverished and vulnerable members of our societies. We make public notice that this appalling suffering inflicted upon the people is the direct responsibility of the political, social, and economic leadership in the region.

We therefore call for and demand durable peaceful political solutions to the current violent conflicts in our region and beyond. In this context we wish to support and encourage efforts to build a regional peace movement that will work in concert with the ongoing efforts of the people, the political parties and the government of Burundi to find a lasting and just solution to the conflict in Burundi.

We recognise and pledge support for the commendable initiative taken by the Heads of State in the Great Lakes region under the facilitation of Mwalimu Nyerere, to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Burundi.

Finally and most urgently we implore the protagonist of the war in the DRC to seek a political settlement! In this context, we request the Head of State of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, President Laurent Kabila, to offer an olive branch to
the opponents both inside and outside the DRC in the spirit of mutual agreement to a peaceful resolution where there is no atmosphere of victor and vanquished.

We request that President Kabila extend an invitation to all political forces and civil society representatives to participate in a national dialogue for promoting the process of democratisation and reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Reciprocally, we request the forces in opposition to the Presidency of Laurent Kabila, both outside and within the DRC to accept the olive branch and lay down their arms and agree to participate in the national dialogue for the promotion of the process of democratisation and reconciliation. We ask those opponents of the government of President Laurent Kabila to work together with the government of the DRC for a cease-fire, as defined in the Cape Town meeting of the Southern African Development Co-operation.

In order to protect the peace and ensure the safety and protection of the rights of all the Congolese people we call upon the UN, the OAU and SADCC to provide the necessary support in the form of peace keeping forces and cease-fire monitors and human rights monitors taken from civil society and church organisations in the region.

Signed:
The Africa Peace Forum
People For Peace
Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI)
Norwegian Church Aid
World Vision International
A.C.O.R.D. (Burundi)
Centre for Conflict Resolution (Uganda)
CAP
African Evangelistic Enterprise
All African Conference of Churches
Rev. Felicien Nemeyimana Director
Peace Building and Reconciliation

MAP International East & Southern Africa
Marcus Garvey Foundation (Tanzania)
Africa Open Forum
The Global Pan African Movement
PADEAP
Africa Research and Information Bureau
Napoleon Abdulai
Singo Mwachofe
Karimi Kinoti
Namtasha Kisenge
Dr. Ikaweba Bunting
Tata Ofosu
Bonaventure Rutinwa
Maria Shaba
Monika Kathini
Dr. Chaloka Beyani
Book Notes

The following section gives notes of books recently received which may be of interest to our readers; some may be reviewed in depth at a later date. If you would like to review books for ROAPE, please get in touch with the book review editors Roy Love (at the ROAPE office) or Ray Bush and Morris Szeftel (Politics Department, University of Leeds, UK). Compiled by Roy Love


The former Deputy Editor of Work in Progress has produced one of the more readable and thoughtful accounts of the political changes in South Africa since 1989, with a preliminary review of the earlier period from the 1940s. The core of the book is his analysis and discussion in chapters headed 'Managing the crisis', 'The battleground of the economy' and 'The evolution of ANC economic policy'. The subtitle of the latter, 'A short walk to orthodoxy', gives a flavour of his approach, though the discussion throughout is balanced and evenly researched from a wide range of contemporary material. The appearance and disappearance of MERG, the dissipation of the RDP and the irresistible rise of GEAR are all documented and discussed in an analytical approach that, though aware of theory, is not overweighted by it and which is informed by a detailed knowledge of the political and economic history of recent years.


In some respects this book is timely and yet, paradoxically so, as in many ways it is covering ground already well known, though with additions that have emerged from the TRC. It's point is to ensure not only that individual excesses of apartheid but also that the mindset that it produced and its dominance of the state in the interests of a racial minority should not be forgotten. In asking the question 'why face the past?' the authors easily supply a range of answers including the claim that it will 'facilitate the building of a culture of public ethics for the first time in South Africa and it will make room for genuine
reconciliation'. Whether they are right in the latter still remains to be seen and perhaps in some senses they have made the task less easy by comparing apartheid to Nazism and accusing its perpetrators of a form of genocide, which they defend in a postscript. On the other hand, they are surely right to remind us that apartheid was supported by the white electorate and that its ills cannot be solely attributed to individual leaders like Vorster and P.W. Botha (p.149).

The numerous chapters recapture various aspects of the apartheid regime since the election of the National Party to government in 1947, with a wealth of detail on the background to the emergence of major policies and items of legislation, interspersed with reminders of many of the related incidents and the apparent motivations of their perpetrators. It does, however, appear to lack an obvious structure, being more series of topic related discussions on aspects of resistance, reconciliation, legitimacy and responsibility. In some senses a timely book in its intent but structurally and compositionally somewhat unsatisfying.


In one sense the title of this book is misleading, probably deliberately so, because although much of it is about what is done to women at times of war, it is also about how they attempt to anticipate, resist, cope and live with the consequences afterwards. Much of it is about rape and sexual humiliation and is a dreadful indictment on masculinity and men's actions in the absence of accountability. Examples are drawn from chapters devoted to South Africa, Mozambique, Sudan, Rwanda, Chad, Liberia and Namibia and it is a depressing read in its universality of man's inhumanity to woman. The opening chapter by Meredeth Turshen attempts to find explanations and to observe patterns, for example in that irregular armies are more prone to this sort of abuse, even against their own ranks of female fighters, than are regular forces. Explanations range from distant structural economic factors which produce poverty and dislocation, to colonial heritage, to psychological male propensities in times of war and, at times, to related deliberate policies of weakening and humiliating the enemy in a broader strategic sense.

The concluding chapter, by Daniel Volman, explores the 'militarization of Africa' in the wake of the demise of the cold war, coinciding with the increased availability of small arms and the consequent change in the nature of conflict. With these two more general chapters the editors avoid the trap of pathologising African atrocity, always a danger in this type of book, but one which is also diverted by including the accounts of victims of South African security police during the apartheid period in chapters 2 and 3. These chapters also discuss the limitations, but also the potential, of bodies such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and a more extended debate on this and the possible role of international courts in gender abuse would be a welcome follow-up.


'Analyses of democratisation in developing countries are proliferating. Why, then,
another one?’ asks the author of this volume in his Preface. Why also another from a US publisher and academic, one might add. In this case, however, research funding came from the Norwegian Nobel Institute and the author’s justification is that he combines ‘macro-historical’ and contemporary issues into a theoretical framework which informs his substantive discussion on the dynamics of democratisation, and the result is a more critical and reflective account than is often found in mainstream writings on this area.

Chapter 2 contains the essence of his theoretical approach which attempts to combine macro-level structures, based on power, interest and knowledge with micro-level determinants such as those associated with incumbent regimes and with civil society to produce a ‘national democratic dialogue’ (p. 24). This, in turn, is set in an overarching process which links coercive rule, preconditions of democratisation and ‘global systemic ideologies’ as a series of ‘punctuated equilibria’.

From this there then follows a series of chapters on authoritarianism, insecurity, ethno-politics, military-corporate interests and external imperatives, with his discussion of the last named raising the clear tensions between the macroeconomic objectives of IMF policies and their domestic social and political impact, depending often on the strength of local civil society. Quite a thoughtful and historically aware compendium of argument and evidence on all these issues is somewhat marred, however, by the author’s rather dense writing style – Chapter 6, for instance, is headed ‘The Ethnopolitical-Democratisation Conflict Nexus’. With a tendency to employ triple adjectives, qualifiers and referents in a single phrase, sentence or subordinate clause this book is not for the ‘scan reader’!


Supported by UNRISD (UN Research Institute for Social Development) and commissioned by IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development) where the editor is based, this rather interesting book brings together a number of case studies written to a common formula on Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, mostly by nationals living and researching in the countries concerned. This not only makes comparison easy but also more readily highlights differences as they become clear in such various common subheadings as sedentarisation, titling and land use planning, the colonial legacy and legislation.

The introductory chapter by the editor summarises the present understanding of pastoral livelihoods and of the complex nature of their relationship to land tenure in its alternative forms. The conventional view of pastoralists misusing the natural resource is dismissed as is the most frequently recurring solution to ‘the problem’, namely, sedentarisation. Reference is made to the internal class and gender dynamics of pastoral communities and of how little is still known of how these change to favour particular individuals as tenure becomes formalised. There is a wealth of comparative material in this book which also contains a useful bibliography, a detailed list of international organisations working on pastoral issues and the addresses of indigenous pastoralist NGOs in Africa.
Although much has been written about structural adjustment and much continues to be written there is some justification for this as longer time spans become available at least for assessing its medium term impact. This book is useful in that it presents the considered conclusions of a team of economists at Cornell University on the outcome in five countries: Cameroon, The Gambia, Madagascar, Niger and Tanzania over the period up to the early 1990s, late 1980s. Although their principal method was the application of an econometric model based upon social accounting matrices both the results and surrounding discussion are presented in a form accessible to the non-specialist.

The various chapters bring together a host of comparative material on poverty, on trade and exchange rate policy, on fiscal policy, and on agriculture and food markets, coming to the conclusion, perhaps unsurprisingly, that currency devaluation has on the whole been beneficial to farmers, and that this in their opinion has outweighed the negative effects of removing official subsidies (or the opportunity to gain from artificial rent) on other, mainly urban sectors. The fact that the former group are generally poorer and more numerous than the latter (as demonstrated in their Chapter 2) justifies their conclusion that ‘most of the poor in most of the countries examined are small net gainers’ (p.247). There is a certain historical awareness in their discussion of the origins of debt and of influences other than SAP in causing reductions in public expenditure at different times. Clearly, this all comes through the lens of mainstream neoclassical economics but it is a fairly dispassionate use of the tools and as such is worth our attention.

Being the published papers from the 18th Southern African Universities Social Science Conference held in Swaziland in 1995 this book provides an interesting contrast to that of Sahn et al, reviewed above. There is much common ground in exploring the impact of particular SAP policies even though the contributors to the SAUSSC volume include only one economist. Where the present volume is useful in adding an African viewpoint is in the country studies, on Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana in which the intricate networks between urban and rural populations indicate that a simple dichotomy in defining poverty is misleading.

A more intimate knowledge of countries like Zambia and Malawi, in the chapters by Maipose and Simukonda, also casts valuable insight into the politics and problems of implementation of SAPs, in the context of governments struggling to achieve multiple objectives under severe financial and organisational constraints, raising doubts therefore about the formulaic application of IMF type policies and consequent attempts to analyse their effects in generalised models. The structure of the book is fairly well balanced, with introductory chapters on the origins of crisis and adjustment, middle chapters on economic and social impacts, and a final section on alternative approaches. The latter is something of a misnomer, however, as it includes papers on the need for more qualitative measures, on the limits to privatisation and on corruption. Of more relevance is perhaps the editor’s reference in Chapter 1 to the potential of the vast informal economies of these countries and of the role of savings and credit associations in facilitating their performance.
Books Received


Freeman, Linda (1997), The Ambiguous Champion: Canada and South Africa in the Trudeau and Mulroney Years, University of Toronto Press. 0-8020-7888-5. £16.00.


