

the northern Hausa Muslims; the main plank in its electoral platform is rejection over the compromises the NPN has made with the south and the Christians.

The Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP), also a northern-based party, won the governorships of Borno and Gongola states in the 1979 elections.

The United Party of Nigeria (UPN) is headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, with its power base among the Yoruba in the southwest.

Presently, the opposition parties have formed a somewhat shaky confederation called the Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) and are tentatively committed to supporting a candidate chosen by that coalition.

Because of the complex formula involved in a presidential election, there is all sorts of room for forces outside Nigeria to intervene and manipulate the outcome. Under the constitution, a president cannot be elected by a simple majority; in order to prevent a candidate from winning based on the strength of only one tribal group, the constitution holds that a victorious candidate must get at least 25 percent of the vote in at least two-thirds of the states.

Economic prospects

The economics of Nigeria's federal system are as follows: The 19 states and the federal government are funded by dividing oil revenues. The federal government receives 50 percent, the states 40 percent, and local government 10 percent.

The decline in oil revenue has severely affected Nigeria, as it has other OPEC members, forcing a cutback in some development plans and restricting imports, especially consumer goods. Nigeria is dependent on oil sales for 90 percent of its foreign exchange. The import restriction has been geared, not to cutting the living standards of the population, but to weighting the economy toward heavy industry and infrastructural development; Nigerians are aware that no country on earth has developed economically except by protecting its industries from dumping and providing protected markets.

Nigeria is going ahead with plans to dredge its river system to facilitate the transport of iron and steel from its two steel plants at Aladja and Ajuokuta. Three rolling mills are under construction at Jos, Katsina, and Oshogbo; other rolling mills are on the drawing boards. As a result of the international economic crisis, Nigeria has, however, postponed a \$2 billion-plus plan to build a standard-gauge railroad linking the Ajaokuta steel complex to Port Harcourt.

It is impossible to say how many further economic shocks Nigeria can withstand, but it can be emphasized that the country is not without weapons. Together with Saudi Arabia Nigeria could easily participate in bankrupting Britain's North Sea oil corporation, BNOC, which has taken the lead in the operation to destroy the large-population OPEC producers by lowering the price of North Sea oil below OPEC's prices. North Sea oil competes directly with Nigerian oil (both are

of the same high quality). The price-cuts meant that purchasers of Nigerian oil broke their contracts. If the Saudis and Nigeria deliberately drove the price to an extreme temporary low, BNOC, with its relatively high production costs, could be forced under. In tandem with a debtors' cartel to force a flow of credit for industrial development, this could put Nigeria on the track of rapid growth.

And, as the London *Daily Telegraph* has pointed out, Nigeria is Britain's largest trading partner, which represents another potential for leverage.

To refer back to the international press: this writer has never seen such a display of hypocritical racism. Not only are the media's controllers out to destroy Nigeria: don't believe for one second that they give a damn about the deportees.

Documentation

African officials blast Club of Rome, IMF

Africa has suffered the most deeply of any continent at the hands of the colonial oligarchy which organized the Bretton Woods system at the end of World War II. At the time of independence in the early 1960s, Africa was balkanized into mostly small, underpopulated countries: 24 of the 39 Sub-Saharan countries in Africa have a population of less than 5 million, and 12 of these 24 have less than 1 million. Only 6 of the 39 have more than 15 million.

The draconian conditionalities imposed by the World Bank and IMF, in the context of the depression crisis of the international economy, have in most cases wiped out the first steps of progress that African countries made in the period immediately after independence. As a solution, the World Bank is now proposing, as described by its infamous Berg Report, the restoration of colonial economic organization. The Berg Report categorically calls for African nations to forget about the national institutions necessary to guide the development process, and remain content with small-scale agriculture, using primitive technology, and producing cash crops for export, and extracting raw materials to generate foreign exchange. This is exactly how economies looked in Africa under their respective colonial administrations.

Zaire, for example, a country with tremendous potential for industrialization, has been completely destroyed as a result of World Bank and IMF policies. The central government is no longer in control of sections of the country as transport and communications infrastructure fall apart.

During the recent Non-Aligned summit in March in New

Delhi, India, *EIR* correspondents had the opportunity to talk to four African cabinet officials about the economic problems facing Africa. Sophie Tanapura of *EIR*'s Paris bureau conducted interviews with Zimbabwe minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Dr. Bernard Chidzero; Zaire Foreign Minister Kamanda wa Kamanda; Guinea Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Toure; and Ghana minister of External Affairs, Dr. Obed Y. Asamoah.

What emerged from these interviews with representatives of nations ranging from southern to central to western Africa was a common perspective both on the nature of the problems facing Africa, and what the solution should be. The hopes of all four government officials for progress and development have not been dimmed by the continent's disastrous economic situation.

'We could sustain far larger populations'

Malthusian propaganda, such as that spread by the anti-growth Club of Rome, and implemented by the IMF, was dismissed out of hand by the African ministers. "I don't think Africa is overpopulated; Africa is very rich in resources," asserted Ghana External Affairs Minister Asamoah. "What we need is to exploit these resources and use them for the benefit of the people. If this is done, then we can certainly sustain a much larger growth rate in population. I think the biggest weakness of the Club of Rome theory is that they do not give due credit to human ingenuity."

Asamoah also attacked the IMF prescriptions as being worse than the disease: "The interesting thing is it's very difficult to come up with an example of a country that has applied IMF methods and has come out of it well."

Zaire Foreign Minister Kamanda, whose country has plenty of experience with IMF conditionalities, and whose central bank and finance ministry have been occupied by IMF personnel as one of these conditionalities, criticized the IMF as aggravating the debt crisis facing the developing sector: "It is absolutely indispensable to solve the problem of conditionality and that of the deterioration of the terms of trade. The developing countries see their export earnings diminish continually because the prices are fixed in an arbitrary way, because these countries do not master the fixing mechanisms of these prices. . . . In this situation, if we are forced to resort to foreign borrowings to meet immediate and daily needs of development, it is only logical that these borrowings, these developing countries' debts, should not suffocate us, should not kill us. . . ."

"One cannot, on the one hand, try to help developing countries' economies out of a dead end, and on the other hand, create such pressures that the priority of all our actions for development be oriented toward satisfying debt demands. . . . We are the poorest countries of the world, whose economies are the most vulnerable in the world. . . . We are reduced to producing and selling in order to pay our debts, at the expense of evident domestic aspirations of the people for

development. . . ."

Kamanda made it clear that he was not merely looking for a way to avoid paying some debts, but was seeking development: "This having been said, we are not opposed to reimbursing debts. What is needed is the creation of the economic development capacity which would allow us to pay our debts. . . . It is only normal that we reimburse money that has helped us increase our productivity."

He went on to make the case for a new monetary system needed for the developing sector to get out of the no-win trap it is in. "The Bretton Woods accords, which had its merits at the time, does not correspond to today's realities anymore. Currency parities which were the basis of the agreement at Bretton Woods and at the creation of the IMF, do not exist anymore. Therefore, there is a problem of restructuring, a new structure which should be adapted to new developments. We were not at Bretton Woods when the IMF was created. We were not at San Francisco when the United Nations was created. If we were taken into account at all, it was in the context of a marginal notation that was concluded and voted on among big powers. At the start, things were not made for us to solve our problems nor to take into account our concerns."

Kamanda pointed out that since the creation of the Bretton Woods system, "to speak only of Africa, 50 states [have emerged] that did not exist in 1945, 50 states that correspond to the same number of states present at the creation of the United Nations.

"We think that the moment has come for us to gather together, to create together, to put together, to forge together new mechanisms, new structures that will engage the responsibility of everybody in such a way that everyone takes part in economic as well as political affairs. I mean, finally a new system which will allow each one to find his own interest without forgetting the lawful interests of nations in the world."

Referring to the IMF solution of patching up the bankrupt Bretton Woods system, he said: "Illusions, expedient solutions that do not tackle the fundamental issue will not solve the problems posed. We are speaking of a reform of the international monetary system and not of the transformation of the IMF into a [world central] bank to manage private and public credits. There is a very big difference between the two approaches. If this transformation is far from the essential parameters of a new world economic order, it is evident that all this will complicate even more the already difficult relations between industrialized and developing nations."

The Zimbabwe Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Dr. Bernard Chidzero, also stressed the problem of the present monetary system: "It is not the principal which is difficult to repay, it is because the interest rates are just too high."

Guinea Foreign Minister Touré stated that the purported IMF solutions actually cause more damage: "As for the IMF, we have noted that each time the IMF has intervened in a Third World country, whether it be in terms of advice or

allowance of Special Drawing Rights to patch up a conjunctural payments crisis, the receiver country has always ended up in bankruptcy, in total catastrophe. Examples are many in Africa as well as in Asia. Therefore, this destabilization caused by the IMF advice that these countries have followed, shows clearly that the philosophy of the IMF is not often—if ever—in the interest of the Third World countries.”

Touré linked the idea of a debt cartel and a new monetary system. “Whether you speak of a debtors’ cartel or South-South cooperation, all that means really is that the South should form a common front. . . . To constitute a debtors’ cartel would be a strategic solution. Those who demand payment of our debts, can only demand repayment if we have the means to do so. They must be brought to reconsider their position, i.e., to offer us better repayment conditions. Otherwise, in trying to repay our old debts, we are getting more indebted. We think that the best way to pull the Third World out of this bankruptcy situation, or out of this precarious monetary situation, is to first of all reconsider the international monetary system. This is a necessity. The second consideration is the strengthening of South-South solidarity.”

The need for unity

The idea of South-South cooperation was a recurring theme when the question of how to implement the new world economic order, how to get a new monetary system, was discussed. As Asamoah put it: “I think that the North-South dialogue will take much longer to materialize, and I think the area of more immediate progress will be in this field of South-South dialogue and cooperation. And I think if that could be developed, this could improve our position in relation to the North-South dialogue.”

Touré also emphasized this point: “One point is clear. The North is in agreement to act in a concerted manner. One of the first remedies must be agreement in the South to act in an equally concerted manner vis-à-vis the North. The South is a market of raw materials, a key borrower from a debt-ridden market, and a market upon which more and more pressure is brought to bear.” Touré indicated the “vicious cycle” of Third World countries running to the banks in the North to borrow money deposited by oil producers from the South, and asserted: “Once again, it is necessary to stress that, in all domains, South-South dialogue is the solution to our present situation.”

At the time of independence in Africa, the United States was the one hope that Africans had to break the colonial relations with Europe that had kept Africa undeveloped. Unfortunately, the United States did not distinguish itself that much from prior and present European policy toward Africa. As Kamanda said: “The United States must shape a coherent policy vis-à-vis the Third World in general, and Africa in particular. There are numerous friends of the United States in the world who have the impression that there is no clear and precise African policy, no Third World policy of the United States.”

Thailand: the choices as elections approach

by Pakdee Tanapura and
Sophie Tanapura in Bangkok

Since the beginning of the year, Thailand—a country of 42 million inhabitants—has again been plunged into political instability. Strategically situated, Thailand has common borders with the Indochina countries on the east, with Burma on the west, and with Malaysia in the south. For more than two decades, the country has been involved in the Indochina conflicts: after having provided the United States with bases, Thailand is now providing the Khmer Rouge of Pol Pot (backed by China) and Khmer Serai forces (“Free Khmer” led by Son Sann and backed by the United States) with training camps to fight the Vietnamese-backed Kampuchean government of Heng Samrin. This is Thailand’s backup for the “China card” policy of the U.S. State Department.

Since 1976 Thailand has been operating under a quasi-parliamentary system dominated by the Thai military. The four-year “crisis management” provided by the constitution was to come to an end on April 21, at which point the military-dominated appointed Senate would relinquish to the elected National Assembly the power to nominate the prime minister. The present government of Premier General Prem Tinsulanonda would have run a high risk of losing its place to a civilian government.

Army Commander in Chief General Arthit Kamlangek, in league with Prime Minister Prem, opted for a “democratic coup” by proposing an amendment to the constitution, in order to prolong the provisional crisis management for another four years.

Fearing a violent coup d’état, the parliament initially accepted the amendment. Then the media and pro-British political figures such as Kukrit Pramoj, former prime minister and leader of the Social Action Party, began to argue that the amendment would pave the way for a continued military dictatorship. Rallies were organized by Anant Senakhan, a police officer under the 1960s Marshal Pao Sriyanond government. Anant recently quit his post-law enforcement monkhood to organize a hunger strike against the amendment. Under this pressure, the parliament convened a new session to reconsider the amendment.

In the second voting, the amendment was rejected, whereupon the parliament was dissolved by royal decree implemented by the Prem government. Election day is set for April 18, giving the candidates only one month’s campaigning. The quick dissolution allowed for elections to take place under the old electoral formula of the crisis-manage-