

EIR Africa's Crisis Today

Industrialize Africa to ensure world's future

by Nancy Spannaus

As we enter 1993, the continent of Africa has come into the center of public attention. As a result of the decision by the Bush administration to send tens of thousands of troops to escort relief convoys in famine-wracked Somalia, the debate over why Africa has come to this pass, and how to solve its crying needs, dominates the world's agenda. Some imperialists openly call for recolonization and protectorates, while other voices denounce the deployment as having contemptible geopolitical purposes, or, alternatively, oppose putting any resources into Africa at all.

Within this debate, *EIR* shares with many others the belief that Africa represents the moral test for the success of our civilization. If the world's citizens cannot muster the moral, political, and economic means to foster the economic development of Africa as a continent of sovereign nations, not colonies, in which all human beings live lives of sovereign dignity, then we will have proven ourselves unfit to survive. In fact, our failure to meet this test will likely result in the physical destruction of not just Africa, but the world of nations.

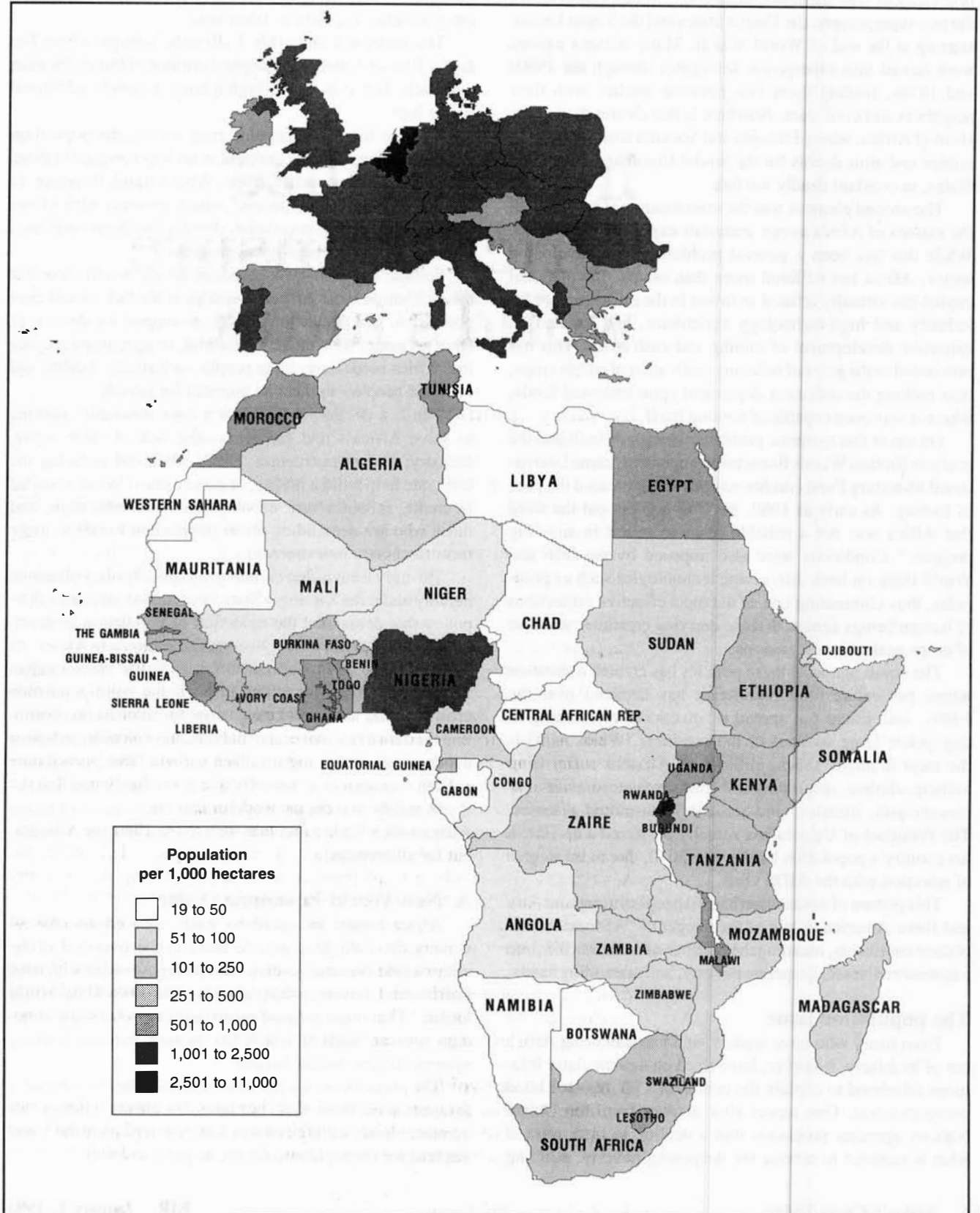
EIR's unique role has to do with the fact that we are the chief international publication of the political movement associated with Lyndon LaRouche, the American economist whose breakthroughs in the science of physical economy provide the only viable basis for the rebirth of Africa. We have assembled in this issue the core materials for statesmen and citizens for dealing with the issue of Africa. We present an overview of the looting process that has brought the continent to the abyss, a survey of longstanding development projects available to make Africa a center of prosperity, and a major conceptual contribution on Third World development by LaRouche. The evidence is compelling: The disaster need not have occurred, and all the tools are available for reversing it.

A model to be avoided

There should be no question in the mind of the reasonable observer that Africa is potentially a thriving place. It has a surfeit of raw materials and plentiful water resources, if they are developed. It has abundant arable land, and until recently,

FIGURE 1

Africa's population density is very low compared to most of Europe



a healthy, growing, young population. One is justified in asking the question: What went wrong?

The answer is a devastating documentary of evil. The first element was the manipulation of various countries by the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, starting at the end of World War II. Many African nations were turned into superpower surrogates through the 1960s and 1970s, leading them into constant warfare with their neighbors and civil wars. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Horn of Africa, where Ethiopia and Somalia took turns being armies and arms depots for the Soviet Union and the United States, in constant deadly warfare.

The second element was the maintenance of virtually all the nations of Africa as raw materials exporting economies. While this has been a general problem of the developing sector, Africa has suffered more than others. International capital has virtually refused to invest in the infrastructure for industry and high-technology agriculture, and insisted on extensive development of mining and cash crops. This has proceeded to the point of reducing cultivation of edible crops, thus making the continent dependent upon imported foods, where it was once capable of feeding itself.

On top of this systemic problem, which was built into the postwar Bretton Woods financial arrangement, came International Monetary Fund conditionalities that increased the pace of looting. As early as 1980, the IMF had put out the word that Africa was not a suitable place to invest in any "big projects." Conditions were also imposed by the IMF and World Bank on basic life-saving technologies such as pesticides, thus eliminating one of the most effective protections of human beings against disease-carrying creatures, and also of crops against locust swarms.

The combination of these policies has created a situation where per capita food production has declined over the 1980s, and where the spread of disease is threatening to depopulate large sections of the continent. While AIDS is the most dramatic killer, millions of Africans suffer from malaria, cholera, respiratory infections, schistosomiasis, onchocerciasis, measles, and sexually transmitted diseases. The President of Uganda has actually projected a decline in his country's population by the year 2010, due to the degree of infection with the AIDS virus.

This picture of devastation has led people throughout Asia and Ibero-America to talk of the danger of "Africanization" of their continents, meaning the collapse of economic life into a morass of disease, desperate poverty, and marauding bands.

The population issue

Even many who have wished, and tried, to bring Africa out of its misery, however, have fixed on a particularly infamous falsehood to explain the continent's plight—so-called overpopulation. One report after another from the United Nations agencies proclaims that a decline in birth rates is what is required to reverse the deepening poverty, pointing

to the high per capita birth rate in certain African nations.

This refrain can be expected to reach an even higher pitch next year, as the U.N. prepares for its next Population Conference in 1994, and as the implementation of the U.N.'s environmental regulations takes hold.

The reader will find in Mr. LaRouche's chapters from *The Lagos Plan of Action*, a conceptual critique of this malthusian approach. But it is worth highlighting a couple additional points here.

First, as the accompanying map shows, the population densities of the African continent in no way compare to those of industrialized western Europe. What a fraud, therefore, to say that it is "too many people" which prevents Africa from thriving. Increasing population density has been correlated historically with technological progress.

Second, any competent economic review would show that the problem in most African countries is the lack of sufficient population, and population density, to support the division of labor necessary for a modern industrial, or agricultural, economy. Africa needs many more people—admittedly, healthy and educated people—to meet its potential for growth.

Third, a decline in population does absolutely nothing to solve Africa's real problems—the lack of clean water, industry, and infrastructure. Since when did reducing the birth rate help build a bridge, or power lines? What's needed is credit, infrastructure development, and education, and those who are demanding fewer people don't want to make those necessary investments.

The ugly truth is that certain geopolitical policy planners, notably under the Kissinger State Department, devised a U.S. policy that demanded the reduction of population in developing countries, including Nigeria and Ethiopia in Africa. As outlined in the 1974 National Security Study Memorandum 200 (NSSM 200), this policy insisted that rapid population growth would lead developing countries to insist on controlling their own raw materials, and thus become independent of the demands of the industrialized nations. Thus, population growth was seen as a "security threat" to the United States.

In reality, it is the poverty, disease, and chaos in a looted Africa which leads to security threats, not just for Africans, but for all mankind.

A 'New World Economic Order'

Africa cannot be saved by itself. The context for reversing the outright genocide there is the overhaul of the entire world financial system, and its replacement with what LaRouche's movement has called the "New World Economic Order." That order is based on arrangements between sovereign nations, each of which has its own national banking system, to their mutual benefit.

The plans for such a just new order have been on the table for quite some time. With our intensive efforts, perhaps this current, bloodcurdling crisis in Africa will provide the moral impetus for these plans to finally be put into effect.