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A3-0170/94

## REPORT

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security  
on the democratization of Africa

Rapporteur: Mr Carlos ROBLES PIQUER

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PE 204.257/fin.  
ES - Or. ES

\* Consultation procedure  
simple majority

\*\*I Cooperation procedure (first reading)  
simple majority

\*\*II Cooperation procedure (second reading)  
simple majority to approve the common position

absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to reject or amend the common position

\*\*\* Assent procedure

absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to give assent  
except for simple majority under Articles 8a, 105, 106, 130d and 228 EC

\*\*\*I Codecision procedure (first reading)  
simple majority

\*\*\*II Codecision procedure (second reading)

simple majority to approve the common position

absolute majority of Parliament's component Members either to adopt a declaration of intent  
to reject the common position, or to amend or confirm the rejection of the common position

\*\*\*III Codecision procedure (third reading)

simple majority to approve the joint text

absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to reject the Council text

DA

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At the sitting of 12 July 1990 the President of the European Parliament announced that he had forwarded the motion for a resolution by Mr Glinne on democratization movements in Africa, pursuant to Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Development and Cooperation for its opinion.

At its meeting of 6 February 1991 the committee decided to draw up a report and appointed Mr Robles Piquer rapporteur.

At its meeting of 28 November 1991 the committee decided to include in its report the following motion for a resolution which had been referred to it:

- B3-1074/91; author: Mr Vecchi; subject: the democratization process in the Maghreb countries; announced in plenary sitting: 13 September 1991; opinion: Committee on Development and Cooperation.

At its meetings of 3 November and 22 November 1993 of the committee considered the draft report and at the latter set the deadline for amendments.

At the meeting of 26 January 1994, owing to the number of amendments tabled, the committee applied the procedure pursuant to Rule 150(5) of the Rules of Procedure and requested the rapporteur to submit a new revised draft report.

At the meeting of 16 February 1994 the rapporteur submitted his revised text and a deadline for amendments was set.

At the meeting of 22 March 1994 the committee adopted the resolution by 17 votes to 1 with 2 abstentions.

The following were present for the vote: Cassanmagnago Cerretti, vice-chairman and acting chairman; Robles Piquer, rapporteur; Balfe, Canavarro, Cheysson, Crampton, Delorozoy, Dillen, Günther, von Haller (for Lenz, pursuant to Rule 138(2)), Holzfuss, Lalor, Langer, Llorca Vilaplana, Magnani Noya, Onesta, Oostlander (for Penders), Pons Grau (for Verde i Aldea), Puerta and Sakellariou.

The opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation is attached to this report.

The report was tabled on 23 March 1994.

The deadline for tabling amendments will appear on the draft agenda for the part-session at which the report is to be considered.

**A**  
**MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**  
**Resolution on the democratization of Africa**

**The European Parliament,**

- having regard to the motions for resolutions tabled pursuant to Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure by:
  - a) Mr Glinne on democratization movements in Africa (B3-1123/90),
  - b) Mr Vecchi on the democratization process in the Maghreb countries (B3-1074/91),
- having regard to Article 5 of the Fourth Lomé Convention (15 December 1989) on respect for fundamental human rights and liberties (Doc ACP-EEC 2107/90 of March 1990),
- having regard to the resolution of the ACP-EEC Joint Assembly of 31 March 1993<sup>1</sup> on democracy, human rights and development in the ACP countries,
- having regard to its resolutions of 12 March 1993<sup>2</sup> on human rights in the world and Community human rights policy for the years 1991/92 and 13 July 1993<sup>3</sup> on human rights, democracy and development,
- having regard to the resolution on democratization adopted by the ACP-EEC Joint Assembly on 7 October 1993 in Brussels,<sup>4</sup>
- having regard to the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty on a common foreign and security policy, with express reference to development cooperation,
- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security and the opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation (A3-0170/94),
- A. whereas 53 sovereign states coexist in Africa, which are at times very different for geographical, historical, religious, linguistic, ethnic, political, economic and social reasons, many of them governed by authoritarian regimes that rely on the armed forces and single parties,
- B. mindful of the desire to change that situation by democratizing its political systems - a desire often expressed by the people of Africa at frequent personal risk, and which has led to significant progress being made on the road to political freedom in a number of African states,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 234, 30.8.1993

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 115, 26.4.1993

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 255, 20.9.1993

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 14, 17.1.1994

- C. whereas the collapse of the Soviet Union, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon, the defeat of totalitarian ideologies and the end of the East-West bipolarity have provided African countries with an incentive to seek solutions to their socio-economic problems based on liberty and participation,
- D. mindful of the difficulty in achieving this desire for democratization because of certain economic factors which have an undeniable social impact, such as the deterioration of the terms of trade, which is harmful to the developing countries, the external debt of these countries (which, in sub-Saharan Africa is equivalent to 106% of GDP), the fact that the current GATT agreements are weighted against them and the anomalous flow of capital from certain countries of the South to certain international financial centres,
- E. mindful of the strength of the autocratic regimes of many countries, which ever since their independence have inherited the worst aspects of colonial policy, concentrating power in the hands of dictators and single parties supported by military and bureaucratic minorities,
- F. whereas greater or lesser progress towards democratic pluralism has, despite these obstacles, occurred in various countries, in addition to countries with a tradition of democracy,
- G. whereas civil wars, political assassinations and military coups have destroyed fledgling peace processes and democratic governments which were peacefully installed by popular vote, and whereas other countries are grappling with high levels of terrorist activity and are tempted to severely restrict civil liberties and impede attempts to establish democracy,
- H. mindful of the support given to that desire for democratization by the European Community in the documents cited above and the basic agreement with that support expressed by the African representatives in the ACP-EEC Joint Assembly, in particular as regards its negotiations on human rights and through steps taken by its Bureau and Co-Presidents,
- I. mindful of the growing demands among many circles of opinion for an in-depth examination to be made of the concept of non-intervention, with a view to making the public aware of the suffering undergone by many peoples at the hands of the autocratic powers referred to above, whilst the international community remains indifferent,

Considers that:

1. The people and governments of Africa must find appropriate ways of establishing legal, democratic institutions based on their history, their cultural identity and open participation by the people in decision-making processes which must be characterized by the principle of the separation of powers; maintains that the peoples of Africa are entitled to fully democratic and participatory systems of government;
2. Economic development and political democracy are closely linked and that support for democracy in Africa should also take the form of economic instruments for the benefit of its peoples;

3. That right is supported by the will of the African people, repeatedly given popular expression since the beginning of the present decade because 'the forces of liberty and democracy are contagious' (Charter of Arusha, 12 to 16 February 1990);
4. Those African peoples which have recently initiated processes of democratization in the face of numerous difficulties therefore deserve to be congratulated and supported; and the setbacks which have sometimes occurred in some of these processes are to be regretted;
5. As in the rest of the world, democracy will give the people the power to elect their rulers and to reelect or replace them under the protection of representative institutions and under the rule of law;
6. The primary expression of democracy is the protection of human rights. Regional instruments designed to protect human rights in Africa must be perfected in order to guarantee personal liberties against the risk of any improper or arbitrary state action;
7. Democracy is a task that requires constant attention; what is essential is a guarantee that conventions for the protection of human rights and democracy - such as those drawn up by the UN, the ILO, the OAU and the Fourth Lomé Convention - will be implemented and not just signed;
8. Human rights are universal and indivisible. Those of a political nature, including the freedom of information and speech, cannot be infringed on the pretext of defending economic or social rights. However, they can undoubtedly be more easily safeguarded by ensuring that basic needs such as food, housing, education, medical care and properly-paid employment are met;
9. Considers that the current international economic system which marginalizes the countries of the South is not in accordance with the principles of international democracy and that such a situation serves only to aggravate the political and economic difficulties of developing countries;
10. Regrettably, a number of authoritarian regimes in Africa helped to prevent acceptance, at the recent Vienna Conference on Human Rights, of the objectives set by the Council in its Declaration of 25 May 1993; nevertheless, tribute should be paid to the support given by other African states to the defence of democracy and human rights;
11. Specifically African forms of democratic co-existence, which sometimes sprang up in villages and tribes, are rooted in their history and cultural identity and frequently have a federal or confederal political form, deserve to be fully respected. Those democratic forms must evolve and mature so as to enable modern democratic institutions (parliament, government, public administration, courts) to function smoothly in accordance with the general principles of law and the specific traditions and values of each people. In order to prevent corruption and manipulation, the essential goal is for all citizens, without distinction of race, sex or social class to participate freely in the expression of political will within the framework of a state governed by the rule of law and based on the principle of separation of powers;

12. Democracy may be introduced through direct elections or elections prepared for by national conferences. In both cases, those who already hold power must be scrupulous in exercising it in order to guarantee that the popular will is freely expressed. One way or another, it is also essential that the majority emerging from that process in turn guarantees and safeguards the rights of political, ethnic, religious or cultural minorities. For all concerned, rights go hand in hand with duties;
13. Democracy admits of various forms of state and government; it always requires, however, a spirit of mutual and abiding tolerance of the differences that exist within every country. In particular, it is necessary to combat racism of any kind without past abuses being used to justify future abuses or leading to inter-ethnic fighting;
14. It is necessary to promote, by persevering, the full integration of African women into the political action and civil life of democratic states, in accordance with the burden which each African country bears and in order to prevent the discrimination they frequently suffer; it is therefore satisfactory that their right to vote and stand for election has not been questioned in those countries which have initiated processes of democratization;
15. Great importance attaches to the political function of civil society, which finds expression in political parties, local authorities, churches and religious groups, trade unions and professional and employers' associations, educational centres, many NGOs and in other agents of a social fabric that is crucial for the consolidation of democracy;
16. Any form of entrenched traditionalism, radicalism or fundamentalism as well as the confusion of religious creeds and political opinions or the rise of extreme nationalism undermines the necessary democratic pluralism and threatens basic human rights. When such principles also favour terrorism, condemnation of them must be all the more emphatic and unequivocal;
17. In cases of systematic infringement of human rights and democratic freedoms, in Africa as in any other part of the world, the European Union must apply firmly and without hesitation the doctrine formulated by the Council, the Member States, the Commission, the European Parliament and the ACP-EEC Joint Assembly in the documents cited above. To this end, the Commission should draw up transparent, homogeneous and non-discriminatory criteria for its application. The European Union should cooperate in the adoption and application of United Nations decisions aimed at protecting human rights and the will of the people;
18. Funds to assist the democratization of Africa must be increased and be incorporated into a coordinated multi-annual policy that prevents the wastage of resources which occurs at present and contributes to the proper monitoring of the use of those resources. The role of monitoring falls to the Commission, through its services, which must keep the Council and Parliament regularly informed;

19. The funds to assist the democratization of Africa should be earmarked mainly for:
- (a) training in human rights and civil liberties for election administrators and inspectors, officials of various organs of sovereign bodies, officers in the armed forces and police and members of the judiciary;
  - (b) the infrastructure for electoral processes: electoral rolls, campaigns, defining constituency boundaries, setting up electoral boards and colleges, vote counting, etc.;
  - (c) funds for the launching of the institutions that are features of a democratic state under the rule of law, especially the houses of parliament, the courts of justice and auditors and the associated technical services which are usually lacking in many states that become democratic;
  - (d) the carrying out of legal studies of a constitutional nature in order to consolidate the state under the rule of law;
  - (e) the establishment of an independent judiciary subject to the rule of law;
  - (f) the demobilization of combatants and the rehabilitation of refugees and displaced persons;
  - (g) the social integration of those who have taken risks in the fight to establish democracy, so that they can participate fully in the institutions which represent the will of the people;
  - (h) the strengthening or creation of media which are truly dedicated to truth, pluralism and general respect for human rights, the will of the people and the protection of minorities.
20. In serving the cause of African democratization, the European Union will always seek to ensure the greatest possible coherence between its own action and that of its Member States so that the above objective is served by a genuine common foreign and security policy, in which multilateral action predominates over the interests which play a part in any bilateral aid;
21. Within this multilateral framework, particular support should be granted by means of specific budget lines to those African countries which have achieved a genuine democratic transition, bearing in mind the problems associated with a lack of financial liquidity arising from the earlier dictatorship;
22. The European Parliament must reinforce its participation in the democratic processes in Africa by increasing its cooperation both bilaterally and within the framework of the Lomé Conventions and the agreements with the Maghreb and Mashreq countries, in the regular revisions of which it wishes to be involved;

23. In particular, the European Parliament will analyse the benefits obtained by the peoples of Africa from the successive Lomé conventions, paying special attention to the regular revisions carried out by the Joint Assembly. In its own conclusions, the European Parliament will seek to make that Assembly fully democratically representative and to strengthen the link between cooperation and democracy outlined in Article 5 of the said Convention;
24. When the European Union has to suspend its cooperation with governments that infringe human rights and hinder democratic life, it will endeavour not to cause the African peoples more suffering than that already inflicted upon them by internal oppression. It will therefore seek to maintain, and even increase, humanitarian aid through independent channels, including local NGOs which are in a position to distribute it efficiently;
25. Corruption, sometimes linked to the export of unlawfully acquired African capital, may endanger democratic institutions. In this regard, some European States have experienced situations which prevent them from lecturing others on matters of ethics. For that very reason, the European Union and its Member States must prevent any possible irregularity in the use of Community funds earmarked for development and democratization, being especially vigilant in ensuring that banking secrecy does not shield the exploitation of African capital. In order to prevent subsequent disillusionment, the European Union will help the new political parties in Africa to profit from European experiences and to remain free of the corruption occasionally found in the West;
26. The lack of popular participation in public affairs makes a crucial contribution to the African crisis, as it did, in particular, to the economic recession observed during the 'lost decade' of the eighties. Without that popular participation it is not possible to build a nation, as the Charter of Arusha (12 to 16 February 1990) points out. The European Union must encourage such popular participation, including non-governmental and decentralized forms thereof;
27. The consolidation of African democracy is without a doubt bound up with a drastic reduction in military expenditure, which currently exceeds the total aid received by African states. Such a reduction will make it possible to strengthen the fight against hunger, depopulation and environmental damage and improve the living conditions of refugees and displaced persons. Developed countries contribute to excessive military spending with their sales of arms that often sustain authoritarian governments. One objective of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) should therefore be to promote the international control of excessive arms sales to Africa, which may favour anarchy and despotism, as seen in Somalia;
28. Although the crisis cannot be an excuse for not introducing democracy, it is clear that the latter will become better established - in Africa too - if it is built on the firm ground of economic development. In view of the current worrying tendency for official development aid (ODA) to be reduced, the EC will endeavour to maintain its own contribution, with the aim of earmarking 0.7% of Community GDP, as well as to compensate for the damage caused in Africa by civil or tribal conflicts, corruption or the dictatorial abuse of power;

29. While bearing in mind that African development must chiefly be brought about by the efforts of its inhabitants, the European Union will, nevertheless, give them the benefit of its own experiences in order to help them construct sound market-based economic structures which are self-sufficient in food and take account of basic social needs. At the same time, it will promote a European and world trade policy which favours Africa's incorporation into a market which is open to its products and protected against excessive downward trends, as attempted by means of systems such as STABEX;
30. Democracy in Africa will probably promote integration in various supra-national - continental or sub-regional - forms of unity that will encourage states and peoples to come together. The necessary revision of the OAU charter could cater for that objective and facilitate integration. While being fully conscious of the differences between the two processes, the institutions of the European Union should nevertheless set out their own experiences if so requested;
31. The objective importance of Africa for Europe as well as its historic links and its geographic proximity mean that the latter must launch a serious and sustained initiative within the framework of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) to break the silence surrounding Africa. Africans must not become increasingly the orphans of the post-cold war era. The European Union must help to ensure that Africa receives fair treatment and that its collective voice and that of its democratic peoples and states are respected and listened to in the concert of continents and nations;
32. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EEC Joint Assembly, the Organization of African Unity and the governments of the 53 sovereign states in Africa and their parliaments.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

## A. SIGNS OF CHANGE

1. A wind of change is blowing again in Africa. When the British prime minister of the day, Harold MacMillan, first used the phrase, it was to make the move towards independence of the entire continent and many of the islands and archipelagos off its coasts. There are now (including the newly independent Eritrea) 53 sovereign countries, very different in many respects, ranging from their history to their language or languages, their religious beliefs to their political and social structure, their ethnic composition to their method of government. They all belong to the Organization of African Unity (OAU); some also belong to the Arab League. They have formed various kinds of regional groupings, such as the French African Community which uses the CFA franc as its common currency, or the Community of West African States, ECOWAS, or the Union of the ten countries in Southern Africa which once formed a common front against apartheid, the SADDC, or finally the emerging Arab Maghreb Union. There have even been outline plans for an African Economic Community. Through these organizations and their member states, Africans gradually came to believe, particularly in 1990 and 1991, that there was a direct connection between their economic needs and their lack of basic freedoms, according to a UN publication (1-1). However, it must be recognized, in a spirit of realism, that the new wind is blowing against very solid walls: when the last OAU Summit met in Dakar in July 1992 it was still possible to point out that 'few of the 29 presidents and 10 prime ministers who had come to Senegal were in power as a consequence of free elections'. In what is supposed to be a worldwide era of democracy, two of them represented 'two traditional routes to leadership in post-colonial black Africa': one was Captain Strasser who had just led a coup in Sierra Leone at the age of 27; the other was the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr Houphouët-Boigny, described as one of the 'veterans of the anti-colonial struggle who have led their countries to independence and continued to cling to power, stifling the majority of discordant voices for decades'. As if this were not eloquent enough, the Summit opened on the day on which the President of Algeria, Mohammed Boudiaf, was murdered (1-2).

2. Independence meant something very important: freedom for the people from the colonizing European powers. It was in many cases a peaceful process, even when the colonial power succeeded in delaying it or had recourse to formulas which failed to catch on, such as the French 'independence within interdependence'; on other occasions there was violence, which was particularly bloody in the case of Algeria but was also present in the large Portuguese possessions. In almost every case forms of cooperation remained open, or were reopened afterwards, through various channels between the newly independent country and its former metropolis, sometimes of sufficient strength to create a new concept, that of 'neo-colonialism'.

3. With a few honourable exceptions, decolonization has not meant political freedom for the majority of citizens of the new African countries. On the contrary: either immediately, or through the trauma of a civil war or overthrow of the elected President, the new citizens frequently came to be governed by dictators who survived for many years in the enjoyment of unlimited power, and in some cases still do so today. It is true that this one-party system was

sometimes applied in good faith because 'it obviously meant not only greater efficiency but also a way of opposing tribalism' (3-1). Some of these dictators merely disguised their ruthless ambitions for power behind the claim that it was impossible to apply Western formulas to tribal societies which were largely illiterate.

Others claimed to subscribe to a 'revolutionary' ideology propounded by the Soviet Union, with the aid of its satellites and the communist parties which had achieved significant popular support in some European democracies. At a later stage the intervention of Cuban troops supported by the USSR propped up some of these governments in revolutionary garb. In every case the people were deprived of any real control over their destiny for many years, whether with the Algerian FLN or the South African apartheid system, under the 'left-wing' dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia or the 'right-wing' leadership of Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire. In sum, the original assessment by an expert introducing his study of the subject considered here is very much to the point: 'Since Ghana led the way to independence three decades ago, Africa's experience with liberal democracy has not been a happy one' (3-2). In common with this author and his co-editors, we take democracy to mean a system which allows peaceful and regular competition for power, participation in the selection of political leaders and the proper enjoyment of civil and political liberties (3-3), to which one might venture to add that the exercise of democracy must include the existence of real alternative government, in forms which will offer the citizen a range of options and are capable of carrying them out.

4. Today the prevailing wind favours devolution to the African people of the right to decide for themselves; in other words, to elect their own governments according to the universal rules of plain democracy, shorn of such qualifying adjectives as 'popular' or 'organic' for example, although African nuances may always be added: when it comes to democracy 'the African soil is very fertile' (4-1). This changing trend may be seen in the OAU itself. A Western observer of the African scene over more than 30 years recently described the phenomenon, with a certain irony, as follows:

'The public sessions of the OAU Summit Conference still ring with emptiness. In the old days, leader after leader would take the podium to extol the virtues of socialism without meaning or understanding it. Now, at Dakar, leader after leader took the podium to extol the virtues of democracy without meaning or understanding it' (4-2).

Setting aside the irony, the second eulogy would seem preferable to the first for the simple reason that the socialism to which lip-service was then paid was synonymous with a single party state and government by dictator, whatever his apparent ideology.

5. It was clearly a speech delivered at La Baule by President Mitterrand in June 1990, at the start of one of the traditional Franco-African Summits, which prompted the democratizing spirit to propose that aid to the developing countries of Africa should tend to support countries willing to develop in that direction. By a lucky coincidence, the same day the King of Spain hosted a reception in Madrid for the President of Nigeria, General Babangida and congratulated him for undertaking to improve the amount of freedom in his highly populated country. During this state visit the Nigerian President observed that 'the Africans are asking for participation and we have got to accept that fact' (5-1); a comment at variance with events as this report goes to press. There are signs that, in the words of a noted specialist 'the African continent is in

a state of ferment' (5-2). However, another French commentator on African affairs points out that the La Baule speech was countered 16 months later at the Francophone Summit in Chaillot when, while repeating the need to make progress towards democracy, the French President said 'each country will have complete independence to make suitable arrangements at its own convenient pace once the direction has been taken' (5-3); particularly as the Libreville Summit in October 1992, not attended by the French President, concentrated on economic problems and produced the statement that 'African democrats ... now believe they have been sold down the river' because the French 'premium' offered in the past will be awarded more readily to economic rigour than to enthusiasm for democracy (5-4).

6. A state of ferment, however, can take various forms. And the reaction of established authority to the quest for participation in public life may be very different from that of the people concerned. There are likely to be as many attitudes as there are sovereign states in Africa. Since an earlier document has considered the situation in each country (6-1) this explanatory statement will rather refer to certain countries which for various reasons are symptomatic of the process of change, and of resistance to change. It will then attempt to classify the 53 sovereign states (6-2) according to the extent to which they have accepted democracy. It will then briefly review the resistance and obstacles to democracy and conclude by summarizing the grounds for a cautious optimism.

7. The model for this is BENIN. Lieutenant-Colonel Kérékou had firmly supported Marxist-Leninism and the single party, until the fall of the Berlin Wall and strong social pressure induced him to call a national conference, composed of about 500 representatives of civil society and more than 50 of the 'politically sensitive'. The Catholic bishops had already launched a reform movement by their critical remarks during 1989 and as a result Monsignor Isidore de Souza chaired the first conference, which led to a democratic multi-party constitution and free elections. In them the President, dictator, democratizing spirit and fellow candidate was overthrown by the current President Soglo who, most symbolically, turns out to have been an official of the World Bank. Obviously Benin's problems have not come to an end, but at least its people have acquired the freedom to decide their own fate and the use of their civil and civic rights.

8. ZAIRE provides the counter-model, although other African systems of government would do equally well. A repeated failure to respect the most elementary human rights and dismay at official corruption led to the withdrawal of substantial Western aid; this no doubt influenced the decision to convene a National Conference, the conclusions of which continue to be suppressed or denied by the President-dictator. Meanwhile one of the largest and richest countries of the continent continues to decline, according to local accounts, from civilization to the law of the jungle. Prime Minister Tshisekedi is supported by the Conference which is chaired with considerable moral authority by Archbishop Monsignor Monsengwo, but his way forward is totally blocked by the President backed up by his Pretorian guard, the much feared 'Special Presidential Division' (DSP), the only military force with fire power and the usual source of abuses of authority. This tragic situation was compounded in mid-March 1993 by Mobutu's absurd decision to appoint a second Prime Minister, Faustin Birindwa, an action which is doomed in the same way as two similar previous actions but will prolong the suffering of the Zairan people. It is hard not to agree with a Washington Post editorial ('Mobutu is the problem') or a Belgian commentator who has described the Mobutu system as chaos by decree.

The serious incidents of January 1993 in which several hundred died, including the French Ambassador, and the Prime Minister took refuge in a diplomatic mission, graphically illustrated the general collapse even the minimum of public order needed for survival and were an indictment of the free world's deplorable passivity in supporting Mobutu and ignoring his abuses when it saw him as an ally. The former Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans has gone so far as to call for the intervention of the Security Council and the Protection Council (8-1).

9. The problem of ALGERIA is of another kind, though perhaps even more serious. There the interplay is between a disenchanting youthful population with few prospects of employment and a world-weary dictatorship which had imposed a socialist revolution and one-party state, whose leaders many Algerians believe are guilty of blatant self-enrichment. The road to democracy was opened in 1990, but closed again in early 1992 by a coup cancelling a general election whose results favoured the Islamic Front. The coup was supported by the fears of those in power, many military leaders and part of the general public at the rapid growth of fundamentalism, in this case Sunni Muslims. The dialectic between terrorist attacks and repression continues to increase at the gates of Europe; the Community looks on with understandable concern but will not venture to take a clear stand in favour of the democratic principles that have now been suspended or against the worrying phenomenon of religious fanaticism. In these circumstances it would be wrong to make reassuring forecasts about the future of Algeria, still less about its intentions for democracy. In many eyes a full-scale civil war will eventually be inevitable.

10. In the extreme south, SOUTH AFRICA is the example of the most radical change, no doubt because in this rich country, the potential driving force of southern development, there were the greatest contradictions between a democracy open only to the white minority and to other minor ethnic groups, and a black majority radically deprived of the right to influence the destiny of a nation that belongs just as much to them, though neither more nor less. The deep-seated changes to the political and legal systems introduced by President F. W. de Klerk have still not completed the cycle and are encountering fierce resistance from the privileged groups of today and the often violent impatience of those passed over, but they represent the end of apartheid and should open the way to multi-racial government or a system of guarantees for the respective minorities as planned in Namibia. Unfortunately the long negotiating process since the release of Nelson Mandela (whose human and political qualities deserve every praise) has provoked other conflicts and resulted in thousands of murders, demonstrating the depth of existing divergencies within the black community. The elections scheduled for April 1994 should open the way to a future in which the unity of the country and the exercise of universal suffrage are backed up by a system of checks and balances that will respect the varied nature of South Africa and the right of minorities. This reform process has also had favourable repercussions in other African countries, by highlighting human rights abuses which were previously hushed up in order to maintain a united front against South Africa. The recent report by a Commonwealth expert group on South Africa recognizes, in the words of its Secretary-General E. C. Anyaoku, that 'since February 1990 important changes have been initiated by State President F. W. de Klerk,' which is considerable praise from such a quarter, 'but the path to a truly reformed South Africa remains a tortuous and difficult one and many hurdles will have to be crossed' (10-1). The tragic events of each succeeding day confirm this point; no less than 7000 people, according to government figures (10-2), have lost their lives during this long transition period. For now, the great hope remains that the people of South

Africa will be better off when they have ceased to be a 'fascinating ... morality play' and have become 'just another country in Africa' (10.3).

11. To the east, there is the problem of what should not happen: SOMALIA. The fall of the dictator Siad Barre after 21 years of absolute power did not lead to the desirable national agreement on reconstruction but to a flowering of mankind's basest instincts. It is a tragic situation, perhaps only comparable with that of Liberia. In Somalia, all-out civil war within a people united by race, language and religion seems to have left some 300 000 dead of starvation and has even permitted the de facto independence of the former British Somalia in the north-east of the country. It has been said that Somalia is the worst human tragedy on earth; and to Europe's shame, the glimmerings of a negotiated solution and an end to the cease-fire only came about after the intervention of American troops, followed by UN contingents whose action has drawn attention to the difficulties of such peace-keeping missions.

12. In the west, NIGERIA. The African giant - in terms of its population and oil wealth - has taken a singular path towards democracy at the hands of its latest in a line of military dictators, the General Babangida referred to earlier, who came to power in a bloodless coup in 1985. What is singular is the government's creation of two sole parties of the centre-right and centre-left respectively. They have broadly similar programmes and are expressly designed to overcome within their confines the enormous tribal and religious tensions which have repeatedly frustrated the political participation which the President now wants for his approximately 90 million compatriots. The governors of the federal states were elected in early 1992; 16 are from the slightly right-wing NRC (National Republican Convention) and 14 from the slightly left-wing SDP (Social Democratic Party). The ensuing elections to both Chambers gave the SDP a slight predominance over the NRC. The National Electoral Commission, however, saw fit to cancel the primary elections to select two candidates for the President of the Federation, causing further delay. At the time of writing, a new President has been elected ... and his election has since been challenged.

13. For the historical perspective, ETHIOPIA. The fall of the dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam and the collapse of his Marxist-Leninist regime was considered the best news out of Africa in 1991, the direct result of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of support from the former Soviet bloc. The Ethiopian State, as the oldest country in Africa, has suffered a long war leading to the triumph of various peripheral armies over the central power; this has led in turn to the dismantling of its territory, with the separation of Eritrea following the April 1993 referendum, which the Ethiopian leaders have accepted, although it has come as a blow to certain major ethnic interest groups (13-1) and is in breach of the principle maintained by the OAU of the inviolability of colonial frontiers (13-2). Meanwhile demands are emerging in other regions fluctuating between autonomy and independence. Admittedly, in very difficult circumstances the new central power has made great efforts to establish democratic institutions and these will now have to tackle the poverty which they have inherited.

14. With an eye to the present, ZAMBIA. The clear victory of Frederick Chiluba and his Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in 1991 in the presidential and general elections was a welcome surprise to outside observers, who admired the elegant way in which Dr Kenneth Kaunda, who had exercised virtually unlimited power since 1964, responded to his compatriots' discontent, respected the result and with dignity handed over the presidency to his rival who had gained 80% of the vote. A trade union leader who deserves the confidence of his people now

faces the difficulties of democracy, including the fact that Zambia has the highest per capita foreign debt of the whole of Africa. These difficulties led to the declaration of a state of siege in March 1993 and the arrest of leaders of the old single party on a charge of conspiracy. The detainees included various sons of former President Kaunda and Zambia broke off relations with Iran and Iraq, accusing both of complicity in an intended coup. As in any democratic regime people have a freedom to criticize; and certainly more is expected - including more urgency - from the new political freedom in terms of economic improvements. The 'year of discipline', as President Chiluba has described 1993, is a year of painful transition towards a market economy, which the new government is promoting following the collapse of the previous socialist system.

15. Looking to the future, NAMIBIA. It is no exaggeration to say that the free world has invested great hopes in this country's viability and stability; the youngest in Africa, it emerged from the 1990 elections after a long period of confrontation between SWAPO guerillas and South African troops. A constitution based on a careful system of internal checks and balances gives some ground for such optimism, although commentators are already beginning to discern signs of disenchantment with the behaviour of the government of President Sam Nujoma. One observer, for instance, claims that the linguistic variety of citizens whose mother tongue is not English but German, Afrikaans or Portuguese is not being respected. In any case, the consolidation of national unity and the democratic system, which it may be hoped will succeed in Namibia, will augur well for African democracy.

16. Virtually all the other African countries are variants of the above models. In some, civil war is still destroying or threatening hopes for peace. Such are the hopes and disappointments in Angola, where a peace negotiated at length collapsed in a new explosion of cruelty by both sides (16-1), once UNITA had rejected the validity of elections it had lost and which international observers had considered to be fair. The 20 000 victims of the new Angolan war are evidently being used to delay an election process which was in any case premature. The process was monitored by only 400 unarmed observers, because President Dos Santos feared that to accept more, with arms, would damage his sovereignty. Meanwhile the opposition leader Savimbi has shown himself to be 'lacking in the essential commitment of democracy: a willingness to accept defeat' (16-2). In MOZAMBIQUE, following the hard-won agreement of August 1992, the ceasefire is being maintained and there are grounds for hoping that the Angolan example will not be imitated. At any rate things are going slowly; and 7500 armed UN troops are supervising the demobilization of the FRELIMO and RENAMO combatants. These are unfortunately not the only countries under the shadow of war. In addition to the tragedy of SOMALIA which has already been described, a precarious ceasefire is being maintained in the city state of DJIBOUTI; and a long struggle continues between various groups in LIBERIA, where a force from neighbouring countries, appalled at the large number of dead, injured and refugees from a brutal tribal conflict, are attempting to make peace; after what has been going on in Yugoslavia, it is unlikely to prompt feelings of European superiority. Something similar, if on a smaller scale, is happening in the over-populated RWANDA, in a conflict which is affecting its neighbours through the mass exodus of refugees at each stage. In these five war situations it is impossible to imagine the establishment of a democratic system.

17. The only reliable example of democratic stability is offered by such countries as BOTSWANA, GAMBIA or MAURITIUS, which are sparsely populated with one predominant ethnic group and since independence have maintained an adequate system of freedoms and respect for human rights; few African countries may be described in the same terms. Some have joined this select group at times, at a faltering pace: BENIN and NIGERIA, in the circumstances described above, the new island republics of CAP VERDE and SAO TOME and PRINCIPE, the new state of NAMIBIA as mentioned, the large and sparsely populated countries of NIGER, MALI and MAURITANIA, the intermittent personal dictatorships experienced by GHANA between Nkrumah and Rawlings, and even a country of the size of KENYA, which has still not fully come to terms with itself. Mention must next be made of two recent converts to democracy, the huge island of MADAGASCAR and the mountain kingdom of LESOTHO, where a single-party government backed up by military power has just been swept away by the civil opposition in free elections. It must be hoped that political alternation will be maintained in ZAMBIA and that the President of ZIMBABWE, who is governing with an overwhelming majority, will increase the narrow margin he has offered to other political initiatives within the democratic framework set up by the constitution. In spite of their peculiarities this group should be joined by two countries of undoubted influence in Africa: SENEGAL, where the legacy of Senghor remains in its characteristic political evolution, a country considered to be 'the most democratic of the old African French colonies', following elections won by the outgoing President, Abou Diouf, as a result of the abstention of many of the urban young and the traditional support of the countryside (17-1); and finally, MOROCCO, where political parties co-exist with the major powers of the monarchy, which is increasingly endeavouring to respect the rights of its subjects and whose external image will depend much on the results of the continuing dispute over Western Sahara. To conclude, two Mediterranean Arab countries should be mentioned here: EGYPT and TUNISIA. Both are under serious threat from the fundamentalist wave, but for the moment their democracies survive, albeit with limitations to which other constitutional countries are at times compelled to resort to deal with situations of especial gravity (particularly acute in the case of Egypt).

18. Some African countries are resisting the wind of change with unusual persistence. Such is the case of the YAMMAHIRIA of LIBYA, whose founder claims to have established a channel for representation of the people - and consolidation of his personal power - very different from the concept of democracy that we now regard as universal. In addition to the case of Zaire mentioned above, the same attitude can be seen in the President-dictator of TOGO, in the most recent coup leaders of Sierra Leone, in the enormous resistance to change shown - until quite recently - by the President-for-life of MALAWI, where terrible violations of human rights have been committed over many years; and of course in SUDAN, whose independence has been almost entirely governed by two dictators and where democracy is a bad joke. A particular case is TANZANIA, where the strong personality of Julius Nyerere continues in his successors and a tough one-party state, which maintains some respect for (private) dissent. This attitude is shared by UGANDA, since its President and government believe that the consolidation of peace and economic recovery may eventually open the way to pluralism, though it is considered very dangerous at present.

19. The remaining African countries are fluctuating in a grey area between single-party and multi-party systems, between past or persisting dictatorships and democracies sought after with varying degrees of enthusiasm. This ambiguous situation applies to ALGERIA, in the circumstances mentioned above, BURKINO FASO, BURUNDI, CAMEROON, COMORES, CONGO, COTE D'IVOIRE, CHAD, GABON, GUINEA, GUINEA BISSAU, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, SEYCHELLES AND SWAZILAND. In CONGO, for instance, it is worrying that six months after his democratic election President Lissouba should have seen fit to dissolve the Assembly and, pending new elections has set up a provisional government, without cohesion and facing a difficult economic situation, with the apparent result that 'to the Congolese, democracy has the frankly bitter taste of disillusionment and crisis' (19-1). The situation in BURUNDI deserves special mention: it is hesitantly included in this section in view of the changes introduced in 1990, when political pluralism was proclaimed and the charter of national unity promulgated; but the dominant minority, the Tutsi, are a long way from respecting the rights of the Hutu, who have been the victims of massacres which have been strangely hushed up both within and outside Africa, despite the fact that some 225 000 people, in a country of just over 5 million inhabitants, are believed to have been killed for ethnic reasons over the last 20 years (19-2). These countries in evolution are joined by the cases of South Africa and Ethiopia mentioned above, either in view of the unusual nature of their future systems or because the systems are still not in place.

## B. OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS

20. The prospect of calmer waters for the African continent in which greater freedom and prosperity may prevail is being obstructed by the dead weight of certain dangerous imbalances. The general situation may be likened to a contemporary version of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, who are still at large in the grasslands and deserts of Africa. They are paralysing the new countries' progress and they largely bear out the comment made 30 years ago by René Dumont: 'Black Africa has got off to a bad start' (20-1). Although the borderline between the two areas is blurred, some obstacles are of a social and economic nature while others, of greater interest here, are more clearly political.

### I. Underdevelopment

21. There are various interpretations of the term 'development'. With the aim of preventing the sometimes serious and even irreversible damage caused - in countries with a different political system - by unlimited development, the term is usually qualified today and only 'sustainable development' is recommended, belatedly vindicating the now classic first report of the Club of Rome (21-1). However, there does not appear to be much doubt that the opposite concept, underdevelopment, means poverty, ignorance, sickness, low life expectancy and the arbitrary and often general absence of personal freedom. These unwelcome features are widespread and permanent in much of the African continent, although the situation is not identical in all its sovereign states. Underdevelopment is also a relative concept: some countries are less developed than others. Comparisons are beginning to be made; thus Africa has recently been compared with south-east Asia, with the comments that 'in 1957, Ghana - one of the brightest hopes of black Africa - had a higher GNP than South Korea, which is today one of the 'four dragons' of Asia while Ghana's GNP is lower than at the time of independence'. The writer adds: 'one expects to find that Africa is underdeveloped; what is surprising, is the degree of underdevelopment' (21-2).

In September 1992 an influential American weekly saw fit to dedicate its cover story to nothing less than 'The agony of Africa'. It took the view that 'Africa - sub-Saharan Africa, at least, has begun to look like an immense illustration of chaos theory, although some hope is forming on the margins' (21-3). It will certainly be difficult to consolidate a system of freedoms in a population consisting of empty stomachs and uneducated and unemployed young people.

22. As a whole, Africa is the poorest regional grouping of all those into which the world usually divided. There are some exceptions to this rule, either because they possess valuable raw materials as in the case of Libya, or because their population is particularly industrious, as in Mauritius, or a combination of both factors as in South Africa, although in the first case the wealth is largely in the hands of the government and in the last there is an appalling difference between racial groups. But these isolated cases cannot obscure the fact that only four African countries appear in the first half of the table drawn up UNDP in 1992 in its 'Index of human development': they are Mauritius, at No. 48, Seychelles at No. 58, South Africa at No. 70 and Libya at No. 74. Moreover, with two exceptions - Gabon and Botswana - the other 46 African countries are lumped together on the last 70 places on the list (22-1). Almost all the data confirm this backwardness: thus the distribution of telephones is 7 per 1000 Africans, compared with 700 per 1000 inhabitants for an industrialized country (22-2). And Parliament has estimated at 320 million the number of sub-Saharan people living below the poverty threshold (22-3).

23. In 1990 the World Bank published its 13th report on poverty. It points out that, five years earlier, a third of the population of the developing countries, or more than a 1000 million people, were living on the equivalent of 370 dollars a year or less, which without doubt means surviving on or close to the poverty line, with a particularly high percentage in Africa south of the Sahara and southern Asia (23-1). The same had already been said earlier by the UNICEF and Brundtland Commission reports. The World Bank itself acknowledged in 1989 that African agricultural production was growing at a pace that was only just over half the rate of its demographic growth, which was increasingly disrupting its balance of agricultural trade. As J. K. Galbraith has rightly commented, the first principle of any development policy is to 'recognize the primary role in early economic life of agriculture and the peasant' (23-2). Such poverty is further affected by what is known as 'the deterioration in the terms of trade' of which the President of Uganda (and the OAU), Mr Museveni, gave an example in plenary in March 1991: 2.2 million sacks of coffee exported by his country in 1986 produced 400 million dollars; 3.2 million exported three years later earned only 150 million dollars (23-3). Obviously, this is connected with the rise in coffee production in other parts of the world, which is not offset by a proportional rise in consumption.

24. African poverty is not an isolated phenomenon but affects virtually all the Member States. It is true that it does not affect them all in equal measure: four countries - South Africa, Algeria, Nigeria and Egypt - produce a total value of goods and services greater than all the other African countries put together; and per capita income in 1990 ranged from 5310 dollars in Libya to 160 in Guinea Bissau (24-1). Overall, however, Africa is contributing a declining percentage to world production of goods and services. In 1970 it was receiving 17% of world development aid and in 1987, 30%; its contribution to world non-oil production over the same period fell from 7 to 4%, and the proportion of total profits obtained by investors in Africa fell dramatically from 30.7 to only 2.5% between the 1960s and the 1980s. As a consequence of this last statistic foreign investment is heading elsewhere: between 1980 and

1990, 43 of the 139 British companies with industrial investments pulled out, mostly from Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Kenya; in the latter, only two of the 15 Japanese companies based there were still in place at the end of the decade. The major changes which have occurred in Europe since 1989 have extended to the economic world the notion that we are entering a new phase of 'post-neo-colonialism' and that 'the African crisis should be left to the international financial institutions as a salvage operation, and if that works, fine: if not, so be it; the world will hardly notice' (24-2).

25. The rise in poverty has been influenced by external debt. According to the report on the African economic crisis drawn up by the UN Secretary-General in August 1991, at that time Africa as a whole owed other countries 270 000 million dollars and was having to make annual interest payments amounting to 21 000 million. In the countries south of the Sahara the debt had grown from 138 000 million in 1988 to 161 000 million in 1990; average per capita earnings were declining by 1.2% per annum throughout the 1980s, which have rightly been called the 'lost decade'. In sub-Saharan Africa individual earnings fell from 400 dollars in 1968 to 340 in 1988. Significantly, the average growth of the world economy during that decade reached 3.2% (it was only 2.4 between 1965 and 1980); in other words, which means that the decade's problem was that 'international growth was distributed very unfairly' (25-1). On the problem of debt Parliament stated its views in May 1992 with a special recommendation on the African countries (25-2).

26. An essential factor in African poverty is the position of women, where there is more to regret than to welcome. In general, women are the main losers in African life, whether in societies based on Islamic traditionalism or those south of the Sahara which maintain their original customs. (It is fair to say that in this respect the situation is generally more acceptable in Christian communities.) Some countries have made progress towards equality; Islamic countries in this category include Tunisia and Libya and the sub-Saharan countries including Lesotho and Botswana; but in the bulk of the continent the situation is most unsatisfactory. In the large Sahel region women do between 70 and 90% of the agricultural work, usually without any kind of load-bearing or draught animal or even simple barrows, so that they have to carry firewood, water and farm produce on their heads. As Dumont has said, they are practically slaves, which he adds makes real democracy impossible. Certain essential features of this situation are the predominance in many countries of polygamy, 'by a long way the unfairest and most dangerous form of social injustice' (26-1). This submission of women to male domination contributes in no small measure to the population explosion in tropical Africa, growing at a rate of 3.3% a year and likely to double in 22 years, though forecasts are difficult as the new Africans will be better fed and educated. Suffice it to say that the 100 million inhabitants of tropical Africa at the beginning of the century had become 500 million by 1990. With a population of about 650 million that year Africa continues to have the highest fertility rate, with 6.4 children per woman compared to 2.3 in China (26-2). This is particularly unfortunate, since African women must daily demonstrate their capacity for hard work and self-sacrifice: it is they who sow and reap the harvest, their proportion of the working population, depending on the area, being between 60 and 80%, a figure which rises to between 78 and 90% for preparing food and drink and fetching drinking water; even in an area which used to seem a male preserve such as looking after livestock, women are estimated to work as much as men (26-3).

27. The awareness is growing that women have a decisive contribution to make to improving the situation in Africa. For instance, the report drawn up by Mrs Schmidbauer for the ACP-EEC Joint Assembly, on the viability of a new adjustment policy under Lomé IV, does not merely recommend democratization to ensure that citizens participate in possibly difficult decisions but also recommends women's participation and calls for the influence of women in economic and social life to be encouraged (27-1).

28. One separate but influential reason for its backwardness is perhaps the outside world's neglect. Africa takes a very subordinate place on the international scene. One commentator has called it a 'forgotten continent' and asserted that 'sub-Saharan Africa does not seem to interest either the strategists or the investors of the West' (28-1). Not long ago a well-known humorist published a map of the continent bearing the expressive phrase 'We are nobodies': in other words, we interest no one (28-2). It is the feeling of no longer being courted, as in the case of the countries in the Horn of Africa, which were once fought over by the world powers and are of no further interest but have become 'the orphans of the post-cold war era': the rest of the world treats Africans with indifference (28-3). A recent study on ways of bringing about the painful structural adjustment required by many national economies concludes that the high price demanded 'cannot conceal what is really at stake: extricating Africa, the continent outside the real world (sic) from silent chaos' (28-4).

29. Disease is a decisive and essential factor in underdevelopment and should be regarded as one of the most serious problems facing the people of Africa, particularly south of the Sahara. Disease is becoming endemic, if not pandemic, in certain cases such as malaria, which have regressed sharply after being thought to have been stamped out, to the extent where there are now 97 million recorded cases in Africa per year compared with only 9 and 1 million a year in Asia and Latin America respectively (29-1). One million people are reckoned to die each year in Africa as a result of malaria and at least 140 million are affected by bilharzia. The other predominant diseases are tuberculosis, cholera, typhus, polio, leprosy - with 4 million sufferers - and now AIDS, that terrible plague which according to the WHO will have contaminated 18 million Africans by the year 2000, creating between 10 and 15 million orphans south of the Sahara (29-2). Such illnesses are obviously more widespread in the harsh tropical climates of Central Africa and are closely connected with the general conditions in the country concerned, as they are stimulated by poverty and malnutrition; affluence provides the means to fight the disease: in Libya, for instance, trachoma, an eye infection prevalent in desert and dusty regions which was very common before the oil industry arrived, has virtually disappeared. The governments have done very little to improve the situation during the colonial era. 'In 1986-1988, average spending on public health in Africa was 0.9% of GNP, a little higher than the 0.6% in 1960 but only a fraction of the 3.3% devoted to military spending'. The situation has worsened with the economic crisis so that average health spending in sub-Saharan Africa in 1990 was only 3.5 dollars (29-3). The result is all too clear: life expectancy, which is 77 in Spain and 78 in Sweden, is 44 in Niger and 47 in Malawi (29-4). The health problem affects not only people but also livestock. As well as carrying the fatal disease of tripanosomiasis, of which sleeping sickness is a variant, the tsetse fly is one of the reasons why man has been unable to use draught animals in large parts of Africa, preventing the use of carts and ploughs for agricultural work; and this pest, like the locust, has still not been wiped out. In the UNICEF report for 1990 its Director-General makes what ought not

to be an unrealistic proposal: allocating 5 dollars per inhabitant per year to providing basic health care for mothers and children throughout the world. Two years later the same UN agency has stated that covering the basic needs of all the world's children by the year 2000 would cost 'only' 25 000 million dollars a year, a figure which former President Carter has described as less than what Americans will be spending this year on beer (29-5). Less than a month before, he had solemnly signed the Dakar Consensus, the fruit of an international conference on helping African children; it contains an admirable programme which cannot here be given the attention it deserves, except to mention that it refers to the agreement reached at the OAU summit in 1990 in the following terms: 'The African countries accept and affirm that they have the main responsibility for settling conflicts in Africa'. Obviously one of the conflicts to be settled is the low level of education, with all its implications for attitudes to co-existence.

## II. Autocracy

30. The existence of autocracy comes as no great surprise. Although it takes various guises, from the most absolute and tyrannical totalitarianism to a less rigid or intolerant authoritarian regime, it always means that fundamentally power is concentrated, at least for important decisions, in the hands of one man. It has ancient roots in Africa, often going back to pre-colonial times; and since then 'the colonial empires set an example of authoritarian government' (30-1). No doubt it explains why 'except for one or two leaders ... the commitment to liberal democracy was of short duration' (30-2). For this reason, in the early 1970s, practically all the governments of sub-Saharan Africa were in the hands of single-party regimes or military dictatorships. In consequence the main political obstacle to democratic evolution is obviously the usurpation of power by a person with minority support - whether military or political forces, or both - which provides him with physical coercion and a measure of persuasion by gaining virtually complete control of the media. Autocratic regimes sometimes give way to reason or their own conviction that, in spite of the resources at their disposal, they cannot solve the problems which overwhelmed their subjects and which eventually exhaust the dictatorship. Such was the case of Benin and of both governments which have agreed to seek a way out of their own control of power, often by calling national conferences. However, this is not true of those who have resisted change of any kind or have called conferences but then refused to implement their decisions, as in the case of Zaire and Togo. It should be added that we are a long way from any African version of the old 'enlightened despotism', since the exercise of tyranny is usually accompanied by the most blatant kind of robbery, by which the tyrant - and to a lesser extent, his minions - become an oasis of shameless wealth in a desert of poverty. That such a situation exists, cannot be denied; nor can it be denied that this colossal injustice can only be remedied by allowing the people to express their preference. However, African leaders have not normally seen things this way. For example, in December 1986, before anyone had imagined the fall of the Berlin Wall or of the African 'walls', the Club of Rome, whose freedom of expression is well-known, held a conference in Yaounde. The speech of welcome by the President of Cameroon, Paul Biya, listed the 'internal needs' of African countries: the quest for self-sufficiency of food supplies, public health, education, population control and employment; the President also mentioned the objectives of joint action in Africa: to promote its unity, stability, prosperity and integral development. Clearly, the words democracy and freedom are conspicuous by their absence; neither appears to have been applied to the reality of Africa in the main text reporting on the conference's conclusions, which was drawn up largely by the Club of Rome's Secretary-General,

Bertrand Schneider (30-3). One consequence of tyrannical regimes is usually the arms race. According to UN figures, sub-Saharan Africa is one of the regions where 'some governments are spending two or three times more on arms than on education and health' (30-4).

31. Any form of personal power that is not freely conferred by the electorate requires justification these days; the pretext has sometimes been a temporary measure to solve a serious crisis situation. But in Africa it has too often been prolonged, requiring a doctrinal explanation or, to put it more bluntly, an invariably subjective justification in objective guise. Some people said as long ago as 1947 that power would have to be confined to the 'prepared minority, destined for government', in the words of one of the first Nigerian nationalists (31-1).

The former Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere, wrote in 1966 that the single-party principle was essentially democratic and a reflection of African culture, in which consensus was a firmly established principle (31-2); a notion he has recently repeated, asserting that the existence of a single party has never prompted him to believe that his country's government was not democratic. The First Republic was the method used by Nkrumah to succeed the British-style democracy with which independence began in Ghana, as the first country in Africa; his creed was one of ideological mobilization and the call for political uniformity, with a muzzled press and restrictions on any activity outside the single party, so that it was not surprising when a few years later, 'support for the violent overthrow of Nkrumah's tyranny came from every sector of Ghanaian society' (31-3). In general African governments which we consider autocratic have treated the single party as their way of communication with society, and they have sought further support in the army, the bureaucracy, the security service and control of the media.

### III. Fragmentation

32. However, the study quoted above emphatically underlines the evils which political fragmentation is causing in Africa. In a comment which has unfortunately since acquired fresh topicality, Schneider said: 'The main geo-strategic point about Africa is undoubtedly its Balkanization, fragmented into 36 sub-Saharan countries with populations of under 10 million, and 12 countries with less than 1 million'. Frontiers are generally artificial and are the 'source of political and even military conflict'. Elsewhere he reviews some of the main African peoples whose unity was politically destroyed by the colonial frontiers dividing them: the Ew, the Mandingo, the Yoruba, the Sara, the Fang, the Bakongo, etc. Not only peoples but also natural regions have been broken up: 'The countries of northern, central and southern Africa have frontiers which have been drawn at variance with the natural frontiers of the African relief map' (32-1). Hence the logic of the recommendation put forward by three African authors at the end of this document: that the OAU Charter be revised, in view of the fact that its current structure 'contains one main failing: the total absence of supranationality', in place of which it is at present devoted to 'a simple cooperation structure'. The authors do not go into the internal political aspects but confine themselves, following the footsteps of the EEC, to the economic implications, recommending the establishment of a 'genuine integrated and integrating economic authority', which they suggest should incorporate not only the Conference of Heads of State and Government but also a Pan-African Assembly, a Pan-African Court, an Economic and Social Council, special commissions and finally, the granting of new powers to the Secretariat and the Council of Ministers. The Euro-Community model is very apparent in this

plan, no doubt because - as Schneider points out - the Community is the only foreign power which supports African unity, the EEC plays an essential role in African development aid and the Community example can help to ensure that the 'myth of the nation-state is reduced to reasonable dimensions' (32-2). Of course, this will not be easy in a continent beside which the fragmentation of the European peoples appears minimal, in view of 'the enormous diversity of Africa, with more than 800 distinct ethnic communities speaking 600 languages (no dialects)' (32-3). Meanwhile, African commentators are not unreasonably drawing attention to the new European tribalism and its contradiction with the supranational intentions of the EC (32-4).

#### IV. Fanaticism

33. When it comes to fanaticism history will not allow Europe to cast the first stone. But the countries seeking European Union would seem to have renounced fanaticism, even paying the to many people high price of agnosticism. This is not the case for some African countries, where Islamic fundamentalism finds it hard to accept the existence of alternative beliefs, to the point of banning any conversion to faiths other than their own and identifying the state doctrinally and politically with the Muslim religion. This is a mainly Maghreb phenomenon in Africa and appears to have its antecedents in two long-standing culture-shocks: the first resulting from the 'Reconquista' and the loss of Andalusia by Islam in the 15th century; and the second, 19th century colonialism, which was regarded as a continuation of the process. This move back to fundamentals has its positive side in that it has had 'a wide appeal in a world which seemed to have turned away from morality and honest government'; but there is also a dark side because 'fundamentalism, as a political movement, rapidly took the road of a violent extremism, spurning the traditional tolerance of African Islam' (33-1). It is supported in Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, as well as in some non-African countries, by the 'Afghans', the name given to nationals of countries which fought as mujahidin in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union, well equipped and financed by the United States and Saudi Arabia (33-2). Their influence is most apparent in Algeria, and it is there that religion is moving most strongly into the political domain, with the result that 'the state has been eroded from within, to the point where it is no more than a hollow shell' (33-3).

34. The foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 marked the beginning of the current period as the 'first movement to cast doubt on the separation between religion and politics', a change which has gathered pace since the triumph of the Iranian revolution in 1979. The combined effects of the two phenomena are apparent in both the Maghreb and Mashreq countries, if to differing extents. This is perhaps because governments have to show 'a certain caution in the exercise of repression, using a language which takes account of human rights', as a result of international pressure, as happened in Iran when President Carter's policy in this area softened the impact of the Shah's police. The tension between political power and Islamic fundamentalism is increasing daily in Egypt, where tourism has been the target of terrorist attacks on the grounds that it is a source of corruption; Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, who is one of the intellectual leaders of Egyptian fundamentalism (and is also an 'Afghan', albeit on its general staff), in a speech in a New York mosque, justified the attacks on policemen and tourists and has helped to strengthen the determination of President Mubarak to fight back, in what amounts to a declaration of war (34-1). But perhaps the decisive change took place in Algeria after the revolt in October 1988. According to a recent analysis, and just as happened previously in Iran, society in Algeria has been 'broken down by the oil economy and

modernization' which in the Algerian case 'combined forced industrialization with agricultural reform' and led to the emergence of 'a new kind of social agent: urban youth'. In addition, Algeria is to a greater extent than Tunisia or Morocco 'certainly the country where the West has penetrated furthest in cultural terms and is suffering a much fiercer identity crisis than its neighbours'. It must be hoped that 'the logical development will be an agreement between the army and the Front [The Islamic Salvation Front, FIS], as a way out of the crisis' (34-2). Meanwhile in other countries, such as Chad, there is evidence of concern at 'Islamic imperialism' (34-3), in this and other cases promoted by Sudan, apparently as an Iranian outpost among African Sunni Muslims. Some see things differently from the European viewpoint: it was the corruption of the single-party state in the case of Algeria which promoted the strength of the mosques; and democracy, even if the mosques win in the polls, will be a better remedy than repression (34-4).

### C. INCENTIVES

35. Fortunately, there is no shortage of incentives to encourage the Africans to develop in the direction marked out by the new wind of change. Some of these are the product of their own societies and have ancient roots or have emerged more recently; others have originated beyond its frontiers and outside the continent itself. All of them are helping to ensure that democratic progress is particularly strong in most of the countries covered by this report.

36. The main incentive is the will of the people. Awakening from a long and frightened lethargy, many African peoples have risen up against internal oppression to claim their right to control their own lives. This was the motive for the national conferences of Benin, Congo and Niger, or the comments of General Babangida quoted above. It is also the reason for change in South Africa, the collapse of the Algerian single-party state and of the prolonged Madagascar dictatorship, invariably after violent popular revolutions. It was people's armies, sometimes mere guerrillas, which overthrew the Ethiopian dictatorship or led to the secession of Eritrea. The smaller Portuguese ex-colonies - Guinea Bissau, Sao Tomé, Cap Verde - are peacefully replacing dictatorship by pluralism, as has been achieved in countries of very diverse origins and often with a complex tribal background such as Ghana, Zambia, Mali and Namibia. When it makes itself felt, popular will is unmistakable and direct: in Malawi, the chairman of the commission which organized the national referendum recently confirmed on the national radio that '63% of the electorate have supported a Western-style multi-party system' and rejected the single-party government of President Banda (36-1).

37. At times the democratic system is responding to changes which, in the spirit of a new age, are gradually being introduced into African society. In this connection it may be useful to mention the case of Botswana, to whose stability attention has already been drawn. An example of what one analyst has called a 'paternalist democracy', Botswana has slowly evolved from an indigenous 'highly authoritarian' tradition and a class structure which was always 'one of the most inegalitarian in Africa'. It has experienced prolonged government by a single party - the Botswana Democratic Party, BDP - which gains substantial majorities at each election but has also faced a 'multi-party opposition capable of winning as much as a third of the vote'. Since these comments were written a little over five years ago (37-1) new elections have enabled democracy to be consolidated. The process was encouraged by the tradition in which the chiefs of the eight tribes living in what is now Botswana 'called all adult males to

an assembly' the kgotla, when the need arose to decide issues of importance. The fact that respect for the law is an old tradition has also supported the current democratic process. Two further significant points should be added: the fact that the BDP 'is perceived by the Bamangwato and the Bakuena tribes as representing their people' and that critics of such long predominance by one party are emerging in urban areas, where its rival, the Botswana National Front, BNF, is gaining substantial votes from the working class and the more educated classes, to the extent where they include at present the mayor of the capital and the two seats representing it in the National Assembly. Obviously the affluence of the population is one of the main foundations of such stability, as a recent report points out (37-2), commenting that 'Botswana has the highest human development index in Africa' and that natural resources - diamonds, copper, nickel, livestock and some industry are generating a per capita GNP which had already passed the 2000 dollar mark in 1990. Clearly, and regrettably, the rest of African does not enjoy the same advantages as the Botswanan people.

38. Foreign action is a strong incentive towards democratization. The decisive influence of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the system supported by Soviet power has already been mentioned. The end of the Cold War following the disintegration of Communism has undoubtedly liberated international relations and will continue to cause dramatic changes; whatever the dangers, the change in Africa should be counted among the most positive. To consider the practical expression of this new approach, in late 1992 the European Community 'suspended payments' - other than humanitarian purposes - to Liberia, Malawi, Zaire, Sudan, Somalia, Togo and Equatorial Guinea, either because civil war was making it impossible to finance projects from the European Development Fund, EDF, or because these governments were not respecting human rights or were opposing democratic change. This is a considerable penalty, since the Fund increased its spending on the ACP countries (most of which are African) from ECU 1234.3 million in 1991 to 2052.2 million in 1992 (38-1). The Security Council has followed up its intervention in Somalia by announcing the dispatch of 30 000 soldiers and civilians at a cost of 1500 million dollars a year, with orders to complete the disarmament of the warring factions, and they appear to have agreed on a method and deadline for national elections (38-2), although blood is still continuing to be spilt. At almost the same time the OAU has shaken off its torpor and reached the conclusion that 'the right to intervene takes precedence over national sovereignty in the event of a total breakdown of law and order, or where there are clear humanitarian grounds for doing so', for which it intends to set up its own peacekeeping force and security council on UN lines (38-3). It was high time the OAU took some initiative, as its paralysis was becoming conspicuous to Africans, as some opinion polls have shown (38-4).

39. A particularly influential external stimulus is what is known as 'conditionality'. Although this term does not normally appear in official texts, the idea behind it does. It consists in making certain support, particularly financial assistance, subject to proper respect by the recipient government for 'fundamental human rights and freedoms', i.e. of the people who are compatriots of that government's members, since 'development policy and cooperation are closely linked with the respect for and enjoyment of fundamental rights'. With these words Article 5 of the Lomé Convention took a significant step forward, since the idea had previously been relegated to the preamble. Nor is it an imprecise definition: it clearly affirms 'all human rights, the various categories thereof being indivisible and inter-related, each having its own legitimacy: non-discriminatory treatment; fundamental human rights; civil

and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights'. As can be seen, the list expressly includes political rights, the first of which is the right to elect a government. While on the African side the mandate of Lomé IV is supported by the will of the people, on the European side it is supported by such texts as the Declaration on Human Rights of the Community's Foreign Ministers (21 July 1986), the Commission communication (25 May 1991), the Luxembourg Declaration of the European Council (29 June 1991) and finally the Resolution on human rights and development adopted by the Council and the Member States on 28 November 1991, a crucial year for the new doctrine. Its third paragraph describes development cooperation as having to be designed with a view to 'promoting - in parallel with economic and social rights - civil and political liberties by means of representative democratic rule that is based on respect for human rights'. To assist the process the Community proposes 'active support' to governments which pursue these ends and defines in detail what the terms mean; but it also announces its intention to sanction bad government by procedures which range from 'confidential or public démarches' to 'suspension of cooperation with the States concerned' while taking care in the latter case not to penalize the population affected by bad government. The resolution concludes by congratulating instances of recent democratic progress and admonishing governments to limit military spending. As a natural consequence of this resolution, in February 1992 the Council adopted Regulation EEC 443/92 applying the same principles to developing countries in Latin America and Asia, and couched in remarkably strong language. On 21 October 1992 the Commission published a communication (SEC(92) 1915 final) giving details of the application of the text of 28 November 1991. This document lists Sudan, Zaire and Malawi as African countries with which cooperation under Lomé IV has not been initiated or has been suspended.

40. No one should imagine that the democratization of Africa has been completed. There is still great resistance to the process, at times with armed oppression and at times doctrinal opposition. Exceptional evidence of this ideological battle is provided in the report on democracy, human rights and development which the ACP-EC Joint Assembly entrusted to the Spanish Socialist MEP Josep Enriquer PONS GRAU, who produced a very balanced and sensible text. However, it was not adopted by the 1992 Luxembourg Assembly; it was adopted, in the calmer atmosphere of the Assembly in Gaborone in March-April 1993, with some substantial amendments. By way of illustration of this report, it will suffice to quote its affirmation (in point 70) that the principle of human rights will have to roll back the doctrine of non-interference in internal affairs, which has permitted the most appalling violations of freedom and human rights. As this report was being completed the UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna was providing dramatic proof of the resistance of some governments, led by China and Cuba, to such humanitarian and political progress. A report published on the same day as this text was tabled states that 'the countries of the Third World, the successors to the non-aligned movement and the last vestiges of real socialism, have become major champions of the principle of 'non-interference in internal affairs' and claim that human rights are not universal but a function of cultural and religious differences' (40-1). These are governments - not peoples - who do not believe that 'without democracy, the chances of achieving stability are reduced. And without stability, countries have less chance of making economic progress' (40-2). It is not surprising that this group should include several African countries. But the progress towards democracy which Africa has already made encourages hopes that the peoples of that continent, its islands and archipelagos are on the way to regaining their rights and basic freedoms, and thereby recovering their full dignity as human beings.

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION  
(B3-1123/90)

on democratization movements in Africa  
pursuant to Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Mr Glinne

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the protests by students and civil servants in Gabon, Ivory Coast, Niger and Senegal demonstrating against their governments' share of responsibility in applying austerity policies, challenging the single party and calling for more democracy,
- B. whereas President Mobutu has announced that 'political pluralism' will be established in Zaire,
- C. having regard to the economic and political reforms which have been or are being carried out to varying degrees in Mozambique, Benin, Congo, Angola and Ethiopia,
  1. Welcomes the democratization movements in Africa;
  2. Calls on the Twelve to do their utmost, in compliance with international law and Lomé IV's commitment to human rights, to encourage current or future reforms aimed at introducing greater democracy into political, social and economic life in Africa;
  3. Calls on the industrialized countries to facilitate the work of reformers, in particular by reviewing their debt repayment policy, which has given rise to structural adjustment policies harmful to the African nations, whose gross national product has dropped from \$854 to \$565 in the last decade, and taking account of austerity policies that are not accompanied by 'social safety nets';
  4. Instructs its committee responsible to prepare a study of the political, economic and social situation in Africa.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION  
(B3-1074/91)

on the democratization process in the Maghreb countries  
pursuant to Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Mr Vecchi

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the democratization process under way in certain Maghreb countries such as Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco,
- B. whereas much remains to be done to guarantee genuine democracy, especially in Tunisia and Morocco, with regard to freedom of the press and of expression, recognition of the opposition's rights, trade union rights, etc.,
- C. concerned at the agitation by fundamentalist leaders who, through their calls to violence, especially in Algeria, are jeopardizing the fragile process of democratization under way,
- D. concerned at the economic and social situation in the Maghreb countries,
  1. Calls on the European Community to give its full support to the current democratization process and promote the Euro-Arab dialogue;
  2. Stresses the need for the Maghreb countries to be supported in their efforts to transform their economies;
  3. Asks that its committee responsible examine the Community's role in the democratization process in the Maghreb countries.

**OPINION**

(Rule 120 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on Development and Cooperation  
for the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security

Draftsman: Mrs ERNST de la GRAETE

At its meeting of 30 January 1991, the Committee on Development and Cooperation appointed Mrs Ernst de la Graete draftsman.

At its meetings of 24 June and 14 July 1992 it considered the draft opinion.

At its meeting of 16 October 1992 it unanimously adopted the conclusions as a whole.

The following took part in the vote: Saby, chairman; Belo and Chiabrande, vice-chairmen; Ernst de la Graete, draftsman; Christiansen (for Bird), Daly, Kostopoulos, McGowan, Pery, Simons, Telkämper, Van Hemeldonck and Verhagen.

## 1. Introduction

The draftsman first wishes to thank the ACP Ambassadors who have accepted her requests for information on the subject, and in particular the representatives of Benin, Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Since 1989 the wind has changed in Africa. The air breathed there may not yet be that of freedom everywhere, but new currents are in evidence throughout.

Observers agree that this phenomenon has two main causes:

- firstly, the events in Eastern Europe: the fall of the Communist regimes has not only shown Africans that it is possible to shake off the yoke of dictatorship, even where it is as powerful as that of those regimes, but has also altered the relationships of power affecting the countries of the Third World. The financial and military support received by many of Africa's tyrants from both East and West abruptly disappeared;
- secondly, the economic and social failure of most of the regimes, accompanied in some cases by structural adjustment policies, deprived most of their citizens of their previous minimal level of resources, thus producing increasing discontent with existing policies.

## 2. The course of political change in Africa

Two points must be made here first:

- firstly, Africa has not always lived under dictatorial regimes: the pre-colonial regimes were often organized in such a way as to leave substantial autonomy to local communities. Kings and emperors confined themselves to collecting taxes and providing security within their territory;
- secondly, formal democracy - the apparatus of elections and multiparty systems - does not automatically imply real democracy. Other preconditions are also required: freedom of expression and information without the threat of punitive measures, education for participation in the decision-making process, etc.

It is not easy to summarize the democratization process in Africa. The process takes many different forms and is not always constant: there is, unfortunately, a real risk of relapse, as in the tragic case of Zaire. At the risk of considerable simplification, one may identify two main elements in the process of change:

### (a) the organization of a national conference:

The 'active representatives' of the nation, under the aegis of a figure of incontrovertible independence (often a church leader), meet for a limited period of time for the purpose of non-violent settlement of accounts with the old regime and determination of the new rules for the political process (a new constitution, procedures for recognizing parties, regulation of elections, etc.).

In certain French-speaking African countries this stage has not occurred, possibly because colonization had gone so far as to introduce certain forms of political culture.

(b) the immediate introduction of a multiparty system:

In certain countries, the stage of a national conference was not considered necessary - in some cases because the regime in power preferred to keep control over the process of change, as in Rwanda or Côte d'Ivoire. In other cases, the existing political forces saw no reason for a conference, as in Zambia or Cape Verde, where elections without a prior conference have led to a change of ruling party.

In Africa as much as everywhere else, there is no one magic formula to guarantee the transition to democracy; thus, in Congo, the government, although the product of a national conference, appears to be struggling to establish its legitimacy.

3. Human rights: conceptual definitions

The definitions of human rights laid down in the various international charters cover both civil liberties (individual and collective) and social, economic and cultural rights. Accordingly, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the UN Conventions on civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and the African Charter on Human Rights of 1981 are considered as elements of international law.

The African Charter on Human Rights would appear to authorize a composite notion of human rights tending to combine two different conceptions: the Western concept of civil and political rights and the concept of social and cultural rights associated with the Socialist countries.

3.1. Civil rights and individual liberties

This notion of human rights, as typically put forward in the West, basically entails the protection of the individual by the public authorities against all forms of oppression. It implies the need to protect the individual's rights to life, liberty, dignity and physical integrity, to a fair trial and to freedom of religion, expression and conscience. Respect for human rights, defined on this basis, has recently become a precondition insisted on by aid donors for African countries in receipt of economic assistance.

3.2. Collective rights

The notion of collective rights essentially covers collective freedom of expression for various social groups in the areas of politics (political pluralism and freedom of association), religion (freedom of belief) and the media (freedom of the press and publication).

The concept is wide-ranging and also includes the rights of peoples to self-determination, peace, development, environmental and cultural protection, etc.

3.3. Social, economic and cultural rights

This notion covers the right to work and to a fair wage and the rights to education, medical care and an adequate income.

Most of the post-colonial African states were based on an authoritarian political system leaving little room for respect for the above fundamental human rights. The African states were conceived and treated as part of the private property of their leaders, and the vast majority of the population were left, for the last three decades, without a voice in the decision-making process or the administration of their countries, whether in the political, economic, cultural or social sphere.

#### 3.4. Human rights and EC cooperation and development policy

Since the insertion into the Lomé Convention of Article 5, concerning respect for human rights, major advances have been made in the Community's cooperation policy *vis-à-vis* the ACP States. The Community has established that respect for human rights is a necessary condition for development in the ACP States.

The Commission accordingly drew up a document on 'human rights, democracy and development cooperation policy', which was adopted by the Council in November 1991.

Community aid is thus now conditional on what are considered to be the basic civil and political liberties linked to the criteria of democracy and effectiveness of economic mechanisms. Respect for civil and political liberties obviously represents a positive step towards respect for human rights as a whole; nonetheless, it is to be regretted that respect for social and economic rights has not been taken into account when it comes to defining human rights violations.

It should also be remembered that the existing unjust international economic system contributes to deteriorating respect for human rights.

#### 4. Democracy

Democracy and respect for human rights are two intrinsically related concepts. The ability of citizens to exercise the whole range of human rights, including social and economic, cultural, civil and political rights, is a crucial yardstick for assessing the degree of democracy of a regime. A state cannot legitimately call itself democratic if it admits only some of those rights - for instance, if it permits free elections while failing to guarantee its citizens a minimum level of social and economic rights. One cannot talk of respect for human rights unless the fundamental rights of citizens, such as the right to food, lodging, medical care and education are guaranteed; this is a vital prerequisite for economic and social development in Africa. To say this is of course not to justify human rights violations on the pretext of a supposed need for a 'strong state' to ensure economic development.

##### 4.1. Political democracy

A political system may be called democratic where it is based on a set of ground rules accepted by the majority of the population or their representatives and where those rules are respected both by those in power and by the opposition. After independence in the 1960s, almost all the African countries opted for a political system based on a single party and with no time limit on the mandate

of government. This choice was justified in terms of the need to promote national unity, safeguard territorial integrity and stamp out tribalism. In most cases, the result was dictatorship and a reign of terror; instead of government based on democratic alternation, countries underwent a string of military coups.

(a) Multiparty democracy

Multiparty democracy, as an expression of political pluralism, can certainly guarantee changes of government; it does not follow that it will also deliver development and economic prosperity. This depends on the nature of the regime in power, the political choices made respecting development, international relations, etc. Multiparty democracy is not a synonym for either economic democracy or social justice. One need only recall the poverty afflicting the vast majority of the population of Brazil, in a country which is actually rich and has a multiparty system.

(b) Democratic control

In the West, democratic control is based on the separation of powers: there is the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. In addition to those organs, a major role in the exercise of democratic control is played by the media.

Although the African post-colonial states have adopted constitutions based on the models of the former colonial powers, the various constitutional provisions have remained a dead letter in most countries. Presidential and parliamentary elections have been conducted on the basis of a one-party system and in the absence of democratic rights, above all freedom of expression; this has emptied the system of any democratic content.

4.2. Economic democracy

The North-South gap is continually widening, especially in the case of Africa. After independence, most African countries decided on an export-oriented economic system, without, however, any genuine participation in international decisions on raw material prices.

The Western insistence, which is becoming ever stronger, on tying aid to respect for human rights and political liberties contains at least two internal contradictions. On the one hand, the aid donors now require that African countries should introduce political democracy; on the other hand, they impose draconian conditions for the granting of aid, as in the case of the structural adjustment programmes.

5. Democracy and human rights: universal or Western concepts?

(a) Universal concepts as to the substance

While it is true that the term 'democracy' is today associated with Western political systems, it does not follow that all non-Western societies necessarily had or have totalitarian systems. In fact, apart from the different forms which the application of the concept of democracy may take, examination reveals the existence of elements of democracy in traditional African societies.

The inalienable basic principles of democracy and respect for human rights thus belong to the universal sphere; this applies to fundamental personal rights, civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights.

(b) The question of specific form

The great problem in Africa is that the African countries have never tried to build democracy on a realistic basis, on the foundations of the traditional institutions available to them. They have yielded in the past to the easy option of imitation, and this is still the case. None of the major existing democracies has copied someone else's system *en bloc*; the systems adopted, whatever their nature, have reflected the national character and history of the countries concerned. Thus the UK has adopted a constitutional monarchy, France a unitary presidential system, the US a federal presidential system, etc.

It is essential that the African countries learn the necessary lessons from the failure of imitation of the Western development model and create formulae for democratic political institutions based on their own history and cultural identity.

6. Multiparty democracy and ethnic and regional questions

The present painful experiences in Europe, in Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union, demonstrate that it is impossible to take the lid off the pressure cooker of twenty years of dictatorship without disruptive consequences. This should remind Europeans of the need for prudence when taking on the role of instructors.

One of the anxieties expressed by certain African leaders when the question of multiparty democracy is raised is precisely that of the resurgence of 'tribal', ethnic or regional interests running counter to national development. Such fears are not groundless: the dictatorial regimes have frequently been based on the promotion of one particular ethnic group or region at the expense of others. It is thus perfectly logical that the excluded groups should claim their due. Democracy is not the cause of tensions, but it brings to light those already in existence; the vital need is to find ways of managing those tensions.

Federalism is one possible approach: on this basis the African nations would return to their old traditions, creating a system with a unitary state but substantial decentralization of powers.

In other cases, the artificial character of the post-colonial frontiers may require more radical solutions including independence. It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that the creation of monoethnic or monocultural units is a solution in itself: it would be physically impossible in most instances, while the unfortunate case of Somalia, a country of a high degree of homogeneity in those aspects, speaks for itself.

7. Democracy and development

For thirty years development cooperation policy was based exclusively on economic growth. There has been a double questioning of this approach in the last few years. It is clear from the recent work of the UNDP that development

is no longer measured today in terms of economic growth rates; a series of indicators of human development is now also taken into account.

Whereas the orthodoxy for more than three decades was that in Africa economic development was a precondition for the introduction of democracy, the present tendency is, rather, to consider democracy as the 'miracle solution' which will permit economic take-off in Africa. It may be noted in this context that only countries operating Western-style democratic systems and free-market economic policies are now considered eligible for development aid.

The least that can be said is that the link between democracy and development is far from evident. If one examines the history of countries which have successfully achieved economic growth, it becomes clear that there is no necessary link between economic success and the nature of the political regime. Singapore, Indonesia and Morocco are far from being models of democracy, any more than Germany under Bismarck or Italy under Mussolini.

While it may seem self-evident that the Community should require its partners to respect fundamental human rights and freedom of expression, in politics as in other fields, it remains the case that this requirement should be made out of human solidarity and not with a view to selecting the beneficiaries of a parsimonious aid system.

The democratic condition should replace the economic condition, rather than being added to it; this is essential as aid will thus be granted on the basis of fundamental values rather than European political or economic interests.

## 8. The difficult transition to democratic societies in Africa: contrasting experiences

Following the end of the cold war and the advent of political pluralism in Eastern Europe, Africa is now entering an era of multiparty democracy and free elections. However, in Africa as in Eastern Europe, the transition from a one-party regime to a pluralist and democratic society is proving difficult. The obstacles confronting the African countries include the absence of prior democratic experience, economic problems aggravated by the current drought, and the revival of extreme nationalism.

The political transformation of the African countries is continuing, for better or worse according to the case. Certainly, some countries, such as Senegal, Mauritius and Botswana had developed democratic practices well before the events of the last few years. For the other countries, the scenarios adopted with a view to achieving a multiparty system and free elections have been highly diverse. By way of example, and to illustrate this diversity, the experience of several African countries is summarized below.

### 1. The 'gentle' transitions

Cape Verde: Following independence in 1975, the leaders of this country - veterans of the anti-colonial struggle - adopted a one-party system based on Marxist ideology. After 16 years in power, it was the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) itself which introduced political pluralism in 1990, abandoning its monopoly on power.

The media subsequently discovered freedom of expression; new political parties emerged and legislative and presidential elections were held, in January and February 1991 respectively. Both elections were won by the newly-formed Movement for Democracy (MPD). The verdict of the electors was accepted by both winners and losers; the transition to democracy was achieved without violence.

Benin: The church in Benin has been a catalyst for change. As early as 1989, the bishops sparked off a protest movement against the Marxist-Leninist Kérékou regime, denouncing corruption, nepotism and other abuses.

The regime, weakened by the country's economic collapse, was obliged to bow before the protests, and agreed to hold a national conference to resolve the crisis. In 1990, Mgr Isidore de Souza chaired the first national conference to be held in Africa; following this, legislative and presidential elections were held.

During the transitional period - which lasted only one year - a government of technocrats, answerable to the national conference, was formed to handle current business. A new constitution was meanwhile adopted by referendum. To prevent the rise of extreme nationalism, a charter for political parties, outlawing the formation of ethnic or religious parties, was formally adopted by the national conference. The electoral law requires that parties contesting national elections should be national in character.

These constitutional provisions formed the basis for the 1991 legislative and presidential elections. The outgoing president was defeated by his prime minister, Mr Nicéphore Sogolo, who obtained 68% of the vote. The democratic change was rewarded by the Club of Paris, which reduced Benin's national debt by 50%.

In addition, the Benin bishops, noting a certain delay in the implantation of the democratic institutions, spoke up once more in March 1992, signing a letter calling for greater vigilance and rigour in the democratization process.

## 2. Angola: from civil war to a constitutional state?

Following independence in 1975, Angola was at once plunged into a civil war, essentially between the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA - backed by the USSR and Cuba) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA - supported by South Africa and the US). The MPLA assumed power in 1975, but was at no point able to control the entire country.

The 16-year-long conflict between the MPLA and UNITA was a manifestation of the cold war between the then superpowers; the end of the cold war thus brought with it the termination of the Angolan civil war. Thanks to mediation by the US, the USSR and Portugal, the two sides were able to reach an agreement, based on a compromise solution, with a view to establishing peace and initiating a national democratization process.

The peace agreement signed in May 1991 in Estoril (Portugal) envisages a period of transition on the following basis: a joint political/military committee including representatives of both the MPLA and UNITA is responsible for superintending the peace process, while the UN 'blue berets' are responsible for ensuring respect for the ceasefire until the planned elections are held in September 1992.

The two sides are currently preparing for the September elections. The electoral law, accepted by all parties, requires that any party wishing to contest national elections must prove a membership of at least 3000 and submit at least 150 signatures from each of the country's 18 provinces.

### 3. South Africa: awaiting the final disappearance of apartheid

The release, in February 1990, of Mr Nelson Mandela, who for 27 years had symbolized the struggle against apartheid, ushered in the democratization process in South Africa. Mr Frederik de Klerk, the initiator of the process of change, has achieved repeal of the Land Act, the Group Area Act and the Population Registration Act, thus opening the way to the total dismantling of apartheid.

The creation of a democratic, multiracial South African state is still, however, far from imminent. Of the country's 35m inhabitants, the black majority who form 75% of the population are still denied the vote. The constitution which is still in force after over 40 years is clearly discriminatory. The Parliament is still organized on a tricameral and ethnically separate basis, with 'white', 'Coloured' and 'Indian' chambers. Continued inequalities in the areas of wages, education, health and pensions confirm the persistence of real, if not formal, apartheid.

To ensure that the political reforms so far introduced cannot be reversed, it has become more than ever urgent to revise the constitution and to set up a transitional government to prepare elections based on the universal principle of one person, one vote. It is this aspect of the reform, however, that is proving a stumbling block, in the negotiations between Nelson Mandela's ANC and Frederik de Klerk's National Party. While the two sides agree in principle that a multiparty conference should be held, there are several areas of disagreement.

Firstly, the ANC is demanding the release of all political prisoners before the conference is held. Secondly, it is calling for the de Klerk government to make a firm commitment to ending the killings in the townships, in which police involvement is suspected. Finally, Mandela and de Klerk have sharply differing notions of the powers to be granted to the multiparty conference. The ANC believes that its role should not include the preparation of a new constitution or assumption of the functions of a transitional government; its task should, rather, be confined to defining the arrangements for the convocation of an elected constituent assembly. In this case, it would be the responsibility of the constituent assembly to draw up a new constitution and install a democratic, multiracial transitional government.

### 4. Somalia: from military dictatorship to anarchy

After 22 years of military dictatorship, General Siad Barre was deposed by an armed opposition movement in January 1991. His fall represented a change of regime, but this has not led to an era of peace or democratic transition. For the last year and a half, Somalia has been submerged by a tribal war which is neither inter-ethnic nor ideological in character. All the contending groups in the country - the Somali National Movement (SMN), the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) and the United Somalia Congress (USC) - are essentially tribal. The various endeavours to reconcile the factions with a view to forming a

transitional government, preparing free elections and creating democratic institutions have failed to achieve their goals.

Somalia has become a 'ghost country': infrastructures no longer exist, anarchy and insecurity reign and hundreds of thousands of people are struck down by famine. Meanwhile, international public opinion has until recently been indifferent: Somalia is no longer - in contrast to the cold war period - a country of strategic importance, be it in geopolitical or humanitarian terms, for the European powers or the US.

#### 5. Ethiopia: democracy, the winners' privilege?

After 17 years of military dictatorship, the collapse of the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam was followed by the seizure of the territory by rebels from Tigre and Eritrea. Following the eclipse of the USSR, leaving the US as the sole global superpower, the US is now proposing a negotiated settlement for Ethiopia. A conference, with US mediation, was accordingly held in London in May 1991. The participants comprised the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF - dominated by the Tigre People's Liberation Front), the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), other, unarmed political organizations were excluded.

Following this conference, the EPLF formed a provisional government in Asmara, while the EPRDF took power in Addis Ababa. In July 1991 the EPRDF called a national conference with carefully selected participants, which adopted a 'Charter governing the transitional period in Ethiopia'. By comparison with other national conferences held in Africa, the Addis Ababa conference was not organized in such a way as to deal adequately with the country's problems.

In the first place, the conference lacked sovereign powers, since it was called and chaired by the president of the transitional government himself, who imposed his own rules. Secondly, it was called without prior agreement between all the political parties and representatives of civil society to define its mandate and powers and the criteria for participation. Thirdly, it was closed to a number of parties with differing views on the national situation, such as the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF) and the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE).

One year after the accession of the EPRDF to power, the situation of Ethiopia now seems to be even worse. The OLF, the other main party in the transitional government, recently left the coalition, on the grounds of lack of democracy and large-scale fraud in the regional elections of 21 June 1992. These elections, organized on the basis of the 'Charter', were boycotted by several political and ethnic organizations, including the OLF, and the results have been contested. The existence of large-scale fraud was confirmed by international observers.

Far from being committed to peace and democratization, Ethiopia is now on the verge of a full-scale civil war.

#### 9. Conclusions

The Committee on Development and Cooperation calls on the Committee on External Economic Relations to include the following points in its report:

1. Considers that democratization in the African countries is a long-term process taking many forms and that it is not for the Community to impose its own model of democracy; at the same time, hopes that certain fundamental democratic and human rights will be universally applied and therefore not be violated with impunity;
2. Considers that it is essential that the African countries find formulae for the creation of democratic institutions that are based on their own history and cultural identity and explore federal and confederal systems; and that the crucial need is for genuine popular participation (by both men and women) in the decision-making process, on the basis of a constitutional state and the separation of powers;
3. Takes the view that whatever parties are created must work for the harmonious development of democracy;
4. Considers that the Community must support the democratic process in Africa, both through the established methods of economic development aid and through measures of support for democratic adjustment;
5. Considers that it is important for the Community to provide concrete help in the development of democracy in Africa, for instance by devising a human rights training scheme for those employed in the administration, the judiciary and the security forces and by consolidating democratic and legal institutions;
6. Considers that the presence of international observers constitutes a guarantee for the correct conduct of elections and calls on Parliament to send observation missions whenever possible;
7. Affirms that access to information, the right to be informed and the development of independent media are an essential part of the development of the democratic process;
8. Considers that respect for fundamental human rights and freedom of expression is a precondition for all cooperation policies and that any serious deterioration in these areas must therefore be penalized, subject to a warning procedure, by the suspension of cooperation agreements; that socio-economic development and respect for human rights are therefore both deserving of support; that greater respect for human rights justifies greater support for the development process, and vice versa;
9. Considers that the appropriations devoted to support for the democratization process in developing countries must accordingly be substantially increased;
10. Considers that decentralized cooperation is an essential means of encouraging and consolidating the emergence of new social forces in Africa (trade unions, small farmers' associations, farming cooperatives, etc.), and should therefore be considered by the Community as a priority;
11. Considers that genuinely democratic countries should have control over their own economic development and that, where democracy exists together with the necessary elements of sound administration (a fair distribution of wealth, anti-corruption measures, and respect for freedom, including freedom of enterprise), no other type of condition should be imposed;

12. Considers that the international economic system, which marginalizes the countries of the South, is incompatible with democratic principles and is contributing to deteriorating respect for human rights in the developing countries; considers that the collapse in raw material prices on the world market is continuing to impoverish the developing countries, the GATT agreements do little to respond to their development needs, their debt burden is stifling them, the financial flow from South to North is greater than the aid they receive and the structural adjustment programmes imposed by the IMF and the World Bank result in massive redundancies, a fall in real income and the numbers in full-time education, and a reduction in health care, all of which primarily affect those suffering greatest deprivation;
13. Considers that the democratization of economic relations between North and South is a sine qua non for lasting development and for respect for human rights in the developing countries;
14. Considers it essential, in assessing respect for human rights, that the Commission should provide a clear definition of criteria, means of evaluation and penalties, which must be implemented in a flexible, but sufficiently fair and open manner; and consequently asks the Commission to follow up its communication on 'human rights, democracy and development cooperation policy' by presenting a proposal along these lines to Parliament and the Council, stressing that:
  - (a) it is only possible to speak of respect for human rights if fundamental human needs such as the right to food, housing, education and medical care are guaranteed;
  - (b) the right to life, the outlawing of torture and judicial guarantees are fundamental principles to which exception cannot be made on the pretext of 'reasons of state';
  - (c) the right to freedom of movement in one's country, to leave it and to return, the right to peaceful assembly and association, the right to communicate ideas and receive information and the right to monitor human rights violations are all essential to the process of democratization;
  - (d) the assumption is that, in general, developing countries can be approached with a request not to allow their development to be impeded by a high level of arms spending; should this prove the case, however, talks would need to be held with the country in question to explore ways of cutting arms spending; continued development cooperation might be made conditional on an agreement being reached;
  - (e) where governments fail to provide sufficient guarantees of democratization, Community funds should be channelled to elements in civil society which are in a position to institute a transitional process.

