

# Conference plans cities for Africa

*FEF sponsored event in Paris presents a comprehensive program for development*

A conference on economic development in Africa, held in Paris at the end of June, now promises to have a very great impact on the thinking of Third World leaders and industrial-nation policy-makers. The conference, sponsored by the Fusion Energy Foundation, the American-based scientific think-tank, was attended by 50 persons during the three days of proceedings June 27-29. Those attending heard ten speakers give a combined presentation of the most detailed, thoroughly researched and rigorously conceptualized industrial development program ever advanced for an undeveloped region.

The program is not a summation of national perspectives, but continent-wide; national programs and projects for regions like the Sahel are spelled out, but as integrated features of an all-African development. The program's goals are ambitious—to make Africa an industrial leader by the year 2000—and the speakers proved it feasible. The costs and labor requirements in numbers and training for a vastly expanded mining industry, a strong, technologically advanced basic steel industry, a network of biochemical centers, a fertilizer-rich, highly irrigated and mechanized agriculture were set forth in detail.

The infrastructural requirements of such an African "industrial revolution" received a similar fine-tuned treatment: the needed transportation grid, encompassing rail, road and harbor, with investment requirements spelled out; the needed energy grid, incorporating coal and hydroelectric potential, but a nuclear-technology "building block"—nuplexes, which are nuclear-based "cities" built at chosen locations as integrated complexes of energy-intensive industries.

The distinguished group of speakers rejected at the outset the "neo-Malthusian" approaches of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank as contrary to any African development prospects. The conference's program for American—"Hamiltonian"—crash development, now being printed up for broad circulation in the form of a transcription of the proceedings, owes its growing influence in part to the fact that it has been

introduced to intersect policy-initiatives by France, West Germany, Mexico, the Soviet Union and several Arab nations which also openly or implicitly reject IMF-World Bank "self-reliance" programs for the Third World. The policy goal shared by those nations' policy-makers and the Paris development conference is technology-transfer to developing nations and cooperative energy agreements essential for an effective development program in any part of the world.

One major address, which we reprint in full below, "The myth of equilibrium economics," was delivered by Lyndon LaRouche, the U.S. presidential candidate who is chairman of the U.S. Labor Party. Other speakers included Hans Bandmann, Philip Golub, Pakdee Tanapura, Marlene Godwin—all of the Fusion Energy Foundation in Paris—whose addresses concentrated on leading features of the development program. Their remarks were complemented by Helmut Bottiger, who outlined the nature of the industrial nuplex; Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who leads the European Labor Party in West Germany, spoke on the relevance of the renaissance periods in European and Arab civilizations. Professor Koto Essomé, a historian and mathematician at the University of Paris, delivered a moving account of Africa's similar city-building tradition. Dr. Emmanuel Tremblay, a reknowned French physician and author, spoke on the demographic effects of African development. Dr. Andre Dodin, a nutrition expert from the Pasteur Institute, addressed the problem of epidemic disease prevention.

## **A city-building past**

Professor Essomé's speech well summarized the militantly pro-development thrust of the conference. For long Africans "have been told by their British colonial authorities that they exclusively do not have the privilege of inspiring themselves from the past—that they never knew the fascination of cities, but unlike all other peoples, were condemned to dispersal in many primitive tribes." Essomé proclaimed this a myth, and used his

command of African history to establish that Africa knew mighty civilizations prior to the 17th century, boasting cities as large or perhaps larger than any in Europe or Asia.

"This alibi, of precolonial virginity," he continued, "is a pretext for the colonial and neo-colonial remodelling of Africa. The cliché is that Africans are dedicated to rural life... We have to establish reality. Historians like Al Bekri, Ibn Khaldoun and Ibn Battuta have spoken of the existence of cities in Africa, as large as the ones in Europe and Asia at that time. This holds a lesson for the future... Africa today is a panorama of a continent-divided. The anti-urbanism now existing in Africa, however, cannot eliminate the memory of what a high degree of urbanism was achieved before the cities were destroyed by the slave trade. This anti-urbanism must be ended.

"Why should Africa have defied the law that all developing regions move toward a concentration of the population? This is the myth that precolonial Africa was cut off from the world. But in fact, it was integrated with the rest of the world. The Ghana kings, Sonni Ali, the Sonrhay Empire, organized vast trade routes and built canals. Kankan Moussa, the King of Mali, administered an intense commercial life. There were vast organized movements of population and vast trading networks across Africa.

"In the Western Sudan there were many towns trading to the Mediterranean; excavations at Kumbi Saleh, the capital of Ghana, show a well organized shop and market system. There were many towns with concentrations of population without equivalent in West Africa today. Timbuktu, Jenne, Oulata—all had more than 100,000 inhabitants engaged in world trade. Jenne's shops sold cereals, butter, pepper, dried fish...

"Were non-Africans responsible... Did expanding Islam build the cities and develop the trade?... Houses of the Sudanese type like Kumbi Saleh, Timbuktu, were built with local materials. This area didn't wait for the expansion of Islam... Kumbi Saleh was built in the third Century A.D., before Mohammed... In cities of the southern equatorial type, vegetable material was used for buildings. The buildings at Zimbabwe, that have been attributed to the Phoenicians, to everyone in fact except the Africans, required as much ingenuity as the Egyptian pyramids.

"Africa was not cut-off, but integrated with the world... Africa was not a people of tribes, but of cities and civilizations... The veil must be lifted on the genius of the African city-builders."

—Vin Berg

## The myth about

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*The following is the text of the address which U.S. Labor Party Chairman Lyndon H. LaRouche delivered to the Fusion Energy Foundation's Conference on African Development on June 27 in Paris.*

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For more than half a century, it has been well known that the application of 20th century science and technology can transform the semiarid, starving region of the Sahel into the breadbasket of the African continent. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt outlined the main features of such a postwar effort to Prime Minister Winston Churchill during their wartime meeting at Casablanca.

Each decade, governments, financial institutions, engineering firms, and others complete studies of new projects. To date, for Africa alone, we have a substantial accumulation of projects of investment which are not only technologically feasible beyond doubt, but which would produce a substantial contribution to the national surplus of the nations and the regions in which they are intended to be placed.

Indeed, at this moment we have more sound projects to launch than the combined forces of the industrialized and developing nations have the present economic means to launch simultaneously.

Our practical task for development is that of selecting a combination from among those proven projects. We must allocate limited capital resources for development to a combination of selected projects which, taken together, will have the optimal effect in raising per capita output in the developing nations.

Up to that point, the policymaking and the administrative problem are well defined and easily understood among the relevant professionals. Limiting our attention to those governments, parties, and financial institutions which are opposed to a neo-Malthusian, Club of Rome, genocidal policy, the problem occurs the instant those groups' sound packages are turned over to the economic specialists. With some few exceptions, the economic specialists respond with elaborate explanations showing why the high-technology development of continents such as Africa is more or less impossible.

In point of fact, the arguments of such economic specialists are worse than mistaken. The variety of