

to explain the relationship between demographic growth and births. According to this kind of thinking, birth control is the indispensable precondition for the "sustainable development" of poor countries. By "sustainable development" is meant a development where the different factors involved (food health, education, technology, population, environment, etc.) are brought into harmony so as to avoid unbalanced growth and the waste of resources. The developed countries define for other countries what must be, from their point of view, "sustainable development." This explains why certain rich countries and major international organizations are willing to help these countries, but on one condition—that they accept programs for the systematic control of their births. . . .

25. It would be difficult to find an example in history of a country which underwent a prolonged trend (more than twenty-five years) of falling population and enjoyed substantial economic development at the same time. It has even been shown that population growth has often *preceded* economic growth. Attentive to current facts and the lessons of history, the Church cannot accept that the poorest populations be treated as "scapegoats" for underdevelopment. The Church regards this attitude as particularly unjust considering that some countries are undergoing grave economic difficulties when, at the same time, they have a low population density and abundant exploitable resources. Furthermore, the Church can no longer ignore the *negative* demographic trends of industrial countries, all the more because the effects of these trends cannot be neutral. At the same time, the Church wishes to maintain a constructive dialogue with those who remain convinced of the necessity of setting up imperative population control, and with governments and institutions concerned with population policies. There are real demographic problems, even though they are often envisaged from an erroneous point of view and perverse solutions to them are often proposed. . . .

2. Population Reference Bureau, *World Population Data Sheet*, 1993.

3. Daniel Noin, *Atlas de la population mondiale*, Paris, Reclus, La Documentation française, 1991, p. 22.

4. The synthetic fertility index, calculated by adding up the fertility rate according to age, allows a comparison in time and space of fertility behavior because it practically eliminates the effects linked to the differences of age groups in the population.

5. Cf. Pontifical Council "Cor Unum," Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, *Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, 1992.

6. Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (14 September 1981), 19: AAS 73 (1981), p. 624.

7. This phenomenon can be seen in the various European countries, in particular: Italy, France, Germany and Spain. . . .

11. In the "first demographic revolution" in developing countries, medical progress reduced general mortality and births increased (inverse relationship). In the "second demographic revolution," for example in Europe today, medical science has reduced mortality even more, but births are decreasing.

13. Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987); 11-26; AAS 80 (1988), pp. 525-547. . . .

OAU has no answers for Africa's crisis

by Lawrence Eyong-Echaw

The highlight of the recent summit of the Organization of African Unity on June 13-15 in Tunis, Tunisia, was the attendance by the new President of the Republic of South Africa, Nelson Mandela. But even Mandela's presence could not hide the fact that the OAU as a body is not prepared to meet the life-and-death challenges facing the continent's 53 nations.

Although the heads of state at the conference were able to chronicle many of the problems afflicting Africa, they were assiduous in their effort not to name the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank as responsible for the crisis, but limited their attack to outside interference. The OAU did decide to press for an African version of the Marshall Plan, according to Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia, whose country is the new OAU head. Ben Yahia said that Rwanda, Somalia, Liberia, and Burundi highlighted the need for a new phase in the history of Africa: "The new phase is one of development to complete political independence through economic progress." The idea for a Marshall Plan was most recently put forward by Nigerian President Sani Abacha in December 1993, right before Nigeria decided to resist the conditionalities policies of the IMF which have collapsed the Nigerian economy over the last eight years. Ben Yahia said the idea for an African Marshall Plan would be put to a meeting of the Group of Seven industrialized countries in Naples on July 9. The message, he said, would be to ask them to examine their consciences: "It is in the interests of the industrialized countries," he said, according to Reuters.

But the OAU has offered no route for organizing such a Marshall Plan other than simply begging from the industrialized countries—a plan that has not worked so far.

No unity

The summit therefore appeared to heighten the sense that the OAU is such in name only, that in reality, the African states remain weak and isolated from each other, with no clear unified vision of how to guide the continent into the 21st century. This creates enormous problems for Africa to meet the accelerated pressures coming from the outside, which are fast reducing its countries to states of chaos and

economic disintegration.

To understand the obstacles Africa's micro-states face, imagine what would happen to the economy of the United States, if each of the 50 states traded with the world but hardly with one another! California and Nevada might do no business, so Nevada would buy its lettuce from Mexico and its beef from Australia. Maine would sell fish to Italy and canoes to Brazil and nothing to Massachusetts. New York and the Carolinas would buy all their manufactured goods from Europe and Asia. If the New York apple crop failed one season, the state would have to borrow money from the United Kingdom because it would have no other commodities to cushion the loss of revenue. To break the dependence on foreign markets, each U.S. state would then try to develop its own light industries, but with no regional coordination, without knowing what its neighbors are doing. Soon every state would have its own brewery, cement plant, tobacco industry, and so on. Most would be too small to turn a profit and would be subsidized by state governments and protected by high international tariffs.

Recognizing the absurdity of the situation, the New England states, each with its own airline, would establish a regional economic community. They would merge their six airlines into a single carrier, remove trade barriers, and eliminate immigration formalities at the border. A single tobacco company in Vermont would supply cigarettes to the entire region. New Hampshire would produce beer for all its five neighbors.

But there would be problems from the start. The states would speak different languages and use different currencies, which would not be honored next door. To complete the scenario, let's say Vermont and New Hampshire are fighting a border war; Maine was governed by the National Guard, and had decided to pursue a Marxist philosophy; Connecticut had a new civilian government oriented toward capitalism; Rhode Island was ruled by a former police chief who declared himself governor-for-life; and Massachusetts had foiled an attempted coup sponsored by a neighboring state, and had asked Canada to send troops to protect its territorial integrity.

Ludicrous as it all sounds for the United States, it is the reality of trade and regional relations in Africa.

Trapped by its colonialist past, divided by political and cultural differences, isolated by the absence of a trans-African highway or an intra-African communications system, each African country has remained little more than a haphazardly placed economic pocket, neither related to nor dependent on its neighbors. The result has been that the African micro-states have remained poor, incapable of establishing large-scale production complexes which could stimulate demand throughout the continent's economy as poles of rapid economic growth. Yet, the narrow-minded leaders who met in Tunis recently are aware that the way to achieve economic reconstruction and development is, first, through a unified fight against the stranglehold of the IMF and donor condition-

alities that have destroyed the productive capacity of their infrastructure, planning which can change the face of Africa and permit it to industrialize.

Nkrumah's vision

Thirty-one years ago, Ghana President Kwame Nkrumah had proposed that the first meeting of the OAU, on May 26, 1963, should produce a Union of African States, with a union government, an African High Command, and a Court of Justice. He also proposed the creation of a common market, a common currency, a monetary zone, a central bank, and a continental communications system. On the eve of the 1963 OAU meeting, there was a concerted international effort to depict Nkrumah as a ruthless and bloodthirsty Pan-Africanist who would use any means, including political assassination, to achieve his goal. *Newsweek* magazine, in its May 20, 1963 issue, which was on the newsstands in Addis Ababa on the eve of the summit, included an article titled "Ghana Subversion Inc.," smearing Nkrumah as follows: "Since the first year, Nigeria and Niger have linked the Bureau of African Affairs (the Ghanaian secret service) to treason plots, and Liberian President William Tubman has flatly charged that Ghana was behind a recent attempt on his life. In the Ivory Coast, policemen claim that a plot to kill President Houphouët-Boigny was financed by Accra and it was widely believed that the killers of Togo's Sylvanus Olympio were rewarded by Kwame Nkrumah."

This outburst was no doubt prompted by Nkrumah's strong objection to the presence of an Organization of American States "expert" brought in by Liberia and Ethiopia to help draft the OAU charter.

The issue was not the transformation of Africa into a subset of a one-world government. Nkrumah understood that the only way in which African nations could possibly defend themselves against the pressures of neo-colonialism feeding off the weakness of the African countries, was through unity. The IMF and their Anglo-French-American accomplices have consistently relied on the method of divide and conquer with good effect. Some leaders of African countries have been permitted the ego-boosting trappings of sovereignty—such as presidential jet planes, 21-gun salutes, mammoth fortunes, absolute power, kickbacks from contracts, and arbitrary power—but control of the destiny of their nation and the development of its economy and population have not been permitted.

This reality was very apparent at the recent OAU proceedings. The OAU may provide troops to keep peace in Rwanda, but just as in the Congo in 1960 and in Liberia, they will need financing from the West. Since he who pays the piper calls the tune, this is no solution to the urgent problem of reversing the trend toward total disintegration in the continent. The Tunis summit did not even dare to adopt the African Economic Community proposal made in Abuja, Nigeria.