

as well as by several Western interests, particularly through President Giscard d'Estaing's campaign against "radical" Algerian influence in *francophone* Africa.

Similar coalitions have tended to be formed to support the antagonists in related regional conflicts such as those in Angola, the Horn of Africa and Shaba. Clearly, the rebellion in Zaire's Shaba province was one by-product of the Angolan civil war and Zaire's mischievous role in it, as well as a result of indigenous dissatisfaction with Mobutu's permissive rule of *embourgeoisement*. If the MPLA has held on to power in Angola because of Cuban and Russian support, so Mobutu – having backed the FNLA and supported secession in the Cabinda enclave – has retained power because of Moroccan, Egyptian and French support. And Moroccan and Egyptian interest in Shaba reflects their mutual opposition to the common interests of Algeria and Libya in the Sahara and the Horn, as well as the bilateral disputes of both of them along the Mediterranean coast. Such tacit coalitions involving African and extra-African countries are reminiscent of the earlier period of African international relations in which the Casablanca, Brazzaville and Monrovia blocs jockeyed for influence and membership.

Regional integration advocated as pathway to development

Horn of Africa

The situation in the Horn is even more complex because of the role of the Eritrean and Somali liberation movements and because of the U.S.S.R.'s apparently precipitate switch from socialist Somalia to revolutionary Ethiopia. Moreover, as the radical Arab states now tend to support the Derge in Ethiopia rather than the liberation movements in Eritrea or the Ogaden, Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Iran have begun to provide assistance to the anti-Derge forces. With the demise of Soviet-Cuban plans for a socialist-oriented federation around the Red Sea, the "anti-Communist" Middle Eastern members of OPEC hope to make it an "Arab Lake" rather than a "Red Sea" in the political sense.

Bilateral Egyptian-Libyan and Sudanese-Libyan disputes cannot be separated from the role of each of these countries in antagonistic coalitions in the Horn or differences over Shaba and the Sahara. And the interests of France in Djibouti and Morocco, those of the Soviet Union in Libya, Uganda and South Yemen and those of the United States in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran serve both to intensify and to link these "regional" issues. Meanwhile, after conflicts in the Sahara and the Horn, OAU insistence on the inviolability of inherited borders – which have now been subject to invasions, not just

clashes – looks rather threadbare. And the Organization's claim to exclude external powers – whether super-powers, middle powers (eg. France, Iran) or Third World states (eg. Cuba) – has been further belied. As Peter Enahoro, one of Africa's leading political commentators, noted in a year-end review, "1977 was Africa's year on the calendar of international power politics"; his "political horoscope" for 1978 consisted largely of a continuation of these conflicts and compromises.

Nor can the increase of interrelated conflicts in Africa be separated from the demise of regionalism. Regional integration had been advocated as a pathway to both peace and development. African statesmen have often expressed their confidence in regional as well as continental unity. The decay of the East African Community – Africa's oldest and most advanced regional grouping – has shocked and saddened many leaders, as well as exacerbated bilateral conflicts among the three ex-members. However, new regional associations – both single and multipurpose – continue to rise Phoenix-like from the ashes of other institutions. The Mano River Union, Egyptian-Sudanese links, the Economic Community of the Great Lakes and embryonic ties between Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia all illustrate residual confidence in the regional approach.

The largest and most ambitious new regional institution is the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which stretches from Mauritania and Senegal to Nigeria and Niger and includes the Entente, Mano River and other sub-groupings. It also spans linguistic, ideological, cultural and religious divides and could emerge as a very cosmopolitan and pluralist community. Its core consists of the three major states of the region, each of which dominates its respective hinterland – Senegal, Ivory Coast and Nigeria. The presence of this trio – Nigeria is clearly *primus inter pares* – may serve to avoid some of the problems caused in other regional groupings by a single dominant state or city. But the appearance of difficulties associated with the emergence of "sub-imperialism" in Africa is inseparable from the problems of regionalism and the growth of inequality.

Regional and continental politics in Africa are increasingly dominated by a few "sub-imperial" powers that – in part because of their essentially symbiotic relations with external interests – are able to exercise a local hegemony similar to that of the great powers on a world scale. In general, Africa's leading states are either the resource-rich or those most permissive towards foreign states and corporations or