

I REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Africa and the Middle East

In the aftermath of the October 1973 war the Middle East, with its newly-discovered power and its sudden increase in wealth, has become perhaps the most important focus of world concern and attention. Nor have the forces of change been confined solely to the Middle East. Significant among recent changes in Africa have been the end of Portugal's 500-year-old empire, the development of a new willingness for dialogue in Rhodesia and South Africa, the catastrophic droughts across the northern part of sub-Saharan Africa, and the adverse effects on developing countries of the massive price increases for oil, fertilizer, basic foodstuffs and other essential commodities.

The African and Middle Eastern region contains nearly 60 states, some of which are so poor that their GNP is less than \$100 *per capita*; others, with the increase in their oil revenues, have accumulated a combined annual surplus of \$60 billion.

Canada's relations with many of these countries arose from the ties of the Commonwealth and *la Francophonie*, from the search for markets for Canadian goods, and from the desire to assist in the development of the least-developed countries. In addition, Canada has been deeply concerned both by the Arab-Israeli dispute and the continuation of colonialism and *apartheid* in Southern Africa. But the recent changes have helped to infuse the countries of the Third World—in particular those of Africa and the Middle East—with a new sense of solidarity, both as an organized bloc in multilateral forums and as producers of scarce raw materials. Canada has recognized the significance of these developments and in 1974 undertook to extend the scope of relations in the region as a first step in the on-going process of creating stronger and deeper ties with the Third World.

Africa

1974 may come to be regarded as the year in which the log-jam began to break on the question of racism and colonialism in Africa. As a result of the April revolution in Portugal the political face of Africa underwent a major transformation. Guinea-Bissau became independent. A transitional government was established in Mozambique to prepare for independence, and the divided liberation movements of Angola discovered enough common ground to enable them to join in negotiations with Portugal about Angola's independence. The significance of these developments was not lost on leaders elsewhere in Africa. Both Black and White Rhodesians were subjected to heavy pressure from their respective supporters to renew their efforts to resolve the political situation in rebel Rhodesia.

The Canadian Government continued its unequivocal support for the goal of democratic majority rule in Rhodesia. The economic sanctions against the Salisbury regime were maintained. But participation in the Commonwealth Scholarship Fund for Rhodesians was continued, as were contributions to the various UN funds which benefit Rhodesians.

In line with its emphasis on social justice, the Canadian Government has continued to condemn South Africa's *apartheid* policies. It has also supported the continuing efforts of the UN Secretary General to settle the Namibian issue and the right of the peoples of Namibia (South West Africa) to self-determination.

The Government's concern about the injustices existing in Southern Africa was a major factor in expending its humanitarian aid in the area. The new policy, as announced, provided for matching grants to projects organized or supported by Canadian non-governmental organizations or reputable international organizations, and did not exclude indirect assistance to members of liberation movements. It gave rise to much public discussion and scrutiny, but was finally approved by Parliament in November.