

## Subsisting in the subsahara

tion practised by military units are legion in these and other countries.

The tumultuous and periodically violent politics of Tropical Africa, combined with natural disasters, have generated here the worst refugee situation in the world. In 1980-81 there were an estimated five million refugees in this region. The largest group has been in the Horn of Africa. People have fled civil wars in the Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda, the Somalia-Ethiopia war, and oppressive, chaotic, and ethnically-based regimes in Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. Wars of national liberation in the former Portuguese territories, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa have also displaced hundreds of thousands. However, the collapse of the Portuguese in 1974 and of the Rhodesian regime in 1980 prompted a massive return of refugees to Mozambique and Zimbabwe — over 600,000 to the latter country in 1980-81. Today, refugees in Somalia, the Sudan, Djibouti, Mozambique and the Cameroon place an onerous burden on the local economy and services. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees assists with its very limited resources.

### A "second independence?"

These then are the dimensions of the false start that accompanied Africa's "first" (political) independence. The

hope for Africa? The novelist V.S. Naipaul has pessimistically concluded that Africa has no future. To rest the case with a description of Africa's mammoth problems is implicitly to encourage such despairing notions. This is not my intention. But what is the option? One wants to suggest ways to eliminate or transform unhealthy trends and replenish hope. As risky as that is, there are certain popular proposals for ameliorating the problems just surveyed which are worth commenting upon.

A major proposal advanced by Third World governments and reform-minded intellectuals since 1974 is the creation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO). This demand stems from the view that the present international order is fundamentally inequitable. The benefits from North-South exchanges of primary commodities, manufactured goods, technology, and skilled manpower seem to favor the already developed and privileged partner. Today, one finds a situation in which Africa, though bearing no responsibility for high interest rates or the rising cost of its imports, must nonetheless shoulder the economic burdens which these impose. This is the sort of regional situation which gives impetus to the Southern demands for greater access to developed-country markets, especially for their manufactured exports; for more stable

Countries Classified by Rulership, June 1982

Military	Quasi-Military	1 party state or hereditary monarch	Competitive party system
Benin	Chad	Angola	Botswana
Burundi	Guinea-Bissau	Cameroon	Gambia
Central African Republic	Mali	Comoros	Mauritius
Congo (Brazzaville)	Somalia	Djibouti	Nigeria
Equatorial Guinea	Togo	Gabon	Senegal
Ethiopia	Uganda	Guinea	Zimbabwe
Ghana	Zaire	Ivory Coast	
Liberia		Kenya	
Madagascar		Lesotho	
Mauritania		Malawi	
Niger		Mozambique	
Rwanda		Sierra Leone	
Sudan		Swaziland	
Upper Volta		Tanzania	
		Zambia	

Source: Author's files

Table 3

record is sobering. Since 1960 the economic experience has been one of agricultural stagnation or decline combined with poor-to-modest, but at any rate inappropriate, industrial growth. The prospects for economic improvement in the 1980s and 1990s are dim, in light of the trends. Mainly for this reason, the abysmally high level of absolute poverty is unlikely to fall by the year 2000. Meanwhile, income inequality will typically remain high and may even worsen in some countries. Economic crisis and social polarization will, finally, provide an unfavorable socio-economic environment for counteracting authoritarianism and nurturing constitutionalism.

Yet, one still confronts the central question: is there

and higher prices for their primary commodity exports; for controls to prevent abuses in the transfer of technology by transnational corporations; for the recognition of the right to national ownership of natural resources; and for the increased availability to the South of financial resources from reformed international monetary and development agencies. The well-known Brandt Report (or "The Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues," entitled *North-South: A Programme for Survival*) of 1980 endorsed many of these proposals. It nurtured the view that a North-South dialogue could lead to a restructuring of the international economic and political order in directions that would benefit the world's popu-