

become today, both politically and economically, the U.S. assumes a large share of the responsibility." Said *South African Outlook* in 1977: "Zaire is a house of cards," and "on that flimsy structure the United States has built one of the pillars of U.S. policy in Africa." The United States Government is certainly aware of the situation. In February, 1980, the State Department reported to the Congress on the sorry state of Zaire and its people, listing several reasons for the situation—some of them external, such as the rise in petroleum prices, an inability to transport products for export, and a drop in copper prices. And the report continued:

Bad judgment, poor management, and corruption, abetted by international businesses, caused most of the effective destruction of what had once been a thriving economy with a healthy agricultural sector.

One is led to suspect that the international community *likes* what is going on in Zaire. Obviously, it is willing to support the Mobutu regime. In 1979 the U.S. Export-Import Bank loaned \$119.2 million to Zaire, more than ten times the 1978 sum. Other U.S.-based loans amounted to \$123.2 million, not to mention the \$45.4 million in economic and military assistance. International agencies committed themselves in 1979 to \$56.6 million in assistance to Zaire.

Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Richard Moose testified to a House subcommittee in March, 1980, that support of Mobutu is in the interests of the United States. A Catholic missionary who has worked in Zaire believes it is even in the interests of the Church, stating in an interview reported in *National Catholic News* last May:

To collaborate with Mobutu means to collaborate with a system in which at the lower levels there is much corruption, oppression, abuses....The church has to make a choice, and I believe despite the regime's weaknesses, it's better to collaborate with Mobutu....If Mobutu goes, anarchy reigns.

Belgium, Zaire's one-time colonizer, and France are now actively campaigning to extend their influence in Africa. Both countries are more deeply involved in the exploitation of Zaire's wealth than is the United States. Belgian and French investment surpasses U.S. investment there, and both countries cooperated with the Mobutu government in suppressing a revolt in 1978, with some assistance by the U.S. Yet the fact remains that the average citizen of Zaire considers the United States the most important influence in maintaining Mobutu's power and its accompanying oppression and corruption.

The Interreligious Task Force on U.S. Food Policy in testimony to a U.S. congressional committee last March, urged a serious cutback of U.S. aid:

We would place Zaire at the bottom of our list of countries in terms of potential aid effectiveness. Zaire's need for aid is indisputably high: 60% of the population lives in abject poverty. In terms of our other criteria, however, Zaire ranks very low. There is very little evidence of commitment to equitable development....The economy is in the hands of a politico-economic elite which is urban-oriented and concerned with personal consumption. Corruption is widespread—it is estimated that up to 40% of government funds are pocketed by government officials....We see no current justification for an aid increase and seriously question Zaire's capacity or will to use aid effectively to meet the basic human needs of its poor majority.

Yet the U.S. Government continues to pour money into

Zaire, applying some pressures on that country to spend the money properly. A modest degree of success is claimed by our government officials, who must report occasionally to the Congress. Meanwhile the situation festers, threatening further rebellions and perhaps eventually chaos.

Rollins Lambert, a Roman Catholic priest, is Advisor for African Affairs in the Office of International Justice and Peace, U.S. Catholic Conference.

EXCURSUS 2

Thomas Land on LEVIATHANS REPRIEVED

The European Community is about to phase out the import of all whale products by its nine member countries. The policy, intended to save what remains of the world's whale population, springs from proposals originally put forward by Britain. A U.S. ban is already in effect.

Four members of the Community—Britain, France, Denmark, and Holland—are represented on the International Whaling Commission, which has just defeated a call for a worldwide ban on all commercial whaling. Instead, it cut by 13 per cent the quota on whales that may be taken. The commission met in Brighton in late July amidst the much-publicized attempts of a group of Canadian environmental activists to purchase a British trawler suitable for ramming pirate whalers on the high seas.

At present the European Community imports 35 per cent of all sperm whale oil, which is used mainly in lubricants, and 14 per cent of all baleen whale oil, an important ingredient in margarine. Oils are also used by the leather and cosmetics industries, though suitable substitutes are widely available.

The Community considers that the international measures guided by the whaling commission have been either inadequate or adopted too late to prevent stocks of endangered species from falling to extremely low levels because of overhunting. As a result, it may now prove difficult, if not impossible, for the diminished population to recover its original size. Many international organizations now seek to establish sanctuaries for threatened marine mammals. The influential British group Friends of the Earth has responded to the decisions of the whaling commission by calling for the creation of a sanctuary in the North Atlantic.

Friends of the Earth has welcomed the Community's decision, while emphasizing that its measure should have been taken sooner. Other environmentalists have already taken direct action, some spectacular, to chase pirate whalers off the seas. *Rainbow Warrior*, a vessel of the Canadian Greenpeace movement, and its eighteen passengers, including a four-member British television crew, was recently taken into custody by a Spanish warship. Allegedly, it had interfered with unauthorized whaling operations in the Atlantic.

Paul Watson of Vancouver is currently negotiating on behalf of another North American pressure group for the purchase of a hull trawler specifically for the ramming of pirate whalers. The boat is to be named *Sea Shepherd II*; *Sea Shepherd I* was used in the ramming of the pirate whaler *Sierra* off the coast of Portugal last year. Eventually it was scuttled.

The whaling commission was established thirty-six years ago to ensure the conservation and development of stocks by setting catch quotas and identifying species in need of protection. Its rulings, which have consistently ignored the advice of the alarmed scientific community, are frequently breached by pirate whalers. For seven centuries the whaling industry developed totally uncontrolled, reducing the population of blue and humpback whales to about 6 per cent of their original numbers. The commission has given a measure of protection to nearly all species separately. Last year it declared the Indian Ocean a sanctuary and banned factory-ship whaling, with the exception of that involving mink whales.

Acting independently of the commission, the Community as a whole is now to introduce a licensing system, to take effect after an eighteen-month transition period, banning all whale imports. The one area that will remain exempt from the new regulations is the traditional whaling activity of the Greenland Eskimos, as well as of the other aboriginal peoples of the Community for whom the hunt is an integral part of the local economy and culture.

Thomas Land writes on world affairs from European capitals.

EXCURSUS 3

Leonor Blum on NICARAGUA: TEACHING THE FOUR Rs

A young girl carefully guides the stiff, weatherbeaten hand of an elderly man to form the words "La revolución." The two are seated on stools propped against a huge banana pile in the middle of Managua's large outdoor market.

Between March and August the small Central American country of Nicaragua was transformed into one giant schoolhouse. In markets and slums, in fields and adobe huts, in factories and churches, Nicaraguans old and young were learning the four Rs: reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic, and revolution.

A \$25 million literacy crusade that aims to reach over 50 per cent of the country's population is the most ambitious task Nicaragua's socialist-oriented Sandinista junta has undertaken. Not since the Cuban literacy campaign of 1961, which is being drawn upon heavily as a model, has there been such a mammoth project.

Massive and rapid mobilization efforts were required to get the crusade rolling. A million textbooks were printed, and, in December, 1979, eighty university students went out into the field to conduct a preliminary literacy census. As a result of their findings, the students offered workshops to 1,600 teachers who, in turn, trained others until 180,000 volunteers had been prepared to instruct 800,000 illiterates. In March all schools in Nicaragua were closed for five months and the *brigadistas*, students over the age of thirteen, and their teachers went into the field. Meanwhile, in the cities, adults volunteered to teach in factories and in their neighborhoods.

Why this emphasis on education in a country so close to bankruptcy; whose masses are malnourished and where poor health conditions prevail? Nicaragua, battered in 1972 by an earthquake that demolished its capital city and in 1979 by a revolution that brought down the forty-two-year Somoza dynasty, now faces a foreign debt of \$1.5 billion, an unrelenting flight of capital, 30 per cent



unemployment, 60 per cent inflation, and a 25 per cent drop in agricultural and industrial productivity. "Can Nicaraguans live on the alphabet without the soup?" asks one critic.

For the Sandinistas the literacy campaign is more than a means of teaching the ABCs. They consider it an integrating, nationalistic movement that will persuade the people of the merits of the revolution.

"Literacy raises the political, social, and economic conscience of the people. By becoming literate, a nation becomes aware of its reality," says Dr. Carlos Tünnerman, Nicaragua's well-regarded education minister. "Conscientization," the educational method employed, was used successfully by Paulo Freire in the Brazilian northeast in the early 1960s and then again in Chile under Allende.

Several Nicaraguan politicians, including Alfonso Robelo, one of the junta's two moderates who resigned last April, find fault with the method, claiming that it indoctrinates the people in communism and Marxism. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, supports the literacy effort with enthusiasm, and it is Fernando Cardenal, a Jesuit priest, who heads the crusade.

The campaign's primer, called *The Dawn of the People*, is in fact highly nationalistic, pro-Sandinista, and anti-imperialist, but not distinctly Marxist. Its hero is Augusto Cesar Sandino, the guerrilla rebel who fought the U.S. Marines in the 1920s and early '30s and was killed by the first Somoza. A leading role is assigned to Carlos Fonseca Amador who, in the '60s, created the Sandinista Front that led the revolution to success in 1979. In the less