# OECD countries spit on starving Africa

by Nancy Spannaus

All of the major OECD countries, led by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, combined to reject the Organization for African Unity's proposal for economic recovery, at the United Nations Special Session on Africa on May 29-31. Shultz, West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and British Foreign Minister Geoffrey all demanded that Africa submit even further to the International Monetary Fund-dictated "free market" measures which have already devastated the continent.

The entire General Assembly was convened in New York City to consider a proposal by the Organization of African Unity, for a $128 billion, five-year economic recovery plan for Africa. The plan, presented by OAU Chairman Abu Diouf, calls for a joint effort between the African nations and the international community to go beyond the band-aid, "relief" measures which Africa has been receiving, and to invest in infrastructure key to long-term agricultural development, and reversal of the desertification process. The plan, which has been reviewed by *EIR* in previous stages, is economically competent.

The OAU program, which has been the subject of discussions among the African nations for at least six months, also addresses Africa's growing debt crisis. The African debt has currently surpassed $175 billion, a level higher than the entire continent receives for its exports. In his opening speech to the U.N. session, Diouf demanded a fundamental change in this relationship: "Without taking measures on raw material prices and debt, it would be an illusion to believe that Africa generates sufficient growth to solve its economic crisis. If the present situation continues, only a few countries in Africa will survive."

Diouf was not exaggerating in the least. Although official U.N. agencies have reduced their level of alert on the famine in Africa, most of the sub-Saharan nations remain on the verge of disaster, and totally dependent upon the trickle of food which comes in from international relief agencies. In addition to the long-term effects of drought, many of the southern African nations are currently being hit by plagues of locusts. Further north, in Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Chad, starvation and disease are killing tens of thousands, with no relief in sight.

The OECD countries hope to use the plight of the African countries to gain a further foothold for recolonization schemes, put forward by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Aware that certain politically influential African nations, such as Nigeria and Senegal (Diouf's country), are looking with interest at the success of Peruvian President Alan García's approach to the IMF, the Western nations understand that they have to move very rapidly to divide and conquer.

Secretary of State Shultz was brutally blunt in his approach. "No amount of foreign assistance, and no measures of good intentions, can alleviate the hardship caused by a government bent on misguided policies," Shultz told the General Assembly. However, Shultz is not offering either. Instead, he pumped the "free market" approach which has looted the continent of its raw materials, and virtually forbidden industrial and infrastructural development, saying, "Today many countries are re-awakening to the fundamental connection between individual initiative and economic progress. . . . Africans have learned that responsibility for their economic well-being rests squarely with themselves."

Shultz's statements are more than obscene. The Reagan administration, for all its flowery talk about "individual initiative," has put its entire weight behind the draconian programs of the IMF and the World Bank. These agencies have consistent policies: demand elimination of government protections for living standards and vital infrastructure through mandated budget cuts; devalue local currencies, thus increasing the cost of all imports; and insist upon the opening up of local economies to takeover by private international companies. Not only do these measures prevent development of American-style modern agriculture, but they also pile up mounds of usurious debt, which literally takes food out of the mouths of starving Africans.

## Gramm-Rudman mandates further cuts

Having dictated that this genocidal program continue, Shultz added insult to injury. He announced that due to the Gramm-Rudman budget balancing law, it would be impossible for the United States to meet its previous foreign-aid commitment to Africa, much less increase it. The Reagan administration has currently budgeted about $1 billion for African aid, but State Department officials anticipate a Gramm-Rudman mandated reduction to as little as 50% of that amount.

Shultz was echoed by the German and British foreign ministers. Genscher declared his nation to be a "staunch champion of free world trade," and pontificated that "the management of African economy must be improved and the private sector stimulated."

Howe remarked that African "management efficiency must be improved, public spending brought under control," and "open trading conditions maintained."

It is not known as of this writing, whether the African nations are politically prepared to buck the IMF dictates.