

the FIS in 1989, Sahraoui had been a teacher of Arabic in Algiers, and, after emigrating to France in 1956, had worked in the trade union movement, to integrate Algerian workers. Following independence in 1962, he returned home to continue his teaching career, and entered politics. A co-founder of the FIS, he became its vice president, and supported the democratic method of gaining political power through the electoral process. In June 1991, following clashes in Algeria, he moved to France, where he lived in exile. He was the honorary president of the FIS executive abroad and FIS spokesman in France. Sahraoui was regularly interviewed on French television, to analyze political events in Algeria, and repeatedly spoke out against the murder of civilians by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). This earned him the reputation of a moderate, even among the most visceral anti-Islamists of the French police apparatus, including former Interior Minister Charles Pasqua. During the raids against Algerians and other Muslims residing in France, Sahraoui was never disturbed, a fact which points to a special relationship he enjoyed with the authorities. This raises the disquieting question: If he was smiled upon by Pasqua, why did he not have any protection from French security forces?

At his mosque on Rue Myrha, Sahraoui was known to dedicate his energies to social problems. He is quoted in *Le Monde* as laughing off the label "fundamentalist": "Our main role is to approach the [Muslim] communities and to fight against delinquency and drugs."

Killing Sahraoui, while at prayer in a mosque, was a declaration of war by the Algerian "eradicators." This was the first time that an Algerian FIS member in exile had been killed, and as such, is a warning to other leading FIS representatives in Europe and the United States. Eyewitnesses described the assailants as Algerian military security types, but press accounts say they were from the terrorist GIA, which, according to the London-based *Al Hayat*, claimed responsibility for the murder. Attributing it to the GIA is a way of igniting internal strife within the FIS and the Algerian opposition as a whole. It is known that the GIA has been infiltrated and manipulated by Algerian security forces, who often perpetrate atrocities then blamed on "the Islamists."

The dramatic turn in Algeria cannot be viewed as an "Algerian" decision. Just as the road to dialogue was opened last December by the intervention of forces outside Algeria—in that case, by Catholic circles who organized a conference of the opposition parties in Rome—so the confrontation course has always been steered from abroad. The policy has been mapped out in London, and French forces associated with the former government have been complicit. This complicity was best illustrated in the close cooperation Pasqua maintained on Algeria policy with his British colleagues.

Unless energetic action is taken outside Algeria to pressure that government to accept negotiations for a peaceful solution, the civil war which has bled the country over the past three years threatens to become a second war of Algiers.

African patriots gather in Paris

by Odile Mojon

Most of those invited by the Schiller Institute to a July 11 conference on Peace, Development, and Human Rights knew from the outset that this would be a historic event. In addition to former President of Uganda Godfrey Binaisa, it was announced that there would be a Nigerian delegation led by Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu of the National Constitutional Conference (NCC) of Nigeria. Those who know even a little bit about Africa, will recall the role played by Ojukwu in the independence struggle of Biafra, which he proclaimed following the massacre of the Ibos. In addition to this delegation, including Chief Abiola Ogundokun of the NCC, Dr. George A. Abiozor, director general of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Sen. Ali Sharif, and Baba Adi, participants were honored by the presence of Prof. G.O. Olusanya, the Nigerian ambassador in Paris.

If, during the 1970s, there was still hope that Africa could, sooner or later, get back into the mainstream of economic and political development, 25 years later, this hope has faded and given way to cynicism. That was a point that former French Presidential candidate Jacques Chirac stressed in his introduction, explaining how, "whereas yesterday's rejection of racism, colonialism, and financial neo-colonialism would appear to be a banality to an honest man, we hear today more and more justification of a recolonization which is returning—without any fanfare—to establish virtual slavery."

The picture he painted of the situation in Africa allowed the 170 participants to see how, in order to create this neo-colonialist Frankenstein's monster, hands and feet have been grafted on, in the form of the International Monetary Fund and regional wars. As for the monster's brain, this clearly comes from those who are manipulating, fostering, and propagating the ideology that justifies the triage that Africa is subjected to, whether in the "hard" version—blatant racism, which is acting in a manner that would have been unthinkable 30 years ago—or in the "soft" version—persistent manipulation of the media and hypocritical use of human rights and of democracy, where these words are debased in order to abolish independence.

That is why, if one attaches some value to the rights of man, and if one truly wishes for Africa to heal its wounds, one must acknowledge the primary human right, that is, the

right to development and progress. In order to do this, European countries must themselves change their policies, both toward the East on their own continent and toward the South. In order to concretely illustrate this point, Cheminade showed five maps of Africa depicting the outlines of several infrastructure projects. It has become perfectly clear that the true problem in realizing such projects does not lie in some kind of technical difficulty within the projects—several of which have already been the object of numerous studies and discussions since the 19th century—but rather in the lack of political will.

The right to development was at the heart of a call sent out by the former President of Uganda, Godfrey L. Binaisa, last January. This was a call for the formation of an African civil rights movement, with the objective of bringing together Africans, beyond ethnic and tribal divisions, around a project of peace through development, in the spirit of the peace plan between Israel and Palestine. For, although the flags and national anthems have changed, since “decolonialization,” the substance itself has not changed since the colonial powers were replaced by economic powers such as the IMF. Some heads of state, such as Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Charles de Gaulle, had certainly tried, with more or less success, to fight imperialism and to have a pro-development policy toward newly independent countries, but these efforts were interrupted by Kennedy’s assassination.

The Nigerian example

The case of Nigeria is exemplary. Professor Olusanya briefly reviewed the pertinent facts: The former colony of the British Empire, Nigeria, born in 1914 and having achieved independence in 1960, was not only the most populous country in Africa (about 90 million inhabitants), but it also had considerable petroleum and mineral wealth. This young, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious country today faces a crisis such as all democracies have had, with the difference that, in other such cases, the crises have often come close to killing the patient, as the French Revolution bears witness. It is good to recall, Olusanya said, that when the present government of Nigeria came to power, the country was on the verge of collapse, and that those who today talk about sanctions were the same ones who favored this government’s coming to power.

Nigeria is a rich country with great potential for Africa as a whole. This gives it a special responsibility, which cannot be concretized as long as the policy of former colonial nations consists in “not allowing the true Africa to emerge,” as Ojukwu put it in his impassioned talk. Speaking as someone with great experience and deep familiarity with his country—both from at home and abroad—he nonetheless did not hesitate to upbraid his compatriots:

“We have celebrated our independence for 30 years. It is now time to stop.” The most essential things have yet to

be done, from the political standpoint first of all, with the departure of the military from politics, which must be carried out in conformity with civil laws and peace. Then, a new constitution must be adopted, guaranteeing exact representation of each of the different states and the rights of each citizen.

This is a very sensitive question at a time when the country is regularly under attack by the international (especially British) press over accusations of corruption and human rights violations. Aside from the fact that one might well ask if there is any country on this planet with the truly desirable moral standing to expose corruption, it is admittedly difficult, and possibly even risky, to make sarcastic judgments without knowing anything about the country’s politics. That is the lesson one should draw from the exposé of Chief Abiola Ogundokun on democracy and what he calls “tribal chauvinism.”

Since before independence, and up to the present, political life in Nigeria has witnessed numerous movements marked by battles between political parties usually defined by tribal and ethnic lines. What came of it? Violence, massacres, coups d’état, punctuated by more or less successful efforts to push democracy forward and especially the regular return of the military to power. Before assuming his function, the current leader of Nigeria, Gen. Sani Abacha, had clearly indicated that he would not restore civilian rule until after a solid base for a democratic government had been laid. This is the process that Nigerians want to bring to good end.

The call goes out

Uwe Friesecke of the Schiller Institute, who gave the concluding speech, demonstrated the stakes in this battle, reprising how the press treats the case of Nigeria. Those who denounce the “turpitude” of Nigeria know very well what is really at stake: the fight between neo-colonialism and freedom. Friesecke said we have come to the end of a historical period, in which virtually all international institutions and authority are discredited, which has nonetheless left no dearth of countries that have been victimized by their policies. Whether it be Russia, Mexico, or Argentina, the price is being paid in “pounds of flesh” which the populations of these countries must pay in order to continue to live in misery. Nigeria’s sole crime is that it opposed the IMF and the World Bank.

The conference promises to be just a prelude to a growing movement. A flood of questions showed to what extent the work has only begun, since up to now, debate on fundamental problems has been generally controlled through classic British “divide and conquer” methods, and has been channeled into dead-ends. Among the participants representing a broad array of African nations, many associations which had sent delegates vowed to pursue this route and act on the ideas presented to them.