year. The *Observer* reappeared last September after its owners and the territory's rulers struck a deal in which Lister and other journalists were fired. ■

SANKARA GIVES MARCHING ORDERS

[AN] The Burkina Faso leader, Capt. Thomas Sankara, has reappointed all but three members of the Cabinet he dissolved on Aug. 12 when he named all ministers project chiefs of collective farms. The team that Sankara picked on Sept. 1 includes 18 civilians and four army officers.

In the wake of the Aug. 12 decision, Burkina Faso's *Journal Officiel* reported that Sankara had tapped the permanent under-secretaries to act as chief administrators of their ministers, while the former ministers were supervising farming projects. The caretaker administrators were ordered to carry out the government's day-to-day business "in conjuction with the Revolutionary Defense Committee," according to the *Journal.*

Sankara also named three army officers to liaise between him and the various projects. The officers —Capt. Blaise Compaore, Maj. Jean-Baptiste Boukary Lingani, and Capt. Henri Zongo—to be known as "coordinators," were also given a special mandate to act on behalf of the president:

It was unclear why Sankara reversed his three-week-old decision. The earlier move had sparked off a wave of rumors of possible dissent within the ruling National Council of the Revolution (CNR).

To dispel the rumors, Sankara told journalists Aug. 14 that the dissolution of the Cabinet had nothing to do with crisis or failure on the part of the ministers. He defended the action as a response to the need for what he termed "a revolutionary working method."

In addition to viewing government posts as training centers, Sankara said he will dissolve the government regularly to remind officials that they are not indispensable. "Men have the tendency of behaving as if they are infallible" when they stay in the same posts for too long, he said.

Meanwhile, Sankara has pardoned more than 100 political prisoners, including the man he ousted two years ago, Col. Jean-Baptiste Ouedraogo. The amnesty was declared to mark the second anniversary of Sankara's rise to power in 1983. The former leader had been under house arrest since his overthrow on Aug. 4, 1983.

Prior to a three-hour parade marking Sankara's anniversary, Sankara announced the lifting of the night curfew that had been in effect during the past two years. ■

EIGHT NATIONS IN NILE TALKS

[AN] Senior government officials from eight African nations met in Cairo on Aug. 7-9 to discuss coordinated efforts to combat drought and water wastage and improve agricultural production in the Nile River Basin sub-region.

The nations, mostly in the Nile Basin—Burundi, Central African Republic, Egypt, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zaire—are members of the Undugu Group. [Undugu is the Swahili word for affinity.]

The talks, which were held behind closed doors, were opened by Egypt's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali Boutros. He said the water levels of the Nile, on which his country depends for most of its livelihood, have been severely reduced because of drought in the other nations.

Egypt, which created a great civilization based on intensive cultivation along the Nile's banks, has voiced concern over planned dams and irrigation projects upstream—schemes that may further divert river water to the benefit of agriculture in other member nations.

During the early 1950s, the Owen Falls Dam in Jinja, Uganda, generated heated exchanges between Egypt and colonial Britain. At one stage, Egypt felt the dam endangered its survival and even threatened to destroy it.

Formed in Khartoum in 1983 at Egypt's initiative, the Undugu Group held its last annual meeting in Kinshasa, Zaire's capital, in 1984. Ethiopia is the only Nile Basin country that is not a member of the organization.

Sudan's deputy foreign minister, Farouk Abdul-Rahman, called on the member nations to consult regularly to ease the effects of drought and famine.

Zaire's Makolo wa Mpombo urged the nations to become a model for sub-regional cooperation. Ali Omar, an aide to Uganda's new military ruler, Gen. Tito Okello, apologized that Kampala had failed to host the talks because of the recent coup. ■

LESOTHO ABORTS ELECTION

[AN] Citizens of Lesotho were scheduled to go to the polls on Sept. 16 and 17, but the government has aborted what would have been the southern African kingdom's first general election in 15 years.

In a nationwide broadcast on Aug. 14, Lesotho's chief elections officer, Mphosi Matete, declared the victories of all 60 candidates fielded by the ruling Basotho National Party (BNP) of Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan. Matete alleged that the five opposition parties had failed to submit challengers.

The nation's official broadcaster commented that the ruling party had won a "record landslide victory."

Three days later, the obviously-pleased Jonathan termed the return of all the BNP candidates "a record in the history of elections in a multiparty democratic system." There is no need to go to the polls later this month, he said proudly.

The opposition parties, for their part, reportedly said they had decided to boycott the polls because Jonathan had placed too many obstacles in their way. A spokesman for one of the parties said the government had not allowed the opposition parties to inspect the voters' register.

Jonathan, however, charged that the parties stayed away because they could not find suitable candidates by the Aug. 14 deadline, nor could they find the 500 names required to sponsor each candidate. His opponents failed because they lacked public support, he told the *pitso*, a meeting of elders, in Maseru on Aug. 17.

Jonathan, 70, and his BNP have ruled the small southern African kingdom since it won independence from Britain in 1966. He suspended the constitution during the 1970 elections—Lesotho's first post-independence polls—after it became apparent that the opposition Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) was winning. (See also *AN*, Aug. 12.)

Lesotho's constitution provides for a national assembly with 60 elected members and up to 20 nominated legislators, with a separate Senate comprised of 22 ethnic chiefs. ■

RAIN NO END TO SUDAN'S WOES

[AN] NAIROBI—Now that the drought is ending in Sudan "the country's real problems begin," UNICEF's Sudan spokesman said at a late August Nairobi press conference.

Like Mali, Chad and Ethiopia, much of Sudan is getting more rain than has been seen in four or five years. But ill-timed efforts by well-intentioned donors have slowed relief and recovery operations, according to UNICEF information officer John Richardson.

Several months ago, trucks were desperately needed to deliver tens of thousands of tons of food stockpiled in Port Sudan. Food is still backed up there, though trucks are finally arriving in large numbers. But some will come too late, because they were needed before the rains of July and August made unpaved Sudanese roads impassable. Soon, Richardson fears, the country will have more trucks than it needs, but not enough fuel to run them. If the world's foreign aid bureaucracies had responded to the earliest warnings, he said, the trucks could have arrived four or five months ago when they were needed most.

The biggest problem, however, is figuring out how to revive communities decimated by drought. Along the Red Sea coast, where this year's rain remained inadequate, some village elders "talk about the end of the world," said Richardson. So many people have died that some smaller ethnic groups are threatened with extinction, he added.

Even where farming conditions have improved, it will not be easy to start growing crops agin. Sudan lacks the resources needed to resettle the hundreds of thousands of rural famine victims who have crowded into the cities. Moreover, extreme shortages of seeds and tools mean that many who remained in the rural areas could not take advantage of this year's rain. ■

—Steve Askin, Carole Collins