

African countries outside of the franc zone as well.

The Pan-European aspect of Giscard's diplomacy is confirmed by a report from the Parisian weekly *VDS* that during Giscard's state visit to the Soviet Union this spring, the Soviets will accredit a French diplomat to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the Comecon, giving the French tremendous trade advantages with the East bloc. The CMEA is the economic coordinating agency for the Soviet sector.

Spanish-Soviet discussions about Third World development are just as intense as the French-Soviet ones, with special importance for both Latin America and Africa. The Jan. 24 issue of the Parisian daily *Le Figaro* commented on Spanish Foreign Minister Oreja's visit to Moscow that "Spain's vast Hispanic project, its ambition to build a community of Iberian nations, fits into the framework of this European policy ... Latin America is Spain's dowry to Europe." The daily added that Moscow "heartily encourages Spain's Maghreb policy," a reference to Spain's decision to turn its former colony of Spanish Morocco over to Morocco and Mauritania in the northwestern or Maghreb section of Africa.

Hence the significance of the Pope's Latin American tour. Immediately before he set off for his Jan. 25-30 trip, the last official visitor to the Vatican was Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. And just before his visit to the Vatican, the Soviet official had met with Italian government leaders and issued a call for "relaunching detente" in a "Pan-European context," specifically the upcoming meeting of signatories of the Helsinki accords in Madrid. Gromyko also signed three collaboration agreements with the Italians, and emphasized the two countries' mutual responsibility to cool down world trouble spots.

In Mexico, observers expect that the Pope will be guided by the Third World development goals of the *Populorum Progressio* encyclical of his predecessor Pope Paul VI, ideals fully coherent with the perspective of developing sector integration into the European Monetary System.

### The West German contribution

West Germany, the European country that provides a good share of European development funds for the Third World, is

presently reorganizing its entire Ministry for Economic Cooperation, the development ministry, so that it can better participate in the planned expansion of development activities.

Minister for Economic Cooperation Rainer Offergeld announced Jan. 19 that Manfred Boell, head of the Ministry's department on regional development projects and coordination, and Rainer Opplet, another department head, were both dismissed, in addition to many other secondary Ministry officials. Sources inside the Ministry said that the two officials were fired because "We don't need any more 'creative' chaos, just hard efficient work, and the people who dismissed were plain creative chaos.... Our perspectives are all there. Now comes the implementation."

The only two higher-level Ministry officials who were not sacked were State Secretary Brueck, who accompanied West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt on his trip to Nigeria and Zambia late last year, and Norbert Burger, an expert on coordination among the various West German development institutes. Klaus Dieter Leister, formerly in charge of Schmidt's

Chancery office, will take Wilfried Boell's position.

The EMS's opponents have their own plans, however.

A phony Franco-West German alliance on Africa was the highlight of the Jan. 23 Paris conference of the Bavarian-based Hans Seidel Foundation. There Bavarian Minister Strauss outlined a strategy for Africa based on the apparently sound proposal that "both France and Germany should develop their strategy for Africa, a strategy formulated in Paris and worked out with Bonn." But a call to the Foundation's headquarters in Munich revealed that Strauss was not calling for aid to Africa, but for European support for Great Britain's contrary policy of "less is more" development for the Third World.

"This African strategy is by no means directed against Britain," a Foundation staff member said. "Not only are Strauss' contacts with Healey and Thatcher good, but this meeting was worked out with them. The idea is to produce much more intense cooperation between Britain and Europe, and that can't happen if France and Germany 'misunderstand' each other."

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## Panel to set a competent U.S. health policy

Everyone knows the United States is in urgent need of a sound national medical policy, but there's no doubt that neither of the two bills now before the 96th Congress — the Kennedy health insurance bill and HEW Secretary Califano's "hospital cost containment" alternative — can provide Americans with even adequate health care.

A more positive prospect was raised last week by Debra Hanania-Freeman, Congresswoman-elect for Maryland's 7th district seat. She reports that at her request Dr. Ernest Schapiro, a medical doctor distinguished as a leader in the movement against marijuana decriminalization in upstate New York and around the U.S., is forming a "Blue Ribbon Commission" to immediately formulate a competent national health policy for the U.S.

"Dr. Schapiro has already begun con-

tacting interested individuals," said Dr. Freeman, "and he will be issuing a series of interim reports on health care questions, as steps on the road to the Commission's formation of a comprehensive policy."

If the Kennedy bill becomes law, said the Congresswoman-elect, "HEW officials are already mooted the possibility... of forcing those seeking government health insurance to sign a so-called 'living will' giving hospital administrators the right to 'pull the plug' or restrict treatment to pain-killing drugs if it is deemed no longer expedient to keep the critically-ill patient alive."

"Dr. Schapiro and I are in fundamental agreement on the basic principles that will guide the Blue Ribbon Commission in its efforts to develop a real American health care alternative to this nightmare."