

riddles as a kind of poetry using "impossible metaphors," and indeed many great poets, from Jonathan Swift to Robert Frost, have employed riddles in their work. Perhaps, suggests Wilbur, this is because "the riddle exaggerates an essential characteristic of poetry. If metaphor . . . is

central to poetry, then the riddle operates near that center." And, concludes Wilbur, "if poetry may be seen as offering a continuing critique of our sense of order, the riddle has its peculiar aptitude for that."

**Solution: An egg.*

OTHER NATIONS

African Democracy?

"The Coming of Africa's Second Independence" by Colin Legum, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Winter 1990), 1800 K St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Africa is on the verge of its second liberation. Three decades after they threw off the shackles of European rule, predicts Legum, a veteran journalist, many African countries are about to overthrow their "unpopular, unsuccessful, and undemocratic" postcolonial governments.

After achieving independence during the 1950s and '60s, most African countries adopted European-style parliamentary systems. But only six have remained democratic: Botswana, The Gambia, Djibouti, Mauritius, Tunisia, and ("arguably," says Legum) Morocco. During the past three years, however, popular discontent has led to the end of single-party rule in Senegal and Algeria. In Nigeria, with 100 million citizens the continent's most populous state, the military regime which has held power since 1983 has promised to hand over power to an elected government in 1992.

Leaders in uniform are common in Africa. Since 1963, when President Sylvanus Olympio of Togo was deposed by a military coup d'état, 28 of Africa's 51 states have been taken over by military officers. Most others are one-party states, generally created within the first few months of independence, when the former independence movements split along political, ethnic, or regional lines. New leaders, such as Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, argued that single party rule arose out of African traditions of rule by consensus. They also argued that it was needed to restore harmony and to promote rapid and bal-

anced economic development. Both arguments have been proved terribly wrong, says Legum.

Africa's six long-time democracies are relatively serene and prosperous. Few of its single-party states can say the same.

What went wrong? Legum says that some of the single-party states were more democratic than others, but virtually all of them were alike in one important way. Whether they officially embraced capitalism (Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon) or socialism (Algeria and Tanzania), the ruling parties created huge new "parastatal corporations" to control the major "wealth-earning crops, minerals, and enterprises, thereby establishing national priorities for both economic and social development." But the proud new institutions were not equal to the task; they quickly became bloated and corrupt. Most African countries are poorer today than they were a decade ago. Throughout Africa, governments are now cutting their losses by dismantling or selling off these government-owned corporations.

But it is not for want of bread alone that Africans are demanding democracy. Legum credits the African human rights movement, sparked during the 1970s by President Jimmy Carter. "It is no longer possible to campaign for human rights without linking them to the abuse of undemocratic governments," he observes. As in Eastern Europe, a related pro-democracy movement has sprung up, headed by courageous academics, journalists, and

writers and artists, such as Nigeria's Wole Soyinka.

As a new generation of political leaders comes to power in Africa, the major challenger to democracy is Islamic funda-

mentalism rather than Marxism. If democracy does not come quickly to Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and other countries with large Muslim populations, Legum warns, a great opportunity may be lost.

Cocaine Politics

"Cocaine Mafia" by Rensselaer W. Lee, in *Society* (Jan.-Feb. 1990), Rutgers-The State University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

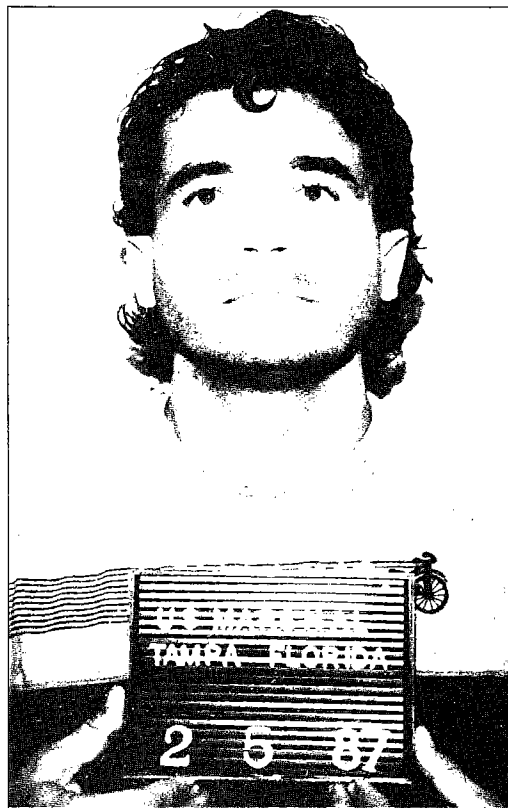
Less than a year after the government of Colombia began its crackdown on the country's cocaine traffickers, many Colombians are growing weary of the turmoil and bloodshed. According to a public-opinion survey conducted last fall, citizens favor a negotiated settlement with the country's cocaine mafia by a two-to-one margin.

What may sound incredible to Americans is all too familiar to Colombians, writes Lee, the president of Global Advisory Services, Inc. In 1984, in the middle of another Colombian anti-drug campaign, representatives of then-president Belisario Betancur held secret talks in Panama with Pablo Escobar, Jorge Ochoa, and other drug kingpins. Alarmed by Betancur's campaign and his threat to begin extraditing criminals to the United States under a 1979 treaty, the drug lords proposed to withdraw from the cocaine trade and to repatriate their capital (possibly billions of dollars) to help ease Colombia's economic problems. In return, Betancur would grant them amnesty.

That deal collapsed when the story leaked and created a national scandal. Today, Lee suggests, public reaction might be different.

Not only is the public intimidated by the bombings and murders, but the drug barons have also become political figures in their own right. One of them, Carlos Lehder, went so far as to create his own fascist political party, and also may have had ties to the leftist M-19 guerrilla movement. But Lehder, who was extradited to the United States on drug charges in 1987, was an exception. Despite allegations that they back M-19 and other guerrilla groups,

Lee says, most of the drug traffickers are, "if not exactly pillars of society," conservative in their politics. "As soon as they become landowners in guerrilla zones," one Colombian official observes, referring to the drug lords' massive rural estates, "they



An extremist even by the standards of Colombia's drug barons, Carlos Lehder formed a fascist political party but backed the Communist candidate for president in 1986. Extradited to the United States in 1987, he is now serving life plus 135 years in jail for smuggling cocaine.