

## OTHER NATIONS

ate Francophone states. The Polisario resistance movement has been endorsed by nine of the more radical OAU members (including Angola, Mozambique and Togo).

Meanwhile, neither Moscow nor Washington has encouraged its traditional ally (Algeria and Morocco, respectively); Algeria has tried in vain to curry favor with the Russians by condemning the peace initiatives of Egypt's Anwar Sadat and seeking to reintroduce the Soviet Union into the Middle East peace negotiations. Mortimer argues that Washington should encourage "self-determination" for West Sahara for the sake of stability in Northwest Africa.

### *Rx for Japan: Social Innovation*

"Japan: The Problems of Success" by Peter F. Drucker, in *Foreign Affairs* (Apr. 1978), 428 East Preston Ct., Baltimore, Md. 21202.

Everyone in Japan talks "economics and only economics," says Drucker, professor of social science at California's Claremont Graduate School, but the basic problems facing that country today lie elsewhere. Social programs that worked well for a century are becoming obsolete; they now threaten Japan's cohesion and her ability to compete.

Especially damaging, says Drucker, are the seniority-wage system that sets incomes for everyone from manual workers to managers and professionals primarily by length of service rather than productivity; the education-career link which puts people into work categories for life; and the employee's lifetime commitment to one employer and one place of employment.

Japan's underlying problem is not the high price of oil and other raw material imports but population dynamics: low birthrate, a surplus of university-educated workers (58 percent of males now entering the work force are university graduates), a shortage of manual and farm workers, and an aging work force (retirement age for most employees is 55). Drucker writes that the 6-percent growth rate required for Japan to maintain her competitive position in the world "is simply not sustainable on the basis of available manpower and existing retirement policy."

The traditional link between formal education and career opportunity has made competition for high educational status a nightmare; pressure starts at the nursery level. Moreover, Drucker notes, parents must pay as much as \$4,000 to admission committees as "voluntary contributions" to get their children admitted to the entrance examinations of a supposedly "free" elite public high school.

Drucker sees some encouraging changes: delayed retirement, retraining workers for new jobs, greater mobility for young professionals, a slight shift toward basing wages on productivity. For the short term, he says, Japan needs to counter the threat of social unrest by sharply cutting domestic consumer prices: food costs are twice those in the United States and rising at 30 percent per year.