

OTHER NATIONS

structure—here, military outlays are a form of social spending.

A country-by-country analysis also contradicts the laissez-faire argument. Singapore, one of the world's best economic performers, is neither democratic nor non-interventionist. The government built more public housing per citizen than any other non-communist regime and ordered several steep general wage hikes during the late 1970s.

The "magic of the marketplace" is respected by Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore. But in each case, government waxes the magician's wand. And a host of other special factors—political stability, cultural traits, geography—have contributed to their success.

Feminism, Italian Style

"1968-79—Feminism and the Italian Party System: Women's Politics in a Decade of Turmoil" by Yasmine Ergas, in *Comparative Politics* (Apr. 1982), Dept. 8010, Transaction Periodicals Consortium, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

As elsewhere in the West, the feminist movement came alive in Italy during the late 1960s, an offshoot of the "New Left." Championing a single issue—abortion—it reached its peak during the mid-'70s, then faded from the political scene. Ergas, a law instructor at the University of Macerata, traces the movement's rise and fall.

Student rebellions rocked nearly every university in Italy during 1968. Young women caught up in the New Left tumult got an education in anti-establishment thought and in militant politics—so much so that they became frustrated by the "sexism" within New Left organizations and formed their own groups. In 1974, the feminists embraced legalized abortion as their chief cause. Women's groups, including a small Radical Party faction, began transporting as many as several hundred women a month to abortion clinics abroad and, illegally, in Italy.

The principal political parties shunned the small feminist movement. The Christian Democrats, proclaiming themselves moderates and maneuvering for votes on the right, condemned feminist ideas as destructive of traditional family values. The Communists, hoping to ally themselves with the Christian Democrats and fearful that feminists' ideas might provoke divisions within their own ranks, stayed clear of the movement. Then, in early 1975, Italy's Constitutional Court found the existing anti-abortion law unconstitutional. The controversy that ensued focused politicians' attention on the movement—particularly after 50,000 pro-abortionists marched in Rome that December.

But the feminists, still in thrall to their New Left vision, spurned the established political parties. They insisted, for instance, that members of such parties not proclaim their affiliations at the Rome demonstration. (In 1978, Parliament enacted a compromise abortion law. It did not go far enough to satisfy the feminists, but it was liberal enough to make their abortion services unnecessary.)

OTHER NATIONS

In parliamentary elections in June 1976, the Communists, still cultivating their "establishment" image, put up many female candidates, but almost none were radical feminists. The strategy worked. The Communists carried an unprecedented 34 percent of the votes; the Christian Democrats got 38 percent. For the feminists, it was a serious blow. Their shrinking movement turned from politics to concentrate on "women and the visual arts" and similar cultural matters.

*Black Africa's
Elusive Riches*

"The Resources of Tropical Africa" by Andrew M. Kamarck, in *Daedalus* (Spring 1982), 1172 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass. 02134.

Explorers, imperialists, and, more recently, black nationalists have all entertained hopes of finding untold wealth in sub-Saharan Africa. Kamarck, associate Fellow at Harvard's Institute for International Development, writes that very little is actually known about the region's resources. Enormous barriers—geographic, climatic, technical, political—still stand in the way of exploration and exploitation.

Africa possesses only a small portion of the world's *proven* mineral reserves. Most of its output—gold in South Africa and Ghana, diamonds in South Africa and Zaire, cobalt and copper in Zaire and Zambia, iron ore in Liberia and Mauritania, manganese in Ghana and Zaire—comes from the temperate southern part of the continent or from areas where minerals are exceptionally easy to mine and transport. Elsewhere, the lack of transportation and of technology adapted to tropical conditions discourages exploitation. Gabon, for example, has a deposit of nearly one billion tons of rich iron ore located only 400 miles from its coast. A railroad through the intervening swamps is being built, but it will cost billions of dollars if and when it is completed.

Since 1960, African political instability has been the key problem confronting developers. Mineral exploration in Africa has declined drastically, with Canadian and American companies now spending about 80 percent of their exploration budgets in North America and Australia. Thus, while Guinea, Ghana, and Cameroun contain the world's largest reserves of bauxite, an essential ingredient in aluminum, developers have turned to Australia, where production since 1960 has grown from 70,000 to 28 million tons.

Only in oil production has there been much progress since the 1960s. The reason: Oil company receipts are so huge that losses due to political instability are more easily absorbed. Nigeria is black Africa's major producer (exports amounted to some \$30 billion in 1980), followed by Gabon, Angola, the Congo Republic, and Cameroun. Yet fewer than 100 new wells are drilled each year in Africa, compared with nearly 30,000 in the United States.

Exaggerating the continent's potential or blaming its poverty on Western exploitation, Kamarck concludes, merely diverts attention from basic problems that must be confronted if Africa is to prosper.