

CHOLERA EPIDEMIC RIPS BANGLADESH, INDIA

Jan. 7 (IPS)--Tens of thousands have died and tens of millions more have been afflicted with the dread tropical disease, cholera, during the past three months in Bangladesh and northeastern India. In the worst such outbreak since the 1943 Bengal Famine. The Bengal Famine caused several hundred thousand cholera deaths in a few months. Cholera, carried by contaminated water supplies, has spread rapidly throughout the regions hardest hit by famine after last summer's floods, exacerbating the already catastrophic starvation conditions.

This epidemic is only a foretaste of the ecological horrors that will sweep over the Fourth World areas left to starve by Rockefeller's genocidal food destruction policies. A cholera epidemic has also ransacked the starving Sahel region of Africa, thriving on the region's emaciated near-corpses and spreading through its unsanitary drinking water.

The disease spreads rapidly and kills about 1 per cent of its victims by rapid dehydration. It is indistinguishable from numerous other gastrointestinal diseases, like dysentery, until it nears the fatal stage. At that time, the victim begins excreting a milky liquid from his rectum continuously for about six hours, at which time so much water has been drawn out of his blood that it coagulates and death follows immediately. In the remainder of cases, while not fatal, it is extremely debilitating, weakening the health of an already run-down individual.

There is no effective preventive vaccine. The disease can be treated by antibiotics and the replacement of fluids and electrolyte lost. However, such treatment requires far more medical facilities than are available in India or Bangladesh.

By extremely conservative estimate, there have been several tens of thousands of cholera deaths in Bangladesh, and several millions of cases. The number of cases and deaths in the neighboring Indian states of West Bengal and Assam is at least 30 per cent more than the Bangladesh total, bringing the total for the entire region to horrifying proportions.

No official composite figures exist, and the Indian Government here officially denied the existence of any cases in the area, but incontestable evidence establishes the approximate minimum proportions of the disaster. In Dacca, the Bangladesh capital, one clinic treated 2,500 patients in the peak month of October. Assuming that approximately half of the critically ill patients from Dacca reached the clinic, and that disease rates for the rural areas are at least as high as in the city (both very conservative numbers) then 25,000 died throughout the country, with 2.5 million total cases.

In India, only scattered reports, such as the report of 300 deaths and thousands of cases in the West Bengal district of Cooch Benar, exist.

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Behar, exist. However, these figures indicate that a substantial proportion of the affected flood and famine regions of India have been hard hit as well.

While the epidemic has now receded, this represents merely a characteristic seasonal pattern in the region. It typically reappears in the spring, and again the next fall, and its virulence is in direct proportion to the existence of famine. Thus, while this epidemic represents the greatest calamity of its type in the region in several decades, it is a mere hint of what will follow if famine and starvation are allowed to increase according to Rockefeller's design.

LEFT PURGED THROUGHOUT MIDEAST

NEW YORK, N.Y., Jan. 7 (IPS)-- Reflecting the CIA's rapidly growing right-wing turn in the Middle East, the governments of Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon--in collaboration with the Israelis--have launched a massive campaign to murder and arrest the remaining network of socialists and independent leftists throughout the area.

The hysterical drive by the CIA to consolidate air-tight control of its Middle East empire was triggered by the Soviet cancellation of party chief Leonid Brezhnev's trip to Egypt. The cancellation presented Rockefeller with the immediate threat that the USSR might shift its Middle East policy from an uneasy truce with the CIA's Arab dictators and the Shah to a "revolutionary strategy"--in the words of a leading member of the CIA-linked Council on Foreign Relations in an interview with IPS.

Despite the desperate moves by the U.S. to enforce its Middle East hegemony, however, the superficially solid cornerstones of U.S. Middle East policy--Egypt and Iran--have grown increasingly wobbly since the ICLC and the Soviets stopped the scheduled CIA-rigged Arab-Israeli war in mid-November 1974. By bringing Iraq into a Warsaw Pact-style military agreement, the Soviets could both secure Iraq from CIA attacks and set into motion the joyful process of toppling the lofty Shah from his throne.

Arrest and Attack

Following a series of government-provoked controlled riots in Cairo, the Egyptian Interior Ministry headed by loyal Sadat lackey and CIA agent Mamdouh Salem announced the arrest of up to 400 "communists" in Cairo and Alexandria, as well as in the working-class suburbs of Cairo where the Egyptian Communist Party has retained a small and relatively harmless following.