

The 'New Yalta' roots of Ethiopian disaster

by Thierry Lalevée

More than 600,000 Ethiopians are expected to die between now and the end of the year. This may become a very conservative estimate as latest reports indicate that up to 7 million Ethiopians, out of a population of 33 million, are being directly affected by rapidly spreading starvation and epidemics. Ten of thousands have already died, many of measles.

What has been described as one of the "biggest catastrophes in recent history" is no natural phenomenon—not even three years of drought in Eastern Africa—but cynical political deals made over more than a decade. The crisis in Ethiopia today is the direct result of the policy enforced in Washington by Henry Kissinger and his Malthusian friends, in their decade-long efforts to negotiate a New Yalta deal to divide up the world with the Soviet empire. Indeed, how can it be forgotten that the military regime which, in 1974, overthrew the obscurantist monarchy of Haile Selassie, was a nationalist group which requested help primarily from the United States? The coup had been prompted by the Emperor's decision to let more than 200,000 Ethiopians starve to death rather than discredit Ethiopia's prestige by admitting that the 1973 drought had created food shortages! However, the same Kissinger who was inaugurating the creation of the U.N. World Food Program in Rome with the aim that "by the end of the decade, no child should ever die of starvation," rejected Ethiopian demands and traded Ethiopia to the Soviets for Somalia.

Hence, perhaps more dramatically than any other African country, Ethiopia was never given a chance to overcome the 1973-74 drought which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives on the continent. Like Mozambique, Ethiopia is today paying the price of more than 10 years of close association with the Soviet Union. While looting Ethiopia, the Russian empire has ensured its control over the country by instigating "Marxist-Leninist" regional revolts in the Tigre and Erythrean provinces. Today, these are the regions hardest hit by drought.

Emergency aid immediately required

According to U.N. officials quoted in the *London Guardian* on Oct. 25, the delivery of a mere 100,000 tons of food aid last year, as requested, would have prevented the disaster today, saving more than half a million lives. What happened? Malthusian supporters of the genocidal Club of Rome in the

West and the East—State Department and economic officials committed to Jimmy Carter's policy of "Global 2000," and Soviet policy makers around the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and the Institute for African Studies of Andrei Gromyko's son—agreed to allow the catastrophe to unfold. Western policy makers did nothing, under the pretext that Ethiopia was a "Soviet puppet"; Soviet officials followed their usual cynical policy that, when it comes to natural catastrophe, drought, and starvation, "imperialism is responsible."

It will take an effort qualitatively far beyond anything presently envisaged to save the 600,000 Ethiopians in landlocked and drought-ridden regions of Wollo and Gondar; but it is also imperative to keep the crisis from claiming more lives, to feed the rest of the population, and to stop the spread of epidemics which know no borders. In recent weeks, many emergency camps have been established in one of the most affected regions, the Tigre, where more than 100,000 are in immediate danger. Up to several thousand are dying daily in these camps for lack of food and exhaustion from the long trek which brought them there. Adding to the difficulty of regular food shipments is continuing military harassment by the so-called rebels, who obviously care little about the dying populations. Rebels of the Tigre front have, for example, announced that they would allow the creation of such camps only for daytime activities, but not during the night, perhaps out of fear that at night the camps may be used for military activities. This insane decision forces thousands to sleep outside at temperatures below 10° Celsius. In many instances, food shipments delivered at the Red Sea port of Massawa have been prevented from crossing the Tigre region to reach central Ethiopia. On Oct. 24, the Ethiopian government, together with the Red Cross, decided to give up attempts at deliveries by road, and mobilized its rare transport planes and helicopters. Washington committed itself to supply the necessary fuel for the operations.

Over the next 12 months, Ethiopia will require more than 1,248,620 tons of wheat to ensure bare subsistence to its population. Immediately, it requires at least 60,000 tons of wheat a month. Present projections show that, at most, 40,000 to 70,000 tons will be coming for the next three months, including a ridiculously small delivery of 10,000 tons sometime by the end of the year from the Soviet Union—their only contribution!

Moscow does have its own agricultural problems to face, but the small scale of the Soviet commitment also reflects the anger of the Soviet leadership at what they consider growing Ethiopian nationalism. During last September's revolutionary celebrations, Ethiopian nationalism was more often mentioned than rhetoric about "communism" and "socialism." As a signal of displeasure, East German leader Erich Honecker is reported to have refused to attend the founding congress of the Ethiopian Workers' Party, and came only to the final military parade.