

Triage in Africa and the Mideast

Egypt: The basic staple of the Egyptian peasant's diet, beans, can now be obtained only when a rationing card is presented. The rationing list is now beans, sugar, oil, tea, laundry soap, and matches.

Turkey: The city of Istanbul (population 3 million), the largest in Turkey, is bankrupt and has announced it will not pay its employees their wages for the month of June. This affects 20,000 employees. The government has no plans to bail out Istanbul; foreign reserves have plunged to a record low. The foreign trade deficit so far this year is \$1 billion.

The price of wheat has been raised; this will devastate the diets of Turkish peasants whose staple item is bread.

Africa

By a conservative estimate 45,000 people have died of starvation in the last nine months in Ethiopia and Somalia. The Tanzanian government has been forced to ransom its population's future to keep the population alive, and to call out the army to meet the terms of the ransom. The so-called boom economy of oil-exporting Nigeria is on the verge of a total breakdown which will severely endanger the lives of its 80 million people, one-fifth of Africa's population.

The Rockefeller/World Bank attitude is that Africa is too backward for investment in any but immediately lootable sectors. The only agriculture policy has been to induce peasant farmers, by force and trickery, into cash-crop production and abandonment of food cropping. Deliberate neglect of the investment necessary to maintain the soil's productivity has resulted in depletion and destruction of the ecology — the reason for the severity of natural disasters on the continent.

This looting process was the cause of the Sahel drought, in which up to four million people were allowed to die.

Famine's Eastward Shift

Somalia, Ethiopia: Although the famine is abated for now in the Sahel, and the population is back to the starvation diet of 1700 calories a day, the famine has moved east, to the African Horn countries of Somalia and Ethiopia.

In southeastern Ethiopia and in most of Somalia the last nine months of famine have killed approximately 45,000 people — 1,250 per week. Despite a relief effort by the pro-Soviet Somali government, 18,000 people have died there since October. In Ethiopia, a larger number of people are affected, the relief effort got started later and, as in the Sahel, the arrival of the rainy season has made transportation impossible. Although the rains have come this spring, the population is too weak to undertake any planting, and 100 per cent of the livestock have been wiped out by the drought.

Officials of the CIA's Agency for International Development (AID) told IPS the situation in Ethiopia "is not too serious," and reported that the U.S. had not contemplated sending any aid to Ethiopia this year "until they came and made a case for it." After the Ethiopians begged for aid, the Rockefeller/Ford Administration dispatched a miserable 7,000 tons of grain; enough only to prolong the suffering.

At the present rates of genocide, another 30,000 will be dead in Somalia and Ethiopia by September.

Tanzania: A similar situation further south in Tanzania has been handled somewhat differently, because the Tanzanian economy offers a bit more lootable wealth. Rockefeller financiers and agents in the U.S. have waged a political terror campaign to force Tanzania's President

Nyerere to reorganize the economy for terminal looting, in return for a few crumbs to stave off the effects of a 571,000 ton shortfall in 1974 cereals production, the result of several years of drought.

In 1974, Tanzania's cereals production fell an estimated 38 per cent below 1973 production. By completely depleting foreign exchange, Tanzania was able to purchase sufficient foodstuffs to last until the first 1975 harvest, which is expected to be adequate.

Discrepancies in reports from equally well-informed sources indicate the nature of Rockefeller's terror operation against Tanzania's government. One source with early information revealed that the U.S. Administration has refused to sell grain to Tanzania, even for hard cash at commercial prices, and reported that the Tanzanians were severely frightened by this use of food as a political weapon. Another source, with somewhat later information, completely denied the first report, alleging that the Administration and the World Bank had been extremely cooperative. An AID official reported that 50,000 tons of grains have been shipped to Tanzania. In addition, the World Bank has increased aid since January, according to newspaper reports.

The Tanzanian government has been accelerating the rate of "villagization" of farming in the country, simultaneously with the drought, and using force where necessary. This program, called Ujamaa, is officially intended only to relocate tiny uneconomical units to provide them with electricity, plumbing, simple machinery, and fertilizer. As it now stands, with no foreign exchange, an increased debt burden, the refusal of the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other creditors to reschedule present debt, and dependence primarily on Rockefeller-controlled governments for food aid, Nyerere is forced to reorganize his economy into slave-labor work camps to quickly boost production. This is an accelerated form of the "inducement" that has destroyed African agriculture.

Nigeria: Coming Crash: Nigeria, with around \$6 billion in money reserves and a large supply of high-grade crude oil, is alleged to be the boom economy of Africa.

This booming economy is a myth.

Of Nigeria's monetary reserves, 85 per cent or \$5.1 billion are held in pounds sterling and similar useless paper. When the pound crashes, Nigeria crashes.

This will happen in the context of internal economic chaos; with massive inflation; with foodstuffs and virtually every other basic commodity in short supply and periodically unavailable; and grave shortages of petroleum products for cooking and transportation. The transportation infrastructure is overloaded to the point of collapse, with ships waiting up to 100 days to offload at Nigeria's one port.

With a large part of imports consisting of necessary foodstuffs, and with a collapsing agricultural sector based mainly on subsistence farming, there is no chance that Nigeria can feed 80 million people when the crash hits. The situation will be exacerbated by tribal tensions now just beneath the surface. Nigeria's cohesion is based on the ability of an increasingly unpopular military government to deliver on its development promises. When this disappears, the chaos and misery will dwarf the Biafran war famine and the Sahel drought famine.