

Famine in Africa: who's responsible?

by Christopher White

Addressing the United Nations Special Session on the Third Development Decade in New York on Aug. 25, U.S. Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie lauded his country's effort to aid the population of the African continent now beset by the combined consequences of famine, drought, and war. Ten million Africans, it is calculated, are threatened with death in the weeks immediately ahead, 70 million over the next few months.

Muskie's praise of such U.S. efforts must have sat sourly on the stomachs of many of the delegations who heard his speech, which otherwise passed notice as a diatribe against the OPEC nations, and a restatement of what has become one of Muskie's favorite policy pronouncements. The Secretary of State is of the opinion that the gravest problem facing the world is the growth of the human population. Muskie has recently argued elsewhere that the 6 billion projected inhabitants of the globe anticipated for the year 2000 are twice as many as can be comfortably accommodated. Muskie wants the world's population growth rate eliminated.

It is in that light that one may turn to look more coldly at Muskie's self-congratulatory pronouncements about U.S. aid to Africa, in order to get at what is really going on and what are the underlying causes.

Muskie claimed, probably correctly, that in shipping Africans 290,000 tons of grain this year the U.S. is in advance of all other donors. The figure compares unfavorably with the existing surplus of approximately 26 million tons of grain, and the approximately 18 million tons that *EIR* economists have calculated would be required to minimally maintain the lives of the millions threatened over the next weeks and months. If Muskie's figures are set against existing surplus stocks and such minimal estimates of requirements, it is obvious that the Secretary of State, whose Malthusian outlook is otherwise public knowledge, is lying when he talks about U.S. aid programs.

If we look further into the situation, we find that the U.S. has allocated 720,000 tons of grain for East African relief operations during the present fiscal year. Of this amount, approximately one-third has been allocated to Somalia alone. The close correspondence between that figure, and the figure



William Cambell/Sigma

U.S. supplied Somali guerrillas fighting to seize land from Ethiopia

cited in Muskie's speech, would indicate that Somalia has been the only recipient of such U.S. aid.

In Somalia the situation is as follows. The decision to make that country the primary recipient of aid programs, a decision enforced at the beginning of this year, attracted an influx of 2½ million refugees into that semi-arid country of nearly 3 million nomads. African nations warned that such would be the result. Aid supplies have not gotten into the refugee camps. Instead, the refugee population, primarily from the Ogaden area of Ethiopia, has been sorted out into able-bodied and non-able-bodied males, women and children.

Able-bodied males have been fed—as they have been recruited and trained as part of a three division invasion force against neighboring Ethiopia. This has been documented in the August issue of the magazine *Africa* and has been covered repeatedly in the French weekly *Nouvel Observateur*, as well as in the leading daily newspaper *Le Figaro*.

The refugee camps in Somalia are directed by an international association headed by the International Rescue Committee of Washington, D.C. and by the Swiss-based and staffed International Committee of the Red Cross.

Associated with the activities of these committees are Muskie's administration associate Zbigniew Brzezinski and Reagan campaign chairman William J. Casey, as well as political influentials such as New York Senator Jacob Javits and Felix Rohatyn of Lazard Frères, to whom we will return shortly.

Africa provides a case study for the activities of these

two institutions. No matter where they operate around the world, be it in the camps on the borders of Thailand and Cambodia, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in Central America, or even in Florida, the committees are involved in using aid programs among refugees, along with the U.S. food that goes into such programs, to build up and equip rag-tag armies modeled on the Wallenstein horde which ravaged central Europe during the 17th century.

As in the case of Somalia, such activities are generally justified by reference to some mystical kinds of geopolitics. For the warped minds that produce such arguments, the Soviet Union's ally of four years ago and less, Somalia, is now the U.S.'s loyal ally against the U.S.'s own old ally of less than four years ago, Ethiopia. This kind of argument does not wash.

The Brzezinski/Casey committee is also organizing the refugee camps within Ethiopia itself. It is simultaneously organizing material support for the longstanding rebels against the Ethiopian government in Eritrea. It is further organizing an insurrection against the government of Gaafar Numeiry in the Sudan, including refugees from Ethiopian and southern Sudanese tribes like the Dinka. Numeiry is presently one of the few remaining U.S. allies in Africa.

Such forces thus assembled are deployed as they have been in the Karamajong province of Uganda to butcher both the human and animal population in that region of cattle-raising nomads. A force of approximately 12,000 is now being unleashed against the population of southern Sudan, and in support of Milton Obote's efforts to secure the presidency of Uganda. Obote is the favorite

candidate of Washington, London, Peking, Tel Aviv and Tripoli, in what are euphemistically called Uganda's upcoming elections.

The deployments of the hordes assembled in such a way by the Brzezinski-affiliated Rescue Committee are the corollary of Secretary of State Muskie's insistence that the world population be reduced.

The continent of Africa is not dying. It is being deliberately murdered.

It is at this point that we may reintroduce Jacob Javits and Felix Rohatyn. These New York figures are not merely members of the Executive Board of the International Rescue Committee. They are also, since 1973, among the most outspoken advocates within the United States of global policies of energy austerity and labor-intensive economics, policies developed primarily in London and New York and forced on countries of the Third World, including most emphatically the continent of Africa, in the name of solving the world economic crisis.

As the drafters of those policies knew back in the early 1970s, a few short years of intensification of such measures would ensure genocide on a scale unparalleled in human history. Africa has been systematically starved of credit, capital goods, manpower training, and development. Africa has been allowed, at most, "appropriate technology."

In the process, across vast areas of the world's largest and potentially richest continents, organized social and political life has been driven backwards into conditions of barbarism and chaos. The basis for human existence itself has been destroyed as human labor power has been eroded through continuing drought, famine, and war, and as land itself has been transformed into desert and semi-arid scrub incapable, with existing technologies on the continent, of sustaining the activities of any kind of agriculture, or any kind of life except that of the marauding bands of Uganda, Chad, and Zaire.

Africa is not alone in this. But in Africa alone, barring the outbreak of thermonuclear war, we stand before a situation in which the continent as a whole is on the verge of the holocaust. Africa will be the first victim of the standing policies of the circles behind the World Bank and its allies to die, if measures are not taken to reverse the situation.

Such are the realities behind Muskie's sanctimonious claims that the United States has done more for the continent of Africa than anyone else. Much more has to be changed than simply reversing present aid programs by supplying American agricultural surpluses to the continent. We must break the constraints imposed on both advanced and so-called developing sectors to create the basis for real development. Or Africa will not be butchered alone.

Africa's peril: scope and solutions

by Mary Brannan

Four hundred to 500 people are dying every day in the Karamoja district of northern Uganda. In East Africa, out of a total population of about 95 million, 10 million people are immediately threatened with starvation. Five million of these are in Ethiopia, totaling one-sixth of the Ethiopian population. Twenty African countries are on the emergency list of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Throughout Africa, more than 60 million are affected by drought; several million have now become refugees. Locusts are at work in Nigeria and Cameroon, and are breeding unchecked in Chad.

Let there be no mistake about the real causes, and thus the responsibilities, for the destruction of the people and the territory of Africa. The development of science and technology means that today war, famine and pestilence are no longer acts of God or nature, no longer Malthusian constraints. They can only be the results of deliberate policies.

The causes of the economic crises in Africa have been obscured by a series of myths.

Myth I. The drought is a natural disaster. In the developed nations, yearly weather fluctuations—even a succession of dry periods—may give rise to difficulties, but do not lead to mass starvation. Why? Because the economy can sustain and expand production of an overall surplus based on the development and implementation of new technologies. This has enabled the industrialized countries, above all the United States, to reduce their agricultural workforce from between 60 and 80 percent of all laborers more than a century ago to between 4 and 10 percent today. Rapid and efficient transportation, processing, and storage enables food to be stockpiled and rapidly moved as needed. The quality and quantity of nutrition has increased to supply growing populations.

Water can be piped from long distances or desalinated, fertilizers and trace elements supplied, new seed and animal varieties bred, pesticides and herbicides developed. Greenhouses and hydroponics can provide 24-hour, 365-day growing opportunities; food can even be produced in Antarctica, at a price.