

No more aid for Marxist murderers!

The time of hunger has again come to Ethiopia. In the two war-torn northern provinces of Eritrea and Tigré, 3.2 million people are currently facing starvation. And, once again, the Ethiopian regime and its fawning coterie of western church groups will be serving up pictures of skeletal babies to demand more cash and food from North America and Europe.

Ethiopia deserves neither a penny of aid nor a kernel of wheat.

People in Ethiopia are not starving because of nature but because of the mismanagement and genocidal policies of the Marxist regime in Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia has traditionally been an empire whose borders have ebbed and flowed depending on the military power of the imperial regime. The heartland of Ethiopia is the high central plateau region of Shoa. From there, the empire's dominant Amhara-speaking Christians slowly expanded their power outward over five centuries. Many non-Amhara peoples, like Moslems of Wollo province and fierce Galla tribesmen, were forced under imperial domination. Today, less than 50% of Ethiopia's peoples are Amhara.

In the north, Tigré was the religious and cultural centre of the empire. Ethiopians believe their founding emperor, Menlik I, son of King Solomon of Israel and the Queen of Sheba, was born here.

But Tigré, which speaks its own language, has long battled Shoa for control of the empire. When a Marxist coup overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, revolt broke out in Tigré. Rebels there are still fighting to overthrow the communists and restore the monarchy.

Above Tigré, along the Red Sea coast, lies Eritrea. The Moslem and Christian peoples of this hot, dusty land



are hereditary enemies of the Amhara. In 1952, Eritrea, which had been a colony of Italy, was handed over by the Allies to Ethiopia. Resistance was immediate, first against Haile Selassie and then against the Marxists in Addis Ababa.

Massive Soviet and Cuban military aid to Ethiopia and thousands of advisers failed to put down the well-organized Eritrean rebels.

Unable to win a victory on the battlefield in Tigré or Eritrea, Ethiopia's dictator, Mengistu Haile Mariam, turned to forced starvation. Mengistu was clearly emulating the example set by his hero Stalin when he starved Ukraine into submission in the 1930s.

Food and seed deliveries were cut off to rebel areas. Crops were destroyed. The rural populations of Tigré and Eritrea were driven into pestilential government camps, where they quickly fell victim to contagious diseases. Those who did not flee were left to starve.

Farmers in Ethiopian-controlled territory were collectivized along the Soviet 1930s model. Anyone who kept stores of grain seed against drought or crop failure was branded a capitalist hoarder and shot. Food became a weapon in the socialist arsenal.

Large quantities of western food deliveries went to

feed the 230,000-man armed forces or the communist militia. Hard cash saved on not having to import food was used to buy Soviet arms and pay Cuban troops.

Inside Ethiopia, a reign of terror was imposed, giving the Mengistu regime the well-deserved reputation as being the most bestial of Africa's many beastly regimes. Yet all the while, western governments continued to provide the food and financial aid that kept Mengistu in power and the Ethiopian Army in the field.

Amazingly, even though Ethiopia is Moscow's closest ally in Africa and a certified communist state, the USSR has provided little food or cash to help that nation's starving millions. The Soviets send tanks, trucks and military technicians.

This week the Ethiopians told their ever-credulous western aid donors that more food was urgently needed but that all such aid had to be delivered only to the government. Expressly banned were direct deliveries to rebel-held areas in Tigré or Eritrea, the very areas where hunger is at its worst. Clearly, those who obey the regime will be fed; those who do not will starve.

Western governments and Canada, which has been noteworthy for its co-operation with the Mengistu regime's genocidal campaign, should tell Addis Ababa: Not one more cent until you stop the forced starvation. Food aid should be sent through Sudan directly to Tigré and Eritrea. All further aid to Ethiopia should cease until that nation's regime, one of the world's very worst violators of human rights, changes its Stalinist policies.

What shameful folly. While Ottawa relentlessly targets the South African government for liquidation it cheerfully aids and abets the murderous Ethiopian Marxists who have killed millions of their own people.