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## The face of famine

### Relief on its way but for many it's far too late

**Bonn, (R)**  
Former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt will head an independent commission supervising food transport in drought-stricken Ethiopia, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) said yesterday.

An SPD statement said Brandt, the Party's chairman, accepted an invitation from the British relief organisation War On Want to head the new commission.

Brandt, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1971 and head of the North-South Commission on Third World development, said in a letter to War On Want that he was concerned about the situation in Ethiopia and would do all he could to help.

The new commission was set up to supervise food transport in Ethiopia and to ensure supplies reached peo-

ple in remote areas, the SPD said.

Relief agencies say hundreds of thousands of people face death and millions are affected by severe drought in the east African country.

The West German government has announced that it will provide 15.5 million marks (5.2 million dollars) for famine relief in Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, food aid was being rushed to Ethiopia by sea and air yesterday to prevent mass starvation, but international relief agencies said the response was a clas-

sic case of the west waking up too late to a Third World tragedy.

Relief agencies warned for two years that an intense drought, a chronic civil war, and a poor transport system were causing potentially disastrous food shortages.

Hundreds of people have been dying daily for weeks, hundreds of thousands face death, and over six million are afflicted by the drought in the Marxist-ruled country, the privately-operated relief agencies say.

But only in the past week

has there been a surge of western public concern, induced by television film shown widely in Europe of dying babies and mothers like walking skeletons, resembling inmates of World War II concentration camps.

Donations have poured into relief agencies in western Europe and governments have come under intense public pressure to rush more food to Ethiopia.

Extra supplies from several countries are already being shipped.

Bumper harvests have in-

creased western Europe's grain reserves, which last year hit a record of six million tonnes.

The 10-nation European community is set to release nearly two million dollars in emergency cash and 25,000 tonnes of grain next week, community officials said.

Several countries are sending trucks or planes to ease bottlenecks in distribution.

Washington is giving fuel for an airlift and aid worth nearly 40 million dollars.

London is sending 6,000 tonnes of grain in addition to earlier shipments and five million sterling (six million dollars).

West Germany announced it was increasing its emergency aid programme by one-third to 15.5 million marks (5.2 million dollars), some of it to be used to help speed up deliveries.

Defence Minister Manfred Woerner offered aircraft and vehicles free of charge to help move aid supplies.

A spokesman for the British-based charity Oxfam lauded such efforts, but said: "It's too late--it was too late for many six months ago, too late for others today, and others tomorrow."

He deemed the Ethiopia rescue mission a classic case of tardy western reaction to problems in poor, distant countries.

Sending grain reserves in 1983 could have averted famine today. Other aid officials expressed similar concern.

Richard Doughty, spokesman for Christian Aid, said it was difficult to arouse interest in Ethiopia's problems without western media attention.

They had tried for 18 months to get western governments to commit more funds.

"Not until our screens are filled with the cries of a mass of starving babies...do we really take notice (and) by then it is too late," British author William Shawcross wrote in the Guardian newspaper.

Private relief officials said western reluctance to aid a Marxist government had impeded relief efforts until recently.

US and other western officials faulted Moscow for not doing more and blamed Ethiopia for refusing to let food convoys into secessionist rebel areas where many are starving.

Peter McPherson, administrator of the US Agency For International Development, said in Washington: "It almost seems like callous indifference that the Soviet Union has virtually done nothing." Soviet aid had been mostly military.

## Calling in for talks



Greek Minister of Agriculture Mr. Constantine Simitis arrived on the island at the invitation of his Cyprus counterpart Mr. D. Christodoulou for talks on Greek-Cyprus cooperation in the fields of agriculture and on Cyprus' relationship with the European Community of which Greece is a member.

The Greek Minister was received by Act-

ing President Mr. G. Ladas and the Minister of Defence Mr. Chr. Veniamin as Acting Foreign Minister and had talks with the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Simitis also visited Archbishop Khrysostomos and laid a wreath on the tomb of those killed in the invasion.

In the picture Minister Mr. Simitis on arrival at Larnaca Airport.

## Tension eased

**Paris, (R)**  
The release of a French television journalist captured in Afghanistan has removed a chill in the atmosphere between France and the Soviet Union on the day they celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations.

Paris newspapers said yesterday the freeing of 53-year-old Jacques Abochar from prison in Kabul was a success for a public campaign in France and for the firm line taken by the French

government and parliament.

Abochar, a reporter for the Antenne-2 Network, was captured in Afghanistan on September 17 and sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment for entering the country illegally.

He was freed Thursday but a hitch involving a plane sent to Kabul to collect him threatened to delay his return to France.

French officials said the plane, a Mystere, had to return to Paris because of technical trouble.

The plane's manufacturers, Marcel Dassault Aviation, denied this and said the real reason was that an unspecified country had refused to allow the plane to overfly its territory.

Yves Tavernier, a socialist parliamentarian who agreed to fly to Kabul to bring Abochar home, said he hoped to leave Paris and return today or tomorrow.

The news of Abochar's release was broken by Claude Estier, leader of a French parliamentary delegation visiting Moscow.

## Airline merger

**Beirut-(R)**  
Lebanon's two airlines have agreed in principle to set up a joint holding company with the aim of eventually merging, a Middle East Airlines (MEA) official has stated.

Wafiq Ajouz, Vice President in charge of public relations, said MEA and Trans-Mediterranean Airlines (TMA) planned to establish a joint holding company in which MEA would initially have 75 per cent of the shares and TMA 25 per cent.

MEA would eventually raise its stake to 90 per cent, he said.

# President not happy

President Kyprianou held his last meeting yesterday with UN Secretary General Mr. Perez de Cuellar in the present "second round" of proximity talks and was due to leave last night returning to Cyprus this afternoon, after an absence of two weeks.

However neither he nor the Turkish Cypriot leader, who would be seeing Mr. Perez de Cuellar later in the evening, are bringing back with them the promised third revision of the "draft agenda" for the third round fixed to take place in New York again in a month's time, on November 26.

Yesterday's meeting lasted three quarters of an hour and the President and the UN Secretary General were each accompanied by only one adviser, Mr. A. Mavromatis (on the Cypriot side) and Mr. Picot (on the U.N. side).

The Cyprus radio correspondent covering the New York talks said that President Kyprianou emerging from the meeting said he was not happy with the progress of events adding that the lack of progress was not because of the Greek Cypriot side's attitude.

# Priest feared dead

**Warsaw, (R)**  
Polish communist leader Wojciech Jaruzelski urged the party yesterday to condemn the kidnapping of anti-government Warsaw priest Father Jerzy Popieluszko, who is feared dead after being abducted a week ago.

Jaruzelski denounced the kidnapping as "an act of dangerous banditry which has stirred much of public opinion in Poland. We must combat all that poisons the social atmosphere and strikes at the party."

He spoke at a crucial policy session of

The Greek Cypriot side, he said, will continue to cooperate with goodwill and good faith with the UN Secretary General.

The Secretary General, President Kyprianou said, concluded that it would be better for him to study all that has been said during the second round by the two sides and then prepare a new draft which he would hand to the two sides with the commencement of the third round.

In his meeting with the press yesterday, the government spokesman had stated that on his return to Nicosia the President will start consultations which would determine the nature of meetings with the party leaders.

The President would also be in touch with the Greek government for a visit to Athens for consultations there, the spokesman said.

Asked if there was any "rapprochement" over the views of the two sides at the "proximity talks", the spokesman said that as far as was known the Turks remained rigid to their positions both as regards territory and constitution.

the Party Central Committee overshadowed by the disappearance of Father Popieluszko, who is among anti-government clerics bitterly attacked in a keynote report.

The report, published in advance of the committee meeting, did not name the missing priest, who is a leading supporter of the banned Solidarity free trade union.

But it used strong language to criticise churchmen like Father Popieluszko as trouble makers and warned that the government would curb them if the church did not.

# Pope shooting - five charged

**Rome-(R)**  
A Bulgarian airline official and seven other Bulgarians and Turks were committed for trial yesterday on charges of conspiring to assassinate the Pope.

The Italian investigating magistrate who filed the committal papers said his 23-month enquiry had led him to the conclusion that there was a plot to kill Pope John Paul.

A Turkish gunman is serving a life sentence in Italy for shooting the Pope in St Peter's square on May 13, 1981. The Pope recovered from wounds in the abdomen and shoulder.

The gunman, Mehmet Ali Agca, at first said he acted alone but later told investigators the others accused helped plan the murder attempt.

Those charged are Agca, airline official Sergei Antonov, Bulgarians Todor Ayvazov and Jelio Vassilev, and Turks Omar Bagci, Musa Cerdar Celebi, Bekir Celenk and Oral Celik.

# President apologises

**London-(R)**  
President Francois Mitterrand said yesterday a French security agent was wrong to bring explosives into Britain but he believed the dispute that followed their discovery would not harm Franco-British relations.

Mitterrand was speaking at a news conference at the end of a four-day state visit dominated by Tuesday's discovery by police of plastic explosives in the grounds of the French Ambassador's residence.

He said the French bomb disposal expert who planted the unprimed explosives as a test of British security acted without malicious intent, but he was wrong to have brought the explosive into the country.

"The correct thing to do is to abide strictly by the regulations of the host country," Mitterrand said.

He added: "One must keep a sense of proportion and that is a very British quality, I believe."

The row has been front-page news in Britain. The Times Newspaper said: "Jokes involving explosive substances are apt to be in bad taste." But it said the visit was good.

The right-wing Daily Star headlined an editorial: 'A French farce in bad taste' and commented: "Britain is not some banana republic where political assassins roam the streets at will..."

# Anger in the ranks



# Diplomat shot

**Rome-(R)**  
A United Arab Emirates diplomat was in a serious condition in hospital yesterday after a gunman ambushed his car in Rome killing an Iranian woman who was with him, hospital sources said.

Mohammad Al Suweidi, a second secretary at the United Arab Emirates Embassy in Rome, underwent a five-hour emergency operation after being struck in the face by a single bullet.

Two dozen taximen in Larnaca staged a protest demonstration against what they called the "privileged group" of cabbies who get all the work at the airport while they are banned from access.

The protesters (pictured above) say that the "syndicate" of taximen at the airport make a deal with taximen from other towns as well which allows them to take passengers from the airport to fill the return leg of the journey whereas under the licence terms for taxis they cannot do so.

Our Larnaca correspondent reports that a res-

presentative of the Licensing Authority told the demonstrators that the matters raised by them will be studied.

# WEATHER

Sunny, but light cloud locally, mostly over mountainous areas.

Winds: light, variable with moderate southerly sea breezes on southwestern coasts.

Temperatures: 28C (82F) inland; 25C (77F) on coasts. Maximum yesterday 28C (82F) previous night's minimum 12C (54F).