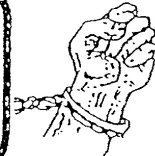




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



November 4/2010

SOCEPP DEPLORES BBC APOLOGY TO BOB GELDOF

SOCEPP was pleased when concerned individuals and the BBC reported, albeit very belatedly, that the aid for famine victims collected through Live Aid/Band Aid and via other NGOs had been diverted by the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which is now in power, to buy arms from China using Sudanese and Somali user-end certificates. Some of the money was deposited at the Saudi American Bank in Jeddah.

SOCEPP was delighted because a crime against thousands was finally exposed and that the rigors of real politic (and Cold War) had finally been cast aside for the truth to come out. That the BBC joined in the exposition of the fact that famine aid was diverted to buy weapons and that many of the donors relay knew and supported this diversion was a surprising but positive development. The BBC has now recanted and said sorry to Bob Geldof (and by consequence to the other NGOs like War on Want, Save the Children UK, Oxfam UK, IRC, Concern, Goal Ireland, World Vision. Norwegian Council of Churches and many more) declaring that it had "no evidence" to air the program exposing the financing of the TPLF by using famine aid as a cover. That the TPLF diverted famine aid and that it was helped in this by western intelligence agencies out to topple the pro Soviet regime was denounced at the time by various quarters including the dissidents of the TPLF, some Sudanese officials, the EPRP, etc. TPLF leaders who left the organization over the years have also confirmed that Live Aid and Band Aid money, among others, was indeed diverted. One Live Aid official in the field in Ethiopia has spoken of trucks loaded with arms and wheat making their way into rebel controlled areas and that they knew there were guns aboard on the trucks.

SOCEPP was formed in 1995 but it has nonetheless condemned the 1984 crime against the people. The starved people of Tigray were used as pawns and perished in their thousands in Tigray and in Wedi Kewli (Sudanese border) as the famine aid was diverted and the starved were forced to trek for weeks in what the Western intelligence agencies had insisted would " expose the Mengistu regime as heartless and feared by the people". Sir Bob Geldof and others were duped and used and taken for a ride and fleeced off the money that they had brought for the victims. The TPLF used this money to buy arms to strengthen itself not only against the regime in place but also against other rival organizations that it attacked consequently. SOCEPP criticized the Live Aid and other NGOs for knowingly or otherwise playing into the hands of the TPLF and the political agenda of Western countries rallied against the pro Soviet regime of Mengistu. In this case, claims of ignorance are of no use as most of the NGOs did know what was taking place. Hence, the BBC's recant and sorry only suggests that it had come under intense political pressure to change course and not to further expose the Meles Zenawi (TPLF) regime that Britain continues to support with fervor. As for SOCEPP, it cannot forget or condone that the rights of Ethiopians were violated by the NGOs who worked hand in glove with the TPLF and ignored the damage to the famine afflicted people. For Ethiopians, it is Bob Geldof and his fellow travelers of the NGOs active in Ethiopia then who must apologize to the Ethiopian people for what happened then in 1984 and what ensued after thanks to their assistance, knowingly or otherwise, to a cunning group that violated and continues to violate the human rights of Ethiopians.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE
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