

## OTHER NATIONS

From Leningrad to Vladivostok, addicts acquire narcotics by various means. Some illicit drugs are homegrown; collective farmers can double their incomes by selling poppies on the black market. As in the West, some drugs are stolen from hospitals and pharmacies. Five hundred people were indicted early this year for such thefts from Ministry of Public Health facilities. Despite strict Soviet frontier controls, smugglers provide another source of supply, particularly in Turkmenistan, which borders on Afghanistan and Iran.

Belatedly, the Soviets have begun to combat drug use. Antidrug TV documentaries, with such titles as "Business Trip to Hell" and "Pain," have been heavy handed and overly didactic. Narcotics treatment programs (which serve perhaps 40,000 people annually) rely on seven- to eight-day sessions that are "woefully inadequate" in achieving permanent cures. The USSR has begun to cooperate with other nations; at Moscow's request, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency is now training Soviet antinarcotics police. Yet, says Kramer, such measures have been "limited and mostly ineffectual" so far.

*A Forgotten War*

"The Loneliest War" by Robert D. Kaplan, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (July 1988), 8 Arlington St., Boston, Mass. 02116.

Ethiopia is entering its 28th year of a civil war—Africa's longest conflict—that has already killed more than 250,000 people and displaced about three times that number. The 35,000 guerrillas of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) are battling a much larger Soviet-backed government army over a Red Sea province the size of Mississippi.

According to Kaplan, the current struggle reflects old sentiments. Since the 11th century, Ethiopia's rulers have been Amhara people from the southern interior. But these rulers have never gained more than a tenuous hold over the Eritreans, who, unlike the Amhara, were exposed to the "cosmopolitan influence" of foreigners coming by sea, notably the Egyptians and the Arabs.

The idea of Eritrean separatism slowly took root during centuries of foreign domination. In 1889, after 300 years of Turkish occupation, the territory was annexed by the Italians. They mobilized Eritreans to build a local road-and-rail network, says Kaplan, suddenly spurring "the growth of a modern national consciousness." Thousands of Eritreans fought alongside Mussolini's Fascist troops during his 1935 conquest of Ethiopia. In 1941, the British ousted the Italians from Ethiopia and moved into Eritrea.

A 1952 UN mandate declared Eritrea a semi-autonomous territory under Ethiopian control. Eritreans considered this act "a gross betrayal by outside powers." Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie disregarded "semi-autonomy"; he proceeded to ban the Eritrean political parties. He also replaced the Eritrean languages with Amharic. He formally annexed the territory in 1962, fueling the civil strife that had begun a year earlier.

Haile Selassie was ousted in a 1975 coup by a group of Marxist officers called the Dergue. Two years later, the Soviet Bloc began to send advisers and weapons. Their reward: bases on the Dahlak Archipelago in the Red Sea and an abandoned American base in Asmara, once the Eritrean capital

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under the Italian colonial rule.

Even though Mengistu Haile-Mariam's Ethiopian regime is inept and dictatorial, Western nations have been reluctant to support the rebels, whom the U.S. State Department also views with suspicion. (Although EPLF leaders deny any political alignment, the front does center around a "Leninist command structure," including a politburo and central committee.) Despite the lack of Western arms, the EPLF has pursued independence with battlefield efficiency and a "maniacal singlemindedness" that the Ethiopians cannot overcome. Recently, Kaplan notes, the Mengistu regime in Addis Ababa has acknowledged that the rebels are "threatening the very foundations of the Ethiopian state."

### *A New Portugal*

"Another New World" by Merrill Stevenson, in *The Economist* (May 28, 1988), 25 St. James St., London SW1A 1HG, United Kingdom.

On April 25, 1974, Portuguese strongman Marcelo Caetano was ousted in a military coup, restoring democracy after 42 years of dictatorship by Caetano and his predecessor, Antonio Salazar. Within two years, most Portuguese colonies, including Angola and Mozambique, had gained independence; at home, dozens of private companies were nationalized, workers' wages increased dramatically, and six provisional governments formed and fell.

Today, reports Stevenson, a writer for *The Economist*, Portugal is a far more stable nation. That stability, she contends, is due largely to two men: Socialist president Mario Soares and Social Democratic (PSD) prime minister Anibal Cavaco Silva.

Prime minister from 1976 to 1979 and from 1983 to 1985, the charismatic Soares led the campaign to make Portugal a member of the European Community, and presided over austere policies that brought a falling inflation rate and a reduced national debt. In 1987, Soares became Portugal's president; as head of state, he provides a "reassuring presence" similar to that in Spain of King Juan Carlos.

A former finance minister and chief of planning, the intellectual Cavaco Silva holds a Ph.D. in economics. He led a coalition government from 1985 until July 1987, when his PSD became the first party to gain an absolute majority in Portugal's Parliament.

Both the military and the Communists have lost ground. Following the loss of the African colonies, Lisbon cut the armed forces in half; defense spending's share of the budget has fallen from 50 percent in 1970 to less than 10 percent today. The military men responsible for the 1974 coup are either retired, in prison, or out of politics; Cavaco Silva's current cabinet is the first with no military members. In 1976, the Communists gained 14 percent of the Portuguese vote; fewer than four percent of those citizens polled in April 1988 said they would vote Communist. A new, non-Communist trade union, the UGT, has emerged to challenge the Communist CGTP; while the CGTP is still Portugal's largest union, its adherents seem "to be increasingly confined to low-skilled jobs in state industries."

Portugal still faces many difficulties—reducing illiteracy, modernizing aging factories. But Portuguese democracy now seems secure.