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PEASANT RESPONSE TO FAMINE
IN ETHIOPIA, 1975-1985

BY
ADHANA HAILE ADHANA

DOCUMENTATION CENTRE
INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
P. O. Box 1176, ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIA

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PEASANT RESPONSE TO FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA, 1975 - 1985

with

Special Emphasis on Manzáná Gíshe, Yifátáná Tímugá
and Woláitá Awrajás

By

Adhana Haile Adhana

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ADVISOR : Dr. BAHRU ZAWDE

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	:	Addis Ababa University
GADU	:	<u>Chilalo</u> Agricultural Development Unit
CSO	:	Central Statistical Office
ENI	:	Ethiopian Nutrition Institute
EPID	:	Extension and Project Implementation Department
ERCS	:	Ethiopian Red Cross Society
FAO	:	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN
LORCS	:	League of Red Cross Societies
MAAA	:	Manz <u>Awraja</u> Administration Archives
MOA	:	Ministry of Agriculture
MOH	:	Ministry of Health
PA	:	Peasant Association
PMAC	:	Provisional Military Administrative Council
BRC	:	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
BRCA	:	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission Archives
SIM	:	Society of International Missionaries
WAAA	:	Wolaita <u>Awraja</u> Administration Archives
WADU	:	Wolaita Agricultural Development Unit
WAPAA	:	Wolaita <u>Awraja</u> Peasant Association Archives
WHO	:	World Health Organisation of the UN
WPE	:	Workers Party of Ethiopia
YAAA	:	Yifat <u>Awraja</u> Administration Archives

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The essay attempts to depict the responses of peasants under famine during the period 1975 - 1985. This chapter gives a profile of three awrajās selected for special emphasis and a glimpse of famine during the period. It also briefly examines the land reform and the resultant rural society. Chapters two and three consider peasant responses to famine in relation to society and the state, respectively. The fourth chapter explores very briefly the prospects of overcoming famine in Ethiopia. Although the field of investigation is the country as a whole, three awrajās have been selected for emphasis: Manznā Gīshe (hereinafter Manz), Yifāt nā Timugā (hereinafter Yifāt) and Wolāitā. Frequency of famine, agro-climatic considerations, ethnography and convenience decided the selection. The sources consist of reports, books, archival documents and oral information. I have also done field work in the three awrajās.

PROFILE OF THE THREE AWRĀJĀS

Wolaita had a rural population of 929919 in 1984.¹ Correspondingly, Yifāt had 298028 and Manz 270164². The average rural household sizes were : Manz 4.1, Yifāt 4.2 and Wolāitā 4.6.³ Manz and Wolāitā measure 3870 km² each and Yifāt 6250.⁴ Cropped land (per cent of the total), on the other hand, amounted to 9.7, 21.5 and 50.9 in Yifāt, Wolāitā and Manz, respectively.⁵ The agricultural density was, therefore, 137.2, 491.6 and 117.6 in Manz, Yifāt and Wolāitā.⁶

Manz and Wolāitā are ethnically homogenous. Yifāt's population consists of the Amhārā, Oromo, Afār and the Argobbā.

The Amhārā (Manz and Yifāt) are Orthodox Christians; the Oromo, Afar and the Argobbā Muslims and the Wolaita belong to various Christian denominations.

In terms of altitude, Yifāt (principally gollā) lies between 650 and 2800 meters above sea level; Wolaita (predominantly wainā - daga) between about 1000 and 2800; and Manz (mostly dagā) between about 1500 and 4000. The former two touch on the Rift Valley.

Pastoralism and cultivation co-exist in Yifāt. Manz and Wolaitā almost exclusively depend on cultivation. The latter belongs, however, to the Gnsat culture, common at altitudes between 1600 and 2800 meters. ? Wolaita also produces maize, taff, root crops, fruit trees and coffee. In Manz and dagā parts of Yifāt, barley and wheat, which form the staple diet, as well as pulses are produced. Otherwise, Yifāt depends on sorghum (true also for 'lower' Manz), maize and taff. Horticulture is comparatively peripheral in both.

The sheep constitutes the major form of livestock wealth in Manz and the dagā parts of Yifāt and cattle in Wolaitā and gollā parts of Yifāt; while mixed herds (including the camel) appear usual among nomadic pastoralists. Apiculture seems widespread only in Wolaitā.

Wollen blanket - making is the single most important handicraft in Manz and, to a lesser extent, in dagā Yifāt. In Wolaitā, handicrafts are relatively more widespread, although only weaving carries the least stigma among the major occupations; smithing, leatherwork and pottery are for instance denigrated.

Manz society still disapproves of trade and seasonal out-migration for work. In Yifāt, the Argobbā stand out as petty traders and migrant labourers. On the other hand, these appear to be attributes of long standing in Wolāitā.

Administratively, Manz consists of seven Waradās: Gīshe, Ansokya, Qayā-Gabrel, Gerā - Midir, Māwā - Midir, Lābo - Midir and Mazazo. The same is true of Wolāitā: Boloso - Sora (hereinafter Boloso), Sodo-Zuryā, Dāmot - Gāle, Dāmot - Waide, Humbo, Koysā - Kindo (hereinafter Koysā) and Ofā. Yifāt consists of six: Bure - Modāitu, Fursī, Gamzā, Efrātānā Jille, Qawat and Māfud. Peasant associations number 175 in Yifāt, 181 in Manz and 266 in Wolāitā.

Each awrāja has a distinctive history. The Amhārā probably settled in Manz in the 10th century and evolved into a dominant body several centuries after.⁸ Amda Siyon incorporated Manz (" Manzih " ⁹) in the 14th century.¹⁰ It seems that about that time Manz suffered from pastoralist raids.¹¹ Nevertheless, the Grāñ wars (1529 - 1540) and the subsequent Oromo population movement probably constituted the most serious threats to Manz in its history as the home of Christian Amhārā communities. Manz braved these odds, supplied the founder of the Shāwā¹² Dynasty and became " the starting point " for the reunification of Shāwā¹² in the 18th century. This and the subsequent fortunes of that dynasty made the people of Manz associate themselves with the Ethiopian monarchy and state with pride that theirs was " Ya Negus Agar ! ".¹³ The rist ownership of land,¹⁴ although not unique to Manz, probably lent further credence to the illusion, which did not lack in conviction. Disaffected aristocrats put to test that conviction against the revolution and thus kept Manz off the stream of the historic

process well until 1979, since when the ordinary peasant seems to date the revolution ('lawtu').

The name Yifātā Timugā combines the names of an Oromo dominant group (Timugā) which occupied it, probably in the 16th century, and of a mediaeval sultanate in that area, first referred to by Ibn Said (1214 - 87) as being of a "very mixed" Muslim population.¹⁵ The sultanate, under a dynasty of "an Abyssinian origin,"¹⁶ rose to prominence in 1285 when it absorbed another sultanate called Shawā.¹⁷ Amda Siyon had reduced the sultanate into a dependency by 1332,¹⁸ and, finally, Yis'hāq absorbed it into the Christian Kingdom in 1415, after which it "is heard of no more".¹⁹ The sultanate had owed its emergence to the historical coincidence of Islam and trade.²⁰ Islam outlived trade in the area, although the Argobbā have retained something of the legacy of both. Whatever might have happened during the Grān wars, the most important event in the area with lasting effect has been, apart from the introduction of Islam, its occupation by the Oromo in the years 1562 - 70.²¹ Yifāt also served, apparently more than Manz, as a base for the reunification of Shawā.²² Thenceforth, the political history of Yifāt probably consisted of alternations of skirmishes and unnegotiated truces amongst its 'very mixed' population. Three forms of land tenures prevailed in Yifāt under the old regime: the rist system (in the dagā parts), tenancy (in large pocket areas in the valleys) and pastoralist communal ownership of rangelands. The tenants consisted largely of migrant peasants from Wello, pejoratively called sadachā (migrants) by the Oromo. The passage of the old regime into oblivion entailed no manifest pangs for Yifāt; for many peasants in the valleys it most probably meant deliverance from serfdom.

Wolaita, whatever might have been the practical significance of its being conquered by Yis'haq (1413 - 30),²³

had a long period of independent evolution and statehood. The name apparently means "blended,"²⁴ as Hābasha in the Arabic sense, suggesting that it developed over the centuries through a process of assimilation of various peoples. Wolāitā's incorporation into the Ethiopian state came only in the 1890s. The two entities, each with its elaborate government, tradition and conviction, inevitably clashed; Wolāitā's stiff resistance provoked punitive campaigns and entailed, as a result, mass enslavement and the imposition of serfdom (malkānā system). Yet, Wolāitā soon buried the hatchet and, even during fascist occupation, it stood steadfastly for Ethiopian independence and unity despite the enemy's efforts to the contrary. Consequently, serfdom was replaced by qutir gibbir in 1937 (E.C.).²⁵ Although landlord - tenant relations in the awrajā under the old regime had been secondary to rist ownership, the Wolāitā welcomed the revolution as a liberating force.

FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA, 1975 - 1985

Available information²⁶ suggests not less than 33 major famines in Ethiopia during 722 years (1252 - 1974): a famine every two decades on the average. The frequency of occurrence shortens progressively towards our period: every 29 years for the period 1252 - 1752, every 14 for 1829 - 1914 and every 8 years for 1916 - 1974 or every 5 years for 1958 - 1974. The dearth of records for the remote past may have given rise to this picture. However, it is also possible that famine recurred at ever shorter intervals towards our period owing to the combined effects of increased exploitation of the peasantry and unimpeded land degradation as well as the population increase without a corresponding development of the productive forces in agriculture; and, hence, the coincidence of famine and the fall of the old regime does not appear conjectural.

The period 1975 - 1985, rich in dramatic events, begins with recovery from the 1972 - 74 famine and ends with an even more devastating one. In fact, famine persisted throughout the period until it eclipsed everything else in 1985. The phenomenon compelled one to conclude that the name Ethiopia " has almost become synonymous with famine. " ²⁷ The Ethiopian Head of State put it even more starkly: " ... Because we were forced to become beggars and to depend on alms in order to save the lives of most members of the society who had succumbed to famine whenever weather abnormality occurred, we were reduced into a laughing stock of our enemies. " ²⁸ It becomes therefore imperative to sketch the history of famine during the period in order to establish the proper context.

The 1972 - 74 famine fell most heavily on Wallo, with 900,000 people " severely affected by the drought ". ²⁹ Tigrāi came next. By 1975, however, the two provinces had recovered so remarkably that the claim each had 400,000 " drought - affected " people as of July 1975 ³⁰ is hardly credible. In 1967 E.C. (1974/75), for instance, the Relief Department of the RRC distributed only 609,527 quintals ³¹ throughout the country, an amount merely enough to feed 338,626 people for a year. Famine was thus waging only a rearguard action. In 1976, Wallo extricated itself from famine almost completely. ³² Tigrāi performed less remarkably, but still registered progress over 1975. ³³ Gojjām and Gondar experienced no famine in 1975 and 1976.

In Eritrea, famine had loomed large by November 1974, ³⁴ although how it subsequently materialised is not clear. The Ogāden, on the other hand, showed early signs of an impending famine in April 1974 ³⁵ and by mid - 1975 some 100,000 people had to be assisted in 22 shelters. ³⁶ The emergency had eased, however, by late 1975, ³⁷ paving the way

for rehabilitation. ³⁸ Pockets of famine had also developed in parts of lowland Bale by April 1974. ³⁹ and intermittent relief work continued there in 1975 and 1976. ⁴⁰ The pastoralists in Sidāmo had also experienced serious distress by March 1974. ⁴¹ Relief intervention had alleviated the situation somewhat by about August; ⁴² but Boranā still remained under famine in October. ⁴³ Arero, on the other hand, required government help for up to 100,000 people in August 1974 ⁴⁴. The situation had apparently worsened by November 1974 for up to 350,000 people in Sidāmo and Gamo Gofa still needed relief. ⁴⁵ Famine persisted in Sidamo in 1975, when the RRC assisted some 91,000 people. ⁴⁶ The situation eased significantly in 1976, ⁴⁷ although the RRC probably continued to assist intermittently more than 100,000 people. ⁴⁸

Gāmo Gofā showed strong signs of distress among the pastoralists and the Konso in June 1974. ⁴⁹ In August, famine encroached even into "the more densely populated and agricultural" areas. ⁵⁰ By September, famine in the province had appeared "as severe as areas ... in Wollo and Tigre" in 1973. ⁵¹ Even as late as May 1975, about 200,000 people in the province needed relief assistance. ⁵² The problem continued until November. ⁵³ But the situation in Gāmo Gofā had improved considerably by 1976, when only 20,000 people reportedly received assistance. ⁵⁴

Shawā apparently had over 300,000 people affected by drought in 1973. ⁵⁵ Yifāt must have topped the list, although pockets like the Karayu also probably suffered no less. ⁵⁶ Yifāt was, however, free from famine in 1975 and 1976. The famine situation noted in 1973 / 74 in lowland 'Sebat Bet Guraghe, ' ⁵⁷ had

recorded some 159,000 people still affected in 1976.⁶⁰ On the whole, however, Shawa was off the hook in 1975 and 1976. Similarly, no famine obtained in Arsi in 1975 and 1976, although some lowland parts had felt some stress by late 1974.⁶¹

Illibābur, Wallagā and Kafa each reportedly had ten to twenty-thousand 'drought - affected' people in July 1975,⁶² the first being the most affected. Back in October 1974., an eyewitness had no "shadow of doubt" that, in pockets of Illibābur, "a miserable condition" obtained for people had "gone hungry," although "not as disastrously as in other provinces"; while another, about the same time, questioned the rationale of relief work in Illibābur and Kafa.⁶⁴ It makes therefore little sense to speak of famine in the three provinces in 1975 and 1976.

Thus in late 1974 and 1975 famine affected essentially pastoral and very marginal agricultural areas. The Ethiopian highlands were, on the whole, free from famine in 1975 and more so in 1976 - a fact underlined by the high cereal production recorded in those years.⁶⁵ It is more than doubtful therefore that Ethiopia had 2,644,000 "drought - affected" people in July 1975.⁶⁶

The year 1977, on the other hand, forms a divide, in many respects, between the anterior and posterior years. In Wallo and Tigrāi, 1977 was one of protracted hardship presaging famine. Past damage in 1977 itself made western Wallo tether during the summer and completely succumb to famine in 1978. In that year,

38 awrajas (in 23 provinces) recorded serious food supply shortfalls, with thirteen of them classified as "most severely and/or extensively affected".⁶⁷ Walle counted, early 1978, a "potentially affected population" of 600,000.⁶⁸ By May, following failure of the haig rains, the estimate of people vulnerable to 'food shortage' in the country had risen to 3,950,000.⁶⁹ Walle and Tigrai accounted for 45.6% of the total, four other provinces (the scenes of wars) for 44.3% and the remaining eight provinces for 10.1%. Thus the wars had aggravated the famine.

The year 1979 showed an improvement.⁷⁰ Arsi, Gojjam and Kaffa faced virtually no famine. Shawa, Gamo Gofa, Illubabur and Wallagā were affected marginally. The total estimate of people vulnerable to food shortage, for non-war causes, stood at 2,037,000, of which Walle and Tigrai accounted for 93.9%. However, the effects of wars in five other provinces had contributed 2,270,000 more. Thus about 4.3 million people (52.7% of them due to war) faced the prospect of famine.

The year 1979, on the other hand, witnessed serious crop damage due to pests and insufficiency of rain,⁷¹ resulting in the lowest cereal production since 1975.⁷² Famine therefore persisted in 1980, when cereal production proved the best since 1975⁷³ and the estimate of people vulnerable to food shortages in 1981 correspondingly the lowest for seven years (1978 - 1985).⁷⁴ However, crop production in 1981 proved much poorer and the food supply situation in 1982 worse.⁷⁵ Better crop

Cereal production in 1984 nose-dived as never before during the decade, with 7.9 million people classified as requiring "immediate assistance".⁷⁸ Thus was ushered in the worst famine of the decade (possibly of the century) - a famine that put to the severest test the country's resources, institutions, aspirations, values and will.⁷⁹

In terms of the food supply situation at the national level, the years 1975 - 1985 may be classified into four groups: the years 1976, 1981 and 1983, which were the best years; 1975 and 1979, years of recovery; 1977, 1980 and 1982, years of protracted hardship; and 1978, 1984 and 1985, years of disaster. The growth of the gross domestic product also somewhat reflects this phenomenon.⁸⁰ Famine thus persisted throughout the period with varying spatial coverage and alternating intensities until it became total in 1984 - 85. It should be emphasised, however, that drought per se, in crop producing areas, may only be blamed for four of the eleven crop years: 1979, 1981, 1983 and 1984.

The occurrence of famine in Manz, Yifāt and Wolāitā more or less conforms to the general picture. The latter two throughout the period and Manz⁸¹ since 1979 enjoyed peaceful 'development'. Famine in the awrājās therefore arose from 'natural' events. Hailstones, frost and heavy rain usually cause problems in Manz and Yifāt and hailstones do the same in many parts of Wolāitā. However, these, on their own, did not cause famines affecting whole waradās or awrājās. Famines originated primarily from pests and 'drought', occurring separately or in combination.

At the root of Manz's problems was aphides, a minute plant pest, which first appeared in Gīshe in 1975⁸² and spread

to Gerā - Midir⁸³ and Māmā - Midir⁸⁴ in 1976 and 1977, eventually causing damage in the awrājā in 1979, so extensive as to draw the attention of the RRC⁸⁵ as well as to become a subject of official correspondence. In areas of lower altitudes, the pest and rain shortage appear to have operated in combination since 1979.⁸⁶ The pest and frost combined also made 1979 a year of hardship in Manz.²⁷ 'Drought' figured prominently only in 1984.⁸⁸ Thus, in Manz, 1978 was a year of protracted hardship, 1979 of a graver hardship resulting in localised famines - expanding in scale since 1980 until 1984, when famine (threatening over 81,000 people⁸⁹) became universal, exceeded only in 1985. In general, famine in Manz dates from 1978 at the earliest⁹⁰ and from 1981 at the latest.⁹¹

In Yifāt, serious food shortages occurred in 1983, 1984 and 1985.⁹² 'Drought' combined with pests took a heavy toll of the crops in the lowlands in 1982.⁹³ In the daḡā parts of Māfud, heavy rain in 1982 and 'drought' in 1984 seem the important adverse factors.⁹⁴ In others, hailstone was the culprit in 1982.⁹⁵ Even earlier, in 1980, local drought and pests precipitated famine.⁹⁶ 'Drought' also receives mention as affecting nomads in Bure - Modāitu and Māfud in 1980.⁹⁷ However, drought hit Yifāt hardest only in 1984. By early September, over 140,000 cattle had already perished.⁹⁸ Overall, some 40% of the livestock perished during 1984 - 85.⁹⁹ So famine of an awrājā dimension occurred in Yifāt only in 1983, 1984 and 1985.

Wolāitā received relief assistance in mid - 1974.¹⁰⁰ But the period until 1981 appears famine - free, whereas in 1981 lowland parts of Dāmot - Gāle and Humbo required relief.¹⁰¹ The years 1982 and 1983, similarly, appeared good. In 1973, however, the RRC had identified food shortage in Ofā, Dāmot-

Gāle and Dāmot - Waide. ¹⁰² Up to 61,000 people (in 40 PAs) in lowland parts of Humbo and Dāmot - Gāle also required assistance in 1981. ¹⁰³ Their number was reduced to 40,000 in 1982. ¹⁰⁴ The annual estimates for the years 1982 - 85 was, however, between 145,000 and 500,000. ¹⁰⁵ Thus, in Wolāitā, famine dates from 1981, becoming chronic and generalised thereafter. Ensat disease, drought and cessation of WADU's operations have been cited as factors.

Nevertheless, general hardships and localised famines might have operated even in the years anterior to 1981. A peasant association in Humbo claims to have been "fettered" by periodic drought from 1973/74 to 1984. ¹⁰⁶ Health workers, on a routine tour of the awrajā in 1976, also found "an unusual incidence of malnutrition," particularly in Dāmot - Waide and Sodo - Zuryā. ¹⁰⁷ Koysā probably also experienced spells of 'drought' since 1979. ¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, 1984 and 1985 were the worst famine years in the awrajā. By August 1984, Wolāitā had already registered 16622 deaths. ¹⁰⁹ In July (1984), even Boloso, the richest waradā, reported daily deaths of 10 persons in each of the 43 PAs. ¹¹⁰ A relative improvement apparently occurred in August, but this had meant little to the lowland areas and clearly of short duration for the rest. ¹¹¹ In fact, 1985 proved more damning than 1984.

THE LAND REFORM AND THE POST REFORM RURAL SOCIETY

A medley of land ownership forms and tenures ¹¹² had prevailed under the old regime. Behind the emergence and existence of these diverse forms lay the evolution of society and state in response to changing historical circumstances including, eventually, responses to the world capitalist system. The rist (' kinship ') form of ownership and the gult mode of surplus appropriation formed the pre - Cambrian

complex of agrarian relations under the old regime. The diverse forms were therefore so many adaptations, adjustments and transformations of that system for the appropriation of agricultural surplus, in the context of a changing historical environment, by a ruling class that remained essentially feudal. The process of adaptation stopped and the various forms of ownership ossified when change meant the abolition of feudal agrarian relations.

The Ethiopian rural society on the eve of the revolution consisted, essentially, of two social classes: ¹¹³ the feudal class (the aristocracy, the upper clergy and the gentry) and the peasantry (' owner - cultivators', tenants, nomads, semi - workers, agricultural labourers, ' kulaks ' and the indigent - in descending order of numerical significance). Whatever the differences between the first two of its sections, the mass of the working peasantry sustained a wasteful feudal class and a burdensome state machinery. The system reproduced famine.

The land - reform law ¹¹⁴ abolished feudal agrarian relations, blocked the emergence of capitalist relations in agriculture and made land accessible to all peasants on the basis of usufruct. The subsequent supplementary law ¹¹⁵ further envisaged a socialist transformation of agriculture, the peasantry and the state being the agents of that transformation. The reform also envisaged, initially, land redistribution to institute a rural society of working peasants with ' equal ' access to land.

The feudal agrarian relations were generally ended within the first two years of the land nationalisation decree. Land - lord tenant relations in Wolāitā and Yifāt disappeared within the first year of the proclamation. Manz had not had

these relations. Land redistribution did not, however, receive earnest attention, even in southern Ethiopia, ¹¹⁶ although, later, peasant associations ' themselves ' appear to have " designed and pushed through " redistribution in some wards. ¹¹⁷

By 1987, Wolāitā had had no significant land redistribution - only adjustments were made " here and there ". ¹¹⁸ The same holds true for Yifāt. ¹¹⁹ In Manz, however, a fair measure of land redistribution seems to have been attempted. ¹²⁰ The current average size of family holdings in the avrājā is given as 1 to 2 hectares. An ' interview ' of 1219 peasants (in 12 PAs) in Māwā - Midir in 1985 indicated that 0.8% " had no land, " 22.4% " held under one hectare each, " 60.2% " ' owned ' one hectare each " and 16.6% " had 1.5 to 2 hectares each ". ¹²¹ How much these differences were due to household sizes could not be known.

The average size of holdings in Wolāitā probably is between 0.25 and 0.8 hectare of cultivated land. Gross holding is put at 1.35 hectares: 2.25 in Humbo, 1.8 in Dāmot - Waide, 1.6 in Ofā, 1.59 in Koyshā, 1.43 in Sodo - Zuryā, 0.55 in Boloso and 0.25 in Dāmot - Gāle. ¹²² The conclusion that in Boloso, and in Wolāitā generally, a peasant operating 1 to 1.5 hectares " is considered a large owner " is apt. ¹²³ Individual holdings vary between about 0.25 and 1.5 hectares or more, however. In Yifāt, the average size of cultivated land ranges from 1.5 to 2 hectares, ¹²⁴ although individual sizes may vary between 0.33 or less and 4 or more hectares. ¹²⁵ In Tigure PA (Qawat), some women heads of households and " destitutes, not capable of work " are landless. ¹²⁶ Generally, cultivable land resources are limited in the three avrājās. Nonetheless, the inequality of individual holdings cannot be without bearing

on the impact of famine on individual households, although the reform has virtually abolished landlessness and has tended towards ' equalisation ' or at least worked against polarisation. ¹²⁷ On the whole, the land reform has made little difference, in terms of sizes of holdings, to the overwhelming mass of peasants compared to what obtained immediately on the eve ¹²⁸ or a year after ¹²⁹ of the reform. Essentially, therefore, pre-reform peasant holdings depressed from top-down, minus feudal agrarian relations, form the basis of the post-reform rural society. ¹³⁰ Thus, except for the upper section of the peasantry (with kulak or gentry leanings), the differences within the class that had existed before the reform are basically maintained.

In addition to access to, size and fertility of land, access to oxen and essential work tools determines the realisation of the immediate economic possibilities of the reform. On the eve of the reform, 29.4% of peasants had no plough oxen, 33.7% owned one each, 28.9% a pair each, 2.1% possessed three each and 5.9% had four oxen or more each. ¹³¹ Today 38% of the peasants have none, 32% have one each, 25% possess a pair each and 6% own two pairs each. ¹³² The number of peasants possessing " the necessary work tools " has also been described " as very small ". ¹³³ Manz, Yifāt and Wolāitā also appear to conform to the general picture. Most peasants, in Manz and Wolāitā, in particular, possess either an ox each or have none. A small stratum possessing a pair or more (in Wolāitā up to three pairs) each exists, however. Livestock ownership also exhibits these differences on a large scale. In Manz, the variation may be from none to up to 60 heads of sheep; in Yifāt the disparity in cattle possession before 1984 ranged between none or a few to up to a hundred among cultivators in the valleys. Wolāitā also probably shows variations similar to that of Manz.

Thus the post-reform rural society consists of a peasant class on whose upper section the reform weighs down as a fetter and for whose lower section it has not meant freedom from want; while for the middle section (an overwhelming majority) the reform has not meant security against falling victim to the inclemencies of weather. In other words, while the reform has sealed off the fate of kulakism,¹³⁴ it has not been able to uplift a 'Guddina',¹³⁵ from the abyss nor prevent a 'Woldemariam',¹³⁶ from falling into it. This explains the persistence and periodic bouts of famine throughout the period. Moreover, the existing differences are not without effect on the lower stratum. At least in Wolāitā, a peasant with surplus pairs of oxen may hire out the surplus to another with none for a 50% share of the produce. In parts of Yifāt, migrant labour from Wallo used to be, before 1984, hired on a daily basis during weeding and harvesting periods. In Manz, the practice of entrusting sheep (as in Wolāitā cattle) to the poor for tending for a share of ewes (in Wolāitā for milk) has not disappeared. Perhaps the sale and purchase of labour power in rural Ethiopia today is not ^{as} negligible as it is often assumed.

In general, the basis for famine in rural Ethiopia remains because the reform was not, until 1985, complemented by sufficient inputs and organisational transformations to realise its benefits in full. The differences within the peasantry explain why famine does not disappear even in the best years, but merely recedes, and why in the event of serious crop failures 'most members of the society succumb' to famine. The same differences also explain why, even during severe famines, famine grips the peasantry, in the words of a peasant, "early and late" ("fītnā huālā").¹³⁷

N O T E S

¹ Ethiopia 1984: Population and Housing Census Preliminary Report (Addis Ababa: CSO, September, 1984), p.28, table 14.

² Ibid., p. 26, table 12.

³ Ibid., pp.68 - 71.

⁴ "Ethiopia: Land Use, Production Regions and Farming Systems Inventory, Vol. 1: Report" (FAO, 1984), pp. 89 and 94, tables A₄ and A₉. (mimeographed.)

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Information obtained from the Wolaitā MOA Office gives for the awraja (as of October - November, 1986): a rural population of 1,017,202, a cultivated land of 144,626 hectares (i.e., 60.9% of the total) - hence, agricultural density of 642.98/km² - and a total area of 237,483 hectares.

⁷ "Ethiopia: Land Use," p.47.

⁸ Volker Stitz, "The Ashara Resettlement of Northern Shoa During the 18th and 19th Centuries," in Harold G. Marcus and Donald E. Crumney, eds., Ethiopia Land and History, 11 (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1970), p.71.

⁹ Tadesse Tamrat, Church and State in Ethiopia 1270 - 1527 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 135.

¹⁰ J. Spencer Trimingham, Islam in Ethiopia (London: Frank Cass, 1976), p. 71.

¹¹ Tadesse, p. 135.

¹² Stitz, p. 72.

¹³ Donald H. Levine, Rax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 47 - 48.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 38, quotes this adage: " ' Ya - Manz rist be - shi amatu/la - balbetu! ' "

¹⁵ Trimingham, p. 58.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁷ Taddesse, p. 124; and Trimingham, p. 62.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 74.

²⁰ Taddesse, p. 124.

²¹ Trimingham, p. 94.

²² Stitz, p. 80.

²³ Trimingham, p. 78.

²⁴ For the meaning and for the insight into what possibly happened see Abraham Babanto, Lamlamitua Wolaita.: Tintawitua na Yazaretua (Addis Ababa: n.p., 1971 E.C.), pp. 15ff; Fiqadu Ababno (First Secretary, Wolaita Awraja WPE) also informed me that the ruling class before the incorporation of the awraja was known as " Tigre Wolaita ".

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Richard Pankhurst, " The History of Famine and Pestilence in Ethiopia Prior to the Founding of Gondar, " Journal of Ethiopian Studies, X, 2 (July, 1972), pp. 42ff; Richard Pankhurst, Economic History of Ethiopia 1800 - 1935 (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University Press, 1968), pp. 217ff; RRC, The Challenges of Drought: Ethiopia's Decade of Struggle in Relief and Rehabilitation (London: H. & L Communications, 1985), pp. 55; and Mesfin Wolde Mariam, Rural Vulnerability to Famine in Ethiopia: 1958 - 1977 (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1984), pp. 35ff.

²⁷ Mesfin Wolde Mariam, " Ethiopia's Food Security: Problems and Prospects " (Paper presented at the National Workshop on Food

strategies for Ethiopia, Alacāyā (University of Agriculture, December 8 - 13, 1986), p.1. (mimeographed.)

28. Speech to Rural Development Workers and Professionals on the Programme of Food Self-Sufficiency, "Addis Zaman /Asharic Daily/, Tir 1, 1979 E.C., pp. 5 and 7.

29 Paulos Abraham, "Organisational Frame for Wollo Relief, Medium - and Long - Range Development Programme" (May, 1974), p.7. (mimeographed.) See also RRC, p. 84, table 2.

30 Ibid., p. 105, table 7.

31 Unpublished data compiled by the department give the number of beneficiaries as 400,000 in Wollo, 168784 in Tigrāi, 228349 in Bale and 7184 in Gāno Gofā - a total of 895794 people. Since the minimum relief ration is 500 gms. /person/ day, these people must have received much less than the minimum.

32 Hekuria Bulcha, "Final Report on Children Relief and Rehabilitation Activities in the Drought Affected Province of Wollo, Part I: Family Reunification, Institutional Care and Vocational Training" (RRC, April, 1976), p.2. (mimeographed.)

33 Dawit W/Giorgis, "Report on a Trip to Tigre, March 7th - 20th, 1976" (RRC, n.d.) pp. 2-8. (mimeographed.)

34 Johan Holmberg and others, "Reconnaissance Survey of Needs for Relief and Rehabilitation Assistance for the Eritrean Region" (RRC, November, 1974), p. 7. (mimeographed.)

35 Zewde Wolde Gabriel, "Report on ENI's Field Team Trip to Hararfchie, March 28 - April 11" (ENI, April, 1974), Passim. (mimeographed.)

36 Hāile Māryām Sayfu, "Sila Māraq Gāshāmo nā Awāre Waradā Nātalayāwoch Liyu Riport" (RRC, Yekatit, 1968), p.1. (mimeographed.)

37 Yemane Kidane and Mesfin Bokelle, "Preliminary Report of the Fourth Surveillance Round of the Ogaden Region" (RRC, September, 1975), p.1. (mimeographed.)

³⁸ Haille Maryām, p.1; and Sam Street, " Report of a Field Tour of the Ogaden and the Wabe Shebelle Valley " (WHO, Addis Ababa Office, July, 1976), p. 26. (mimeographed.)

³⁹ John J. Miller, " Report on Survey of Famine Conditions in Bale Province " (SIN, April, 1974) p.2. (mimeographed.)

⁴⁰ Relief Department (RRC), unpublished data, gives a distribution of 42138 and 46804 quintals of grain to 228349 and 134454 people in 1967 and 1968 (E.C.), respectively.

⁴¹ Belote Beyene, Elizabeth Wuhib, and Lars Haraldson, " Report on the Drought - Stricken Areas of the Governorate General of Sidamo " (ENI, March, 1974), p. 15. (mimeographed.)

⁴² "Preliminary Report on an Investigation into Cattle Losses from Drought in the Southern Region of Sidamo " (RRC, n.d.), p.3. (mimeographed.)

⁴³ Joseph S. Salzburg, " Field Report on Disaster Relief situation at Gemu Gofa and Sidamo Provinces, October 21 - 22, 1974 " (USAID Mission to Ethiopia, November, 1974), pp. 4 - 5. (mimeographed.)

⁴⁴ William P. Carter, " Field Survey Report on Famine Relief Operations in Sidamo and Gemu Gofa Provinces " (USAID Mission to Ethiopia, August, 1974), pp. 2-3. (mimeographed.)

⁴⁵ Tamru Feyessa, " Trip Report - Gemu Goffa & Sidamo Administrative Regions, November 21 - 24, 1974 " (RRC, November, 1974), pp. 5 - 6. (mimeographed.)

⁴⁶ Relief Department (RRC), unpublished data.

⁴⁷ Yeshitela Zelleke, " Brief Report on the Reconnaissance Trip to Sidamo " (RRC, June, 1976), pp. 4 and 7. (mimeographed.)

⁴⁸ Relief Department (RRC), unpublished data.

⁴⁹ " Food and Nutrition Survey in Drought Affected Areas of Gemu Gofa, June 1974 (Draft Report) " (ENI, September, 1974), pp.13ff. (mimeographed.)

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51 Gaylord L. Walker, "Meeting With Governor of Gemu Gofa and Field Trip Within the Province" (USAID Mission to Ethiopia, September, 1974), p.6. (mimeographed.)

52 Mario Maffi and others, "Preliminary Reports on Gemu Gofa Survey" (ENI, June, 1975), pp. 1 - 2 and 7. (mimeographed.)

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55 RRC, p. 84, table 2.

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58 Gebrehiwet Kidans, "Drought Situation Report on Guraghe" (ENI, December, 1975), p.9. (mimeographed.)

59 Bantirgu Haile Mariam, "Drought in Kambata, Situation Report on the Preliminary Survey" (ENI/ RRC, October, 1975), p.1. (mimeographed.)

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63 Nega Negere, "Report on Survey of the Province of Illubabor" (RRC, October, 1974), p.3. (mimeographed.)

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65 Tegegne Teka and Tennassie Nichola. " Rural Poverty Alleviation: The Case of Ethiopia "(Rome: FAO, 1984), p.5, table 1. (mimeographed.)

66 RRC, p. 84, table 2.

67 " Food Supply System Synoptic Report 1969 - 1970 Eth. C. Meher (Main) Season, June 1977 - January 1978 " (RRC, 1978), p.i. (mimeographed.)

68 " Food Shortages Survey Report on Wello (Lasta, Wadla Delanta and Werhimenu Awrajas) " (RRC, May, 1978), p.9. (mimeographed.)

69 " Ya Ehil nā Ya Migib Tināt Kifl Sost, Ka Mīyāzyā Eska Ginbot 1970"(RRC, Bahāse, 1970), annex. (mimeographed.)

70 " Food Supply Synoptic Report : 1970 - 1971 Eth. C. Meher (Main) Season, June 1978 - January 1979 " (RRC, March, 1979), p.ii. (mimeographed.)

71 The RRC did not produce crop production assessment report for the 1979 season (food supply prospect for 1980); hence, I am depending on my personal knowledge.

72 Tegegne and Tennassie, p.5., table 1.

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75. Food Supply System Meher Synoptic Report 1973/74 (1983) Crop Season " (RRC, March, 1982), pp. viii and 4 - 10. (mimeographed.)

76. Food Supply System Meher Synoptic Report, 1974/75 (1982) Crop Season " (RRC, March, 1983), pp. ivff. See also Solomon Belette, " An Overview of Ethiopia's Agricultural Production Strategies and Policies " (Paper Presented at the National Workshop on Food strategies for Ethiopia, Alamayya University of Agriculture, December 8 - 13, 1986), pp. 31 - 32. (mimeographed.)

77. Food Supply System: Meher Synoptic Report 1975/76 (1983) Crop Season " (RRC, January, 1984), p. iii. (mimeographed.)

78. Meher (Main) Crop Season Synoptic Report: 1984 Crop Season (April - December) " (RRC, January, 1985), p.1. (mimeographed.)

79. For the economic impact of the drought and famine, see "WPE C.C. Secretary General's Central Report to the Fifth WPE C.C. Plenary Meeting. " Addis Zaman, Page 4, 1978 E.C., pp. 5 - 6.

80. Ya Ethiopia Ya Economy na Ya Mahbarawi Edgat Mari Egid (1977 - 1986) (Addis Ababa: WPE, 1977 E.C.), p.11, gives the growth rate of the GDP as - 0.9% (1977/78), 5.2; (1978/79), 5.5% (1979/80), 3.0 (1980/81), 1.1% (1981/82), 5.2% (1982/83) and 2.5% (1983/84, estimated).

81. MAAA, Ref. No. 6832/8277, Manz Awraja Administration to ERC, Ginbot 22, 1971, gives 4260 households as displaced in Gisho and Mاما - Midir. This appears to be the last communication concerning insecurity as a cause of social dislocation.

82. MAAA, no Ref. No., People of Arata Pa (Gisho) to Manz Awraja Administration, Magabit 11, 1971, blame "matmit " (literally ' sucker ', i.e. aphides) for having destroyed barely for four years; and MAAA, Ref. No. /559 /2730, Shawa Provincial Administration to ERC, Miyaaya 22, 1971, traces the appearance of the pest to the same year.

83 MAAA, Ref. No. 967/1245, Gera - Midir Waradā Administration to Manz Awrajā Administration, Hagabit 8, 1971.

84 MAAA, Ref. No. 1047/71, Mana - Midir Waradā Administration to Manz Awrajā Administration, Tahsas 24, 1971.

85 MAAA, Ref. No. 22/11/14/77, Shimalis Adunā to MOA Plant protection Department, Ginbot 24, 1971, complaining that the pest still "remains unchecked".

86 MAAA, no Ref. No., Quāchnā Nhuy PA to Qayā - Gabrel Waradā Administration Tiqint 7, 1972, refers to the pest ("Ya midir qunchā til ") as having destroyed barley in the highland parts and also mentions shortage of rain doing the same to other crops in lowland parts of the PA.

87 MAAA, Ref. No. 1457/8277, Manz Awrajā Administration to Provincial MOA Office, Hidar 11, 1971.

88 MAAA, Ref. No 4009/ 173/76, Manz Awrajā MOA Office to Provincial MOA Office, Ginbot 11, 1976, refers to serious drought-affecting all waradās.

89 " Food Shortage Survey Report on Menzina Gishe Awraja " (RRC, March, 1984), p.17. (mimeographed)

90 MAAA, Ref. No. 1047/71, Tahsas 24, 1971, mentions famine in 3 PAs wholly dependent on barley.

91 " Special Report : Food Situation in Ethiopia, 1981 - 85 ' Trend Analysis ' Report " (RRC, October, 1985), p. 13, table 2.1, says virtually all waradās experienced food shortages every year during 1981 - 1985; the severely affected numbered 3 (1981), 1 (1983), 4(1984), while all were severely affected in 1985. (mimeographed)

92 Ibid.

93 YAAA, Ref. No. 124/ 44/214/75, Yifat Awrajā MOA Office to Provincial MOA Office, Maskaran 22, 1975; YAAA, no Ref. No., Peasants of Awashna Lute PA to Yifat Awraja Administration, Tīr 22, 1975; and YAAA, Ref. No. 1649/708/75, Fursi Waradā Administration to Yifat Awrajā Administration, Sane 6, 1975.

94 YAAA, no Ref. No., Peasants of Gadālgena Chalango PA to Mafud Waradā PA, Yakātīt 20, 1976.

95 YAAA, no Ref. No., Representatives of Peasants of Wube Wubā PA (Mafud) to Yifat Awrājā Administration, Yakātīt 12, 1975.

96 YAAA, Ref. No. # 145/203/73, Fursā Waradā Administration to Yifat Awrājā Administration, Hidar, 15, 1973.

97 YAAA, Ref. No. # 152/297/72, Yifat Awrājā Administration to Provincial Administration, Mīyānyā 6, 1972; and YAAA, Ref. No. 2355/72, Mafud Waradā Administration to Yifat Awrājā Administration, Ginbot 12, 1972.

98 YARCCF, Ref. No. 3791/1/18/73, Yifat Awrājā MOA Office to Yifat Awrājā WPE Committee Office, Pāgume 5, 1976.

99 Biruk Yemane, Tedla Desta, and Dires Demissie, "Pastoralist Rehabilitation Feasibility Study, Part I, Reconnaissance Survey." (RRC, December, 1986), Annex D. (mimeographed.)

100 WAAA, Ref. No. 1388/1/1/37/67, Wolāitā Awrājā Administration, to Provincial Administration, Fiqist 13, 1967, reports distribution of 4602 quintals of grain sent by the RRC (Hāmle - Nahāse) in "seven waradās and Soddo town".

101 Informant: Fiqādu Sabano

102 "Ya Ehil nā Ya Migib Tīnāt." p.12; and "1969 - 70 Meher Synoptic Report." p.15.

103 "Ba Wolāitā nā Ba Hāiqochnā Butājirā Awrājāwoch Siladaragaw Dirq Yatadaragaw Tīnāt Yamajamarāyā Daraja Zagaba" (RRC, Magabit, 1973), pp.1 - 3. (mimeographed.)

104 "Food Shortage Survey Report on Wolaita Awraja" (RRC, September, 1981), p.4. (mimeographed.)

105 "Trend Analysis", "p. 23, table 6.1.

106 WAAA, no Ref. No., Abalā Ajajā PA (Humbo) to Wolāitā Awrājā Administration, Hāmle 15, 1976.

107 WAAA, Ref. No. 474/2/3/68, Sodde Health Centre to Provincial
NOR Office, Mijāyā 16, 1968, requested that RRC be informed to
intervene.

108 WAAA, Ref. No. 1332/76, Koyaha Warādā Administration to
Wolaitā Awrājā Administration, Bahase 11, 1976.

109 WAAA, Ref. No. 2777/10 / 3/76, Wolaitā Awrājā Administra-
tion to Provincial Administration, Bahase 19, 1976.

110 WAPAA, Ref. No. 1142/070 /76, Boloso Warādā PA to Wolaitā
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Emergency Doctors, 1984), pp. 1 - 2. (mimeographed.)

112 John M. Cohen and Dov. Weintrub, Land and Peasants in
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Van Gorcum & Comp. B.V., 1975), p. 29; Dessalegn Rahmato, Agrarian
Reform in Ethiopia (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African
Studies, 1984), p. 21; and Karl Johan Lundstorn, North-Eastern Eth-
iopia: Society in Famine, A study of Three Social Institutions in
a Period of Severe Strain (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of
African Studies, 1976), p. 28.

113 Dessalegn, p. 35, identifies four social classes: the
' landed ' aristocracy the ' local ' gentry, the peasantry and
the ' landless '. The first two are strata of the same social
class, while the fourth cannot be justified unless equated with
what I see as the indigent.

114 See Basic Documents of the Ethiopian Revolution (Addis
Ababa: The Provisional Office for Mass Organisational Affairs, 1977),
pp. 18 - 29.

115 Ibid., pp. 30 - 47; and Zoltan Gyenge, " Ethiopia on
the Road of Non - Capitalist Development, " Studies on Developing
countries, 90 (Budapest: Institute for World Economics, The Hungarian
Academy of Sciences, 1976), p. 35.

- 116 Michael Ståhl, New Seeds in Old Soil: A Study of the Land Reform Process in Western Wallata, Ethiopia 1975 - 1976 (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1977), p. 32.
- 117 Dessalegn, pp. 42 - 43.
- 118 Informant: Fiqādu Zabano.
- 119 Informants: Beldā Dādī, Yifat Awrajā WPE Committee's First Secretary, and several peasants from Tigure and Balchī PAs (qawat).
- 120 Informants: Getāchaw Alāyu, Manz Awrajā Administrator, and Tāddasa Charnat, Deputy Chairman of Manz Awrajā PA.
- 121 "Evaluation Report on the Cash-for-Food Project (II) Mama Midir Wereda " (RRC/UNICEF, November, 1985), p.7 and annexes A and B (a).
- 122 Wolāitā Awrajā MOA Office.
- 123 Dessalegn, p. 45.
- 124 Informant: Beldā Dādī
- 125 This is so in Tigure and Balchī PAs according to information from several peasants.
- 126 Informant: Mahāmad Sayd, c. 55 years old, Deputy Chairman of a Producers' Cooperative, Tigure, in the presence of several peasants.
- 127 See also Dessalegn, pp. 61 and 71 - 74.
- 128 See Agricultural Sample Survey 1974/75 (1967 E.C.) Report, I (Addis Ababa: MOA, July, 1975), p. 58, table 11.
- 129 Crop Production Survey 1975/76 (1968 E.C.) (Addis Ababa: MOA, April, 1976), pp. 52 and 73, tables 7 and 18.
- 130 Dessalegn, p. 58, thinks the landless benefited " most " from the reform, while, at the same time, finds the ex-landless hold ' the smaller of the lot '.

131 Agricultural Sample Survey, p. 71, table 18.

132, "Speech to Rural Development Workers," p. 1.

133 ibid., and see Dessalegn, p. 51, table 6.

134 ibid., p. 60.

135 stähl, pp. 70 - 73: Guddina (Wallagā), as a poor tenant with 8 children, used to supplement his income by "wood - cutting" and selling firewood. The reform freed him from tenancy, the PA advanced him an ox (from "confiscated" cattle) and seed, and EPID fertilisers, on credit. In 1976, he could not plant the full size of his holding, expected only 5 quintals of taff and birr 15 from sale of coffee against a debt of birr 59.0. So had obviously to continue his old supplementary 'trade'.

136 Lundström, pp. 44 - 45: Woldemariam (Tigrāi), with four children, had been a self - sufficient owner of rist land until 1971 - owned about 1 ha. of land, 15 bovines (2 of them oxen) and "some" shoats. Production shortfall in 1971 due to rain shortage and subsequent fall of stock prices, forced Woldemariam to sell 4 of his bovines for food and borrow a "sack" of seed (at 100% interest) in 1972. The 1972 production was similarly reduced, thus forcing him, besides a debt obligation of 2 sacks of grain, to sell more of his livestock in early 1973 and by June he had exhausted all his stock (some of which died) and now depended on balas (natural, though protected, fruit); and thus his only hope had become relief assistance.

137 Informant: A peasant from Marawana Hadare PA (Efrātānā Jille), a member of the PA's leadership.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PEASANTRY UNDER FAMINE AND SOCIETY

This chapter discusses peasant responses to famine in relation to their non-cereal resources, social norms and opportunities offered by the society and the 'natural' environment. The responses are grouped into five sections: 'market dependency', 'borrowing and assistance', 'dependence on famine foods', 'theft and robbery' and 'mass population displacement'. The presentation thus follows the actual sequence of responses, starting with what would generally occur when food stocks are about to run out and going on to those characteristic of famine at its peak.

MARKET DEPENDENCY

Although the cultivator generally supplies directly his staple foods, the peasants in Manz¹ and Wolaitā² have, over the years, become partly dependent on the market. Peasants in Wolaitā,³ closely followed by the Argobbā⁴, have even been involved in peddling. Nevertheless, the market as a source of food remains normally only supplementary. In the event of crop failure and exhaustion of food 'reserves', however, the cultivator depends necessarily on the market through the medium of his livestock and other 'assets'. The exchange of livestock for food is therefore the first major peasant response to famine.

Peasants make individual decisions, generally of the same pattern, and never without sound rationale, on which animal to sell first or last.⁵ They also, at the same time,

struggle, with possible misjudgements, to retain as many of their stock as possible. ⁶ On the whole, however, it is indisputable ⁷ that, in the event of famine, the cultivator and the pastoralist (be it the Afār ⁸, the Somālī ⁹, the Oromo ¹⁰, or the Galab ¹¹, etc.) see their livestock as commodities and exchange them for food. In fact, at times, officials feared that too many animals were being disposed off. ¹² The efficacy of the response depends, however, on the size, type and condition of the stock a peasant owns, the existence of effective demand for them and on the supply of staple foods.

In February 1984, the herd-mix in Manz appears to have been about 56% shoats, 33% bovines and 11% equines, while the average family possession approximated 8 heads. ¹³ The wealthiest peasants then probably owned a herd of 40 to 60 heads of sheep, a pair of oxen and two cows each; most peasants had 15 to 40 heads of sheep and an ox each; and relatively fewer peasants owned none to 15 heads of sheep each. ¹⁴ Tāddasa Charnat thinks that in his PA 11% of the 272 members owned no stock. In 1985, an interview of 1219 project beneficiaries in Māmā - Midir revealed that 71.8% owned oxen (45.3% one each, 25.7% a pair each and 0.8% three each), while the distribution frequency of other stock ("mainly sheep") was 17.2% had none, 58.8% owned 1 to 5 heads, 19.5% 6 to 10 and 4.5% possessed more than 10. ¹⁵ All these sources therefore indicate that the sheep is the key animal in any response to famine in Manz and that a significant number of peasants in the awrājā either own none or too few to make a real difference. ¹⁶

In 1981, the herd-mix in Wolāitā ¹⁷ appeared to be 73.6% bovines, 15.5% shoats and 5.9% equines; and in 1986 ¹⁸, 78.2% bovines, 16.7% shoats and 5.1% equines. The average family possession in 1981 and 1986 was about 1.99 and 2.43 heads,

respectively. The figures suggest, whatever may be the disparities, that in Wolaitā cattle must play the key role in the struggle against famine and that numerous peasants lacked the means.

In Yifāt, the livestock population numbered 532,498 in 1963/64,¹⁹ with a distribution frequency of 55.2% bovines, 32.9% shoats, 9.0% equines and 2.9% camels. The average family possession then amounted to 7.5 heads.²⁰ Thus, although cattle are the key animal wealth in the avrājā, shoats must also be expected to contribute significantly in the peasant fight against famine.

Given the size and type of animal possessions, the impact of the terms of exchange on the peasant response to famine may be understood from the following table, which compares the range of animals (rounded to the first decimal) required for a quintal of a staple food:

Place and Time	Staple Foods Considered	Range of animals (heads) Required for a <u>quintal</u> of a staple Food		
		Oxen	Cows	Shoats
<u>dāno</u> (March 1974) ²¹				
- Arero and Boranā	Maize	0.9	0.9	N.A.
<u>illo</u> (March-May 1978) ²²				
- Lāstā	Barley, Wheat	0.5-0.6	0.5-0.7	5.7-7.5
- Wādīā Dalāntā	" "	0.7-1.0	0.9-1.3	9.3-13.0
- Warahimano	Barley, Sorghum	0.6-1.0	0.6-1.0	4.6-7.5
<u>dāno</u> (September 1981) ²³				
- Wolaitā	Sweet Potato, Maize, Taff	0.1-0.5	0.2-0.6	1.0-3.7
- Koyshā	" " "	0.1-0.6	0.1-0.6	0.7-3.7
- Humbo	" " "	0.2-0.8	0.2-0.9	1.0-5.5

- Dānot-Gāle	Sweet Potato, Maize			
	Taff	0.2-0.4	0.3-0.6	1.7-3.9
- Sodo-Zuryā	" " "	0.1-0.5	0.2-0.8	1.0-3.5
- Dānot-Waide	" " "	0.1-0.5	0.2-0.6	0.9-2.8
Shawā (Feb. 1984) 24				
- Hanz	Sorghum, Barley	0.3-0.4	N.A.	2.3-3.5
	Wheat			
Dāla 25				
- Mandayo (August 1984)	Wheat, Barley	0.3-0.4	N.A.	10.0-12.8
- Mandayo (August 1983)	" "	0.07-0.1	N.A.	0.7-1.0
- Wābe (August 1984)	Barley Maize,	0.2-0.3	N.A.	2.1-2.5
	Wheat			
- Wābe (August 1983)	" "	0.07-0.1	N.A.	0.7-1.2
Shawa 26				
- Yifāt (October 1984)	Maize, Sorghum,	2.3-2.8	3.0-3.8	9.0-11.3
	Taff			
- Yifāt (October 1983)	" "	0.1-0.2	0.2-0.3	0.9-1.3
Shawa 27				
- Bākotibe and Chaliyā (June 85)	Maize, Taff	1.8-1.9	2.2-2.3	N.A.
- Bākotibe & Chaliyā (June 1983)	" "	0.07-0.1	0.1-0.3	N.A.

(Note: N.A. = not Available.)

The problem for stock owners under famine is that not only do cereal prices soar compared to diving stock prices, but also that the market refuses to absorb livestock, cattle in particular, even at very depressed prices. The information on Mandayo and

Wābe (1984) sheds light on this point: while Wābe at the time was at least as severely affected, Mandayo showed more negative terms of exchange because the former had a market for sheep offered by the Livestock and Meat Corporation (Board).²⁸ As the market for cattle is usually less elastic than for sheep, famine further narrows that market and makes the prices plump precipitously. Moreover, in Ethiopia, drought, probably also aided by diseases²⁹, drives cattle to the 'grave' much more rapidly than to the market.

In Yifāt, cattle started dying in March/April 1984. By April 1985, most peasants in the valleys had probably lost most of their cattle. A peasant in Kārājajabā³⁰ (Qawat), bordering on Shawā - Robīt, had only a bull to sell while his remaining possession of a pair of oxen and a cow had died along with four of his household members by October 1985. He sold his bull for thirty birr. He explained: "Who would buy? There were only sellers, not buyers." Ahmad Musā Abadallā of Bāichī (Qawat)³¹ had lost 28 of his 30 bovines by April 1985 and sold only an ox, while retaining the other, for the same reason. The case of Musā Mahāmad of Tigure (Qawat)³² is even more tragic; he lost all of his some 100 bovines and depended on a cooperative for planting his land in 1985. An old peasant in Bilbo Eadesā (Dāmot - Waide),³³ on the other hand, had, before the 1984 - 85 drought and famine, 3 oxen, 13 cows, 4 sheep and a donkey. During the famine, he sold 2 oxen and 3 sheep; 9 cows died and he retained an ox, 4 cows, a sheep and a donkey. Thus cattle wealth in Yifāt vanished into the thin air because of the problem of market and pasture, and, probably, also disease.

It sometimes happens, as it did in Bākotibe and Chālīyā in 1985, that the condition of cattle remains good but this wealth proves ineffective against famine because of the appalling negative terms of exchange. In Chālīyā a family of

18 persons³⁴ sold seven of its 17 bovines for a total birr of 363 between February and June. This, however, helped little as a wife and her child had starved to death and the rest "confined to bed" by June. The family saw no rationale in continuing the sale: "What is the use when Birr 40 fetches only 20 tumblers of maize [?]". This fact led then to the conclusion that cattle wealth had "delayed ... social dislocation" but that it "no longer" was "a dependable saviour".³⁵

Market dependency through the medium of livestock does not exist as a response for many peasants because they possess none or too few. The response means little for many more peasants when a generalised famine occurs because they own too small herd sizes. Owners of large herds of stock, bovines in particular, cannot also escape the torments of famine because of the negative terms of exchange and, most often, because lack of pasture and diseases render their wealth useless. It is not therefore the peasants' "Strength of ... hope against hope that enables them to face bravely [actually helplessly] the slow and daily march to death by starvation with emphasis in the original, their livestock"³⁶ but the failure of the Ethiopian society at large to provide market opportunities, since the peasant has not lacked in decision to sell.

Peasants under famine also sell anything in their possession (even if it be for a pittance): work tools, utensils, weapons of defence, coffee cups, personal ornaments, and the cover and wood component of their houses.³⁷ This response arises generally from utter desperation than from any expectation of succour. As such the response belongs temporally to the stage of an intensified famine, although for many peasants it may as well rank among the first group of responses.

Sale of ' products of nature ', on the other hand, appears to have helped better many peasants in Wolāitā and Yifāt, at least during the 1984 - 85 famine. Peasants in Manz had no such opportunity, although those who had grown eucalyptus trees on their fields had recourse to, at least in Qayā Abrel ³⁸, selling wood. The sale of eucalyptus and natural wood grown on individual holdings constituted, in contrast, a widespread response in Walāitā. ³⁹ In Humbo, the sale of charcoal and firewood had even greater significance. ⁴⁰ A glimpse of the significance of this response in Wolāitā may further be had from Gurmu Waide PA'ga (Sodo - Zuryā) classification of its 656 members into three groups in 1984: ' self-sufficient ' (75 members), ' under severe famine ' (531 members) and ' those who, although having nothing, live on sale of wood and grass to town ' (50 members). ⁴¹ implying, paradoxically, that the richest and the poorest fractions constituted the ' better - offs '.

In Yifāt, the peasant from Kārājajabā depended on the sale of charcoal and firewood from April to September 1984. Most peasants in Balchī also depended on the same. ⁴² In fact, during the 1984 - 85 famine, the sale of charcoal and firewood involved numerous peasants along both sides of the road from Shawā - Robīt to Sanbate - a sack of charcoal being offered then for as little as five birr. ⁴³ The practice virtually disappeared in late 1985, was revived about April/May 1986 ⁴⁴, and there appeared no trace of it in September 1986.

This response might have prevailed, at least during the 1984 - 85 famine, wherever the opportunity and famine coincided. It also appears that sale of charcoal, unlike firewood and other ' products, ' was more or less confined to peasants who already knew the art. The significance of the response compared to the scale of the famished population does

not therefore seem to have been great. Nor does it, however, appear to have necessarily constituted the weakest of the responses.

Even more difficult to establish is the role of handicrafts in the struggle against famine. The old peasant from Bilbo - Badesā suggested that weaving could have helped, although he did not attempt it because of 'old age' and 'poor health'. The universality of the trade in Wolaitā does not suggest, however, that weaving could have helped much at least during the 1984-85 famine. How the other crafts fared could not be established. At any rate, brewery appears to have been widely resorted to by the relatively 'better-offs' such as Frānje Dubā of Shākīshoshone. In Yifāt, on the other hand, virtually no recourse to sale of handicraft products took place in the most severely affected gollā areas.

In Manz, woolen yarns and blankets are relatively universal products; making of yarns for a weekly sale is a common practice among women. Blanket making, on the other hand, is still based on hired labour, although some peasants have recently started weaving by themselves. The income from the craft does not seem much, however. A kilogramme of white yarn sold for birr 3 and a black one for 4 at Mahāl Nedā on July 19, 1986; while a black blanket fetched birr 30 compared to 25 for a white one. However, a household produces annually only two blankets on the average, even though it takes a week to make a kilogramme of yarn. Theoretically, the maximum annual household income from the craft therefore amounts to birr 384, an amount the scarcity of the raw material renders unattainable. Moreover, the prices usually plump when famine prevails. On the whole, therefore, the craft, on its own, supplies too meagre a sum to make a difference for peasants under famine.

Peasants in Wolāitā employed peddling in the battle against famine. ⁵² The case of Hiwān Salālo ⁵³ sheds some light on what peddling meant to poor peasants under famine. In 1984 - 85, Hiwān tried to augment the "insufficient" relief assistance she received through peddling ("māgalābat"). She started off with five birr obtained from the sale of eggs and chicken. Hiwān would buy pepper, salt or butter from Qochī, a nearby rural market, and resell the butter on the spot to "bigger" peddlers and the other items to peasants either there and then or back home. The "bigger" peddlers would resell the butter in the towns. Hiwān never went to the towns, even to Badītī.

She would thus earn weekly birr 0.40 to 0.50. Sometimes her 'capital' would drop to birr 2 and she would rebuild it through the sale of eggs; but her operating 'capital' never exceeded five birr. Hiwān's case clearly shows that, while the "bigger" peddlers could have obtained fair weekly incomes, peddling, for most peasants in Wolāitā, constituted one of the weakest flanks against famine. The Argobbā do not seem to have employed peddling during the last famine. ⁵⁴ probably for lack of 'capital'. It was peripheral, if any, in the other most affected parts of Yifat and Mañz. On the whole, peddling appears to be the weakest peasant response to famine.

Where the preceding responses fail or do not exist, the peasant response to famine takes the form of sale of his labour power. Historically, the emergence of labour power as a commodity is generally a function of, among other things, the impoverishment of the peasantry. In Ethiopia, or at least in Tigrāi, some form of wage labour, alongside slave labour, seems to have existed at least as far back as the mid-19th century. ⁵⁵ However, the first major temporary release of peasant labour power into the market probably resulted from the 1889-1892 famine. ⁵⁶ Since then, the labour

demands in Addis Ababa and of the colonialists in Eritrea 57 as well as the growing impoverishment of the peasantry and, later on, financial requirements of the state appear to have given peasant seasonal wage - labour a basis for permanence. At any rate, by the early 1970's a sizable portion of the peasantry had at least come to supplement its income as well as partly meet its obligations to the state through such labour. Although commercial farms and coffee 'plantations' publicised the phenomenon, sale of labour power within the rural society itself in the form of rub-ārāsh, weeders, harvesters and shepherds does not seem to have been insignificant. In general, economic hardship and financial obligations to the state 58 underlay the evolution of peasant labour power into a commodity.

Famine, being the worst of economic hardships, releases peasant labour power into the market as massively as it threatens to annihilate it. In the face of the 1984-85 famine, for example, even the proverbial conservatism of the peasants in Manz could not check this urge. 59 However, the market for labour power within an awrājā (rural or urban) generally is inversely proportional to the severity of the famine. In the event of localised famines, even such less endowed awrājās as Manz and Gāint (Gondar) offer some opportunities. 60 Sale of labour power in an awrājā, however well endowed, affected by the scale of the 1972 - 74, 1978 or 1984 - 85 famine is generally impossible unless state farms and/or large towns are located there. Thus in the event of serious famine peasants have usually to seek employment elsewhere in the province or in other provinces.

In the years 1975 - 1984, rural Yifāt offered some seasonal employment opportunities for peasants from Wallo. 61 During the 1984 - 85 famine, however, peasants from Yifāt

sought employment elsewhere in Shawā, in Wallagā, Arsī and Wallo. Shakh Hāssan Yīwar, ⁶² among many others, migrated with his family to wallagā, where he worked in a state farm. Some peasants from Manz migrated to Tagulatnā Bulgā (to Jihur in particular), where they found employment. ⁶³ Rural Wolāitā, likewise, offered virtually no opportunity. Nor ⁶⁴ did the towns in the avrājās help much. Māthawos Dārīmo did some manual work in Badesā for birr 0.50 to 1.00 a day; but it was too occasional to be helpful. In Yifāt, some peasants got employment in Shawā-Robit, probably also in other towns within the avrājā, for mere food, or a pittance of cash in addition to food, for serving as shepherds or for a daily wage of 0.10 to 0.20 birr for serving as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. ⁶⁵ Similar things also happened in Wolāitā and, to a lesser extent, in Manz. ⁶⁶ These 'opportunities' were, however, too few - thus attesting the general truth that in Ethiopia widespread famine makes sale of peasant labour power impossible without entailing out-migration.

In Wallo, the biggest employers of seasonal wage labour are the farms in Lower Awash. These usually employ ten to fifteen thousand seasonal workers about October; but in October 1984 they 'unusually' asked for "none" from Wallo. ⁶⁷ Peasants under famine had most probably offered themselves unusually at the farm gates. At any rate, some peasants from Yifāt did migrate to Dubtī, Asāitā and as far as Asab in search of work during the 1984 - 85 famine. ⁶⁸ One of such peasants named Nure Mahāmad (from Fursī), ⁶⁹ who claimed to have known no town other than Kārā - Qoreq made a kind of tour of the universe, doing any manual work he could get in the process. The able - bodied male youth from the "Argobbā village" - "Ya Morāt Agar" - in Māfud had also abandoned it mostly to 'old men, women, and children' as they had left, by November 1984, "for other places probably for Upper and Middle Awash] to look for work". ⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the Awash state farms apparently attracted

relatively small number of famished peasants from Yifat. For peasants in Manz, the farms simply did not exist. The peasants in Manz generally have looked in that direction not for succour but for trouble. 71

The Upper Awash farms normally attract Wolaitā's male youth, particularly students. The significance of this attraction may be grasped from the following couplet sang by Wolaita girls:

Wanje wadalā watanā,
Ade ni'uluā arana. 72

[Wonji does not let the youth in their homes,
And the old men do not understand our hearts.]

Able-bodied male adults also take part in the seasonal migration for work in the farms. Hiwān's husband normally frequents wonji. 73 Nevertheless, Upper Awash did not offer a visible help to peasants from Wolaitā during the 1984 - 85 famine. Hiwān's husband, for example, did not go there then. The state farms in Sidāmo, on the other hand, normally carry little favour with the Wolaitā. 74 The nearest farm (within Wolaitā itself) is occasionally visited by peasants from the gollā parts of Damot - Waide and Humbo only. The low attraction the farm offers has been overcome through the efforts of the awrajā administration and peasant associations, which 'levy' peasant-workers on a quota basis (a kind of paid corveelabour) from each warādā, including Boloso. 75 The low daily wages (1.99 birr) and the poor lodging and medical facilities as well as the high risk of contracting diseases deter peasants from taking up employment in the farm. 76 The peasants did not seem ready to change significantly their views of the farm even under the pressure of the 1984 - 85 famine, although that chance

In general, it must be emphasised that ~~famines~~ ^{ethio-}plia today affecting at least one major province, let alone on the scale of the 1984 - 85 one, release a huge mass of peasant labour power into the market, which the society at large has shown little capacity to absorb. It also appears that peasants who had already experienced poverty under normal conditions (hence who might have already experienced at least occasional wage labour) looked for employment ahead of others and thus might have fared better. For most peasants under famine sale of labour power as a response comes either late or never.

Ethiopian peasants under famine have resorted to land sale or mortgage at least since as far back as 1892. 77 During the 1972 - 74 famine in Wallo, land sale and mortgage occurred in the most affected awrājās. 78 Now, however, the reform has withdrawn land from commodity circulation. It seems that the 1984 - 85 famine did not compel peasants in Yifāt and Manz to contravene the law on this point. It did in Wolāitā.

Four cases of land sale and/or mortgage have been established from the Awrājā PA archival documents. The first two cases (both of them land mortgages) happened in Dalbonā Wagana and Shānbā - Qīlenā PAs, in Sodo - Zuryā. 79 Both cases involved 22 peasants - 12 "buyers" and 10 "sellers". The Waradā PA Tribunal Committee handed a sentence of 300 birr or a 3 - month prison term as penalty on each "buyer" and 200 birr or a 2 - month prison term on each "seller" - "since they have been lured by financial gain". A woman from among the "sellers" received a reduced sentence ("set bamahouā ") of either 100 birr or a 2 - month prison term. A subsequent letter 80 states that a total of 13 peasants, "buyers" and "sellers," were sent to prison as they had failed to pay the penalty.

The letter also states that the chairman and deputy of one of the PAs had been removed from their posts ' for conniving at the transactions ' and penalties of birr 30 and 50, respectively, imposed on them - amounts based " not on their guilt but in view of the current economic hardship ".

The other two cases (both land sales) occurred in Sime-Delāye, 81 in Ofā. All in all, these involved 19 peasants (including two women sellers). The novelty of these cases is that the PA Secretary was found guilty of " preparing the documents of transaction " and the Tribunal Committee therefore passed sentences on him as well as on those who served as witnesses. One of the cases came to light when, among others, a buyer filed a law - suit in the Waradā PA - " having brought as evidence the document of transaction ". One of the sellers also gave the following ' written ' statement to the committee of investigation.

I, Ato Gāzamo Cāmanā, an inhabitant of Sime Qaballe, affirm, through my thumb signature, that I sold, in order to alleviate my problem, 2 kabs of my land where I live or my rist, situated below my house, to Ato Cām'ā Ayāno for \$50.00 fifty birr ...

There is no doubt these land sales and mortgages originated from the pressure of famine. The remarkable thing is not that poor peasants under famine were compelled to contravene the law, of which they probably were not unaware, but that, even under the severest famine in Wolāitā, there are peasants with investible wealth ready, in collusion with PA officials, to contravene the law with impunity in pursuit of gain. Whether these acts were the first and only cases in the awrājā and whether they are unique to Wolāitā should not probably be answered affirmatively. At any rate, the cases indicate the social ferment taking place in rural Ethiopia as well as the strength of the force that diffuses it.

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In conclusion, it is clear that the peasantry under famine does everything to alleviate its problems through the medium of the market. Nevertheless, this, in the event of a generalised famine, provides it with limited succour. This is so therefore not because the peasants fail to respond to existing opportunities but because the society does not provide them with the necessary opportunities and, hence, their failure in this sphere is the failure of the Ethiopian society at large.

BORROWING AND ASSISTANCE

In cases of a protracted fall or temporary disequilibrium, borrowing in cash or in kind from relatives, neighbours or other acquaintances is possible in rural Ethiopia today as was before the land reform.⁸² Under severe famines such as the 1984 - 85 one, however, borrowing probably becomes impossible to most peasants. In Yifāt, borrowing did not figure in 1984 - 85.⁸³ In Wolāitā, Hiwān said borrowing then was impossible. Māthewos would occasionally obtain a credit of one birr or a kilogramme of grain from neighbours, repayable within the fourth day. The old peasant from Bilbo - Badesā, on the other hand, borrowed up to birr 30 at a time, primarily from relatives, repayable within the month, as well as receiving periodic assistance in kind (often ensat) from relatives in Sodo - Zuryā. In Manz, borrowing and assistance from kins were perhaps more in vogue but could only serve as tentative bridges until relief assistance arrived.⁸⁴

Assistance from kins seems to have played a greater role among nomadic pastoralists. This was so, for example, among the pastoralists in Boranā and Arero⁸⁵ in 1974 and among those in Galabnā Hāmmar Bāko⁸⁶ in 1974 - 75. However, pastoralists' corporateness could not prevent some Afār from ending up in shelters in Maqalle⁸⁷ in 1984 - 85. In the event of drought, the pastoralists

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While rural society cannot be thought of apart from mutual assistance of various forms based on various ties, famine of the scale of 1984 - 85 sucks these ties dry too soon for them to make any positive impact on the struggle against famine as well as narrowing them down to the level of the nearest kinship. Attempts at assistance through coordination by PAs are also usually perfunctory, too rudimentary and ineffective. 88

DEPENDENCE ON FAMINE FOODS

The Ethiopian cultivator and pastoralist know and consume under normal conditions various products of nature as "side dishes or snacks," 89 at least some of which do not lack in nourishment. 90 Such, for example, are balas 91 or aboshānkā 92, aāde or gāāris 93, and ku'entī or entatit 94. Balas, the most universal in Ethiopia, grows wild although in some places such as Wajarāt and Agāme (Tigrāi) it is protected and has assumed a measure of being private property. Most often, however, adult peasants would not be seen picking it unless hardship and famine compel them to. The same also holds for the rest. In the event of famine, however, these and many other products of nature, a number of them poisonous, are necessarily 'picked' and consumed by everybody and hence become famine foods.

In 1972, Ambāssal (Wallo) reported that peasants fed on "a wood" called argārsā. 95 In 1973, peasants in Wafllā (Wāg) reportedly suffered from "dysentery and stomach aches" and sustained "daily deaths of five persons" because they fed on "wild leaves". 96 In July 1977, many peasants in Tantā (Warahīmano) ate the seeds of amadāndo, 97 a weed. In April 1984, peasants in parts of Cidān (Lāstā) "filled the fields" digging for entatit, with up to 3000 of them

observed in one site. ⁹⁸ In 1984, " people in inaccessible areas " in Wallo had been feeding on " various grasses, leaves, roots and barks of trees " by October. ⁹⁹ In 1985, peasants in Boranā and Waraillu, hitherto relatively less affected, consumed wild leaves and grass seeds. ¹⁰⁰

Dependence on wild leaves also caused widespread illness and some deaths in parts of Ticho (Arsī) in 1980. ¹⁰¹ In Bale, peasants in Sof - Umar consumed " a hard nut kind of fruit " called sadaye in May 1974, reportedly introduced " since the drought ". ¹⁰² In July 1984, up to 5000 peasants congregated in Doge (a site in Wābe) and fed on aboshānkā, suffering from constipation and some deaths as a result. ¹⁰³ By August, this number had risen to 16000 (from three awrajās). ¹⁰⁴ In the same month, pastoralists in Elkare reportedly consumed " cooked and ground " cow hides and several roots and fruits (shāmbile, qumbī, galīle, roque and den) and drank " soil boiled in water ". ¹⁰⁵ In the Ogaden, pastoralists had been consuming unusually " more of " wild berries and " fleshy - leaved plants " by early 1974. ¹⁰⁶

In parts of southern Gāmo Gofā, wild fruits and leaves became, besides relief grain, the " main source of food " for peasants in late 1974. ¹⁰⁷ The Konso consumed kalto (a " bitter " tuber which caused " abdominal pain "), garsatā (a wild fruit boiled 3 to 4 times " for hours at a time ") and hāngaltā (the leaf consumed raw and the fruits boiled), all introduced during the famine. ¹⁰⁸ In mid-1975, peasants in Chanchā (Gāmo) were " seen eating wild plants and whatever available leaves "; in several qollā areas of Gāmo, Gārdulā and Gofā peasants had generally subsisted on " leaves, roots and valuable [?] grass types "; and the pastoralists " fed on leaves and various types of grass like animals ". ¹⁰⁹

These also fed on " wild leaves and fruits of zambābā trees " in mid - 1984. ¹¹⁰ Famine also forced some peasants in Wallagā to unusually feed on various wild roots, tubers and leaves during the krauts of 1981 and 1986. ¹¹¹

In March 1974, pastoralists in Malbān (" between Moyale and Moga, " in Sidāmo) were found eating wild roots that caused " diarrhoea and vomiting ". ¹¹² A survey in 1984 also found pastoralists in Djirno - Dida (a village, in Arero) eating " the bark of the agezu tree for five months "; while pastoralists in two other villages had been feeding on barks, leaves and roots " for a very long time " as well as " cooking hooves from goats and drinking the water "; and in a fourth village - with 60% of the children in " acute danger " - " all " had been depending on wild leaves. ¹¹³ A survey of 454 children in 17 villages then revealed that about 58% depended largely on normal foods, 35% on famine foods and 7% on a combination of relief and famine foods. ¹¹⁴ In 1985, peasants in Marahā bate ¹¹⁵ and two waradās (Amayā and Coro) of Chabonā Gurāge, ¹¹⁶ likewise, resorted to wild roots, fruits, tubers and leaves, then suspected as being among the major cause of sickness.

In Manz, Yifāt and Wolāitā, the natural environment does not seem to have afforded peasants under famine that much ' opportunity '. In 1978, the inhabitants of Yadīnā Afnat PA (Gerā - Midir) reported being dependent on weeds (' gomman ') and on garlic and onion leaves. ¹¹⁷ In 1984, many peasants in Gerā - Midir, probably also in many other parts of Manz, had resorted to " bitter roots " by May, thus being exposed to sickness. ¹¹⁸ Children in Qayā - Gabrel had also reportedly taken to eating eret roots, with adverse effects on their health. ¹¹⁹ In parts of Yifāt, some peasants ate ground stalks of the grass phīlā (of the sedge family) about May 1984. ¹²⁰ In late 1984, migrating peasants were seen " feeding on wild grass " on the sides of the road in Shawā-Robīt. ¹²¹ Nure Mahāmad of Fursī claimed that peasants there

of 1984. Information on Wolaitā remains scanty. An agricultural cooperative alluded to members going into the "bush searching for wild berries," and some of them dying there, in 1985.¹²² Endryās and Mārqos also stated that many people in Shākīshoshone ate weeds and potato leaves in 1984 - 85. The same may therefore be suggested for the awrājā as a whole. In general, dependence on famine foods must have also taken in all other parts of Ethiopia that experienced famine, even though records have not been obtained. Thus famine, as a universal manifestation of the failure of labour and society, compels the peasant to regress temporarily in the direction of the origin of man.

TREFT AND ROBBERY

To the Ethiopian peasantry, no misconduct exists more opprobrious than stealing.¹²³ This hostility reflects, however, its existence even under normal conditions, but is kept ordinarily on the margin. Stealing may involve a 'chain,' whereby thieves from a locality effect the sale of stolen objects, particularly stock, in another in league with other thieves. Robbery differs from stealing therefore not necessarily in the absence of 'organisation' in the latter as in the strength of the elements of violence, boldness and 'gregariousness' it entails. The goal, illegitimate appropriation of someone else's property, is the same in both cases.

It has been suggested that the peasant in Ethiopia starves to death as lawfully¹²⁴ as he submitted 'patiently,' except for a few aberrations, to oppression and exploitation.¹²⁵ Since the Ethiopian peasantry had had little organisational capacity (that is what "collective will"¹²⁶ means) against 'the state,' it necessarily stood in awe of the latter's institutions.¹²⁷ Much less organisational capacity can

therefore be expected from a peasantry under famine so long as the state functions normally. The state must enter a rapid process of dissolution for the working people, under famine or not, to make up for their organisational incapacity through, as the May 2-5, 1936 episode in Addis Ababa 128 indicates spontaneous actions. Since the state remained potent throughout the period 1975 - 1985, at least it was perceived so by the peasantry, robbery or looting did not generally appear as possible means against famine. Instead, stealing appears to have been in vogue.

During the kramt of 1984, stealing, connected with famine, constituted a serious problem in Qadidā - Cāmelā (Kambātānā Hādīyā). 129 The situation in Chālīyā and Eākotibe (mainly theft of livestock) was even worse in 1985, when every "small owner" lived "in perpetual fear of loosing his animals". 130 In wolāitā, where it is overly anathematised, stealing, at times approaching robbery, figured prominently during the 1984 - 85 famine. Theft in Dāmot - Gāle, Humbo and Sodo - Zuryā "involved murder". 131 In Shākīshoshone (Dāmot - Gāle), on the other hand, about 20 'thieves' died of wounds sustained when attempting to steal ensat at various times during the period. 132 Bands of up to 20 persons each from the PA and neighbouring PAs also made occasional attempts at robbing markets in Shānto, Bodītī (Dāmot - Gāle) and Shone (Siqe Waradā, Kambātānā Hādīyā); and 'travellers' were also robbed. 133 The old peasant from Bilbo - Badesā and PA leaders of Ambā - Badesā (Dāmot - Waide) also acknowledged stealing as a problem in their areas during the 1984 - 85 famine, although they blamed it on the young. 134 In the awrajā as a whole, stealing was committed frequently in groups and quite occasionally, in the case of stock, in league with 'thieves' from Kambātānā Hādīyā. 135 The seriousness of the problem may be understood from the following circular:

It is known that government assistance is being given in our awraja to people who are furnished because of the drought that resulted from weather abnormality.

Nonetheless, the Dāmot - Gāle Waradā Administration Office, in a letter numbered 1372/77, has reported to us that the Executive Committee of the Ade Peasant Association apprehended [the PA's] inhabitant Ato Mālaqo Māke together with his accomplices Ato Tāye Dabooh, Bāyute Adallo and Lambebo Boqe, on information that they roamed about the qaballe stealing ensat and potato, and whipped them so severely that Ato Mālaqo Māke consequently died while the rest remain on the verge of death.

Therefore, since this is a dangerous phenomenon currently spreading everywhere [in the awraja], we ask you to take precautions. [Italics, A.H.]

Relief organisations such as Radda Barna in Boloso (on five occasions)¹³⁷ and World Vision in Humbo¹³⁸ (both operating in rural areas) also incurred theft of relief property. Thus we see that stealing and, to some extent, robbery were hot issues in Wolaitā during the 1984 - 85 famine.

Oral information on Manz,¹³⁹ on the other hand, revealed only sporadic cases of individuals who wandered into Jihur and got imprisoned for 'minor offences' of theft. Archival records do not mention any. Oral information on Yifāt also strongly emphasised the absence of theft or robbery during the last famine.¹⁴⁰ The problem in Yifāt, in keeping with its location and history, consisted of conflicts between Afār 'migrants' from Wallo and the semi-pastoralist Oromo of the awraja around the question of pasture.¹⁴¹ Even this, after the initial alarm and violence involving loss of life, soon gave way to peaceful cohabitation (until the rains came in 1985) under the supervision of a joint committee,¹⁴² as a result of a speedy intervention by the government. Such conflicts appear to have been worse particularly in southern Sīdāmo in 1975¹⁴³ and, to a lesser degree, in southern Cāmo Cofā¹⁴⁴ following the 1974 drought. However, these as well as the case of the Afār from Wallo

then to famine (search for food and loot).

In conclusion, it is indisputable that famine in Ethiopia engenders stealing and at times robbery within rural society, although the state through its organs, the FAs and relief operations has generally been able to keep them on the margin. The differences between Yifāt, Manz and Wolāitā on this point may be explained by the fact that the 1984 - 85 famine in Yifāt was too severe for anyone to have much to steal or rob; while it was not so severe in Manz as to break visibly one of the best age-old peasant norms; and in Wolāitā the famine was severe enough to break the norm but not too severe to render theft and robbery meaningless. It appears also equally indisputable that the peasantry under famine does not generally trespass on what it must feel are the 'preserves' of the state: the towns and anything linked with them.

MASS POPULATION DISPLACEMENT

Famine at its peak, the only stage that arouses horror and is understood as such, expresses itself through mass population displacement, accompanied by mass misery, death and beggary. It also entails large-scale family breakdowns. This stage of famine reflects the utter failure of the responses already described and the relief mechanisms of the state. The hallmark of peasant response at this stage therefore consists of beggary. Between this and the early stages of famine lies a duration of up to a year.

The aggravation of the 1972 - 74 famine in Wallo, for example, had the following distinct temporal stages. In October - December (1972), the able-bodied migrated for jobs to the Lower Awash. People also had occasional recourse to famine foods. ¹⁴⁵ In January - June (1973) famine victims



started out-migrating into towns and in June deaths among migrants began to be reported. 146 By April, the orientation of the migration had already lost clear-cut objectives. 147 In August (1973) a horrendous mass population displacement, accompanied by mass death and beggary, occurred: more than 60,000 people 'crowded round the road-side relief camps' 148 By November 1973, the Awāsh Valley, Wallagā, Arcī and 'Gurage' had felt the repercussions of the displacement. 149 A survey in 1974 of the most severely affected awrajās revealed that 46,720 people had migrated, 150 a figure inadvertently raised to 174,984. 151 Paulos Abraham's estimates, 152 however, suggest that some 137,000 people (excluding the dead) might have been displaced in search of food. The scale of family breakdowns also appears to have been enormous. 153 Mass population displacement and its evil companions therefore occurred six to ten months after the clear symptoms of famine had been noticed at awrajā levels.

Wallo experienced 'usual' or 'usual with increased rate' seasonal migrations, mostly within the province, throughout 1975 - 1984, 154 except in 1978 when displacement occurred and the RRC had to return the displaced home in Western Wallo. 155 The process of aggravation also shows temporal characteristics similar to that of 1972 - 74: the Warahīmano Awrajā Administration, probably also Wādīā Dalāntā, began sending signals of distress at least early in 1977 and reports of some deaths in July; the Provincial RRC Office established definitively the prevalence of serious famine in Warahīmano and Wādīā Dalāntā in July - August; 156 and by April 1978 (at least a year after the first signal), population displacement and mass misery (probably also serious deaths) had occurred. 157 The number of the displaced has not been established, although the event resulted in the

first large-scale relocation programmes.

The 1984 - 85 famine in Wallo showed a rapid upswing during the months of April - June 1984, with a very high number of people congregating in Koram and other towns in Wallo. By October 1984, the experience of population displacement with its companion evils had assumed very serious proportions.¹⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the Afār pastoralists had moved with their stock into the valleys on the eastern escarpment from Chafā (Qālu) in the south to Marsā (Yajju) in the north.¹⁵⁹ In fact, they had reached as far south as Yifāt by April 1984, their arrival triggering off conflicts with the inhabitants - resulting in "many" deaths.¹⁶⁰ Thus drought and famine gave the Afār "the required stimulus" in 1984 "to burst out of their desert plains and flood over the sedentary societies on the plateaux".¹⁶¹ The 1984 - 85 famine thus showed the same pattern of aggravation: a gradual build-up over a period of several months culminating in an explosion of mass population displacement and its companion evils. There is no doubt that famine took the same pattern of build-up, though not as well documented, in other provinces in Ethiopia during the years 1975 - 1985. However, population displacement was never as severe except in the case of Tigrāi¹⁶² and Shawā during the 1984 - 85 famine. The latter may be understood from the case of Yifāt.

Yifāt had had no population displacement during 1975-1984. In 1984, the balg and kramt rains failed. Already by April 1984, the Afār from Bure - Modāitu and the awrāja's semi-pastoralist Oromo had congregated in Gamzā for pasture as well as "to save their own life".¹⁶³ By August, the cultivators in Fursī, Efrātānā Jille and Qawat, in particular, had faced extreme hardship; and in September first the able-bodied adults and soon after women and children began to migrate.¹⁶⁴ However, archival records and a reconnaissance

study ¹⁶⁵ at about that time do not seem to have captured the process. In November - December, a mass population displacement became the order of the day, with a large number of people heading in the direction of Addis Ababa. ¹⁶⁶ By December 1984, the suffering had become horrible. ¹⁶⁷

A survey in March 1984 qualified Manz as a "pre-disaster" area, with only 3 persons of a sample of 339 households having migrated. ¹⁶⁸ In May, the problem of drought further aggravated in all the seven waradās. ¹⁶⁹ In June, three PAs (Gotarā, Saradaḥ and Anāzīd) in Cerā - Midir reported a total of 32 individuals and 3 entire families having migrated. ¹⁷⁰ In July, awrajā officials expressed alarm because "people were moving from office to office appealing for help" as well as planning to march into Addis Ababa to present their case. ¹⁷¹ Yet, by November 1984, Manz still had not experienced mass population displacement. ¹⁷² Manz ultimately experienced a migratory phenomenon unusual to its past, but avoided a population displacement of the scale of Yifāt.

In 1981, Wolāitā experienced famine - induced internal migration which does not approximate population displacement. ¹⁷³ Since then up to 1985, however, no record has been obtained on the subject. In February 1985, a peasant association (Hobīchā Bongotā, Humbo) reported a migration of 32 household heads. ¹⁷⁴ A producers' cooperative also reported that during the months of Magābīt to Miyāzyā 8 members had migrated, while in a subsequent letter it simply says that members "are dying and migrating". ¹⁷⁶ In June some 296 rural migrants (265 of them from Sodo - Zuryā) were reported in Soddo town, ¹⁷⁷ Otherwise, the archival documents do not tell much. Oral information on Shākīsheshona revealed, however, that 10 entire families migrated to Yirgā - Chafe

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and 3 heads of families to Ra-bātāqā Hadiyā in 1985. 17
It does not appear therefore that Wolaitā experienced population displacement as serious as Yifāt, although the 1984-85 famine hit the awraja hard.

In conclusion, famine-induced mass population displacement constitutes the highest stage, not the beginning, of famine and thus reflects that society and the state had, for various reasons, failed to combat famine, despite temporally sufficient advance notice.

N O T E S

1" Food Shortage Report on Menzina Gishe, " p.9.

2"Food Shortage Report on Wolaita, " p.18, table 7.

3 Dessalegn, p.70.

4 Biruk and others, p.2.

5" Food Shortages Report on Wello, " pp. 20-22, for example, indicates that while the herd-mix of 479 interviewed households was 63.2% shoats and 36.8% bovines, sales (during the three months preceding the survey) consisted of 80.8% shoats and only 19.2% (103 heads) bovines, and market dependency had then increased in the three awrajas by 40, 44, and 55 per cent over the normal.

6 An untitled Amharic report (mimeographed) on Arsi (dated 21/12/72 E.C.) by a provincial team led by Shakh Kadir Jājo (Chairman of Provincial PA), pp. 2-5, depicts a serious famine and deaths of livestock in lowland parts of Arsi as well as peasants migrating to Bale with their remaining stock; Informant: Taddasa Charuat informed me that in 1984-85 many peasants sold 6-12 animals (mostly sheep) while some others migrated to Tagulatna Bulgā with their cattle, some of whom later returned " with their cattle possession kept intact ".

7 See, for example, R.J. Mckerrow, " Report on Trip to Wello, 1 to 13 October 1978 " (LORCS, October, 1978), p.4 (mimeographed); and Pankhurst, Economic History, p.219.

8" Preliminary Report on Wello Survey " (RRC, January, 1977), pp. 5 and 15. (mimeographed)

9" Report on 3rd Round Surveillance Ogaden - Harerghe, June - August 1975 " (RRC, n.d.) p.3. (mimeographed)

- 10 Belete and others, p.95 and " Preliminary Report on cattle losses, " pp.2-3.
- 11 Claudia J. Carr, Pastoralism in Crisis: The Basmetch and Their Ethiopian Lands (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1977), pp. 216 and 220.
- 12 Godāna Tunī and others, " Ba Bāle Kifla Hāgar Ba Mandayo nā Ba Wābe Awrajawoch Yatadaraga Yamask Gubnit Rīport " (Bale Provincial Administration, Hamle, 1976), p.7. (mimeographed)
- 13 "Food Shortage Report on Menzina Gishe, " pp.6-8.
- 14 Informant: Tāddasa Charnat.
- 15 " Evaluation Report on Cash-for-Food Project, " p.7.
- 16 Informant: Balatta Hābte Māryām, Qaya-Gabrel Waradā PA Committee member informed me that a significant number of peasants in the waradā do not normally own sheep, which he qualified as the " saviour from hardship " (" Ka chigir yamiyadin bag naw ").
- 17 Based on " Food Shortage Report on Wolaita, " p.16, table 6.
- 18 Based on information from Wolaitā Awrajā MOA Office (collected through PAs in October - November, 1986): 419775 bovines, 89856 shoats and 27586 equines or a total of 537217; and a rural population of 1,017,202 or (using CSO's parameter of 4.6) 221,131 households - hence, 2.43 animals/household.
- 19 Biruk and others, Annex E.
- 20 Based on CSO's census of the awrajā's rural population (1984) and the parameter of 4.2 persons/household.
- 21 Based on Belete and others, p.8.
- 22 Based on " Food Shortages Report on Wello, " pp.24 and 25, tables 6 and 7.
- 23 Based on " Food Shortage Report on Wolaita, " pp. 20 and 21, tables 8 and 9.
- 24 Based on " Food Shortage Report on Menzina Gishe, " pp. 10 and 12.
- 25 Based on " Ba Bāle Kifla Hāgar Ba Ahunu Gize Yālaw Yamiṣib Etrat Hunetā Tināt " (RRC, Nahāse, 1976), pp.7 and 12. (mimeographed)
- 26 Based on an untitled Amharic report on Yifāt (RRC, Midār, 1977), p.3. (mimeographed)
- 27 Based on " Action Report on the Current Food Shortage in Gihatena Metcha Awraja " (RRC, June, 1985), p.5. (mimeographed)

28 " Ba Bāle Yamigib Eprat Banota, " P.8, grain was exchanged for sheep.

29 For the problem of livestock diseases in Ethiopia, see W.F. Langridge, " A Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Survey of Ethiopia " (Ministry of Overseas Development, 1976), p.63, table 5; (mimeographed) and Solomon Haile Mariam, Animal Health Review Ethiopia 1972-1979 (Addis Ababa: MOA, n.d.), p.33, table IV, where the annual mortality rate for 1978/79 is given (per cent of total herd) as 8.5 cattle, 11.6 goats and 14.5 sheep.

30 Informant: same, about 50 years old peasant; among the dead were a daughter and her infant child, a six-year old son and a young daughter.

31 Informant: same, about 55 years old, Deputy Chairman of the PA; he blamed lack of pasture and buyers for the loss of his cattle; see also " Ba Boranā nā Ba Arero Awrajāsoch Yadarasaw Dirq Silaskatalaw Chigir Yaqaraba Rīport " (Southern Ethiopia Zonal Planning Office, Bahāas, 1976), pp. 9 - 10. (mimeographed)

32 Informants: a group of the cooperatives members, including Ahmad Muhe Adam, 41 years old, chairman of the cooperative and the PA, Tigure.

33 Informant: same, a 60 - 70 years old peasant, who depended on relief assistance during 1984 - 86; his daughter and her son (who had taken refugees with him) starved to death.

34 " Action Report, " p.5.

35 Ibid., p.6.

36 Mesfin, Rural Vulnerability, p.65.

37 " Ba Wallo nā Ba Samen Shawā Ya Erdātā Enqisqāse Hunetā Rīport, Tīqimt 29 - Hidar 19, 1977 " (BRC, Tahsas, 1977), p.2; " Ba Illibābur Ki/Hāgar Ba Bunno Badalle Awrajā nā Ba Wallagā Ki/Hāgar Ba Gimbi Awrajā-Silalaw Ya Migib Huneta Rīport " (BRC, Bahase, 1978), p.25; Julius Holt and John Seaman, Rehab: Drought and Famine in Ethiopia, ed. Abdul Mejid Hussain (London: International African Institute, 1976), p.4; and informants: Gazāhan Kīdāne, Alī Mahāmād and Shāhīb Kīrān (Kunfā Bahādā administrator, MOA representative

38 Informant: Balatta Habte Maryam, Qaya - Gabrel

39 Informants: Endryas Anebo (PA Chairman) and Marqos Yohannis (PA Secretary) of Shakishoshone, Murot-Gale, and the old peasant of Bilbo - Badesa. Eucalyptus is widely grown in the awraja, one reason it keeps it green even when under drought.

40 Gaertner, p.2; and informant: Ya'eqob Chali'abo, Treasurer of Wolaita Kuraja PA, remembers that the peasants when caught used to retort: "So should I die. What do you suggest I should do?"

41 WAPAA, Ref. No. 867/76, Sodo-Burya Warada PA to Sodo - Burya Warada Administration, Miyaaya 30, 1976.

42 YARCCF, Ref. No. 9/ 25/21/77, Yifat Awraja WPE Committee, to Provincial WPE Committee, Hidar 6, 1977.

43 Personal knowledge.

44 RRCA, Ref. No. 70 11/811/202, Shawā RRC Office to RRC Relief Department, Ginbot 12, 1978.

45 Informant: Fiqadu Zabano

46 Informants: Endryas Anebo and Marqos Yohannis.

47 Informant: Getachaw Aläya, (Awraja Administrator.

48 Informants: Kabada Tascanä (c.60 years old, from Worq-Amba), Getachaw Shäraw (c.50 years old, from Gulai), Gabra-Yohannis Häile - Maryam (c.40 years old, a priest, from Du'at) - all peasants from Gerä - Midir; I met them at Mahäl - Medä market, selling blankets. They informed me that a weaver takes 3 - 5 days to complete a piece and that he gets 1 to 1.5 birr a piece compared to 0.50 before 1979.

49 The price of the yarn is my own actual observation of transactions, while informants Kabada and others supplied the prices for blankets.

50 Informants: Kabada and others

51 I got a yarn weighed, which came to 1.1 kg., and the owner informed me that it took her a week to spin it; Kabada and others also thought that on the average a woman would spin only 1 kg. of yarn a week.

52 Informant: Fiqādu Sabana puts peddling on par with weaving in terms of universality, but during famine the former most probably has a higher significance.

53 Informant: Same, of Shūmāshoshane, Dāmot-Gāle, interviewed in the presence of the PA chairman and secretary.

54 YARCCF, Ref. No. P-9/ A 25/21/77, Hidar 6, 1977.

55 W.C. Plowden, Travels in Abyssinia (London: Gregg International Publishers, 1972), pp. 141-143.

56 Gabrahiwat Baikadān, Maḡisṭ nā Ya hizb Astadādar (Addis Ababa: Tafary Maknonen Mātanya Bet, 1953), pp. 41-42.

57 Pankhurst, Economic History, pp. 48-50.

58 Mario and others, p.15; and Robert of Klinteberg, " Socio-Economic Survey of Konso Woreda, Genu Hofa " (RRC, March, 1976), p.59. (mimeographed)

59 Informant: Dullā Wadājo (Manā Arrājā MOA, Head of the Plant Protection Section) stated: " In the past a poor peasant would not hire himself out. Now because of the famine this has disappeared. Many peasants have begun to supplement their incomes with manual work for wages . "

60 " Evaluation Report: The Local Purchase of Food Commodity Project in Ethiopia " (RRC/UNICAF, July - August, 1984), p.28.

61 Informant: Baldā Dādī

62 Informant: same, a poor peasant (Ṭigure PA) holding under 0.25 of a hectare and has had no livestock at least since 1974; migrated to Naqamte with his family of 4 persons, where he stayed from Hidar 1977 to Yakatit 1978, when he returned on hearing of the arrival of the rains and relief assistance in Yifāt.

63 Informants: Getāchaw Alāyu and Taddasa Charnat.

64 Informant: Same, a poor peasant (as poor as Hiwān Salālo), holding under 0.25 of a hectare and has had no livestock

since 1974, from Aabā - Badesā (Dūgot - Baideg capital Badesā); usually worked as a migrant labourer in the Abāyā State Farm but did not do so in 1984 - 85; has a family of 7 and lost a child during the last famine.

65 Informants: a group of peasants from Kārājajabā.

66 Informant: Wandināgān Lohate Dubāle, a 13 - year old, 6th grader, from Giche; came along with his two elder brothers to Bahāl - Keda, where they abandoned him; he had lived in the town for 11 months doing all sorts of odd jobs when I met him in July 1986.

67 "Ya" Dirq Chigir Ba Wallos Ya 1976 Gimagamā nā ya 1977 Hunetā Taquāmī Rīport " (Provincial Administration, Tiqimt, 1977), p.24. (mimeographed)

68 Informants: Gazāhān and others.

69 Informant: same, about 40 years old, saved his family of 7 persons except for his father who died of starvation in 1985; ' visited ' Addis Ababa, Nāzroth, Dire Dāwā, Awāsh, Dubtī, Asāitā, Dessie and Kombolcha; reflecting on his experience, in the presence of many of his colleagues, Nure said: " Now I have seen towns and people. We [peasants] are living the life of beasts. [laka enā enda awre naw yamīnoraw.] "

70 YARCCF, Ref. No. P9/ A25/21/77, Hidār 6, 1977.

71 Informant: Tāddasa Charnat, when I suggested that direction to him, exclaimed: " But they [the Afār] would emasculate them! " Thus history still heavily weighs even on the mind of the enlightened young peasant of Mana.

72 Informant: Fiqādu Zabane, who also supplied the Amharic version.

73 During my visit to the PA, however, he was away to Upper Awāsh and Bivān's information then was he had contracted some disease and so was not working.

⁷⁴ Informants: Fiqādu Sabane.

⁷⁵ See, for example, WAPAA, Ref. No. 112/0/7/9/76, Bolecco Waradā PA to Wolaita Awraja PA, Hamle 19, 1976, where, as part of a progress report, for the period Hachkaram - Ginbot 1976, is stated that 250 peasants were sent to the "Gurcho Farm to pick Cotton".

⁷⁶ Informants: Mathewos Darimo, gave the problems as deterring peasants from non-gella areas in particular and the highest saving he was able to make was birr 25, and that only once; and Fiqādu Sabane mentioned the same problems, without being as categorical on their effects.

⁷⁷ Pankhurst, Economic History, p. 219.

⁷⁸ Mesfin, Rural Vulnerability, p. 62.

⁷⁹ WAPAA, Ref. No. 776/76, verbal of the decision by the Sodo - Zuryā Waradā PA Tribunal Committee, Ginbot 20, 1976.

⁸⁰ WAPAA, Ref. No. 1110/76, Sodo - Zuryā Waradā PA to Wolaita Awraja PA, Hamle 4, 1976.

⁸¹ WAPAA, Ref. No. 862/76, Ofa Waradā PA to Wolaita Awraja PA, Ginbot 14, 1976; and WAPAA, Ref. No. 1141/76 Ofa Waradā PA to Wolaita Awraja PA, Nahāse 1, 1976.

⁸² Ahmed Abdulahi and others, "Report on the Reconnaissance Trip to the Drought Affected Parts of Baresghie 5th - 7th September 1974" (ENI/RRC, September, 1974), p.3. (mimeographed); Fasil G. Kiros and Asmerom K., "Socio - Economic Baseline Survey of Welmera Wereda, Part IV, Institutional, Social and Attitudinal Aspects" (Addis Ababa: Science and Technology Commission, July, 1979), p. 11. Tables A - IX and A-X (mimeographed); Dessalegn, p.65; and Mesfin, "Ethiopia's Food Security," p.8.

⁸³ An exception is YAAA, no Ref. No., Chairmen of Rāsā, Qille, Fātu and Huri PAs (Fursi) to Iifāt Awraja Administration, Nahāse 2, 1976, which refer to possibilities of borrowing from relatives in Gamsā and request for marketable grain from the AMC.

- 84 Informant: Girmā Tafarā, Treasurer, Qayā-Gabrel MOA office.
- 85 Belete and others, p. 14; and "Preliminary Report on cattle losses," p.7.
- 86 Tamru, p.3; and Frank P. Davich, "Field Survey Trip to Gemu Gofa Province, November 19 - 20, 1975" (USAID Mission to Ethiopia, December, 1975), p.2. (mimeographed)
- 87 Graham Hancock, Ethiopia: The Challenge of Hunger (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1985), p. 89.
- 88 WAPAA, Ref. No. 827/77, Ofā Waradā PA to Wolāitā Awrajā PA, Magābīt 11, 1977, speaks of having collected 98 quintals of grain, but asks for instructions to distribute it "so that weevils would not destroy it"; WAPAA, Ref. No. 373/77, Koyshā Waradā PA to Wolāitā Awrajā PA, Magābīt 3, 1977, speaks of 35 quintals and 380 utensils collected; and WAPAA, R. f. No. 442/177/0/1/77, Yakātīt 1, 1977, collected 38.75 quintals and 3 pieces of clothes.
- 89 I have borrowed the terms from Thayer Scudder, Gathering Among African Woodland Savannah Cultivators, A Case Study: The Gwembe Tonga (London: University of Zambia, 1971), p.20.
- 90 John Seaman, Julius F.J. Holt, and John P.W. Rivers, "Harerghe Under Drought: A Survey of the Effects of Drought Upon Human Nutrition in Harerghe Province" (ERC, May/June, 1974), pp.81 and 82. (mimeographed)
- 91 Lundström, p.12.
- 92 "Ba Bale Ya Migib Strat Hunetā," p.9.
- 93 Miller, pp. 1-2.
- 94 Personal knowledge; and Informants: Trunah Mallassa and Bekuma Dilgāsā, field workers, ERC.
- 95 Commission of Investigation, "Ba Walle Taqlay Gizāt Yadarasaw Dirq nā Yäckatalaw Nahāb" (Tiqimt, 1968), p.18 (mimeographed)

- 96 Ibid., p.30.
- 97 Personal knowledge.
- 98 Informant: Trunah Malasse.
- 99 " Ya Dirq Chigir Ba Wallo, " p.5.
- 100 " Reconnaissance Study Report on South-Western Wello" (RRC, October, 1985), p. 10.
- 101 An Untitled Amharic Report on Arsi, pp. 2 and 16.
- 102 " Survey Report: Bale Province " (ERCS/LORCS, May, 1974), p.2.
- 103 Godana and others, pp.4 and 5.
- 104 " Ba Bale Ya Migib Etrat Huneta, " p.9.
- 105 Ibid., p.4.
- 106 Seaman and others, pp. 81 and 82.
- 107 " Food and Nutrition Survey in Gemu Gofa, " p. 35; and Walker, p.2.
- 108 " Food and Nutrition Survey in Gemu Gofa, " pp.45-47; and Klinteberg, p.52, claims the "gerbatta," " a famine food, " was boiled only 3 - 4 hours to get rid of the " bitter taste ".
- 109 Mario and others, pp. 16 and 17.
- 110 " Ba Galabna Hammar Bako na Ba Wolaita Andand Waradawoch Yatinat Riport " (RRC, Ginbot, 1976), p.4. (mimeographed)
- 111 " Ba Wallaga Kifla Hagar Ba Qellem na Ba Gimbil Awraja-woch Siladarasaw Ya Migib Etrat Yaqaraba Tinatawi Sagaba " (RRC, Miyaaya, 1974), p.8; " Ba Wallaga Kifla Hagar Ba Naqante na Ba Arjo Awrajawoch Silalaw Ya Migib Huneta Riport " (RRC, Sane, 1973), p.12; (mimeographed) and " Ba Bunno Badalle na Ba Gimbil Silalaw Ya Migib Huneta, " p.26.
- 112 Belete and others, p.9.
- 113 Helge Traeland, " Drought and Food Shortages in Arero Awraja, Sidamo Region " (November, 1984), pp. 7 and 8. (mimeographed)

- 114 Based on Ibid.: p.12; table 3.
- 115 " Report on Food Shortage Assessment of Ma-chabete Awraja " (RRC, June, 1985), p.4. (mimeographed)
- 116 " Ba Shawa Kifla Nagar Da Chabonā Gurāgu Awraja Ba Amīyā. nā Ba Gore Waradā Yatadaraja Tināt Achir Rēport " (RRC, Hamle, 1977), p.4. (mimeographed)
- 117 NAAA, Ref. No. 1457/8277, Sidar 16, 1971.
- 118 NAAA, Ref. No. 880/76, Hans Awraja PA to Hans Awraja Administration, Ginbot 14, 1976.
- 119 RRC, Ref. No. Ha/11/91/77, Ministry of Interior to RRC, Ginbot 17, 1976.
- 120 RRC, Ref. No: 12/34/ 36 Shawa RRC Office to Shawa MOH Office, Ginbot 7, 1976.
- 121 Informant: Bekuma Dilgacā, who was then RRC representative for relief operations in Qawat.
- 122 NAAA, Ref. No. 37/77, Chairman of Kundena Producers' Cooperative to Wolaitā Awraja Administration, Mīyazyā 28, 1977.
- 123 What Levine, p.81, found among Amhara peasants is actually a universal attribute of the Ethiopian peasantry.
- 124 Mesfin, Rural Vulnerability, p.39; and Hancock, p.9.
- 125 Mesfin, Rural Vulnerability, pp. 18 and 113.
- 126 Ibid., p. 18.
- 127 Ibid., pp. 17 - 18.
- 128 See George L. Steer, Spout in Abyssinia (London: Holden and Stoughton Ltd., 1936), pp.373 - 374.
- 129 Personal knowledge.
- 130 " Action Report, " pp.6 - 7.
- 131 Informant: Major Asrat Mengasha, Awraja Police Commander.

132 Informants: Endryās Anoba and Marqos Ychānnis:

Whoever had great placate spent the nights on guard with spear in hand. The thief comes to steal, thinking he was not seen. The owner approaches him stealthily from behind, spears him mortally and commands him: "Go away!" The thief straggles back home and dies there. He and his close relatives alone knew the details. [Sure, the perpetrator would also know.] Since stealing is disgraceful, they would say he died of illness. About 20 thieves died thus in our qaballe in 1976 and 1977 [1984 and 1985].

133 Ibid.

134 Oral Communication on February 14, 1987.

135 Informant: Major Asrāt Mangashā.

136 WAAA, Ref. No. 2225/ 00 /223, Wolāitā Awrajā Administration to the seven waradā administrations, Ginbot 28, 1977.

137 WAAA, Ref. No. 00 UR /2.4/ 00 -19/124/78, Wolāitā Awrajā Public Security and Travel Permits Office to Wolāitā Awrajā Administration, Yakātīt 19, 1978.

138 WAAA, Ref. No. 2231/102/33, Wolāitā Awrajā Police to Humbo Warada Police, Mahase 30, 1977.

139 Informants: Several Peasants from Orañ PA (Gerā - Kidir); all other informants could not recall any.

140 Informants: Baldā Dādī, Abund Mūsā Abdallā and several more peasants.

141 WAAA, Ref. No. A /1675/2904/76, Yifat Awrajā Administration to Provincial Administration, Mīyāzyā 13, 1976; and RRCA, Ref. No. no 11/91/ 71, Ginbot 17, 1976.

132 Informants: Endryās Anoba and Marqos Yohānnis:

Whoever had suqat plans spent the nights on guard with spear in hand. The thief comes to steal, thinking he was not seen. The owner approaches him stealthily from behind, spears him mortally and commands him: "Go away!" The thief struggles back home and dies there. He and his close relatives alone knew the details. [Sure, the perpetrator would also know.] Since stealing is disgraceful, they would say he died of illness. About 20 thieves died thus in our qaballe in 1976 and 1977 [1984 and 1985].

133 Ibid.

134 Oral Communication on February 14, 1987.

135 Informant: Major Aurrāt Marqashā.

136 WAAA, Ref. No. 2225/ 225, Wolāitā Awrājā Administration to the seven waradā administrations, Ginbot 28, 1977.

137 WAAA, Ref. No. 2002/2.4/ 19/124/78, Wolāitā Awrājā Public Security and Travel Permits Office to Wolāitā Awrājā Administration, Yakātīt 19, 1978.

138 WAAA, Ref. No. 2231/102/33, Wolāitā Awrājā Police to Humbo Warada Police, Nahase 30, 1977.

139 Informants: Several Peasants from Grañ PA (Gerā - Midir); all other informants could not recall any.

140 Informants: Baldā Dādī, Ahmad Musā Abdallā and several more peasants.

141 WAAA, Ref. No. 1/1675/2004/76, Yifat Awrājā Administration to Provincial Administration, Mīyāzyā 13, 1976; and RECA, Ref. No. h 11/91/ 71, Ginbot 17, 1976.

- 142 Informant: Baldā Dēdi; the rehabilitation apparently proved so amicable that he chose to forget the initial violence and alarms, which I had to discover from archival records.
- 143 Gebrehiwot Kidane, "Preliminary Report on Arere and Korena in Sidamo Administrative Region" (IHI, August, 1975), pp. 6-7 and 10.
- 144 Pavich, "Field Report - Gomu Gofa," p. 4.
- 145 Commission of Investigation, pp. 18 - 24 and 27.
- 146 Ibid., pp. 15 - 27, 22 - 23, 30 - 34, 37 and 61.
- 147 Ibid., p. 61.
- 148 Holt and Seaman, p. 4.
- 149 Asmerom Legesse and Siloshi Sisay, "Famine in Wello" (Haile Selassie I University, November, 1973), p. 2. (mimeographed)
- 150 Mesfin, Rural Vulnerability, p. 58.
- 151 Ibid.
- 152 pp. 6 and 7.
- 153 Mekuria, pp. 1-3, 23 - 24 and 26.
- 154 See, for example, "Preliminary Report on Wello Survey," pp. 3-5; "Food Shortage Report on Wello," pp. 5, 6 and 25; and "Report on a Reconnaissance Trip in Wello Administrative Region (August 11 - September 4, 1982)" (RRC, October, 1982), pp. 21 and 29 - 31.
- 155 "Food Shortages Report on Wello," pp. 6, 8 and 9.
- 156 Personal knowledge.
- 157 "Food Shortages Report on Wello," pp. 6, 8 and 9.
- 158 "Ya Dirq Chigir Ba Walloq" pp. 4 - 6, 25 and 27; and "Ba Wallo na Ba Samen Shawā Ya Erdātā Enqisqāse," pp. 2-4.
- 159 "Ya Dirq Chigir Ba Wallo," p. 6.
- 160 RRCA, Ref. No. № 11/91/71, Ginbot 17, 1976.
- 161 Tribingham, p. 79.

- 162 See "Ba Tigra'i ki/Hagar Ba Shiro, Ba Aksum na Ba
 Adis Abajjanooh Siladarasaw Ya HIGIIB Barat Yatadaraga Yifat Hiperu"
 (RRC, Miyaaya, 1977), pp. 6 - 8; and "Ba Tigra' Chigir na Wallo,"
 p. 4.
- 163 YAAA, Ref. No. A/336/206/76, Yifat Awrāja Administra-
 tion to Provincial Administration, Hagabit 30, 1976.
- 164 Informants: Nure Mahamad, Ahmad Muhe Adem and Mahamad
 Hayd.
- 165 An untitled Amharic Report on Yifat, Fassin.
- 166 Informants: Bekuma Dilgach, Ahmed Mucā Abdallā and
 several more peasants in Qamat, Fursā and Efrātānā Jille.
- 167 RRCA, Ref. No. 710 2/3/14/333, Head of Shawā RRC Office
 to RRC Commissioner, Tāhsās 1, 1977.
- 168 "Food Shortage Report on Mensina Gisho," pp. 15-18.
- 169 HAAA, Ref. No. 4009/A/173/76, Ginbot 11/1976.
- 170 RRCA, Ref. No. 2975/87, Shawā Provincial Administration
 to Shawā RRC Office, Eane 9, 1976.
- 171 HAAA, Ref. No. 727 531/156/76, Manz Awrāja Public
 Security and Travel Permits Office to Provincial Public Security
 and Travel Permits Department, Hāmo 2, 1976.
- 172 "Ba Wallo nā Ba Samen Shawā Ya Erdātā Enqisqāse,"
 pp. 2 - 4.
- 173 "Food Shortage Report on Solaita," pp. 28 - 29.
- 174 HAAA, Ref. No. 2713/77, Gumbo Haradā Administration
 to Solaitā Awrāja Administration, Tānatīt 3, 1977.
- 175 HAAA, Ref. No. 37/77, Miyaaya 28, 1977.
- 176 HAAA, Ref. No. 38/77, Chairman of Kundenā Cooperative
 to Solaitā Awrāja Administration, Ginbot 1, 1977.
- 177 HAPAA, Ref. No. 1057/77, Sodo - Suryā Haradā PA to
 Solaitā Awrāja PA, Sans 3, 1977.
- 178 Informants: Endryās Anabo and Mārqos Yohannis.

CHAPTER THREE
THE PEASANTRY UNDER FAMINE AND THE STATE

The limitations of societal and 'natural' opportunities naturally impelled peasants under famine to seek succour from the state, although temporally the request for state assistance did usually start immediately after knowledge of failure of crops still in the fields. This chapter discusses this aspect of peasant response to famine under three sections: 'peasant - state relations in 1975 - 1985', 'peasant demands on the state', and 'peasant response to state demands'. The chapter thus attempts to establish the 'behaviour' of the peasantry and the state towards each other in the context of famine.

PEASANT - STATE RELATIONS IN 1975-1985

Agriculture in Ethiopia has been dated back to at least 5000 B.C.¹ This suggests the long roots of Ethiopian statehood. The Ethiopian peasantry had thus served as the pack-horse of Ethiopian statehood for ages, suffering in the misfortunes² without partaking much in the fortunes³ of the throne. The resurgence and recomposition of the Ethiopian state, following some centuries of disarray, in the context of the world capitalist system ultimately produced socio-economic and political conditions that sent the peasantry, scattered and ignorant, falling down a precipice. Thus the history of Ethiopian statehood until 1974 appears as the history of progressive alienation of the peasantry from the state, a history of forced submission.

The 1975 land reform supplied the basis for peasant - state relations during the years 1975 - 1985. The perceived social and economic benefits of the reform encouraged the peasantry to repose confidence on the state. Its organisation into peasant associations also gave it a mechanism for dealing with the state as a body. The land reform therefore could be said to have laid the basis for drawing closer together the peasantry and the state, in contrast to the process of continuous alienation over the ages. How far that alienation was overcome depended, however, not so much on the perceived benefits of the reform as on the actual benefits and the practical attitudes of the state on issues that directly affected the peasantry. Although this can only be fathomed with a proper characterisation of the state, a task beyond the scope of this essay, brief remarks may still be made on what appear to be the basic features that had a bearing on the peasantry under famine.

The Ethiopian revolution produced the Darg, a supreme body combining the executive and legislative functions of the state. The opposition that subsequently appeared from both ends of the political spectrum inevitably compelled the supreme instrument of the revolution to depend on the old state apparatus. The emergence of a revolutionary party was also thus postponed. Thus, while the assumption of political power by the Darg laid the basis for undertaking revolutionary measures of social transformation, the absence of a corresponding state machinery and a ruling revolutionary political party meant inability to realise such

measures in detail. The changes of state personnel, employed often enough, and the formation of mass associations, whose democratic foundations were not always credible, could not therefore make up for the basic shortcomings of the revolution during at least the years 1975 - 1984. In fact, the old state apparatus appears to have had a directly negative influence on the formation and style of work of mass organisations such as peasant associations.

The peasant-state relations in the years 1975-1985 therefore hinged, in practice, on how well the peasant associations represented the peasantry and how the state organs related themselves to these associations. Subsequent discussions indicate that hopes and disappointments had marked peasant-state relations during the period. In general, however, the peasantry under famine expected and demanded state aid in alleviating its problems. It also appears that ordinary peasants and gaballe PAs generally expected more responsible response from state organs than from peasant associations higher - up and more from higher than lower state organs. Lower and middle-level state organs and PAs, on the other hand, did not usually err in not reporting famine so much as probably in their exaggerations and their perfunctory approaches to the problem. In this regard, the political consequences of the 1972-74 famine appear to have indelibly printed themselves on the minds even (or necessarily?) of the worst bureaucrats.

The state has also had a mechanism of response to famine in the NRC: an institution of emergency aid coordination and

administration and of early warning and verification of famine-
with branch offices in all vulnerable provinces and in most such
regions, including Wolaita and Koma. This in itself constituted
a sufficient reason for peasants under famine to expect and demand
for state aid. The ERC has also been able to pick up early signs
of famine at least since 1977. The Ministry of Interior, at all
levels, also served, among other sources, as a vehicle of communica-
tion between peasants under famine and the ERC. Thus, there was
no possibility in Ethiopia, at least since 1977, for a sudden
appearance of famine, except for the very local. Hence, the
peasantry, during most of the period, had the opportunity of an
early recognition by the state of its predicament. The possibility,
too, existed of an early state response, never known before.

The effectiveness of the state response had always depended
on its speed, the amount of food assistance and its proper administrea-
tion. The first two factors in turn largely depended on the re-
sponse from the outside world. The third factor, on the other
hand, depended wholly on the state organs and the lower peasant
associations. That the government had recourse to extraordinary
mechanisms of food-aid administration in 1978 in Wallo and in
1984-85 throughout the country reflects the inherent defects of
the ordinary response mechanisms as well as the severity of ^{the} famines.
Similarly, famine-induced mass population displacements that
occurred in 1984-85, in particular, reflected the weakness in-
herent in the old state apparatus as well as the defects of the
specific mechanisms of its response. Thus, while the peasantry
and the state during the period had all the opportunity to infuse

PEASANT DEMANDS ON THE STATE

In the context of famine, peasant demands on the state consist of food aid, tax exemptions, provision of marketable grain and administrative support. However, a serious famine tends to compel peasants to harp exclusively on the first demand, which is generally presented through qaballe peasant associations. In some instances, peasants probably lodged thumb - signed petitions with the awrajā administrations, as the inhabitants of Awāshnā Lute PA (Gamza, Yifat) did in 1983 demanding food aid, when " the waradā offices " failed to respond. ⁴ Or, they would present their case through ad-hoc teams of representatives (" wakiloch "), as the peasants of Wube Wuhā PA (Mafud, Yifat) did in 1983, when communications " through the proper channel " (" bayadarajāw ") failed to materialise⁵. Or, as happened in Manz in 1984, peasants would go from one office to another appealing for food aid, individually or in spontaneously formed groups. ⁶ The last phenomenon usually appears whenever and wherever state response fails to measure up to the severity of famine and/or when qaballe PAs do not seem active enough in taking up the subject with appropriate state organs. On rare occasions, however, mass case - presentations to waradā administrations would occur right from the start, as did happen in the case of peasants from four PAs in Dāmōt-Waide (Wolaita), who reported in mass at the warada administration " with loads of hailstone lumps " in 1986. ⁷ Ordinarily, however, qaballe PAs would carry out the appropriate communications to state organs and higher PAs.

Qaballe PAs also appear to have short - circuited often the normal channels of communication either due to temporal

emergencies or because of lack of responses. In August 1984, four chairmen of peasant associations (Gishe, Qille, Fata and Murī) jointly addressed an urgent letter to the Yifat Awrājā Administration, calling for food aid and marketable grain from "the ANC at prices fixed by the government and COPPE".⁸ In 1979, Arāṭā PA (Gishe, Manz) also wrote to the awrājā administration, asking for food aid and tax exemptions.⁹ In the same year, Quāshnā Mhuu PA (Qayā - Gabrel, Manz) made similar requests to the waradā administration.¹⁰ In Wolaitā, Abalā Farācho (PA, Humbo)¹¹ in 1980, Abalā Ajajā (PA, Humbo)¹² in 1984 and Doge Māshado (PA, Koyshā)¹³ in 1985 also directly contacted the awrājā administration demanding relief food. The contents of the letters of the latter two (mentions of deaths of 60 and 85 persons, respectively) clearly show the urgency that prompted the steps. This is particularly so with the third PA since it also addressed copies of the letter to the awrājā RRC and PA offices and to the waradā administration and PA.

Generally, however, it seems gaballe PAs put their demands to the awrājā administrations because the lower rungs either did not produce results or showed little sense of urgency. Shclā Kodā PA (Sodo-Luryā)¹⁴ contacted the Wolaitā Awrājā Administration in 1985, requesting for permission to contact on its own NGOs in the awrājā for food aid, after "three to four" communications (including reports of 103 deaths) to the waradā administration, PA and awrājā PA bore no results. The Kundena Producers' Cooperative (Koyshā, Wolaitā), on the other hand, opened communication with

the avrājā administration¹⁵ within a week of its first written contact¹⁶ with the varadā administration and PA. It called upon "the senior of [our] seniors and the partisans of the revolution" to help the people out. The cooperative's second written communication, on the third day after the first,¹⁷ reveals that the administration's prompt instruction to the avrājā RRC Office to provide the necessary relief food had not materialised because this office "claimed to have no fuel" to transport the supply, whereupon the chairman of the cooperative had returned home empty handed to find two more children already dead.

The records in the three avrājās show, except for a few exceptions already cited, that gaballe PAs representing peasants under famine concentrate on requesting for food aid. Demands for tax exemptions, for example, do not appear at all in the records in Kolāitā and Yifāt. Nor has there been any case of gaballe PA - level requests for marketable grain, except the case of four PA chairmen in Yifāt cited above. The varadā and avrājā administrations and PAs do not also appear to have been concerned with the problem of tax exemptions. avrājā administrations and PAs, on the other hand, seem to have taken up the subject of marketable grain from the AKC with their respective provincial bodies, as Kolāitā attempted in 1985.¹⁸ Nor does one see from the records serious attempts made by peasant service cooperatives to move grain from surplus grain areas to their respective member PAs. In fact,

only one case in Wolaitā (Hobliḥā Service Cooperative, in Humbo) has been found, where a cooperative wrote to the awraja administration deploring the prevalent famine and exploitation by traders and asking for travel permits to purchase grain elsewhere and " thus contribute to mitigating the exploitation by traders, even if modestly ".¹⁹ Otherwise, all state organs and PAs concentrate only on the question of food aid, all other endeavours being generally perfunctory.

PAs in 1984 - 85 appeared to be at their wits end in describing the effects of famine. Abalā Ajaḥā²⁰ described life in 1975-80 as one of " falling into an abyss because of the rain [sig., drought], " in 1980 - 1984 as one of " exposure to famine, disease and misery " because of " recurrent drought " and by July 1984 about 20 had already died, more than 60 " are on the verge of death " and " those whom we say are allright look like dead corpses [ya mota resā yamīmaslu] ". It described the relief supply then as being " too insufficient and too irregular " and therefore " not capable of saving from death; let alone its being a life saviour [hiwat adin], it is not even a flesh saviour [sigā adin] "; and, consequently, " it has made human life as cheap as the life of insects [tinīsh nafsāt] ". The Mundena Cooperative, on the other hand, made this political point: " ... We have been compelled to make this request [for relief food to the awraja administration for the second time within three days]

because we know that to look on without a stir while adults who can promote the revolution and children who must inherit it are starving to death entails accountability to the government and the people. " 21 Abalā Fārācho, while offering its " advance thanks, " said that " people have lost all means and have thus been exposed to the whip of famine ". 22 The four chairmen from Fursī (Yifāt) wrote, that " having lacked food and having moved away to beg so as to save their lives, the mass of peasants [safiw arso adar] today have fallen dead in the bushes and roads and have become the staple food of hyenas and vultures " and that the old, the pregnant women and children, on the other hand, " are sitting in the darkness of daylight". "On the whole," they summed up, " people are passing away in mass under the most horrible condition. " 23 The peasants of Wube Wuhā, exposed to a less severe famine in 1985, also presented their case thus: " We depend solely on agriculture We are a people [hizboch] who depend on our own labour and who always meet in full any contribution asked for the state. " 24

Thus ordinary peasants under famine and their gaballe PAS put their cases to the state organs with all the conviction that the state must help them as a matter of duty. The grim descriptions therefore aimed at spurring the state to perform that duty. The awrājā and waradā PAS, normally relatively ' refined ' in their communications, also appear capable of invectiveness, when famine mounts unabated as it did in 1984 - 85. The Wolāitā

Arāja PA wrote in June 1985 that even though relief food " is being given in our arāja to save the lives of people who are falling down like leaves, we know that, at present, the number of people who go without lunch or dinner and are falling down and dying on the roads has been increasing because the assistance is insufficient ".²⁵ Boleso Waradā PA also wrote in June 1984 that " daily, more than ten members from each PA, adults and children without distinction, are dying to the extent that burials have become difficult " and that, since the hope that food aid " would make a difference " did not materialise, all those concerned should " find urgent solution ... to the problems of health and famine ".²⁶ The Dāmot - Kaide Waradā PA wrote in February 1985 with all the bureaucratic exasperation possible - deploring the insufficiency of the food aid and concluded:

... Therefore, considering the gravity of the problem we request you that government grain be sent to save lives. Since people, particularly in the gollā parts, have started dying and since we have reported orally and in writing again and again that the peasantry ... faces death by famine, we inform you strongly that we are not to be held responsible for the consequences of inactivity .²⁷

Apart from the bureaucratic excessive concern for self-exoneration, in the background of such investives seems to lie a popular pressure from below. For example, peasants in Dāmot-

Gāle caused the arrest (and detention in custody in Awāseā) of the waradā's administrator and PA chairman in February 1984, having accused them of having hidden the famine in the waradā from higher authorities. The accused were released only after an investigating team from the province had cleared them. ²⁸ Lack of popular pressure from below as well as the bureaucratic bent probably also explains the subdued tone ²⁹ of some communications and the leisurely bureaucratic ³⁰ nature of some others. Popular pressure, not altruism, seems also to explain the particular virulence of gaballe PAs since the indications are that they showed serious moral flaws when it came to relief administration. The executive committee members of Abalā Qolshobo PA (Humbo), for instance, shared relief food among themselves, as well as taking bribery from famished peasants on promise of relief food. ³¹ Executive committee members of Gurmu Ladīcā (Sodo - Zurya) also levied a birr from each PA member, supposedly to cover expenses of "transport and stationery". ³² PA leaders of Sura Koyu (Dāmot - Waide) were also caught red-handed selling improved seeds meant for free distribution. ³³ Poetically inclined peasants in Wallo seem to have captured the essence of corruption among PA leaderships thus:

የገንዘብ ስለገደብ ገንዘብ ገንዘብ
 ተገደብ ስለገደብ ገንዘብ ገንዘብ

[The Darg has potholed the bag of bribery,
 But, having mended it, neglected use it.]

This appears to be at least one of the major reasons why gaballe PAs fast fall into disuse or the executive committee members

become targets of some hostile actions by peasants when famine grips rural society. Doge Māshde PA in May 1985 stated that "... we cannot say the PA itself exists". 35 The waradā administrator of Koyshā reported in August 1984 that among the problems "occasionally encountered then were the weakened state of mass organisations, inability to pay contributions and refusal " to take part in revolutionary activities, " hostility to " members of peasant executive committees" (burning down their houses and " incitement of hatred against them "), and subscribing to " counter - revolutionary views that the revolution produced the problem " of drought and famine. 36 Thus, famine does not merely kill people - it eats into the body - politic of a society; and its state of health under normal conditions decides the society's capacity to resist.

Fear of negative consequences from above and popular pressure from below also spurred state officials at waradā and awrajā levels to send a flood of letters upwards, letters generally more remarkable for the speed at which they were composed than for their content. This can be illustrated with a few typical examples. The Dāmot - Waide Waradā Administration called for the sending of a study team and for food aid to be sent in the meantime on the morrow of the day peasants reported in the office with lumps of hailstone. 37 Two days later, the same office ' conducted ' a field ' study ' of the affected PAs and ' established ' " an urgent " need of food aid for 5071 people. 38 The Qayā - Gabrel Waradā Administration, on the other hand, transmitted Quāchnā Mhuy's request

for food aid and tax exemptions to the awraja administration on the second day of receipt, with a copy of the original letter attached, and called for a "solution".³⁹ The Yifat Awraja Administration exhibited an even more bizarre behaviour in 1980: it first sent to the provincial administration an alarm signal of misery due to drought in Bure - Modaitu and a week later, following a visit to the warada by the administrator, a reassurance that it was not "that serious" after all.⁴⁰ Equivocation is also subtly employed. Gera - Midir Warada Administration called for relief food enough for well over 22,000 people for six months in 1979 but added that it had asked "an obviously insufficient amount, cognizant of the country's serious economic problems due to a conspiracy of internal and external counter - revolutionaries".⁴¹ Very rarely, one comes across sober assessment of conditions in a Warada;⁴² also equally rarely, one finds proper site-level verification of PA reports on crop failure and impending famine before any communication with the next higher rung, even if this should take more than a month. Such was the case with Fursi in 1980.⁴³ These stand out as lonely examples of a good style of work amidst the norm of communicating uninterpreted information down and up as quickly as possible. A quick flow of such information never helped, and was not meant to help, the peasantry under famine.

Awraja and warada state organs and mass organisations became openly obstructive in the area of grain market controls in grain

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Awrajā and waradā state organs and mass organisations became openly obstructive in the area of grain market controls in grain

surplus areas. Mana had some problem of this in relation to Tagulatnā
Bulgā⁴⁴ in 1984. Wolaitā had the same problem with Kulo - Kontā
in 1985.⁴⁵ In fact, the problem was universal,⁴⁶ and as universally
neglected in the fight against famine. Only Shawā, on the initiative
of the Provincial WPE Committee, attempted to use the market
mechanism against famine in 1984 - 85. A meeting of Party First
Secretaries and Administrators of ten awrajas in October 1984
decided to abandon all grain market controls as well as to encourage
local traders, service cooperatives and individual peasants to
move grain from surplus to famine areas.⁴⁷ Even then, Tagulatnā
Bulgā pestered buyers from Yifat, for instance, thus provoking an
angry letter from the latter's Awraja WPE Committee.⁴⁸ The
Provincial WPE Committee Office had to intervene, for example,
for the restitution of grain purchased in Dabra Birhān by a peasant
from Qebe (a PA, in Ewrstānā Jillo), who had purchased it with
money obtained from the sale of his last ox.⁴⁹ Thus the state
machinery could be damagingly obstructive in the struggle against
famine even in the face of clear instructions by a ruling party.

Peasant demands on the state also generate 'war' between
state organs. This may best be illustrated by what appears to
be a monumental diatribe. A letter from the Ministry of Interior
(signed by a division head) informed the ERC in August 1984 that
in Wolaitā 6000 - 8000 people were "currently" dying of famine
and that the problem could not be dealt with the resources of

NGOs in the awraja. The RRC Commissioner, following a quick visit to the awraja but avoiding communication with senior officials of the ministry there, ⁵⁰ claimed ⁵¹ that the ministry's letter did not correspond ' with the reality in the field ' and that such reports merely created " tension and problems on the operations of the RRC ". The Commissioner also claimed that at the root of famine in the awraja was " backward culture, " which " cannot be expected to be solved by food aid ". He finally demanded that either an investigating committee be set up or (this appeared to be the real intent) " the severest measure be taken against those irresponsible individuals versed in the art of exaggerating rumours and terrorising people ". The Commissioner concluded by saying that he would " no longer accept letters from the ministry unless signed by the highest authorities". The ministry apparently prepared itself for an investigation, as a letter from Wolaita Awraja Administration to the Provincial Administration (detailing 16622 people and 30849 livestock dead) clearly indicates. ⁵² In the end, the RRC seems to have backed down since the ministry clearly did not desire to give in easily. No measures were taken against ' individuals ' and nor did an investigation take place. This episode shows how the old state apparatus bred bureaucratic conflict and mutual recrimination rather than serving as an instrument against famine. It also shows the capacity of the famished peasantry to press for its demands as well as how famine places lower state officials between the hammer and the anvil.

PEASANT RESPONSE TO STATE DEMANDS

The state expects annually a minimum sum of 20 birr from a private cultivator in land - use fee and income tax, in accordance with the Tax Proclamation No. 152/1978.⁵³ In practice, peasants in Manz and Wolaita, probably also in Zifat⁵⁴, uniformly pay this minimum amount, whatever the differences in resources. In addition, peasants pay annual association fees and periodically various contributions. In times of famine, it sounds logical that these payments, are at least deferred in areas thus affected. In fact, the first tax proclamation (No. 77/1976) had provided for tax exemptions for peasants under famine⁵⁵ - after appropriate communication to and authorisation from the Ministry of Finance. It seems however, that the state and PAs demanded their pound of flesh even under conditions of the severest famine. Individual peasants simply defaulted; there were no exemptions.

Peasants in Manz paid a total of 1,260,080 birr in taxes in 1984/85 (Ethiopian Financial Year 1977) compared to birr 1,269,328 in 1985/86 (Ethiopian Financial Year 1978).⁵⁶ Unpaid taxes up to July 1986 amounted to only 15,480 birr.⁵⁷ In Wolaitā, the ratio of taxes collected from the peasantry to the amount due (assessed sum) during the years 1979 - 1986 is the following (in parenthesis are Ethiopian Financial Years): 93.1% (1971), 93.8% (1972), 89.6% (1973), 87.2% (1974), 91.1% (1975), 86.3% (1976).

77.5% (1977) and 76.4% (1978).⁵⁸ The figures suggest 'tax exemptions' by default during famine years. Hiwān Salālo of Bahinkochone, for instance, did not pay any taxes or contributions in 1983/84 and 1984/85, while she did so in 1985/86. Māthewos Dārino of Ambā-Badesā, on the other hand, paid taxes and association fees during the two famine years (a total of 52 birr) but could not do so in 1985/86. The old peasant from Bilbo - Badesā paid throughout, however. He made the highest payment, birr 67 (taxes, association fees and a special contribution), in 1984/85. Defaults must have therefore occurred amongst the poorest section of the peasantry. The overall amount of financial payments (taxes, fees, contributions and repayments on loans for fertilisers) made by the peasantry in Volāitā during the 1984 - 85 famine is, however, generally higher compared to the assessed amounts of taxes.

Humbo had paid birr 233597.65 (compared to tax due of birr 241399.65) by January 1984, in taxes, PA fees and repayments on loans for fertilisers.⁵⁹ Sode - Keryā, on the other hand, had paid by June 1984 a sum of birr 535946.10 (compared to tax due of 433820) in taxes, PA fees and salaries to 10 teachers.⁶⁰ The PA's chairman blamed the famine for "the shortfall in taxes and fees," called for relief assistance and, at the same time, stated that "everything is being done to collect the taxes and fees due".⁶¹ Boloso, likewise, had collected by the end of May 1984 birr 1,064,643.50 (compared to tax due of birr 710,000)

in the form of taxes, PA fees, contributions for 'awraja sport,' for residential homes for workers of the warada health centre, for literacy campaign and for the upkeep of literacy campaigners in the warada.⁶² The report also stated: "The quota for the Awraja development programme is being raised earnestly and flowing splendidly."⁶³ The chairman of the Dāmot - Waide Warada PA, on the other hand, stated in 1985 that "although the masses have been hard hit by drought [sic, famine] "they, nevertheless, " because of their indomitable spirit to realise the instructions of the revolutionary government, " had raised birr 288827.75 in taxes alone by early March 1985.⁶⁴ By the end of the financial year, peasants, in the warada had paid 85.7% of the tax due.⁶⁵ Boloso had also paid 97.4% of the annual taxes due by July 1985.⁶⁶ Even Dāmot - Gālo, one of the worst affected waradas, paid 91.2% of the taxes due in 1985.⁶⁷

The cases of Ofā, Humbo, Sodo - Luryā and Boloso also show that the drop in the amount of taxes paid recorded for 1985/86 (1978) is more than misleading. They are said to have paid, respectively, 68.3%, 73.2%, 74.6% and 90.0% of the taxes due in 1985/86.⁶⁸ But, during the same period each paid an additional amount of birr 302698.8 (Humbo)⁶⁹, at least 345,421 (Ofā),⁷⁰ 576,122.15 (Sodo - Luryā)⁷¹ and at least 728,734 (Boloco)⁷² in the form of special contributions and fees. Hivān Salālo paid birr 40 (taxes 20, PA fee 5, and special contribution 15) in 1985/86. What appears to have happened in 1985/86 is therefore

that peasants defaulted on regular taxes because of the load of other state obligations - the special contribution for rehabilitating famine victims.

The state also demands from the peasantry supplies of cereals at fixed prices. The basic principle ostensibly is that only the marketable surplus is involved. How unequivocal official directives were on the matter could, however, be judged from the following excerpt from a directive (November 1984):

... [The task of the Waradā Task Force is] to allocate quotas to each peasant by name and with the type of cereals, amount, date and site of delivery specified ... on the basis of an assessment of each peasant's farmland size and the household's capacity; and to follow up and check on the delivery.
(Emphasis in the original.) 73

The Wolaitā Awrājā Administration despatched the directive, within the day of receipt, to the waradā administrations merely adding the following injunction:

... We admonish you that you, through unremitting agitation, cause the peasants to supply grain to the cereal procurement agencies on the basis of the directive and that you keep us informed on the results every now and then. 74

How this directive materialised in Walaitā and, since it was a universal directive, in Manz and Yifat has not been established. That it could not have failed to be enforced seems, however, unquestionable. The case of Challiyā and Bākotibe in 1985 strongly suggests that peasants, except the most destitute, had no way of escaping such a directive even in the face of a food shortage that augurs famine. ⁷⁵ There does not also seem any question on the readiness of lower state organs to enforce state demands on the peasantry under famine just as they are as ready to echo its demands for food aid to the state.

The state has also employed resettlement as an instrument against famine at least since 1978. ⁷⁶ Up to then, resettlement had focussed, in practice, on alleviating urban unemployment. The 1978 famine in Wallo gave, however, the immediate impulse for using resettlement as a mechanism against famine. Most settlers until 1984 came from Wallo, Tigrāi accounting only for under 2000 households. ⁷⁷ The 1984 - 85 famine caused the most massive relocation of famished peasants (over: 596,758 peasants from five provinces were relocated between November 1984 and March 1986. ⁷⁸ The percentage distribution by province of origin is 63.4% from Wallo, 18.0% from Shawā, 15.0% from Tigrāi, 2.5% from Gojjam and 1.1% from Gondar. Of those from Shawā, about 18.7% (c. 20,000 people) came from Yifat ⁷⁹ and up to 9.3% (8000 - 10,000 people) from Manz. ⁸⁰

The periods of mass relocation of peasants coincided with severe famines. Since famine impels peasants to do what they normally would not do, it also underlay, on the whole, the mass relocation of peasants. There does not seem to exist a greater coercive adversary of man other than famine. Thus, on the whole, famine compelled peasants to accept resettlement. The permanence of this initial positive response depends, however, on life in the new homes - conditions of health, fertility of the land, the social milieu and economic improvement. This is so because peasant positive response given under the duress of famine always carries within it the possibility of renegation. In 1979, for example, five peasants from Wäg, who had settled in Malkā Odā (Bāle), were apprehended in Mans on their way back to Wäg, after a whole year of 'settled' absence.⁸¹ An RRC team detailed to register family members (then back in Wallo) of settlers in Assosā in 1980 found some settlers uncooperative in providing information - "due to minor counter-agitations" - and suspected that some others might have made deliberately false entries. It also mentioned that 100 - 150 of the 6000 settlers had either died or 'evacuated' the sites.⁸² The team found the settlement stations particularly prone to lightning (it saw one dead and 3 wounded, as a result) and concluded: "Since the producer settlers [amrāch sāfārīwoch] have been very scared, anti-lightning defence [!]" must be sent urgently."⁸³ Hence, the phenomenon of abandoning the new homes for the old does not necessarily

indicate human coercion at the sending end, as it may also arise from unwelcome conditions experienced at the receiving end.

News of improved situation back home may also pull back settlers as it does migrants. In Yifāt most migrants had streamed back home from Wallagā, Arsi, etc., by April 1986 on news of the arrival of the rains in the awraja.⁸⁴ Similarly, most of those resettled in Taddalle and Harrolle (Shawa) had returned by September 1986, although none of those relocated in Gambelā, Wallagā, and Meqakal had done so - except for some who returned to visit relatives.⁸⁵ Some settlers from Manz also returned home, while many more came just to visit relatives.⁸⁶ In Wolaitā, only some 500 peasants had been resettled in Gedee, within the province.⁸⁷ Official communications indicate that many of these probably returned home subsequently.⁸⁸ Peasants in Wolaitā had shown generally little inclination for resettlement,⁸⁹ although one warada claimed having registered 13670 people ready for resettlement by early March 1985⁹⁰ - possibly because of the impact of famine. It appears, in general, that resettlement would not attract peasants under 'normal' conditions of poverty but famine impels them to accept it.

The state also adopted cooperativisation as a rural development strategy right at the beginning of the revolution. However, state emphasis on this and real movement towards this end date only since 1979/80. The official position is that experience since

then has shown that the problem in Ethiopia " is not so much a lack of desire by the peasantry [for cooperativisation] as the inability of the state to meet that desire ".⁹¹ A study on Walumara (Shawā), a warada that does not figure in the list of famine-prone areas, appears also to confirm this view: responses to a question on " institutional preference of land cultivation " revealed that (of all male respondents) 60.4% of those with no oxen, 63.1% of those with one each and 49.6% of those with a pair of oxen or more preferred " communally / mostly so " form of land cultivation, while the corresponding rate for female respondents was 85.7%, 55.6% and 63.6%.⁹² Nevertheless, for the whole country there were in 1982 only 1006 agricultural producers' cooperatives (with 60055 member households cultivating 151821 ha. with 24668 oxen), of which only 72 had been registered.⁹³ Walle accounted for 7.5% of the cooperatives, 7.0% of the member households, 3.5% of the cultivated land, 11.6% of the plough oxen and for 5.6% of registered cooperatives, thus coming lower than Shawā, Gojjām, Arsi and Wallagā in all respects except in plough oxen and registered cooperatives. Thus, cooperativisation has only been seen as a ' development ' strategy, not as a specific instrument against famine. Peasants seem to respond to cooperativisation, however, particularly under the pressure of famine.

In 1986, Manz had 6 agricultural cooperatives, most members of which had either an ox each or none;⁹⁴ and the official feeling in the awraja was that while many peasants would have accepted cooperativisation following the 1984 - 85 famine no particular

emphasis had been made on it " for fear of unwelcome failures ".⁹⁵
Information obtained from Zīgā Cooperative (Qayā - Gabrel)⁹⁶ established on the initiative of 8 core members shows the following fluctuations in membership (Ethiopian calendar years): 15 (1972), 30 (1973), 31 (1974), 26 (1975), 23 (1976), 23 (1977), and 29 (1978). Six new members joined the cooperative in 1986 and one member with a pair of oxen in 1984. Since members of the cooperative experienced less hardship than private peasants in 1984 - 85, this fact appears to have attracted new members. The two lowest incomes (of two female members) of members during the 1986 harvest were 5 and 8 quintals.

Agricultural producers' cooperatives in Yifāt⁹⁷ grew as follows (Ethiopian Financial Years): 2 (1972), 11 (1973), 18 (1974), 24 (1975), 40 (1976), 39 (1977), because all members of one cooperative were shifted to another), 42 (1978), and 45(1979). The corresponding average membership growth (households/cooperative) is 43, 32, 30, 30, 60, 86, 91, and 81. Both the number of cooperatives and the average membership increased more during famine years. The official view in the awrājā was that more cooperativisation was possible following the 1984 - 85 famine but " attention " had not been given.⁹⁸ Several peasants in Tiqure and Balchi PAs (Qawat) also confirmed that they would have never thought of joining cooperatives if it were not for the famine.⁹⁹ The information leaves little doubt that peasants under

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famine in Yifāt responded positively to cooperativisation.

In Wolāifa, agricultural cooperatives ¹⁰⁰ numbered 18 (with 2417 member households) in February 1987. Of this, 16 were set up in 1980 and only 2 in 1985 - 86. The 1984 - 85 famine did not thus result in an increased cooperativisation in the awraja. In fact, the experiment seems to have proved counter - productive as the members of cooperatives fared worse than private peasants during the famine and now peasants resent villagisation because, among other things, they see it as a prelude to cooperativisation. ¹⁰⁴ This stand is clearly a reaction to a false start rather than an ' absolute ' position on cooperativisation. In fact, it stands to historical reason that at least the very poor peasants would welcome cooperativisation even in Wolāitā, particularly in the wake of famine.

The peasantry under famine therefore makes unremitting demands on the state for food aid, exudes confidence that the state (always understood as officials higher up and ultimately the Darg) mean to help it and concentrates its fury almost exclusively at lower state officials and workers when assistance fails to materialise. By doing so, the peasantry under famine sets in motion the state organs, even though a fair portion of that motion dissipates itself in bureaucratic wrangle and mutual recrimination. The peasantry also submits to state demands,

pecuniary or developmental, with little obvious rancour. Nevertheless, not only did the old state apparatus clearly fail in preventing famines from assuming grotesque proportions, let alone in tackling the roots of famine, but also appears to have vitiated the confidence and good will of the peasantry during the period.

NOTES

¹Christopher Ehret, "On the Antiquity of Agriculture in Ethiopia," Journal of African History, 20(1979), p.177.

²See, for examples, James Bruce, Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, Vol. III (London: Gregg International Publishers Limited, 1972), pp. 462ff; Mansfield Parkyns, Life in Abyssinia, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1966), pp. 55, 95-98 and 341-342; Plowden, pp. 135 and 208; and Mordechai Abir, Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes (London: Longmans, 1968), p.30.

³See, for examples, Gabrahiwat, pp. 31, 82 - 83 and 90; G. Mackereth, Economic Conditions in Ethiopia (Abyssinia) 1929-31 (London : His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1932), p. 17; F.C. Dunckley, Eight Years in Abyssinia (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1935), pp. 132 and 213; Taddese Woobnoh, "Ethiopia: The Political Economy of Planned Development in a Traditional Monarchy" (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Nebraska, 1979), pp. 61 - 63, 173 and 175.

⁴YAAA, no Ref. No., Tir 22, 1975.

⁵YAAA, no Ref. No., Yākātīt 12, 1975.

⁶MAAA, Ref. No. @ 72/531/156/76, Hāmle 2, 1976.

⁷WAAA, Ref. No. 1269/ ^{vaide} /78, Demot - Waradā Administration to Wolaita Awraja WPE Committee, Hāmle 3, 1978.

⁸YAAA, no Ref. No., Nahāso 2, 1976.

⁹MAAA, no Ref., Magābīt 11, 1971.

- 10 WAAA, no Ref. No., Tiqant 7, 1972.
- 11 WAAA, no. Ref. No., Abalā Farācho PA (Humbo) to Wolāitā Awrajā Administration, Nahāse 13, 1972.
- 12 WAAA, no Ref. No., Hamle 15, 1976.
- 13 WAAA, no Ref. No., Doge Māshdo PA (Koyshā) to Wolāitā Awrajā Administration, Ginbot 8, 1976.
- 14 WAAA, Ref. No. 38/ḡ/ḡ/77, Sholā Kodā PA (Sodo - Zuryā) to Wolāitā Awrajā Administration, Nahāse 21, 1977.
- 15 WAAA, Ref. No. 38/77, Mīyāzyā 28, 1977.
- 16 Enid.
- 17 WAAA, Ref. No. 38/77, Ginbot 1, 1977.
- 18 WAAA, Ref. No. 563/77, Wolāitā Awrajā PA to Provincial PA, Ginbot 27, 1977; and WAAA, Ref. No. 2225/ḡ/223, Wolāitā Awrajā Administration to Provincial Administration, Ginbot 28, 1977.
- 19 WAPAA no Ref. No., Hobīchā Service Cooperative to Humbo Waradā Administration, Hamle 4, 1976.
- 20 WAAA, no Ref. No., Hamle 15, 1976.
- 21 WAAA, Ref. No. 38/77, Ginbot 1, 1977.
- 22 WAAA, no Ref. No., Nahāse 13, 1972.
- 23 YAAA, no Ref. No., Nahāse 2, 1976.
- 24 YAAA, no Ref. No., Yakātīt 12, 1975.
- 25 WAAA, Ref. No. 563/77, Ginbot 27, 1977.
- 26 WAPAA, Ref. No. 1142/ḡ/76, Sane 22, 1976.
- 27 WAPAA, Ref. No. 221/ḡ/77, Dānot - Waide Waradā PA to Wolaita Awraja PA, Yakātīt 20, 1977.
- 28 Informant: Fiḡādu Labane
- 29 WAAA, Ref. No. 880/76, Ginbot 14, 1976.

- 30 WAPAA, Ref. No. 895/76, Sodo - Surya Waradā FA to Sodo - Surya Waradā Administration, Ginbot 6, 1976.
- 31 WAPAA, Ref. No. 7503/76, Humbo Waradā FA to Wolaita Awrājā FA, Hamle 4, 1976.
- 32 WAPAA, Ref. No. 1264/76, Sodo - Surya Waradā FA to Wolaitā Awrājā FA, Nahāse 22, 1976.
- 33 WAAA, Ref. No. 1292/ /77, Dāmet - Waide Waradā Administration to Wolaitā Awrājā Administration, Ginbot 9, 1977.
- 34 Informant: Alazayahu Asfaw, Walle RRC Office, head of the Relief Section for several years.
- 35 WAAA, no Ref. No., Ginbot 8, 1976.
- 36 WAAA, Ref. No. 1332/76, Nahāse 11, 1976.
- 37 WAAA, Ref. No. 1269/ /78, Dāmet - Waide Waradā Administration to Wolaitā Awrājā Relief Coordinating Committee, Hamle 5, 1978.
- 38 WAAA, Ref. No. 1272/ /78, Dāmet - Waide Waradā Administration to Wolaitā Awrājā Relief Coordinating Committee, Hamle 7, 1978.
- 39 WAAA, Ref. No. 143/506, Gayā - Gabrel Waradā Administration to Mans Awrāja Administration, Tigint 9, 1972.
- 40 WAAA, Ref. No. 152/2957/72, Mīyāzyā 6, 1972; and WAAA, Ref. No. 556/3044/72, Yifāt Awrājā Administration to Provincial Administration, Mīyāzyā 14, 1972.
- 41 WAAA, Ref. No. 967/1245, Nagābit 8, 1971.
- 42 WAAA, Ref. No. 1047/71, Fāhsās 24, 1971; and WAAA, Ref. No. 1332/76, Nahāse 11, 1976.
- 43 WAAA, Ref. No. 15/203/73, Hidār 15, 1973.
- 44 Personal knowledge.
- 45 WAAA, Ref. No. 1590/ /3, Wolaitā Awrājā Administration to Kulo - Konta Awrājā Administration, Nagābit 10, 1977.
- 46 Personal knowledge: Cash-for-food project beneficiaries in Derā initially faced this problem within the same awrajā (Shilalo, Arsi) in 1984; peasants in Agārfā (Bale) faced the

problem in relation to a neighbouring woradā in Arsi; peasants from Badlā - Balāntā (Walle) also faced similar problems in Tēch Gāint (Gāint, Gendar) in the same year; peasants from south - western Walle similarly faced the same problem in Cojjūm in 1984 - at least until the AMC purchased its full quota; etc.

47 YARCCP, Ref. No. ^V9/25/15/77, Hidār 3, 1977.

48 Ibid.

49 Informant: Balān Dādī.

50 Informant: Fiqādu Sabano.

51 WAAA, Ref. No. 21/3/16/115, Dawit Wolde Giorgis (RRG Commissioner) to Brig. - General Tāye Tilāhun (Minister of Interior), Nahāse 15, 1976.

52 WAAA, Ref. No. 2777/2/3, Nahāse 19, 1976.

53 Melaku Kifle, "Agricultural Taxation and its Contribution to Capital Formation in Ethiopia" (MSc Thesis in Economics, Addis Ababa University, 1982), p.40.

54 Information on taxation in Yifāt has not been obtained.

55 WAAA, Ref. No. 2443/8/32/72, Sīdāmo Provincial Administration, the Wolāitā Awraja Administration, Hidār 8, 1969.

56 Awraja Administration.

57 Informant: Getāchaw Alāyu.

58 Based on data obtained from Wolāitā Awraja Domestic Revenue Office.

59 WAPAA, Ref. No. 693/76, Humbo Waradā PA to Wolāitā Awraja PA, Tir 21, 1976.

60 WAPAA, no Ref. No., Sodo - Zuryā Waradā PA Report to Wolāitā Awraja PA, Sane 15, 1976.

61 Ibid.

62 WAPAA, Ref. No. 112/0/7/76, Sane 15, 1976.

63 Ibid.

64 WAPAA, no Ref. No., Dānot - Waide Warādā PA Report to Wolaita Awrājā PA, Yakatit 30, 1977.

65 Wolaitā Awrājā Domestic Revenue Office.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 WAPAA, Ref. No. 799/78, Hambo Warādā PA to Wolaitā Awrājā PA, Hamle 5, 1978.

70 WAPAA, no Ref. No., Ofā Warādā PA to Wolaitā Awrājā PA, Miyaṣyā 15, 1978.

71 WAPAA, Ref. No. 1186 / H / 7 / 78, Sodo - Juryā Warādā PA to Wolaita Awrājā PA, Hamle 11, 1978.

72 WAPAA, Ref. No. 1147 / 7 / 78, Boloso Warādā PA to Wolaitā Awrājā PA, Sane 29, 1978.

73 WAAA, Ref. No. /802/17/24, Sidamo Provincial Administration to Wolaitā Awrājā Administration, Hidar 7, 1977.

74 WAAA, Ref. No. 550 / 3, Wolaitā Awrājā Administration, to the seven warada administrations, Hidar 8, 1977.

75 See " An Appraisal of the Causes of the Current ' Food Shortage' in Parts of Jebatena Hetcha Awraja " (RRC, July, 1985), pp. 2-4 and 9. (mimeographed)

76 For the composition and number of settlers during the years 1976 - 1984, see RRC, pp. 157, 158 and 161.

77 Balata Ergate, " Ya Tigrāi Safārīwoch Enqisqase " (RRC, 1972), p.3. (mimeographed)

78 Settlers' Administration and Cooperatives Department (RRC).

79 Informant : Baldā Dādī.

- 80 Informant : Getāchaw Alāyu.
- 81 WAAA, Ref. No. 362/8277, Mana Awrajā Administration to ERC, Maskaram 28, 1972.
- 82 Balata G. Giorgīs and Girmā Baqalle, " Ba Assosā Ya Wallo Safāriwooh Ya Betasab nā Ya Nibrat Humetā Zirzir Marajā " (ERC, 1972), pp. 1 - 2. (mimeographed)
- 83 Ibide., p.3.
- 84 Informants : Several peasants and officials in the awrajā.
- 85 Informant: Baldā Dādī.
- 86 Informant: Getāchaw Alāyu
- 87 Informant: Fiqadu Zabane.
- 88 WAAA, Ref. No. /385/ 2/29, Sīdāmo Provincial Administration to Wolāitā Awrajā Administration, Tāhsās 7, 1978; WAAA, Ref. No. 2587/ /3, Wolāitā Awrajā Administration to Humbo Warada Administration, Hamle 25, 1978; and WAAA, Ref. No. /9/ 2/29, Sīdāmo Provincial Administration to Wolāitā Awrajā Administration, Tāhsās 10, 1979.
- 89 WAAA, Ref. No. 503/ /78, Chairman of Dāmot - Waide Warādā Resettlement Sub - Committee to Dāmot - Waide Warādā PA, Tāhsās 3, 1978.
- 90 WAPAA, no Ref. No., Dāmot - Gale Waradā PA to Wolāitā Awrajā PA, Yakatit 30, 1977.
- 91 " Speech to Rural Development Workers, " p.8.
- 92 Fasil and Asmerom, P.9, table A - VI.
- 93 Tegegne and Tennassie, p.88, table 47.
- 94 Informant: Dullā Wadājo
- 95 Informant: Getāchaw Alāyu

96 Informants: Begūshās Hāmo, treasurer of the cooperative, and several other members.

97 Yifāt Avraja MOA Office.

98 Informant: Balda Dādī

99 Oral communication in a field work in 1986.

100 Solāitā Avrajā MOA Office.

101 Informants: Several peasants and officials in the avrajā.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In understanding famine, there is no need for counterposing nature to society because such a contraposition has little objectivity. Society, any society, cannot be imagined apart from nature and the effects of nature on society cannot occur unmediated by the constitution of each given society. No society is free from periodic threats by adverse natural phenomena. However, the differences in the constitution or in the modes of production of societies determine, in the final analysis, the scale of the occurrence and the possible social effects of the shocks of nature, as they also determine the effective exploitation of the opportunities provided by nature. In other words, society, being the conscious element in the unity with nature, ultimately decides the social outcome of natural phenomena. Besides, since famine in times of peace is characteristic of only pre-capitalist class societies (famine in pre-class societies being a realm of speculation), exploitative production relations explain famine only in terms of their negative impact on the development of the productive forces - i.e., not in the existence of exploitation per se.

Feudal agrarian relations and the operations of the state in Ethiopia under the old regime siphoned off resources from the

rural society without providing for the development of the productive forces in agriculture and, thus, necessarily reproduced the basis for famine.

The Ethiopian revolution, through the land reform, freed the peasantry from feudal agrarian relations. It, on the other hand, failed to transform peasant agriculture or failed to provide for the development of the productive forces in agriculture during the years 1975 - 1985, despite a clear strategy of social evolution. In effect, the revolution instituted peasant agriculture based on family labour with the resources of the family during the period, a condition which also partly obtained under the old regime in the form of the rist - owner cultivator. Besides, the peasant, on this narrow foundation, had to meet the demands of the revolution and state as well as satisfy his family needs and the requirements of economic reproduction.

The constitution of the Ethiopian rural society during the years 1975-1985 therefore remained dependent completely on the clemency of nature. This explains how, during the period, adverse natural phenomena, drought and pests, combined or independently, necessarily led to crop failures and crop failures inevitably to famine. Famine in 1975 - 1985 was therefore as much, if not more, social as natural and, hence, reflected essentially the failure of the Ethiopian society and state.

Famine does not merely kill individuals. It eats into the body - politic of a society. As such, famine drives the message home, more strongly than any other adversary, that the given society has inbuilt flaws and that it has to change into a higher formation if adverse natural phenomena are to be tamed decisively through effective use of available resources. In Ethiopia, this message has acquired a societal dimension. The government appears determined to root out famine. The peasantry, on the whole, has also shown willingness to follow state guidance in solving the problem of famine. The coincidence, permanence, strength and results of this determination of the government and willingness of the peasantry will, however, depend ultimately on how appropriately the state relates itself to the peasantry. This is so because the task does not consist of mere increase in budgetary allocations for agricultural inputs but in a complete reorganisation of the rural society as rapidly as possible.

The problem of famine in Ethiopia thus hinges on the question of the state as much as on the question of the peasantry. In fact, the question of the state must necessarily be resolved first before the peasant question can be tackled meaningfully. In the years 1975 - 1985, famine reminded Ethiopia that the past impaired its future as much as it overshadowed its present. This apparent puzzle must be explained on the basis of the continuity of the

old state apparatus, the only decisive constant that linked the past with the present. The maintenance of the stunted productive forces in agriculture or the inability of the revolution to tackle the basis of the rural society comprehensively of course, not immediately, but, surely, over the decade - does not lend itself to any other basic explanation. The Ethiopian example has thus furnished a further piece of evidence to the existing knowledge that for a steady, progressive, social transformation to happen, the conquest of political power must entail the replacement of the old state apparatus with one appropriate to the social tasks that made that conquest necessary.

Famine in Ethiopia can be rooted out given the resolution of the question of the state on the basis of the interests of the working people, because only a state apparatus that treasures the interests of the working class and the peasantry can be expected to relate itself appropriately to the peasantry. This would mean instituting a democracy that involves the working people in state administration and, thereby, enables them to shed all that is backward in them. In other words, a truly popular democracy that crushes everything obsolete is required to set in motion the ingenuity and passions of the masses in the fight against famine. Ethiopia's panacea for famine therefore consists in, primarily, instituting and upholding consistent popular democracy. This is also the only guarantee for her continuity as an independent, united and respected member of the family of states.

If Ethiopia somehow founders on the question of consistent popular democracy, however, it will inevitably founder in everything else, including on the problem of famine, in the foreseeable future. The signs are it most probably will not and, correspondingly, famine most probably will become part of our history, not of our future.

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