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FAMINE AND RESETTLEMENT IN ETHIOPIA

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Introduction

I began working on a book entitled *Famine and the Structure of Obligation* some years back hoping to come to grips with some perplexing moral questions connected with relief assistance and with the basis of the individual's and the state's obligations towards the unfortunate many who live in absolute poverty. The book is a philosophical work which has limited appeal to professional philosophers and to those concerned with, and intrigued by, troublesome indifference of people and institutions in affluent societies to those living in miserable conditions.

I soon realized the necessity to address oneself on a level that is practical and imbued with few theoretical constructs and jargons, with to explain the causal mechanisems of famine in relation to a country which I regard to be infested with a famine-prone economy. That necessity was heightened when the present military government proposed resettlement scheme as a lasting solution to famine; and when it has ordered the closure of higher learning institutions, of which I was a member at the time, to participate in the programme in areas considered by the previous regime as punishment locations for undesirable or deviant school teachers, police officiers and civil officials. Many of us have accepted the assignment with stoic silence hoping that some good will come out of it for our compatriots who were suffering from the worst famine in Ethiopian history since the Great famine of 1888-92.

That hope was quickly turned into a pious wish; and our experience began to resemble what seems like a cruel joke. Neither the authorities nor the campaigners had any idea what we really were supposed to do. I thought it was important to follow the events closely and to study the area and the people once the opportunity has availed itself. Upon our return, I became convinced that the programme is not at all meant a solution to the prevailing famine nor to a one which most certainly will occur in a near future. Consequently, I felt it was imperative to examine the causes of famine in Ethiopia and whether or not this proposed solution is an appropriate one. This book is, therefore, a result of this effort.

Chapter 1 and 2 are attempts to define the term 'famine' from a more general theoretical perspective, and to consider the viability of some important theories of famine in order to understand the causal mechanisms involved in generating famines in Ethiopia. I reject these theories on the grounds that they fail to consider unique features of Ethiopia's political economy, and therefore, one has to begin analysis of causation by describing first the political economy of the country and see what has gone wrong. This will provide us with the genesis of famine in the country. To this end, chapter 3 deals with the salient features of the country 's economy prior to the revolution in 1974.

Chapter 4 identifies some ailments in the economy and chapter 5 attempts to show how these ailments were major contributors to the emergence of the famine in the 1970s. In chapter 6, after examining the efforts made by the military regime to correct these ailments, I argue that the institutional measures taken by the PMAC to combat famine have exacerbated those ailments altogether. As a result, it was inevitable for another famine to besiege the country in almost less than a decade after the earlier famine. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the second set of alternative measure of famine avoidance, namely resettlement, by taking our case study in Metekel as a frame of reference. This programme, I argue, reintroduces the very same problem which the PMAC is claiming to avoid. It becomes apparent that unless the state is willing to compromise its position with regard to its relation with pure pastoralists, semi-pastoralists, shift cultivators and sedentary agriculturalists, another famine in a not too distance future is inevitable.

In Chaper 9, I propose some alternative measures of rural development which, given the willingness of the state to assist the marginalized people, could offer assistance to famine prevention. That approach which I call 'a security system approach' is basically a methodology of management of resources by becoming 'inward-looking' rather than 'outward-looking'. I hope that in the end many concerned people would be able to draw some lessons from this modest effort, even if it means to reconfirm what they already know. I tried to make it readable to both development theorists and development practitioners, and sometimes, I am afraid not very succesfully. This does not mean that it would be of no interest to the general and uninitiated public. This category of people would I hope also get a glimpse of the decade of in the recent history holocaust of Ethiopia

Chapter 1: What is Famine?

One of the most significant problems facing the sub-Saharan region of Africa is food shortage. This problem is manifested in the form of undernourishment, malnutrition, and famine. These, in return, contribute to the decline of productivity in the spheres of material and intellectual production. The decline in these spheres turns out to be a prelude to mass starvation. Hence, these countries appear to be engaged in what seems to be an insurmountable vicious circle.

Food crisis, or more specifically famine, has enormous consequences on the country's ability to survive. It causes various social, political, economical, cultural and psychological disarray on the country's population. Displacement, forced or voluntary migration,total debilitation of the rural work force, low productivity and loss of human lives are only the visible outcomes of famine. Yet, in spite of what has been said about the ill effects of famine, it is not clear what this term actually designates.

In order, therefore, to come to grips with the problem of famine, it is of a paramount importance that we have a clear understanding of what the concept 'famine' designates. However, not many people would agree with the need for this kind of conceptual clarity. In their minds it might just be an exercise in futility. No doubt a pragmatic attitude of this sort has certain advantages, but does not quite safisfy our desire to know. Nor is it something that is universally shared. I should think that if everyone means the same thing when using the concept 'democracy' - it would have eased the global political tension in display at the present. People have different conceptions of democracy, as well as different approaches towards establishing a democratic society. By the same token, as we shall see below, the concept 'famine' has different connotation for different people. The failure to come to a more or less common understanding could have an adverse effect on the policy which we are trying to formulate, or to remedying the problem of famine. The solution requires far more radical measures than preseat governments are willing to concede. Any measure one proposes, however, requires *some* conceptual clarity - and its success to some extent depends on it.

'We know very well what famine is when we see a "famine victim" is a locution too often invoked by some people to dodge the effort of defining what famine is. No matter how confident we are, it is utterly difficult to tell the difference between two people, one suffering from famine and the other from Anaraxia, only by looking at them. This suggests that some related concepts lack clear cut boundaries. Moreover, the criterion of telling their difference is not at all clear. If the criterion of 'seeing a famine victim' is a sufficient mark to distinguish the two cases, then it is quite possible that it has failed us on many occasions. It is not at all clear that we are able to tell what famine is, if and when we

see a famine victim. For one thing, unless one has a mastery of a concept, say 'elephant', either through ostensive definition or through a set of descriptions, it will be hard to see how one could tell what an elephant is; nor distinguish it from a horse. For instance, if I want to teach a child what a 'table' is - I could do it by pointing to the object designated by the concept 'table' or/and by giving it all kinds of descriptions which more or less depict what a 'table' is. And if I want to make sure whether the child has any mastery of the concept, then I will ask the child to identify the object, ie. to use the concept. A sufficient evidence to reject the child's claim of mastery of the concept is when it wrongly identifies another object. This clearly shows that the child has not understood the concept.

One could respond to this by saying that we see famine victims either on television or on billboards. Moreover, every time we see them people explain to us what we are watching. One would, therefore, raise the question: what more is required to know what, famine is? This suggests the possibility of knowing 'what famine is, from witnessing 'the effects of famine'. However, it is possible to show that some other things could display similar effects without being famine, i.e.,we can imagine a case, call it X, where X has all the features generally associated with famine, but fails to be X. In other words, one has to show that there is a necessary connection between the concept 'famine' and the set of descriptions generally associated with it.It is doubtful whether such a connection is to be found; and even if there is one, we still cannot say to *know* what famine is. For a knowledge claim entails an enormous degree of certainty, whereas in this case we could encounter a good deal of probability of failing to get it right.

Furthermore, it can plausibly be argued that appearances, behavioral expressions, and the like, are not sufficient criteria for identifying what the object really is. Consider 'water' for instance: how do we tell whether it really is water and not some other kind of substance like acid, only by taking note of its appearance. This criterion would not be a conclusive one in allowing us to distinguish them. Similarly, it would be difficult to distinguish between a famin victim and one who is undergoing the experience of Anaraxia merly on the basis of phenomenal properties.

In general, we more or less know what famine does to people; and unless we intervened by doing something about its causes, the magnitude of human suffering will continue unabated. In order to prescribe a proper solution to the problem it is of a considerable importance that we know exactly what famine is. It is, therefore, this concern which has motivated us to pursue its definition at some length.

1.1. Criteria of a Good Definition

The term 'famine' has been defined by people in a variety of ways. These definitions display considerable differences and some elements of similarity. The differences stem, in part, from the kind of professional orientation which one is familiar with. In a sense, these differences reflect the author's background training or theoretical commitment. A nutritionist, for instance, wants to define 'famine' by reference to insufficient food consumption or by a continual decline in caloric intake. An economist would define it by either emphasizing the decline in food availability in a given region, society or by a reference to the structure of a market or entittlement. And the list, of course, goes on. These definitions, *prima facie* appear to be different. But what we are interested to know is that if they really are different; and what will the consequences be if indeed they are.

It is not really unusual for people of different orientations to define technical terms or concepts relative to their background; and to even introduce new concepts to facilitate their undertakings in relation to their disciplines. Physicsts, for example, define 'matter' differently from philosophers. Are both of them referring to the same or different reality when using the same theroretical term? Rather, they are referring to the same reality but their perceptions of this reality are different? For a long time, philosophers not only disagree about having a common referent when the concept 'matter' is used by philosophers and physicists; but also maintain that the concept does not denote the same entity for physicsts across different paradigmes. Hence, they suggest that the reality of physicists is different from that of philosophers.[1].

If this claim is correct, then it would be utterly difficult, among other things, for people to communicate, let alone envisage the possibility of progress in science or in knowledge. However, we witness progress in science and even have achieved better understanding of things which we had no good grasp of before. Even though philosophers stipulate definitions for certain concepts or introduce new terminologies in their discipline, none the less, their conception of matter is not incompatible with that of the physicsts. No doubt, the philosophical conception of matter has a wider *scope* than the physical conception of it; and that is largely due to the *nature* of the respective disciplines. That is, the 'special sciences' are concerned with *some* aspects of reality and philosophy is concerned with the relationship between that which is material and that which is non-material. Hence, it follows that the scope of philosophy is wider than the special sciences.

It is, therefore, not surprising that when different professionals talk about famine, they define this concept vis-à-vis their background disciplines. But it remains to be seen as to whether these definitions *are*

different from, or incompatible with, one another. And if they are, then it follows that policy measures which we take may not make a big dent on the problem of famine. Nor formulating a consistent policy towards the dissolution of the problem is feasible. A holistic approach to famine will, perhaps, lends us some insight into the correct understanding of it, and its durable solution. One effort towards this involves a careful examination of various proposed definitions and see if, in fact, they complement one another. A very helpful way of approaching the problem is to first see if any one of the definitions of famine is self-sufficient. This requires identifying a particular definition that is both necessary as well as sufficient. A good definition in this case will then be one which has a *scope* wide enough to accommodate various aspects of famine, and the claims made by these definitions ought to be consistent with each other. More importantly, the definitions must be *precise* or *determinate* so that they would allow us to prescribe correct solution to the problem. In other words, what we consider to be a good definition of famine must meet the following three requirements:

1. Its scope must be wide.
2. Claims which purported to fall within the scope must be consistent.
3. The definition must be precise or determinate.

These three requirements constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for defining what famine is. The next question then appears to be: is there any definition which meets these requirements? To determine this, we need to examine the various proposed definitions.

1.2. Definitions of 'Famine'

The most ordinary definition of 'famine' is the one of course, people found in dictionaries. Various dictionaries define 'famine' as 'scarcity of food producing hunger and starvation',[2] or as 'an extreme scarciy of food; broadly any great shortage'.[3] These definitions turn out to be unsatisfactory on two counts: first, their scope is too narrow in the sense that it ignores, among other things, the scale of calamity, its duration, the area and so on. Second, they are not precise in the sense that they could equally apply to starvation and malnutition. Let us now turn our attention to more substantive definitions.

Definition 1 "Famine is the most negative state of food consumption under which people, unable to replace even the energy they lose in basal metabolism, consume whatever is stored in their bodies; that means they literally consume themselves to death. Famine is a general and widespead, prolonged and persistent, extraordinary and

insufferable hunger lasting for several months and affecting the majority of the rural population over a more or less extensive area, resulting in total social and economic disorganisation and mass death by starvation. In defining famine, we are not concerned with specific hunger, but with general hunger...Famine is general hunger affecting large numbers of people in rural areas as a consequence of the non availability of food for a relatively long time".[4]

Definition 2 A phenomena "occurring when a decline in the flow of food to households becomes irreversible so that, without outside intervention, people starve to death".[5]

Definition 3 "A temporary, but severe, local shortage of food is called a famine. It is generally the result of an almost complete crop failure in an area of subsistence or near subsistence farming. This failure can be caused by one or more factors which, in the past, have included prolonged drought, e.g., failure of the annual rains, untimely frost or a severe attack by insects".[6]

Definition 4 "Famine may be defined as the regional failure of food production or distribution systems, leading to sharply increased mortality due to starvation and associated disease".[7].

Definition 5 "A famine is usaully agreed to be a general, acute, and extreme shortage of food within a region, which is not relieved by supplies of food being sent in because of inadeguate distribution. Famines cause death from starvation and disease, which follow the extreme shortage of food, calories and nutrients. Infections readily take their toll under these circumstances".[8]

Definition 6 "A famine occurrs when many people in the same place and at the same time lack resources to provide them with command over foodstaff, for example, adequate income, interpersonal solidarity, and institutuional aid can no longer cope with the situation".[9]

Definition 7 "Famine might be effectively defined as the community syndrome which results when social, economic and administrative structures are already under stress and are further triggered by one, or several discrete disruptions which accelerate the incidence of many symptoms, or crisis adjustments of which one is epidemic malnutrition".[10]

Definition 8 "Famine is considered to represent a general state of prolonged foodgrain intake deficiency per capita giving rise to a number of accompanying substates (symptoms) involving individuals and the community that ultimately lead, directly or indirectly, to excess deaths in a region or in a country as a whole. These substates include: increase in interregional status, eating of alternative "famine foods", mental disorientation, "wandering", uprooting of families, separation of families, transfer of assets, and breakdown of traditional social bonds. Among these, crime, disease, loss of body weight, changes in nutritional status, and eating of alternative "famine foods" can combine to produce significant excess deaths".[11]

Definition 9 "The word, 'famine' is used to refer to a societal crisis induced by the breakdown of the accustomed availability of and access to basic foods, on a scale sufficient to threaten the lives of a significant number of people... The crisis thus defined is limited in time, being of an episodic career with three distinct phases: an initial period of gestation in wich a number of factors converge in attenuating food supplies; a period in which the inaccessibility of food reaches critical dimensions in terms of human survival and creates modes of behaviour which diverge extensively from the accustomed routines; and a period of recovery when one or more contributory factors or trends cease to operate and there is a return to the accustomed (or modified) patterns of access to food; or else dissolution of settlements and migration of groups or individuals subject to famine take place".[12]

Definition 10 "Famine is an abonormal event, characterised by a breakdown in social relations giving rise to epidemic starvation and excess mortality. It is caused initially by a severe disruption in normal economic activity, principlally but not exclusively brought about by vagaries of climate, which leads to expectations of future scarcities of food among producers, traders and consumers. This in turn leads to modes and the erosin of traditional social bonds which themselves contribute to the development of famine conditions. When famine conditions have become fully established, so that large assets and options and have began to starve, there will be widespread mortality in excess of normal levels unless the authorities or other outside agencies

intervene with effetive relief and rehabilitation aid. Excess mortality is concentrated among certain classes, social groups or households members who are particularly vulnerable socio economically or culturally. A corollary to this is the profit which can be made from famine by other dominat classes, social groups or households".[13]

These definitions of famine represent, in some respects, a wide range of views and academic orientations. This is not to suggest that they are exhaustive; but for the reasons of economy, emphasis, and the like, one has to arbitarily place a cut off point and leave out other definitions. We have already seen at the beginning of this section that dictionary definitions were rejected on the grounds that they do not meet at least some of our requirements. What we shall be pursuing in the following paragraphs is to see if any one of the proposed definitions are any good; i.e. determine whether any one of them meets our requirements.

I suggest that none of them does. Before we attempt to show this, we need to make some preliminary remarks pertinent to our requirements. First, there is no inconsistency or incompatibility between any one of these definitions. This entails that one of our requirements, namely condition 2 *appears* to be met by all of them as they now stand. However, the final verdict on this issue would have to be postponed until later, for we must first determine that the proposed definitions are inadequate and then suggest an alternative definition which meets the basic requirements. Consequently, the question of consistency or inconsistency arises only after having defined, as it were, the domain of discourse. For example, suppose we have a set and we thus define it as that which consists of elements, say x, y, z excluding a null set. Now, we want to know if the set is a consistent set. To determine this, we have to know what x, y, z, are or standing for. So similarly, with respect to our definition, we have to specify the elements which fall within its scope and see thereafter if the scope contains inconsistent claims. If it does, then we reject the definition entirely or salvage it by rejecting some elements which do not cohere with the rest in the scope. This leads us then to our second point: how wide the scope must be? In other words, we need to specify the kind of variables our scope should embrace. Thus, the question of specificity entails that we identify the key points in what we take to be a consistent and a precise definition of famine. To this end, one has to begin examining the aforementioned definitions and see if they share any common elements between them.

Our initial survey of these definitions suggests what appears to be a startling point: no common element is being shared by these definitions. Not even the term 'starvation', which is commonly associated with famine is mentioned by all definitions concerned. This may seem to suggest the relative importance which the authors attach to whatever point they are purporting to prove. At any rate, even though it is

commonly agreed that famine implies starvation, nevertheless not all of them are willing to incorporate it with their definitions. An argument can be made to show that not only this element is indespensable to any definition of famine, but also that a failure to do so would cause a sufficient ground for dismissing it as being too narrow.

Except for definitions 7 and 10, all of them agreed that a decline in food availability or a shortage of food is one of the key terms of reference in defining famine. Other most popular terms of reference include massive death toll and a number of people, region or community, duration and starvation. Few authors seem to consider distribution, subsistence agricultural techniques, socio economic and administrative arrangements, depleted assets, and rural population as key terms in defining famine. It is interesting to note here that (1) even though famine is, under *normal condition*, a phenomena which appears to affect the rural population only one definition takes note of this; and (2) the reason that obvious point such as this is not mentioned has to do, to a large extent, with one's desire to advance a causal theory of famine. For instance, if one wants to establish the causes of famine by invoking entitlement failures as a reason, then an explanation is not needed as to why the rural and not the urban population experiences famine. For regardless of where one resides, what makes the individual vulnerable to famine is the nature and size of the assets of the individual.

We shall discuss the causes of famine, in some details, when we get to Chaper 2. It suffices to note at this point that most of the definitions appear to be 'theory-laden' in the sense that they suggest some causal account of famine. Moreover, depending upon what causal theory one wants to advance, the definitions appear to be heavily influenced by it and are contingent upon the underlying theories.The task before us is, however, to establish a definition which meets our requirements and in the absence of one to suggest an operational definition of famine. It is our contention that none of the proposed definitions is acceptable. However, before undertaking the task of pursuing an alternative definition, we need to show why they are unacceptable.

Definition 1, though in many respects has a wider scope than the rest, except perhaps for Definition 10, attempts to synthesise both the physical impact of starvation on the individual and on the population of that locality. The problem with this definition is not so much with scope but rather with a lack of precision. For example, a rural population is one of the significant aspects of the definition. Though it is the only definition which mentions this point, none the less, it is not at all obvious that famine is under any condition, an exclusively rural phenomenon. The Netherlands famine of 1944 is not exactly a rural phenomenon.In fact, paradoxical as it may seem, it was confined largely to urban areas. The Dutch government has repeatedly appealed to the local Nazi authorities for a permission to transport grain from the rural north and east to the urban south and west, but they declined the permission. Consequently, nearly 10,000 lives were lost in this famine. It is not true that famine is exclusively a rural phenomenon. It can happen in urban areas. Therefore, it is important to add an important proviso, namely, that under normal condtions it is a rural phenomenon. This will not then rule out that under conditions of war or some other similar events, it can happen to urban areas. The Nazis have deliberately wanted the Dutch people to starve to death, and no doubt have succeeded.

Even if one still maitains that famine is a rural phenomenon, i.e. affecting the rural population, it is not at all obvious that every one in that region, regardless of resources gap, will be affected. In other words, it is difficult to suppose that the landlord who lives in famine affected rural area and who has managed to hoard plenty of food grain in his reseve will experience starvation, much less famine. I suggest, therefore, that this definition lacks the precision to specify which category of the rural population is *most* vulnerable to famine.

Definition 2 attempts to define famine as a process in a decline of flow of food culminating in the outbursts of famine. The interesting aspect of this definition is its way of seeing famine as a persistent, prolonged and dynamic process where a decline in food flow in and of itself does not suggest an early warning for an outburst of famine. But this definition leaves out too many variables. For instance, it makes no reference at all to the scale or magnitude of famine, to regions, to a category of people, to socio-economic variables and the like. While this definition is specific in its effort to underscore the dynamic element of famine it fails to include a number indespensable items for any definiton of famine.

Defintion 3 has the virtue of referring to duration but like Definition 2, has a narrow scope. It fails to include the physical effect of starvation on individuals. It is also necessarily associated with crop failure; where if it true, would mean that whenever there is a crop failure anywhere, say for instance, the United States, then there will be famine. The empirical evidence seems to suggest that crop failure is not a necessary condition

of *all* famine. It may or may not be in *some* cases of famine i.e. some does not imply all; but the other way round. Hence, unless we can establish that famine is always preceeded by crop failure, this definition would remain subjected to a lack of precision.

Definition 4 also suffers from similar defects in the sense that it neither has a wide scope nor is it precise. It does not have a wide scope because it fails to mention time or duration which is an important factor among others. It is not precise because a sheer regional failure in food production or distribution does not necessarily suggest famine. It could mean, among other things, a rise in food prices and other commodities without involving famine.

The scope of Definition 5 is limited in very many respects as well as lacks precision. It commits more or less similar errors to be found in our earlier definitions we have covered. Definition 6, as well as 7 and 10 present us with significantly different definitions of famine. That is, they attempt to define it by reference to a breakdown in relations where such relations can be social, economic, political or communal. For instance, Definition 6 is suggesting that famine is a function of people's inability to command a requisite amount of food. It makes reference to the magnitude of the problem in terms of excessive deaths which is *always* associated with famine.

Definition 7 is not only narrow in scope but altogether vague in its usage of key concepts, such as 'community syndrome'. This is guite a loaded concept which admits various interpretations, and like many other phenomenon, it is the result of stress stemming from the economic structrure of a society. Hence, unless we are clear about what a 'community syndrome'really amounts to, we obviously cannot assign the status of precision to this definition. Definition 9 too, is marked by a characteristic of vagueness. It attempts to define famine by an equally openended concept 'accustomed food availability'. That is, it is presumed that famine occurrs when there is a breakdown in 'accustomed food availability'. But whatever this expression means, it is still not a sufficient condition for defining famine; for this breakdown need not entail famine condition. Consequently, it may or may not say anything about famine.

In the light of the above considerations, it appears that none of the aforementioned definitions has sufficiently defined famine. Credit is, however, due to all of them in that they have at least put forward some necessary conditions for defining famine. Admittedly, some definitions, particularly 1 and 10, have come closer to meeting our requirements than others. Some are rejected because their scope is too narrow and others are subjected to the same fate because they fail to achieve precision; and some were rejected on both counts. The task before us is to explore the possibility of providing a definition of famine wich meets both necessary and sufficient conditions. That is, a definition which is precise and has a wide scope.

1.3. Operational Definition of Famine

Let us begin with a tentative operational definition of famine and see if it satisfies these requirements.

Definition A:
Famine is a widespread phenomenon affecting *some* of the population of a country or a region for a limited period through starvation and attendant deseases - resulting either from a shortage of food or from individuals lacking resources or from a society lacking resources or from non-democratic socio economic & political arrangements of a society or from war. Its effects include-massive deaths, forced migration enfeeblement, malnutrition and an overall poor level of productivity.

Our initial reaction to this definition is that it appears to be just as vague as many of the definitions we have considered above. Furthermore, it appears not to be committed to any therory of the causes of famine since it is stated in a series of disjunction. But one may suggest that stating it this way may provide us with a wider scope than any of the earlier definitions.

The definition, indeed, maintains *prima facie* that the causes of famine are multiple and in this respect it appears to be committed to an overtly non-reductionist thesis concerning causation of famine. Consequently, the scope requirement appears to be satisfied. What about the requirement of precision? Many people would feel that the definition is far from being precise. The first sentence says 'famine is a widespread phenomenon'. What does it tell us? Does it mean that it can occur any where at any time? Clearly, our trouble seems to begin with the first sentence. Hence, one way of modifying our tentative definition is to drop some parts of this locution and assert that 'famine is a phenomenon'. But what *kind* of phenomenon is it? The answer to this seems to follow right after the initial locution; i.e, a phenomenon 'affecting *some* of the population of a country'.

Though our difficulty with the initial locution appears to be over, none the less, we seem to land on what I consider to be a substantive problem. We are told now that 'famine is a phenomenon affecting *some* of the population of a country or...' In logic, we understand that the quantifier 'some' means 'at least *one*.' But we have a strong intuition to say that for an individual to be regarded as a victim of famine he must be a member of famine affected population or community. The individual may undergo through similar physical effect of starvation as one who is a famine victim, yet we do not want to say of this individual that he is a famine victim. Why? The reason lies in our belief that famine involves a large number of people. Even though one could

experience famine, we still insist in saying that an individual is undergoing starvation but not famine. The question is, therefore, how many people are required to enable us to claim that these individuals are famine victims? Shall we say ten people? Twenty? Maybe a thousand? Where do we draw the line?

This ambiguity is not one peculiar to our tentative definition but one which is shared by most of our earlier definitions. The difficulty of where to draw the line stemmed from the belief that famine is a mass rather than an individual experience. But is this belief justified, or is it simply a dogma? Well, one reason why we refuse to call an individual a famine victim has to do with the way the experience of famine has traditionally been portrayed to us through the various media. Victims of famine are usually depicted congregated in one region and receiving relief handouts. The irony of it is that if some of these individuals whom we have labeled famine victims were to be placed in urban areas, and were we to find them lying on the streets, then we hesitate to call them famine victims. The explanation for this asymmetry lies not only on our inability to formulate a distinguishing criterion for famine victims; but also depends on the way we perceive the causes of famine. There is no litmus test for identifying famine victims; and even if there is one and the test suggests that an individual is a famine victim, we still refuse to perceive that individual as such. But no argument is given as to why we think numbers are important in the determination of famine or its victims. It is, no doubt, true that if an individual among the entire population of the country were to suffer from the effects of famine, many of us would not regard it as famine victim. We simply say that the individual is undergoing starvation, period. In fact, the term 'famine' would utterly be meaningless in this context.

The emphasis on numbers, as it were a necessary condition, is a traditional dogma which fosters the view that famine involves a large number of people in one area; and it is strictly a rural phenomenon. I suggest that this requires an argument. Therefore, in the absence of such an argument we cannot help but conclude that the number of people involved is not an essential componet of any definiton of famine; and consequently, our tentative definition will then be modified as follows:

Definition A_1:

Famine is a phenomenon affecting *some* people of a country or a region for a limited period through starvation and attendant diseases resulting either from a shortage of food or from individuals lacking resources or from a society lacking reources or from non democratic socio economic & political arrangements of a society or from war. Its effect includes, among other things, forced migration, enfeeblement , malnutrition and an overall low productivity.

Though this definition is much improved than Definition A, we are not however, happy with the degree of precision attained by it. First, the temporary duration which the definition suggests is not quite clear. Second, how this phenomenon has resulted i.e, the causes of famine as they appear in series of disjunction, though *prima facie* appear to be different, neverhteless they are not. Perhaps this might entail that our initial expectation about the width of the scope might not after all be wide.

Supposing we have 100 people whom by any acceptable standard are considered to be famine victims. Relief operations were immediately launched and to our sourprise everyone was saved. Now they have food reserve, etc. Does it now mean they no longer are famine victims? At what point can we say there is no famine in a particular region? Famine implies famine vicitims, i.e, there will not be famine victims unless there is famine. Similarly, heart attack victims won't exist unless there is a heart attack. But what does it mean to say unless 'famine exists' or 'heart attack exists'? -What kind of existence do they have? They obviously do not have an objective existence like the earth, the sun, the mountain and so on. So it seems unless we, human beings, are around they can not possibly exist on their own. Hence, famine, heart attack, and the like, are subject-dependant phenomena and will always be with us potentially. Therefore, it is misleading to say famine is over when we know that some subjects are still around. It is equally misleading to say that heart attact will be over,given similar state of affairs. Moreover, once the victim of a heart attack has recovered, it does not mean that he won't be a victim again, nor does it mean he is capable of performing his tasks as productively as he was able to prior to his heart attack. Famine is not any different from a heart attack in these respects. (a) it will always be with us potentially, (b) after one has survived the ordeal, it will take an enormous period of rehabilitation for recovery and for the resumption of productive work. Consequently, the vagueness of the phrase 'limited period'- in our definition requires modification in view of (a) and (b).

The second discomforting element in our definition is the description of the causes of famine by a series of disjunction. Every disjunct appears to be different from the other. But *are* they really different? If they are different, then it seems famine has multiple causes; and this in turn

would lend the definition a wide scope.

When we look at our definition and examine each of the disjunct, we discover that all of them are question begging. Even though all of these disjuncts appear to immediately cause a particular famine, they are not the root causes of famine. What all of them seem to suggest is that famine is man induced. The disjuncts are simply smoke screens for this essential fact. Now we can drop two items in our definition: (1) the series of disjuncts will be dropped and substituted by 'man induced', (2) the term 'phenomenon' would appear to be imprecise especially since we have now accepted (1) and since we now know what kind of phenomenon it is. Our operational definition therefore would be as follows:

> Defintion A_2:
> Famine is a man induced social, ecological and political crisis, physically affecting some people of a country overtly for a limited period through starvation; but exists always in human society in potentia, and the victims require a period of rehabilitation for recovery and resumption of productive work.

Our concern has been, in the foregoing discussion with an attempt to formulate an operational definition with a wide scope and precision. These requirements, I believe, are met by definition A_2. The difficulty with this definition may be that it is reductionist since the effort was to be precise and some of the loaded terms may cast doubt on the width of the scope. I believe, however, we have given sufficient justifications as to why we have selected these terms or phrases. It is important to bear in mind in the remaining chapters that even though we claim that famine is a social, ecological as well as a political crisis, none the less its particular medium of manifestations could vary from one place to another and from one society to another.

Chapter 2: Causal Theories of Famine

Definition A_2 which we have proposed as an operational definition of famine satisfying the requirements of scope and precision presupposes a causal account of famine. Like Definitions 1 through 10, it is also *not* theory neutral. In fact, it can be generalized by saying that no definition of famine can be immuned from being theory laden; for the definition in question would have to give us an account of how famine has resulted. Hence, our current definition is similar to them, in this respect. However, we still need to argue how famine is a man induced crisis which our definition clearly maintains. Before we begin to undertake this task, it is of a paramount importance to show what kind of causal therories have thus far been proposed; and what is wrong with them. Theories of famine have generally been classified into two contending camps. Food Availability Decline theories of famine which generally maintain that the cause of famine is simply a decline in food availability. The second theory of famine is one which takes famine resulting from the inability of people to command a requisite amount of food, i.e, entitlement failure. The first theory (FAD) generally emphasises the supply side of the problem of famine; whereas the latter emphasises the demand side of the problem. The first is a theory which was first espoused by Malthus in 1789 in his book entitled, *An Essay on the Principles of Population Growth*, which until half a decade ago is regarded to be the most dominant theory of famine. Though,many scholars have rejected it, nevertheless it still remains the theoretical cornerstone of many policy makers in their effort to understand famine as well as in their prescription to remedy the problem. In 1981, Sen has advanced a thesis in his interesting book, *Poverty and Famines*, a theory which has been fermenting through his various articles, arguing that the days for the old Malthusian theory of famine, viz, "too many people, too little food" is over. The cause of famine is not necessaily a decline in food availability but has to do with some peoples's inability to command the requisite amount of food. In this chapter we take up each theory in turn, and argue that they do not reveal the actual causal mechanisms involved in explaining the occurrence of famines in Ethiopia.

A close examination of these theories reveals that the one theory, namely Malhusian or its variants, albeit a causal theory of famine, nevertherless fails to be sustainable on both empirical and logical grounds. As a causal theory of famine, its explanation though precise, has a very limited utility. The other, namely Sen's entitlement theory, is not a causal theory of famine; but it is, instead, a theory *about* a theory of famine or if you will, a *meta-theory* of famine. Due to its generality and width of scope, the entitlement theory fails to aid us in identifying particular causes of famine taking place at a particular time and location. From the point of view of policy, it has a limited utility. Hence, neither

one of these theories sheds any light on our effort to understand the causes of famines in Ethiopia. Therefore, to understad the mechanisms responsible for generating famine conditions, we need to go into the details of the various components of the country's political economy. Before we engage ourselves in this discussion, it is instructive that we direct our attention to these important theories themselves.

2.1 Food Availability Decline (FAD) Theories.

Essentially, any theory which gives food availability decline as a reason for an occurrence of famine is known as a food availability decline theory. Although, all FAD theories agree with this as a cause of famine, none the less, specific variations of the theory disagree as to why food availability declines. Some maintain 'war'; some maintain 'the climate', 'population', and the like. What is important about these theories, apart from the one which we've just mentioned, is their view of famine as something which is naturally induced on us. This simplistic theory of famine has gained popular acceptance by policy makers because questions of accountability would not arise if famine is, indeed, a natural phenomenon. Furthermore, FAD theories always maintain a pessimistic attitude towards famine avoidance. Since they feel that it is a natural phenomenon, regardless of our effort, it is very unlikely that we can avoid famine. If this attitude is pushed further, its implications on our moral life would be very freightening.

2.1.1. Malthus Theory

Malthus has been credited for his attempt to explain the causes of poverty and famine by invoking what he considers to be two important 'postulata':

> "First, that food is necessary to the existence of man. Secondly, that the passion between the sexes is necessary, and will remain nearly in the present state... Assuming, then, my postulata as granted, I say, that the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man. Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio. A slight acquintance with numbers will show the immensity of the first power as compared with the second. By that law of our nature which makes food necessary to the life of man, the effects of these two unequal powers must be kept equal. This implies a strong and constantly operating check on population from the difficulty of subsistence... The race of plants, and the race of animals, sink under this great restrictive low. And the race of man cannot, by any efforts of reason, escape from it. Among plants and animals its effects are waste of seed, sickness, and premature death. Among

> mankind, misery and vice. The former, misery, is an absolutely necessary consequence of it. Vice is a highly probable consequence... I see no way by which man can escape from the weight of this law which pervades all animated nature...". [1]

It was much to Malthus credit, to see, at a time when little was known of population trends, and at a time when census was in its embryonic stage; that population plays a decisive causal role in the development of famine conditions and the general state of poverty. The important element in Malthus' view seems to be that given a numerator Y standing for production output, i.e., the supply of aggregate wealth or means of subsistence, and given a denominator P standing for a total population, an increase in P would have an adverse effect on Y, i.e. diminishes the supply of aggregate wealth or means of subsistence. In other words, we shall have a situation where there is 'too little food', but too many mouths to feed. And the net result of this is famine.

This view depicts the kind of undirectional influence P has on Y. But does Y have any influence on P? Here, too, Malthus has something to say. He suggests that an increase in Y causes an increase in P by reducing mortality and increasing fertility. That is, if the supply of aggregate wealth or means of subsistence increases, then the mortality rate would go down. And if the mortality rate would go down, then there would be an incresse in fertility. Therefore, it follows from this that the population will grow, i.e., an increase in P. It is important to note here that this argument, albeit establishes the same conclusion as the previous one, is a different one. Hence, for the sake of convenience and simplicity, we shall call the first argument, Argument A; and the second, Argument B.

Assuming then, that the relationship between Y and P is a bidirectional one, there appears to be no way out of this vicious circle. In so far as there is an increase in P, there will always be 'too little food, but too many mouths to feed'. This, Malthus thought, is argued for - not merely on the basis of the two 'postulata' we quoted earlier, but also on the bais of Y's influence, i.e., even if one argues for a two-way causation, the net result of this is always an increment in P; and if this is obtained, then there will always be famine.

Malthus thought that the two 'postulata' clearly establish the conclusion that there will always be an increase in P. Is the Argument A justified? At first approximation, the two premises appear to be true, and rudimentary logic warns us that if we accept the premises as true, then we cannot deny the conclusion. Doing so would lead us to a self-contradiction. The way out of this predicament is, therefore, to challenge at least one of the premises. The first premise which reads that food is necessary to the existence of man would seem to be difficult to refute, and is, therefore, admissable as a brute fact. It is with regard to the second premise where suspicion arises and where logical possibility may

turn out to be a realistic or an empirical possibility.

The premise states that passion between the sexes is necessary. This statement is not just *contingently* true; but more importantly, it is a *necessary* truth. For not only can we imagine a possibility where one can place a barrier between the passion of the sexes and reproduction, but *this* has already been achieved. However, this response misses the gist of Malthus' argument, for he is only concerned with the ever presence of this physiological need, but not with what we can eventually come up with to avoid an increase in P. Hence, it sems utterly difficult to reject these premises not at least on logical grounds. But do we need to accept *his* conclusion? For we seem to think that people could look at the same thing and arrive at different conclusions. The rejection or acceptance of Malthus' conclusion depends on the nature of his inference, i.e., can Malthus rightfully draw *his* conclusion from the two stated premises?

Assuming that the premises are true, the conclusion accepts that "the power of the population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man" . This presupposes a triad connection between 'food' (or resource), 'reproduction', and 'population'. This should have been stated: as long as reproduction increases the number of the population, then this raises an additional demand on food (or resources). But this only shows a rise in P entailing a reduction in Y *without* mentioning how much Y has, i.e., the limit which Y can extend itself to match the rise in P. Hence, the conclusion *assumes* that the *power* in the earth to produce subsistence for man is obvious or intuitively clear to us. By no means this is the case; and if one were to assume such an important claim,it definitely requires an argument. A kind of argument showing that the resources which we have at our disposal are limited - and regardless of the kind of technology we develop to expand this limit - it *won't* stretch. Therefore, the increase in population will exhaust the resource, and will subsequntly reach the limit. Consequently, famine will inevitably occur as a result of reaching the limit. But such an argument will, I submit, be difficult to establish, Malthus has, however, an additional argument which we dubbed as Argument B, to reinforce his conclusion just in case we fail to accept it on some grounds. He suggests that even if we manage to increase our resources, i.e., our numerator Y, then P wil also increase. Why? First, an increase in resources entails a decrease in mortality. Second, a decrease in mortality entails an increase in fertility. Therefore, by a principle of transtivity, it follows that an increase in resources entails an increase in fertility. Can 'Argument B be justified?

Hardly anyone would deny the first premise, since this has been empirically established. However, there appears to be a disquiet on the second one. Why do we suppose that a decrease in mortality would result in an increase in fertility? Is there any *necessary connection* between the two? We can assume that an increase in economic well-

being of a society, i.e., increased education and net economic cost of children decreased infant mortality, and the like, has adverse consequences for fertility such that, all things considered, an increase in economic level decreases fertility. Numerous statistical evidence could lend support to this view. Since the second claim is hard to accept, it follows that the argument is not valid. Consequently, the Malthusian view is not sufficient, on both empirical and logical grounds, to explain the causes of famine.

Parenthetically, it is important to note at this juncture a significant similarity between the views of Malthus and Marx. First, though there are significant differences between their views and these differences, at times, were exaggerated by some Marxists including Marx himself, none the less, Marx saw 'population', playing an important causal role in the development of famine and poverty. The difference between their views lies in the particular *aspect* of the population which each has placed an emphasis. For Malthus, the non-deterable growth of population is *where* attention is most directed to; whereas for Marx, the nature of 'relations of production' that exist between people in the process of production explain the occurrence of famine and poverty. Second, Malthus' Argument B, which attempts to establish a connection between an increase in resources and an increase in fertility, though no doubt many Marxists would prefer to ignore it, is nevertheless shared by Marx himself.

The first similarity is less controversial than the second; but it may still be resisted on the grounds that, for Marx, it is the concept of 'class struggle', rather than 'relations of production', which is indispensable in explaining the development of poverty and famine. That may well be true provided that the society under consideration is one which is marked by a presence of class division. However, in the absence of this division, an attempt to explain the development of these states of affairs by invoking the concept of 'class struggle' is utterly pointless. In classical Marxism, the concept which has a *wider* scope of explanation than that of 'class struggle' is 'relations of production' - which constitutes the 'economic structure', and the real *basis* of society. Hence, regardless of the kind of society we are talking about, i.e., whether a class-divided society or not, relations of production are *always* there and *will* always be.

The second point of similarity admits more controversy, yet it is more substantive than the first. The reasons as to why it is controversial are not difficult to discern. Many Marxists believe that the views of Marx and Malthus are diametrically opposite to one another. However, the empirical evidence does not seem to bear out these caims; and more importantly, there is textual evidence suggesting that Marx, himself,thought that Malthusian views were troublesome to his.[2]

Despite some Marxists' rejection of Malthusian view, there are indeed enough similarities to warrant a further scrutiny, especially Argument B, where it will be revealed that Marx, perhaps on a different basis, has defended the conclusion of this argument. We are told by Mark in one of his writings that the "first principle of all human history is, of course, 'the existence of living human individuals".[3] Hence, the continued existence of living human individuals is the result of the two life-sustaining processes of production (to maintain human organisms) and reproduction (to replace human organisms). These two processes then are the most basic in society, and differential control over them gives us the universal first principles of division into social classes.

Much of the connection which Marx draws between the two, i.e., 'production' and 'reproduction' can be discerned by looking at what he says of 'labour'. According to him, 'labour' has precisely these dual features. To put it more picturesquely, labour is not only the goose which lays golden eggs for the capitalist, but also hatches a large population of new geese which lay golden eggs. This is precisely what the conclusion of Malthus' argument suggests. Given the anatomy of labour, Marx can't help but embrace his conclusion; and needless to mention the first premise. Only the second premise which attempts to establish an entailment relationship between a decrease in mortality and an increase in fertility, is the one which is being denied by Marx. Except for this, Marx shared the essential feature of that argument, i.e., an increase in resources entails an increase in ferility. But how he has argued for this thesis is another matter which we shall *not* proceed to examine here.

All in all, Malthus' causal theory of famine has turned out to be an important one, but one not suficient to explain the occurrence of famine. Given the nature of its limitations, and its insufficiency to explain the emergence of famine in view of the available empirical evidence it is hard to see how this theory lends some insight in understanding the cause of famine in Ethiopia. Consequently, we turn now to see if the other theories are any better in aiding us in our pursuit.

2.2. Entitlement Theories

We have been dealing thus far with Food Availability Decline (FAD) theories; mainly what Malthus has to say about famine. What is instructive at this point, however, is an examination of a theory of famine which not only in recent years has gained a certain prominence in the literatures on famine, but also stands diametrically opposite to FAD theories, or at least so it seems.

The main attraction to entitlement theory of famine is its pronouncement that, for the first time since Malthus' theory, famine can occur even when food is available. In many ways, this appears to be counter intuitive because Malthus' view was deeply entrenched in our belief system. How could it be possible for people to starve to death when sufficient amount of food is available? If part of what we mean by famine is a shortage of food or a continual decline of the availability of food, it would seem to be a contradiction in terms, and even absurd to suggest that famine occurs despite the availability of food. By emphasising the demand side of famine, Amartya Sen and others have agued that it is neither a contradiction nor absurd to maintain that famine is a phenomenon occurring even when food is avialable. This argument depends to a large extent on how we understand 'famine' itself; and a decline in food availability may or may not be the cause of famine.

2.2.1. Sen's Theory of Famine

The prominent figure in leading the battle against Malthus under the rubric of entitlement theory of famine is Amartya Sen. Sen's argument is that FAD theories which basically depict the supply side of the story of famine, conceal more than revealing essential causal mechanisms of famine. Food availability decline may cause some famines, but other famines occur even without a decline in food availability. Hence, FAD is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of famines. To understand his argument clearly, we need to see how Sen understood 'famine' itself. Accordin to Sen:

> "Famine is a characteristic of some people not *having* enough food; it is not a characteristic of there *being* not enough food. While the latter *can* be a cause of the former, it is one of many possible causes, and indeed *may* or *may not* be associated with famines. Food supply statements say things about *commodities* as such, while statements about famines are concerned with the relationship between persons and commodites. To understand famines, we need to go into this relationship".[4] (his emphasis)

What Sen is suggesting is that (a) it is not good enough to say that food is or is not available, but the issue of famine has to do with whether or not some people can command a sufficient amount of food; and (b) the relationship people have with food as a commodity is what explains famine. To show that FAD neither explains famine nor is it always associated with famine conditions, Sen appeals to a number of case studies: (a) The Ethiopian Famine - in the administrative region of Wollo in 1973 (b) The Ethiopian Famine, in the administrative region of Hararghe in 1974, (c) The Bangladash Famine in 1974, and (d) the Bengal Famine in 1943.

Sen concedes that indeed some historical famines other than the ones he considered may have been associated with food availability decline. But what he is suggesting is that a discriminating analysis would distinguish between those famines caused by FAD and those famines caused by elements other than FAD. But FAD analysis of famine at least in most peasant economies is not sustainable. What are these other elements, presumably the causes of famine? The answer to this question can be sought by an examination of what Sen calls famine as a relationship between persons and commodities.

To explain the nature of this relationship, Sen introduces the term 'entitlement'. In human society, people in principle have certain entitlements to commodities, to exchange their goods with others, to grow their food, to have legal recourse when their rights are being infringed upon, and so on. Hence the entitlement approach to famine sees starvation, according to Sen:

> "Arising from failure on the part of the groups of people to establish a certain degree of command over a requisite amount of food. What a person can command in a given society is constrained by a collection of relationships covering the legal system (e.g. ownership laws), the political system (e.g. presence or absence of social security or right to work), economic forces (including those of the market), as well as social and cultural influences (e.g. the family's system of sharing incomes and food). Now our ability to command food depends on what we own and what we can get by exchanging what we own. If a peasant slides into starvation because he has lost the land he owned (say, becasuse of debt settelement), it is a case of a loss in entitlement arising from an endowent loss. On the other hand, if a barber has to starve because there is a sharp decline in the command for haircuts (as incidentally, is common in rural famine), this is a case of entitlement loss traceable not to endownment changes but to a collapse of the exchange entitlement mapping...
> The entitlement approach takes the line that one can understand the development of famines by examining how the entitlement patterns change *within* the system of entitlement relations operating in the economy".[5] (his emphasis)

So famine, for Sen, is the *inability* of some people to command a requisite amount of food. This inability would also have to be distinguished from choice since they both suggest that one fails to get enough food either due to inability to command that food or becuase the person chose not to exercise that ability.[6] The entitlement approach, therefore, concentrates on the ability side of the story. And this inability stems from either because of direct entitlement failure and/or *exchange* entitlement failure. For instance, an immediate producer of a certain crop would be directly predisposed to starvation, if for some reason or another his crop fails - this would be an instance of direct entiltement failure. And, on the other hand, since most people acquire food by exchanging their earning or assets with food, because of loss of these elements on the part of some people or because of worse terms of trade - they would be predisposed to starvation because of the failures.

The remarkable influence of Malthus' view on food policy for nearly two centuries,has come under a growing attack ever since the publication of Sen's *Poverty & Famine*. The gist of Sen's view, put together under the rubric of entitlement theory, is its emphasis on the demand side of the story of food crisis. The important denial made by this emphasis is one concerning the locution 'too little food, but too many mouths to feed'.

Famine, according to Sen, is an 'acquirement problem'.[7]. It occurs even when no decline in the avaibaliblity of food supply is taking place. In so far as famine is an 'acquirement problem', entitlement theory attempts to examine how some people fail to acquire a recquisite amount of food. This is what he says:

> "The entitlement approach provides a particular focus for analysis of famines. It does not specify one particular causation of famine - only the general one that a famine reflects widespread failure of entitlements on the part of substantial sections of the population. Such failure can arise from many different causes"[8]

In general, famines arise from a failure in entitlements and why such an entitlement has failed would explain the particular causes of that particular famine. To be sure, famine occurs either because of endowment failure, or because of the failure in exchange entitlement mapping or because the entitlement set does not contain either one of them. To substantiate the advantages which this theory has, looking at famine, over others including food availabity decline theories (FAD), Sen appeals to those historic famines mentioned above.

According to Sen, the analysis of these famines reveals that in some of them there was no decline in food availability. FAD as an approach to famine may be necessary but not sufficient. Sen admits that FAD could be a factor in causing famine, but even when this is the case we need to be careful about other elements contributing or influencing food

availability decline. But Sen's important contention is that a shift in entitlement pattern explains why some people are starving.

I suggest that Sen's entitlement theory makes a general comment on the various causes of famine or how these causes affect peoples's relation to a bundle of commodities of which food is a part. However, this theory should not be viewed as one which tries to offer *a causal theory of famine*, the way in which we conceive traditional theories of famine such as Malthus's, Smith's, Ricardo's, and Marx's. Malthus has offered rapid population growth outrunning production as a cause of famine, Adam Smith urged us to direct our attention to "real scarcity" rather than to artificially created ones as a causal explanation of famine, Ricardo suggests insufficient wages or purchasing power to keep pace with a growing price of food as a causal explanation of famine, and finally, Marx argued that unsuitable relations of production favouring only a segment of the population could allow others to slide into starvation.

In all of these analyses of famine a particular cause has been identified to explain the 'acquirement problem'. Indeed Sen is right when he says that all of these clasical economists were concerned with this problem. What distinguishes Sen's approach to famine from others' is, among other things, its *generality*. As he puts it:

> "It is important to emphasize that the entitlement approach is *consistent* (my emphasis) with many *different* (my emphasis) *detailed theories* (his emphasis) of the actual causation of a famine. While the approach identifies certain crucial variables, different theories of the determination of the values of these variables may all be *consistent* (my emphasis) with the general entitlement approach".[8]

In effect, any one of the detailed theories of famine explaining the cause of famine offered by classical as well as present day economists may all turn out to be consistent with Sen's approach. The reasons are not difficult to see. Sen is not willing to argue or specify a particular cause of famine but only the general one -

> "The entitlement approach ... does not specify one causation of famine - only the general one that a famine reflects widespread failure of entitlements ..."[9]

By invoking this general explanation of the 'acquirement problem', Sen does not stand against any particular tradition nor dismises a particular causal explanation of famine. The essence of this generality is its admittance that any proposed causal explanation, though not sufficient, may constitute necessary conditions for the occurrence of famine in general; but in some instances of famine may constitute both necessary and sufficient conditions for the development of famine conditions. This is what he says:

"Famine can be caused by various different types of influences, and the common predicament of mass starvation does not imply any one common fundamental cause..."[10]

Hence, the virtue of Sen's analysis of famine, unlike its predecessors and contemporaries, is its reluctance to specify a cause. The latter theories, at least most of them, were *precise* whereas Sen's theory is general. For instance, to argue that drought is the cause of a particular famine at location X is to identify a cause; whereas to say that this famine at location X was brought about by a failure in entitlement pattern is not to specify a cause but to make a *statement about various causal explanations of famine*. Hence, except for a precision involved in the one case and its absence in the other, the two claims are consistent with one another.

This suggests that Sen's analysis, even though compatible with other causal theories such as Malthus', Smith's, Ricardo's, Marx's' etc.' nevertheless should be viewed as a theory *about* famine, i.e., a *meta-theory* of famine with a scope wide enough to incorporate any alleged causal explanation of famine. Hence, any one of the proposed theories can be viewed as sub-theories of Sen's general entitlement theory or meta-theory.

The reasons for such a classification are not difficult to discern. Sen's attempt to explain the 'acquirement problem' by an appeal to a failure in entitlement pattern still begs further questions. We need to know why, or what prompts, a failure in entitlement pattern. Any phenomenon, generally associated with the discussion of famine - be it man-made or natural such as - war, drought, population, flood, etc, could cause or influence or bring about a failure in entitlement patterns. In this respect any analysis of famine on the basis of any one of these variables is going to end up being subsumed under Sen's entitlement or meta-theory. It encompasses, and is consistent with, all of these, yet remains non-commital to any one single theory of causation. Many problems, ordinarily facing a theory of famine, are successfully avoided by this theory. For example, the issue of accountability or responsibility either on the part of the state or individuals would not arise on this theory - because it successfully avoids the debate as to whether famine is man-induced or nature-induced. In fact, this debate viewed from the point of view of entitlement approach is rather pointless.

In view of these observations, it seems clear that if one wants to know or determine the precise causal agent responsible for the occurrence of a particular famine, in a particular country and during a particular period, then one is assured of not getting the answer by an appeal to entitlement theory. Moreover, even if one were to identify the causal element, say drought, as being responsible for the emergence of this famine, using some method or another, then one is not going to find out the answer as to *why* drought has caused this famine by directing one's

own attention to Sen's meta-theory. To illustrate these points more vividly, we shall construct a hypothetical case or thought experiment, and see to what extent does the entitlement theory play a role in either identifying a cause or in even explaining famine.

Imagine we have a community X of barbers whose skill consists of mainly cutting hair, i.e., they derive their income from this profession while practicing it in the adjacent community, call it Y. For some reason or another, this adjacent community Y depends on the skill of the people in X. The people in X acquire food by selling that profession not in their own community but in Y. The State decided, all of a sudden, by proclamation, that no member of community X should move out of its boundaries to practice this skill and anyone who tries to do so will be executed. Well, at some point the barbers' food reserve started to dwindle. They made numerous appeals to the state to repeal the law, but it ignored it. Finally, they all starved to death.

What was really the cause of this famine? Many different and possible causes may be identified by different individuals. Here are some of them:-

1. Loss of job is the cause of this famine.
2. The ruthlessness of the state, i.e., the *law* of the state is the cause of the famine.
3. The people themselves were the cause of the famine because as rational beings they should have *either*
(a) acquired some other skill, besides cutting hair, to fall back on, in the event of this kind of emergency. Instead, they put all their eggs in one basket. *Or*
(b) build a grain reserve for their own use to last them for a long time, but they did not.
4. There was no food available in the community.

All of them are statements of fact vis-à-vis the above scenario, and they appear to be true. Can we determine which of the four causes, is the *main* cause of this famine, or shall we conclude that all of them are the main cause of this famine? And how does the entitlement theory help in this case?

Skill is an endowment and so is savings. When these people lost their job, it does not mean that they have lost their skill, nor their savings. In the scenario above, there was no direct endowment loss. They have their skill as well as their savings but they *can't exchange* either one with food. And this is a failure of exchange entitlement. As a matter of fact, many of them starve to death with an enormous amount of savings at their disposal.The exchange ability was there but food supply was *not*, as it were the 'pull' side was there, but the 'push' side was not.[9] This leads us to the fourth explanation, which says food was not available. It is true that food was not avalaible in that community, even though there was plenty next door. This suggests that it is not good enough to have just the cash without the food. How about the food without the cash? Well, if the community had only food at its disposal, it would not have starved. The saving should have been food rather than cash. And this leads us to the third explanation which says that in so far as this community is a rational community it should have either (a) acquired other skills or (b) built a grain reserve. The first part of the disjunction does not work in this case, for even if they were to develop some other skill, they would have gotten only cash but not food. Their problem is not cash but food. This leads us to explanation 1, which invokes a loss of job as a cause of the famine.

Ordinarily, the people go to the community next door, practice their skill, earn some money, buy some food and return to their community. But now, these chain of events could not take place, as it were a failure of exchange pattern has taken place, and a loss of job is an instance of this failure. The loss of job has resulted because of the law which banns the freedom of movement of individuals. They wouldn't have lost their jobs had it not been for the law.

We have now reduced those four explantions into two:
A. The cause of this famine is the absence of grain reserve;
B. The cause of this famine is the law of the state.

Both A and B are true. If there was a grain reserve, they would not have starved; and if there wasn't such a kind of law, they would not have starved. Which of the two is the primary cause? They would have avoided starvation even without grain reserve if B had not been present. Therefore, B is the primary cause of the famine. It is true that the grain reserve may run out at some point unless either an additional amount of grain is added to the reserve or the law is being repealed. But neither one of them can be achieved, therefore the existence of the grain reserve would not have guaranteed their safety. Consequently, only the removal of the law can avoid famine. Hence, in the above thought experiment, we found out that all of the explanations have *prima facie* plausability; but the real cause is the presence of the law which has disrupted the exchange entitlement pattern of the people in that

community.

No one would dispute that there was a failure of exchange entitlement pattern in this case. I suggest, however, that this failure is due to the presence of the aforementioned law. Hence we can't invoke this failure as a causal explanation of the famine,but rather this famine as well as the failure of exchange entitlement pattern are explained by an antecedent element, namely the nature of the law. In short, a failure of exchange entitlement pattern is being explained by this law, but not vice versa, i.e., why is there such a law, can't be explained by an appeal to entitlement theory, but why there is such an entitlement failure can be explained by an appeal to the law. *How* this law has caused this famine can be explained using an entitlement approach, but such an explanation should be viewed as a theory *about* famine causation, i.e., a meta-theory. Hence, in so far as it is not a causal theory, nor professes to be one, its utility in identifying the causes of famine is extremely restricted. Consequently, the lesson to be learned from the above scenario is that to know the causes of a particular famine, we need to go into the specifics of the various elements surrounding that famine, and see if, without these elements famine could have taken place or not.

While Malthus' theory is precise yet inadequate, Sen's entitlement approach as a meta-theory of famine is neither precise nor adequate to explain the occurrence of famine. Its generality and its being ahistorical lend little insight into the undestanding of particular episodes of famine. To understand a particulaf famine, we need to delve into the specific historical details of the social relations of production and see which of the elements have contributed more to the occurrence of that famine than any other factor. Hence, in order for us to explain the factors responsible for the famines in Ethiopia, we need to examine the social formations of Ethiopian society. In so far as the two famines had occurred at two different periods, a decade apart from each other, and under different regimes, we also need to examine the socio-economic and political differences, and their bearing on the development of famine conditions.

The foregoing analysis suggests that the two important theories of famine are not far-reaching in their attempt to explain the mechanisms responsible for the emergence of famine in Ethiopia. Applied to particular famine episodes in Ethiopia, their utility in either identifying these mechanisms or in prescribing preventive measures is extremely limited. For instance, if one takes Malthus' theory seriously, then one discovers that over population is the element responsible for famines and poverty, and if one wants to avoid them, either contraception or sterilisation or triage is a necessary step to take.

Hardly anyone would deny the important role population plays, and how growth in population constrains development and food availability per capita; and in general the quality of life itself. Consideration of this fact also has enormous impact on policies affecting the development of Third World countries. Relying on the link between population and food production, the World Bank invariably has resisted that economic development and food production are constrained by population growth. Few years later, however, the World Bank began to shift the emphasis from population to the link between purchasing power and food. It suggests that "the main issue is not the worldwide availability of food, but the capacity of nations, groups within nations, and individuals to obtain enough food for a healtly diet".[10] In 1986, the Bank has argued that:

> "The world has ample food. The growth of global food production has been faster than the unprecedented population growth of the past forty years. Prices of cereals on world markets have even been falling. Enough food is available so that countries that do not produce all the food they want can import it if they can afford to. Yet many poor countries and hundreds of millions of poor people do not share in this abundance. They suffer from a lack of food security, caused mainly by a lack of purchasing power".[11]

It appears that the Bank has shifted its position from a strict Malthusian assessment of the global food problem to that of entitlement approach. But this is only an appearance, since in reality a loss or a decline in purchasing power could also be influenced by a growth in population. Hence, in one form or another, the population factor figures in very prominently in the discussion of development and famine avoidance. It would, of course, be naive and absurd to mantain that population growth has no significance at all; but what is preplexing about this factor, and too often has been ignored by the literatures on this issue, is the lack of challenge to the very equation wich Malthusians are determining food self-sufficiency or the lack of it. The formula which Malthusians have adopted in determing the degree of food consumption is this:

$$\frac{\text{Food Available for Human Consumption}}{365 \times \text{population}} - 15\% \text{ Loss}$$

This formula is set against estimates of per capita nutrient needs to see if a country is suffering from food deficiency or not. However, the limitations embeded in this equation are quite alarming. First of all, an accurate rendering of the size of the population, the available resources in the country and the like is almost impossible today in many developing countries. This has to do with the nature of the economic and political climate in these countries. In regions where these elements are

not favourable, we see either a tendency of exaggerated estimates or the absence of any survey or a sheer under-reporting. In rural areas, where the element of state intervention is resented the peasant is extremely suspicious of disclosing what he has at his disposal to a census taker. The latter is identified with the state. Secondly, much of the survey ignores vital exotic food resources which could potentially be used as either supplementay or substitute diet. Thirdly, the science of census taking itself is an entirely new phenomenon in most least developing countries. Consequently, these limitations directly influence the outcome of any calculation based on that long standing Malthusian formula.

In terms of solutions to famine, 'triage', contraception and sterilisation are all too familiar Malthusian remedies. The moral implications of these measures are often underplayed as if economic choice has no connection whatsoever with matters of morality. In so far as economics is understood as a science concerned with the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services, regardless of the consequences of these activities on human welfare - then it might be thought possible to make a dichotomy between the 'economic life' and the 'moral life' of human beings. However, the terms of reference of economic discipline suggest that the moral component plays an important role in whaterver we do under the rubrics of production, distribution, etc. Therefore, it is difficult to separate the two spheres.

Malthusian and Neo-Malthusian identification of the causes of famine and the remedies they offer are not only too simplistic in the sense that their crucial formula for determining whether or not the country is food deficient is constrained by important elements; but also their solutions to food deficit countries raise important moral questions which call for careful consideration.

Looking at the demand side of food crisis, as it was obseved by entitlement theories - we find many connections being made between a *capacity* to command food, and food standing among the bundle of commodities. In some sense these theories downplay the role of population growth in influencing the relationship between 'capacity' and 'food'. But what is meritorious about these theories is that they attempt to point out other elements such as economic, political, legal by and large societal arrangements influencing this relationship. And any effort to avert the danger of famine must ultimately do something to rectify those arrangements which gave rise to a breakdown or a shift in entitlement.

Chapter 3: Famines and the Political Economy of Ethiopia Prior to 1974

When one of the severest famines hit Wollo in 1959, the monarchy acknowledged the gravity of the crisis and appealed to friendly nations, such as the United States, to help alleviate the tragedy. They responded promptly and millions of lives were spared. In 1973, fourteen years later, another famine struck the same region; but this time the monarchy tried to cover up the crisis and this lead to the death of thousands of Ethiopians as well as to the demise of the *ancien regime*. Less than a decade later, another famine involving the administrative region of Wollo, among others, devastated the country with an enormous loss of human lives and livestocks. This one happened under the present military rule, a government which had exposed the monarchy's callousness towards its famine ravaged population during the earlier famine, and one which had vowed to fight food crisis and insecurity when it came to power in 1974. The difference between the present and the previous government, some may suggest, has to do with the fact that military government the former went public to secure food aid to its people. As we shall see later, that actually happened several years after the critical period of the outburst of famine - and only after the crisis has become unmanageable. In point of fact, the famine which the world has discovered in 1984-85 was engulfing the northern provinces since as far back as 1978.

Regardless of the differences between this and the past regimes, the recurrence of famine has become an integral part of Ethiopian history. The question which one asks is: Why did it happen? This is a demand for a causal explanation; and it would not do us much good if we are to invoke a certain causal theory of famine to explain the intricate elements, perhaps unique to Ethiopia, which have generated famine conditions. What we think instructive is to assess the Ethiopian reality itself - and to see if there are persistent elements in the course of the country's history that will allow us to establish a cause-effect relationship.

As a point of departure, we shall present in this chapter a brief expose of the political economy of Ethiopia so as to allow us in identifying the salient elements which have contributed more to the emergence of famines in Ethiopia than any other factors. We have already pointed out that to understand famine and its causes, one need to scrutinize the socio-economic and political arrangements of a society under discussion. After all, since these are man-made institutions, human errors could be committed and failures could arise. And when these elements are not properly identified, and solutions are not being sought, then it is inevitable that famines occur. Therefore, it is in this sense that we are claiming that famines are man-made phenomenon. It is neither helpful nor sufficient simply to assert that famines are man-made. Instead,we

need to identify *which* aspects of these man-made institutions are responsible for the emergence of famine. Consequently, the object of this chapter shall be a double-fold one: first, to see how the institutions themselves were arranged, and secondly to show what went wrong with them. We do not wish to delve into a discussion of the chronology of famines, nor involved with popular 'history' of famines and epidemics in Ethiopia. Our modest conviction here is that the most plausible historiography of famine in Ethiopia requires a close investigation of its societal reality; and this means, among other things, that we have to study the political economy of the country.

3.1. Feudo-bourgeois regime?

The political economy of Ethiopia under the former regime has frequently been characterized as semi-feudal and semi-capital. The genesis of this appellation could be traced directly to the radical period of the Ethiopian Student Movement. In view of its commitment to anti-feudal and anti-imperialist politics, it was only natural for the movement to characterize the country as being semi-feudal and semi-capitalist. Very little study has been undertaken to identify the class structure; in fact, it was only in the late 1960s that some effort was made to identify the various classes in Ethiopian society, and much less to identify the extent of the involvement of imperialist countries in Ethiopia. Yet despite the limitations entailed by these efforts, they were regarded as definitive works and thereby set the stage for subsequent radicalism.

The military regime inherited these contentions, and has consistently maintained that the country under the imperial rule was semi-feudal and semi-capitalist. The suggestion in this claim is to underscore the contention that a partial subsumption of labour by capital was undeway in what was predominantly pre-capitalist social relations. The role of the state, an absolute monarchy, was to promote and to protect the interest of the ruling class comprising the comprador bourgeosie, the national bourgeosie, and the feudal lords - without due regard to the peasantry. Nevertheless, a close examination of Ethiopian reality reveals that, (a) neither feudalism *proper*, (b) nor limited capitalism, has ever peneterated the country to any noticeable degree, nor has either one of them endogenously developed. Moreover, the function of the state in many instances was quite the opposite of what has traditionally been regarded.

The kind of feudalism suggested in the literatures to depict Western Europe before the industrial revolution is doubtful if it had ever been witnessed anywhere else. Hardly any Ethiopians would seriously argue that there were in Ethiopia, feudal lords and peasants following the model of European societies. To call the then existing classes as such would have to be a misnomer. In fact, calling an Ethiopian small

cultivator a 'peasant' and one who has right over the small cultivator working on the land, a feudal lord would be to assign different meanings to what had classically been understood by the terms 'feudal lords' and 'peasant'. No doubt one can give a stipulative definition of what one means by a 'feudal lord' or a 'peasant' in relation to the society under consideration. To do so, however, would not only be giving different connotation to the terms involved but to also assign different extension to them. For instance, if one means by a 'peasant' one who is cultivating a small plot of land by a hoe; and if another person means by a 'peasant' one who has a large tract of land, uses a tractor, and the like; then the two people are not obviously talking about he same entity. Consequently, if we are not clear about the senses of these terms, then it is even more difficult to see how we could possibly have a common undestanding of what 'feudalism' really means, since after all terms such as 'feudal lords' and 'peasant' are intrinsic to the meaning of 'feudalism'. However, it might be suggested that what is important in characterizing a society as feudal or capitalist is the predominant social relations that exist in it. This is not a happy response at all; after all what are social relations if not relations between classes. And our problem is not so much with understanding what social relations are but what these classes really are - and whether or not they have the same characteristics or essential attributes anywhere they exist. At any rate, even if we put aside this problem, and try to get some good grasp of what 'feudalism' as a socio-economic formation amounts to, the territory to be explored is not very promising.

For instance, many authors have defined 'feudalism' differently, and no doubt expecting that these definitions would spell out the salient features in all feudal societies. However, in many ways, these conceptions fail to take notice of some important elements unique only to the country in question, and in some cases the proposed conceptions do not do justice to the reality of the countries. Due to these and other related problems arising from the lack of congruence between theory and reality, it may be suggested that these conceptions often taken for granted by some social theorists needed to be re-examined. Marxist oriented social theorists, whatever that appellation really amounts to, have proposed that feudalism is a social formation or a mode of production characterised by the presence of two distinct and important classes, viz the landed class with possession of the means of production on the one land; and the landless class with possession of labour power but one which is not exchangeable for wages, on the other. These two classes are bind together with certain property relations expressed under varied 'legal expressions' which generally favour the landed class. This definition or its variant may well had been appropriate in depicting the nature of social relations in the Middle-Age Feudal Europe. However, the validity of this definition is in doubt when generalised to cover all countries with pre-capitalist social formations like Ethiopia. It is indeed

arguable whether pre-revolutionary Ethiopia was largely feudal, much less 'semi-feudal', since the landed class' property right to land was not a 'real' one, but rather an illusory one, i.e., what he had was a 'nominal' ownership right to the land - and not 'real' ownership right where he can dispose of the land at will. In many ways, it was also unfortunate to characterise Ethiopia as semi-feudal for this is misleading both historically and conceptually- historically because the dissolution of feudal relations is only one possible preconditon for its emergence, conceptually because clearly the concept of 'semi-feudalism' is neither a variant of, nor a logical transformation of, the concept feudalism.

At any rate, it is questionable to invoke land ownership, i.e. 'real' ownership of land as a sufficient criterion for describing the country as having feudal social relations or one with feudal economy. But, on the other hand a close reading of the various remarks of Marx reveals that feudal social relations consists of a combination of the following three elements:

a) A landlord class, i.e. a class having monopoly of 'nominal' ownership of the land, and using this monopoly perhaps with some additional extra-economic mechanisms to exact a tribute from

b) the direct producers, who are *peasants* who control, in the process of material production , all the necessary means of production, using predominantly (but not exclusively) family labour; except in the case of demesne production the landlord exercises no control over any part of the production process, and even then the reproduction of the laborers themselves is still ensured by this form of patriarchal peasant production; this 'possession' is contingent mainly on

c) the absence of capitalist development in agriculture. This absence may be due to (i) backward capitalist development in general, (ii) a low level of profitability for capitalist exploitation of agriculture compared to industry or to explotation through tenancy, (iii) technical difficulties in the way of organising agriculture - or a particular type of agriculture at a particular time and place along capitalist lines, or (iv) peasants' property rights acting as an effective barrier to their eviction and reintegrated into a capitalist production process.

In many ways, this formulation comes close to depicting pre-revolutionary Ethiopia. However, it is not entirely clear as to what was meant by 'capitalist development in agriculture'. Those who wish to characterise Ethiopia as 'semi-feudal' and 'semi-capital' - would deny (c), i.e., they would have to maintain that capitalist development in agriculture was present, and would cite the limited expansion of mechanized farming as evidence for its presence. But since (c) is an important precondition for the success of (a) and (b) and thereby for the entire characterization, then proponents of the appellation 'semi-feudal' and 'semi-capital' would have to reject this characterization of feudalism altogether. And we have expressed above the incoherency of the

appellation 'semi-feudal'. Hence, it is not at all clear in what sense we should regard Ethiopia's economy as being feudal or as 'semi-feudal' and 'semi-capital' Perhaps it might be useful to talk about 'peasant economy' rather than 'feudal economy'. But then the question arises as to whether these appellations are two sides of the same coin - or whether 'peasant economy' is a variation of 'feudal economy'. At any rate, in characterizing Ethiopia's economy, our preference will be, as it will become evident in Chapter IV, for the label 'peasant economy'. In the meantime let us continue exploring other alternatives which might shed light on our conception of what feudalism is, and in whether or not we are justified in calling Ethiopian society as feudal.

Hindess and Hirst defined feudalism as:

> "Whenever people with a legal right to land rent it out to direct producers who have no such rights, and manage to exact a level of rent that effectively prevents the direct producers in significant numbers from accumulating enough land of his own to become free of the landowning class, we have a feudal relation of production. This effective perpetuation of the direct producers' dependence is then construed as a "separation-subsumption", as a mechanism that reproduces the feudal relation at the level of the economic". [1]

Now this definition starts out well but ends up not so well, since the effective mechanism employed in many feudal societies - as a matter of course - has nothing to do with 'separation-subsumption' but has to do instead with 'subjugation', or if you will, 'tribute-paying relation'. In the Ethiopian context clearly this element was fairly visible - hence, such a definition would not do justice to the realities of Ethiopian society.

Another popular conception of feudalism which has also been in vogue among social theorists was one contrived by Marc Bloch. He defined 'feudalism' as follows:

> "A subject peasantry; widespread use of the service tenement (i.e. the fief) instead of salary, which was out of the question; the supremacy of a class of specialized warriors ; ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man and, within the warrior class, assume the distinctive form called vassalage; fragmentation of authority - leading inevitably to disorder; and, in the midst of all this, the survival of other forms of association, family and state..." [2]

Staunch Marxists would no boubt object to this characterization of 'feudalism', since the classes identified here are not being defined in their relations to the means of production. Despite this objection, such definition was considered paradigmatic in the sense that it attempts to capture some important components of feudal social formation. In the

Ethiopian context, this definition like its Marxist counterpart, fails to depict the essence of the social relations present in that society. Donald Donham has identified only two elements in this definition which are relevant to the characterization of Ethiopian society. He mantained that only "the presence of fiefs and the fragmentation of authority characterize Abyssinian society most closely".3. And even here, ownership of fief does not entail ownership right on the land, this would have been typical of a European landlord, but rather an access right to the land and rights over the peasants working on the land. As Taddesse Tamrat has pointed out, the owner of gult (fief).

> "Was basically different from a landlord in that he had originally no right on the land itself, but only on the peasants living and working on it. The ownership of the land remained in the hands of the local people, who passed it on their descendents according to their own customary laws".4

Although these observations were made to depict the social formation present during the period between 1270 and 1527, none the less,they are still pertinent to the social relations under the imperial regime. Indeed, what has evolved out of these is that under the imperial rule, the autonomy of the owners of gult or fief has dissipated and centralisation has emerged as a thrust to them. But their position as well as the peasant's with respect to ownership right to land has not changed - and if anything the centralised structure of the state under Haile Selassie had clearly defined the scope of this property right. Consequently, it is difficult to see to what extent full blown feudalism or feudalism proper was present in Ethiopia. The appellation seems to have been chosen only because the classical literatures offer us no alternative labels to characterize societies like Ethiopia. The other label which was frequently used to describe Ethiopian society, rather its political economy was 'semi-capitalism' or a limited development of capitalism.For Marx, the preconditions for a transition to capitalism were:

> "that two very different kinds of commodity possessors must come face to face and into contact, on the one hand the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence, who are eager to increase the sum of values they possess, by buying other people's labour power, on the other hand, free laborers, the sellers of their own labour power".5

Thus, the origins of capitalist development were rooted in changes in ownership and control of the means of production. The consequence of

the establishment of capitalist social relations has been an unprecedented rate of technological change, a sustained improvement in technological level of development of productive forces.

Now, if one follows Marx's characterization of the bourgeoise and the proletariat class, Ethiopia had none of these classes in the literal sense of these terms. Land was the main source of livelihood for most Ethiopians, and to some considered as an indispensable means of production, but none the less no one in Ethiopia had an *ownership right* or *direct entitlement* to land. Everyone had, in principle, *access right* to land. But ownership right was reserved to the state, and under the existing tenurial arrangements, people were implicitly forbidden to sell their land. Consequently, the tenants had separated their labour from their land. So had the landlords; since the very same arrangement suggests that no one except the state has ownership right. The freeing of labour presupposes capital penetration thereby creating alternative means for the tenants subsistence, but there was no such penetration. Therefore, in reality labour has not been freed though it appears to be the case. If, on the other hand, we accept the belief that the peasants had separated their labour from the land, then we have a case of rural proletariat without the owners of the means of production, thereby indulging ourselves in *contradiction in adjecto*.

However, what has been regarded as a decisive evidence for the presence of capitalism was the proliferation of direct foreign investment in Ethiopia. The tranfer of technology both in its embodied and disembodied forms has its root in colonial, albeit brief, history of Ethiopia. In the decades which the Italians were ruling Eritrea, they have managed to assemble an impressive array of transportation networks, food processing, shoes and other manufacturing companies. This introduction required capital and managerial skills. Nevertheless, for the most part the transfer of technology to Ethiopia by Italians had been confined to the region of Eritrea. Ethiopia's insulation from the world's technology market began to dissipate after the Italians had managed to penetrate the hinterland of the country, during the Ethio-Italian war of 1939-45. This insulation was not so much due to the heroic resistance of Ethiopia's patriots to block colonial cum capitalist penetration, but rather it stemmed from other material factors such as the topography of the country, its inaccessability by land, the scarcity of raw materials, the immobility of labour for both geographical and social reasons, and the insignificance of the country either strategically or in maritime trade; to mention only a few. These reasons, among other things, had compelled colonial powers not to pursue their interests in the country.

In the 1940_s Ethiopia's insulation to world market and technology has begun to change, in part because of Italy's short-lived presence, but

largely because of the United States'interest in the country as well as in the overall region of the Horn of Africa. Between 1946 and 1972, the total outflow of military and non-military resources from the United States and other international organizations was US $ 715 million; of this figure $ 187 million was military aid, $298.3 million authorized loans by the United States, and $229.2 million was loan by international organizations.[6] Until 1970, much of the loans by the United States and international organizations were used for developing, what they consider to be, suitable conditions for undertaking commodity production. For instance, 59.5 per cent of the loans were into building infrastructure and 13.4 per cent for transportation, whereas industry and mining received 10.7 per cent, banking and financial institutions 9.9 per cent and agriculture only 3.8 per cent. The rest, 2.7 per cent was allocated to miscellaneous purposes[7].

In 1950, almost seven years prior to the *First Five Year Plan* (1957-62), the Imperial Government introduced the first investment law under the appellation of "Notice of 1950" to govern the practices of direct foreign investment in the country. But more importantly, the Notice was designed *exclusively* to encourage foreign potential investors to transfer capital and technology through direct investment. No reference was made to potential domestic investors. During this period, Ethiopia's industrial sector was entirely invisible. There were only 107 establishments with less than Eth $ 5 million total investment - owned and operated by expatriates.[8]

The Notice of 1950 was subsequently modified by various decrees - such as the Industrial Decree of 1963, (Which attempts to correct the exclusion of Ethiopian investors from investment opportunity) the Investment Decreee of 1966, and the Investment Decree of 1971. The main objective of all these decrees is the same:to encourage direct foreign investment. The only difference between the decrees is that whereas the Notice of 1950 was not connected to any development plan or aims, the subsequent decrees were intertwoven with the three consecutive five year development plans. And these plans also had similar objectives, viz, a) to change the structure of the economy from a predominantly agricultural to an agro-industrial one, b) to change the pattern of production by introducing new processes and methods, and c) to increase the production capacity of the economy with a view to diversifying production and increasing the rate of growth.

The various decrees introduced between the period 1950-71[9] point to one important observation, namely that Ethiopia had one of the most attractive investment policy to be seen any where in Africa. Some of the benefits which the policy provides for potential investors includes the following:

1) Anyone who invests no less then E $200,000 would be exempted

from profits tax for five years.- and extensions of these investment companies were exempted from this tax for three years.

2) Foreign investors were allowed to remit abroad all of their share of profits, dividends, interest repayments, management fees and royalties.

3) Upon liquidating their property, foreign investors were allowed to repatriate the net proceedings. Foreign personnel were, however, entitled only to remit 35 percent of their annual earnings.

4) Duty free importation of necessary machinery.

5) Export of manufactured products have been allowed exemptions from export duties.

6) Foreign technology suppliers were given complete freedom with respect to the acquisition of equity holdings in firms

7) No limit was imposed on foreign equity holdings in firms

Despite these and other advantages, the extent of foreign investment was in many ways disappointing. Contrary to many people's belief and expectation, the major industrialised countries such as France, Switzerland, Federal Republic of Germany spearheaded by the United States were playing a minor role in direct investment as compared to countries like Italy, India, Japan and the Netherlands.

Between 1950-69, the total direct foreign investment was only E$ 144 million, of which E$ 24,4 million was in the form of loans. For the same period, the country's gross fixed capital formation in manufacturing and mining was E$656 million. Of the figure, the share of total foreign outflow of private long-term capital was 22 per cent. When we look at the foreign shares in paid-up capital in all forms in the manufacturing sector for the period 1969/1970, the total value of paid-up capital was E$ 322.6 million, the foreign share of the figure was E$ 138.3 or 43 per cent, and the share of Ethiopian Government was 38 per cent.[10]

38 of the 51 major firmes in manufacturing in Ethiopia were either foreign-owned, or foreign managed, or both. Only 10 were owned by Ethiopians, i.e. 2 by private sector and 8 by the public sector. As much as they can, these foreign owned manufacturers resisted the hiring and the training of Ethiopian personnel.

Using their unskilled personnel and without opening up any real possibility for the transfer of technical knowledge, itself a form of technology transfer, the foreign manufacturers were extracting profits from the country without any lasting material benefit to the country. When these manufacturers left Ethiopia after 1974, what they had left behind was an inferior, or at best, an intermediate technology which was not economically functional, i.e, neither the managerial skill nor the competent personnel was present to make it even minimally functional. With the added hasty programme of nationalization, their potential benefit was left untapped. For whatever reason, the foreign owned

manufacturers did not want a transfer of knowledge - and through various cunning practices they have succeeded in impeding the development of indigenous enterpreneurs which was then at its embryonic stage. And the imperial regime created the conditions, and had collaborated in this underdevelopment process through various legislations, patent and trademarks registration.

According to a UN study[11] conducted on the eve of 1974 revolution, the picture of foreign personnel present in Ethiopia was disturbing. The total number of foreign personnel employed in 1970/71 was 10,000. 50 percent of them was employed in private sector. Now, 50 percent of the personnel holding key positions in firms had only secondary or vocational education, they had acquirid skills 'on the job' training, 2 per cent of the total foreign personnel were 'illiterate' - and 15 per cent had only primary education, 50 per cent of skilled occupations in these firms were monopolized by Headquarters personnel.

The foregoing brief survey of foreign capital penetration in Ethiopia warrants the following observations:

1) The period of 1950 to 1971 brought to a halt Ethiopia's long standing insulation to world market and technology.

2) During this period, industrialisation was given primary importance by the government's development schemes. Even though the sector's contribution to the GDP was insignificant, none the less an increase of labour force in this sector was growing. The latter suggests either one of the following two things or both. It could mean that the freeing of labour from land in rural areas was slowly beginning to take place, or it could mean that because of the nature of 'open' unemployment which was prevalent in urban areas, this labour force was beginning to be absorbed in this sector which, for historial reasons, many of the establishments in this sector were concentrated in urban centers.

3) During this period, much of the investment went into preparing conditions for a better and eventual exploitation - with very little investment going towards production itself. But because of the short duration of the activity in the latter category - it remains an open question whether foreign investors have achieved their goal of extensive exploitation.

4) The state's policy of investment has undermined domestic enterpreneurs, and has in fact facilitated foreign investors' desire to squeeze the domestic enterpreneurs. Their innovative capacity was hampered by various mal-practices of patent and trademark licencing - their lack of capital and the government's reluctance to encourage them through various means have rendered them incapable of competing with the foreign investors. Only in the late 1960s and early in the 1970s; i.e., after having achieved the necessary capital of E$200.000 for investment that Ethiopian investors began competing with their foreign

counterparts. In view of the above observations, are we, therefore, justified to use the label 'semi-capitalist' to characterize Ethiopia's economy under the imperial rule?

The veredict on whether or not it was semi-capitalist depends to a greater extent on how we understand capitalist social relations to be. As we have noted above, Marx's characterization of capitalism requires the presence of two polarized classes, namely capitalists and proletariats entering into relations in the spheres of material and intellectual production. Such social relations would have to be dominant over other social relations which are less visible, and has a less impact on the economic and political life of a society. The evidence suggests that these two classes were, first of all, at their embryonic stages in Ethiopia with less than 1 percent of proletariats of the then estimated population of 32 million. No one knows for sure how many capitalists were present at the time, but given the small scale of investment by Ethiopians it is hard to imagine that their number was significant. Admittedly, even though the number of proletariats and capitalists was small, they did have an impact on the political economy of the country. For instance, mechanized farming which was launched in the mid 60s and accellerated by the Government's development plans in that decade has rendered many in becoming landless peasants and marginalised pastoralists.

Looking at the available evidence at the time, it is plausible to suggest that the country was engaged in an accellerated process of industralisation. This is not tantamount to saying that the country was undergoing capitalist transformation; for industrialisation and capitalist expansion are not necessarily equivalent. It is possible for industralisation to take place without the country in any way becoming capitalist. In other words, capitalism implies some form of industrialisation, but the latter does not necessarily imply the latter. For this reason, we can view the developments which had taken place in Ethiopia for about three decades as peripheral industrialisation without creating neither capitalist nor proletariat classes. The government's development plans, in many ways, reflect the adoption of capitalistic path of industrial development; but before this was in any way materialized, the 1974 revolution took place.

Hence, there was neither a full-fledged proletariat class nor a bourgeoisie class. In fact from a cultural point of view, the class of bureaucratic landlords considered by us to be very close to being regarded as the bourgeoisie class - had a culture by far inferior to a European peasant at the turn of the century. It should be recalled that the most important achievements of capitalism was the introduction of a culture to both these classes, by far superior to any of the culture exhibited in pre-capitalist social relations. Marx noted that the ruling class in pre-capitalist societies was wary of change, including improvements to the material mode of production, even if some

members of this class were otherwise disposed. To this end, Marx calls non-capitalist ruling classes 'conservative', in contrast with the productively revolutionary bourgeoisie. Here, I might add, the exploited class is also wary of change, for it considers that change might affect his vulnerable placement in the economic structure of the society in which he lives. Therefore our facimille bourgeoisie class, i.e., the bureaucratic landlords, could not be characterized as one devoid of conservatism nor filled with striving desire to bo engaged in the experimentation of new ideas and innovations. Nor was it intersted in revolutionizing the instruments of production. If there was indeed a bourgeosie class, it could not survive without this attitude. This is what Marx says in the *Manifesto* concerning this point:

> "The bourgeoisie cannot exist without continually revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production and all social relations". [12]

In the process it manages to transform the attitude, the discipline and the 'work ethic' of the peasant to a new realm. The transformed peasant would become aware of the scope and limits of his freedom, and the choices available to him. He is free from commiting himself to any owner of the means of production. I shall, therefore, conclude that the bureaucratic landlord and the proletariat emerging classes do not in any way resemble the bourgeoisie and the proletariat classes, respectively. What we had in Ethiopia was a mosaic of classes embracing landlords, commerce class, traders, bureaucratic elite, peripheral workers, small peasant producers, shift cultivators, pure pastoralists and semi-pastoralists. We also saw, since the beginning of 1900 a very limited transformation of subsistance production to commodity production, hitherto with all the consequences.

3.2. Class Analysis

The absolute monarchy has emerged in the midst of covert and overt intrigues and dissension amongst the feudal lords. It inherited a legacy of oppressive property relations expanded during the reign of Menelik II, and Haile Selassie has refined and enhanced such relations. The process of limited industrialisation which we have witnessed during his reign marking the end of the country's insulation from technology has entailed the modification and evolvement of classes. Using the existing property relations, Haile Selassie gave away lands to feudal lords to secure their support, loyality, and to isolate the dessident elements. Some of the favoured lords were elevated to the ranks of governors, army chiefs, and regional administrators. Together with their administrative ranks, they were provided land. The educated elites, albeit few, were retained as his advisors and ministers. They too, were

not without possession of land. And those suspected of posing a challenge to his throne were quietly dispatched as diplomats to less friendly and less prominent countries.

What has evolved during this process was a kind of 'typology of landlordism', the structure of which looks like the following:

A) Landlord not dominant in the state apparatus. Their property right circumscribed - right of eviction only when peasant defaults on payment (whether in labour, cash or kind) of rent, the level of the rent itself being fixed non-competetively, and lying below the competetive rent.

B) Landlords have enough power to extract the full 'economic rent' from tenants, and probably also to impose contractual lease terms enabling them to change tenants or raise rents at the end of a specified period of time. The main grounds for eviction would still be non paymet of rent. The extent that the only limit on the landlord's ability to enhance rent is here the point at which the peasant abandons his holding, one may say landed property has here become absolute.

C) The landlord class, either through their domination of the state apparatus or because that apparatus is not functioning propely - so that the landlord's estate becomes a 'little state' - can extract more than the competitive rent from the tenants. Extra economic sanctions are decisive here.[13]

By the end of 1973, the nature of class structure and its diversity was, in the main anchored in the framework of this typology. Hence, the kind of classification of classses - which we offer below - in some ways reflect this typology but in no way should such classification be regarded as exhaustive. In so far as such 'objective' classification is lacking, it is best perhaps to propose an operational classification of classes present during pre-revolutionary Ethiopia. At any rate the taxonomy of classes looks like the following:

A) ***Landlord class*** Under this category, we find people who were either rural or urban residents with possession of enormous size of land, often good quality, who either exercised tenancy by leasing the land to small cultivators or allowing their kins to run the farms or were engaged in mechanization either directly or inderectly through proxy - and with or without influence on the state apparatus. Under this class falls three sub-classes:

(i) *Bureacratic Landlords* These were people in most privileged category in the sense that they had responsibility in running the state machineries, making contacts with foreign investors and diplomats, contrived policies to promote their joint ventures with these investors; and were also in possession of large tracts of fertile land in the rural areas, and strategic lands in the urban areas.

(ii) *Semi-bureaucratic Landlords* These were people in possession of land in either urban or rural areas or in both, with little or insignificant

resposibility in the management of the affairs of the state. They leased land and collected tributes and revenues.

(iii) *Peripheral Landlords*: These were people engaged *only* in leasing land and in the collection of tributes.

B) ***The Commerce Class***: These were people striving to expand the 'home market' by either making close business relation with foreign investors or involving other native share-holders. Many were not involved in any affairs of the state.

(i) *Well-to-do commerce class*: Essentially involved in the expansion of the services industry and to some extent engaged in mechanised farming.

(ii) *Semi-developed commerce class*: This category of profiteers engaged in small services and manufacturing industries, employing a limited number of workers both skilled and unskilled.

C) ***Class of Traders***: Strictly speaking, these were people operating in the center of the marketing system consisting of distribution and redistribution of goods.

(i) *Merchant traders*: This consisted of people with a good deal of capital, involved in distribution and redistribution of marketable surplus in various regions, particularly in the urban centers, of the country.

(ii) *Small traders*: This consisted of people who owned small shops, and the like; and who provide small-scale services.

D) ***Bureaucratic elite***: This consisted of people with either professional or semi professional skill engaged in various government or commercial organs who managed to earn their income by selling 'labour power', broadly defined to include knowledge and skill.

E) ***Peripheral Workers***: This consisted of people engaged in the manufacturing or services industry selling their skills or labour for salary or wages.

(i) *Regular Peripheral Workers*: This category consisted of people with *regular* function in the industry, selling their skills or labour.

(ii) *Irregular Peripheral Workers*: This consisted of people whom for the most part were unemployed and unskilled and always ready to undertake any manual labour, when called upon - either in the service or manufacturing industry or assisting either merchant traders or semi-developed commerce class or well-to-do commerce class and even small traders.

F) ***Small peasant Producer***: This consisted of small cultivators who either owned their plot of land or who were tenants, and practicing sedentary agriculture.

(i) *Land owning peasant producer*: This consisted of small cultivators with strong 'nominal' ownership right to a plot of land and with some traditional farm implements, and use the entire family as an indispensable labour power; and much of the production is achieved by exploiting the family.

(ii) *Peasant producer*: This consisted of tenants with weak 'nominal' ownership right to land who pay tribute to the landlord. They employ the family for labour. But within this class two categories need to be distinguished: a) tenant producers with little or no farm implements, and b) tenant producers with traditional implements.

(iii) *Landless peasant cultivator*: This class consisted of people with no access right to land and with or without farm implements.

(iv) *Village labourers*: This consisted of people with traditional know-how of cultivation; or unemployed labourers who earn their living in assisting peasant cultivators or sell their labour (seasonally) to bureaucratic landlords or to well-to-do commerce class in areas where mechanized farming is being undertaken, or simply providing services as servants, watchmen, porters, etc..

G) ***Pure Pastoralists:*** This class consisted of people living in arid and semi-arid regions of the country, practicing mainly cameloid pastoralism, and multi-species pastoralism. Access right to pasture land or to any resources on the rangeland is determined on the basis of membership to a particular clan but without entailing a sense of private possession.

H) ***Semi-Pastoralists:*** This category consisted of people who are partly herdsmen practicing pastoral mode of appropriation, and partly sedentary agriculture, or shift cultivation. Access right to pasture land or to resources on pasture land is granted by virtue of membership to a clan. Access right to land for sedentary farming practice is individualized.

(i) *Shift cultivators*: This consisted of people deriving their livelihood maily from the practice of shift cultivation and secondarily from other economic activities. Access right to land is administered on the basis of clan membership.

We do not pretend this taxonomy of classes in Ethiopia is, under the monarchy, to be exhaustive, it does however, serve some purpose. To a large extent, this taxonomy enables us to answer whether capitalism, in one way or another, has proliferated the country. This does not mean that analysis of classes is a sufficient benchmark for deciding whether capitalism has penetrated the country; but it is, none the less, a necessary condition. Since one of the things this penetration entails is the establishment of a bourgeoisie class which has endogenously developed, it is apparent that the class that comes closest to being regarded as such was the bureaucratic landlord class. However, this class is far from being conceived as equivalent to the bourgeoisie class.

One of the criticisms which could be leveled against our taxonomy of classes is the fact that the yardstick employed in the classification is asymmetrical - in the sense that some were defined on the bases of their relations to the means of production and some were not. Perhaps on this view, the yardstick of economism, often employed by orthodox

Marxists is both a necessary and a sufficient criterion of classifying classes - and indeed in this sense such yardstick has not been uniformaly applied. The reason for this has to do with the fact that under certain circumstances not just *production* in the narrow sense but also *circulation* may provide the basis for class relations. This is what Hindess and Hirst had to say on this regard.

"In the analysis of what the means - conditions of production are and the forms of their possession and distribution it is essential to avoid the economic reduction of these forms to technique and the concentration of analysis on the immediate forms of the labour process. It is necessary to abandon the forms of economism which make the process of production essentially prior to and determinant of circulation and distribution. However, not all relations of circulation/distribution must control necessary conditions of production and the effect of the cycle of production/ distribution must be to reproduce this capacity of control in the hands of a definite category of agents".[14]

Consequently, it can be suggested that we have two kinds of class relations. (1) The relation between the labourers and the controllers of the labour process (who are also the effective possessors of some means of production) and (2) relations between the controllers and the possessors of other means of production. Depending on the mode of production, there may be no class relations, or class relations of type (1) only, or type (2) only, or both. Hence, the methodology which we have adopted in our taxonomy of classes is simply this. First, we identify the typical 'enterprise', i.e, unit of appropration of nature, the locus of labour process. Second, we identify the means of production that are brought together in the labour process. Third, on the basis of the above we identify the following category of agents: (a) labourers, (b) controllers of the labour process, and (c) effective possessors of the means of production. The number of classes is the number of distinct categories of agents, identified in this way - distinct not just empirically, but distinct by a logical necessity inscribed in the structure of the labour process.[14]

3.3 Agriculture, Industry and other Services

Much has been written on the imperial regime s land tenure system.[16] Therefore, it will suffice to point out some salient features of this system hoping that it will shed some light on the discussion to follow later. The land tenure system, known for its notoriety, came to a halt after the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) took power in 1974 and has announced a land reform proclamation in March 1975. Prior to this measure, the system has done enormous damage to millions of Ethiopians, particularly to the small peasant producers, and pastoralists,

who had suffered from either a threat of or realized eviction and landlessness. The proclamation was aimed at eliminating landlordism and landlessness which happen to be traditional maladies of Ethiopian society. Whether or not these aims have been realized in subsequent years is a question which we shall have to postpone for a while. The concern here is to assess the extent of the damage which the land holding system under the imperial rule had on Ethiopia's certain segment of the population living in a state of near starvation; and to see to what extent the system stood as a hindrance to the development and to the realization of the country's agricultural potential.

Regardless of significant differences in the land holding system between north and south, there were two important categories of land tenure throughout Ethiopia under the *ancien regime*. These were (a) tenures entailing access right to land but without 'real' ownership right or direct entitlement, and (b) tenures entailing access right to land and in some cases a right on a peasant who toils the land, but without 'real' ownership right or direct entitlement to the land. The communal or kinship or village or rist system, and the church systems were all instances of (a). The rist system has generally apperared in the northern provinces of Gojjan, Gondar, Northern Shoa, Wollo and Tigrai. According to this system, the criterion of establishing access right to land is kinship descent from a family originally attached to the land. Hence, if one establishes this causal link, then the individual rist right is honoured among members of the community. However, in many instances that was not an easy task to ascertain. Since rist right claims could arise from various distant kins in either the mother's or the father's lineage, disputed claims would have to be resolved in court - adding to the toll of various land litigations suffocating the Ethiopian court system. According to one estimate, "75 percent of all civil disputes in the court of Ethiopia concern land".[17]

The other tenure pattern which falls under (a) was the church. The state allocates a certain amount of land, known as semon land, so that it can support its activities by the revenue derived fom leasing this land to individual cultivators. It has been estimated that the church has owned somewhere between 12 and 20 percent of the cultivable land in both north and south.[18] However, the biggest landowner in Ethiopia was the state. It has been estimated that upto 50 percent of the cultivable land, and a significant portion of the fertile land belonged to the state. Its holdings could be divided into two: *maderia* land - given to war veterans, patriots, and the like who had performed exceptional services to the state in lieu of pension or salary; and *mengist* land or land registered as government property. During the late 60s the state has accelerated the granting of access rights to many acres of its land to individuals intimately acquainted with the ruling aristocracy; or to those known to have good business accumen in the hope of expanding the

state's interest in large-scale commercial agriculture. This was, in part, prompted by the Third Five-Year Development Plan (1968-73) which called for the expansion of mechanized commercial farming of cash crops.

Another system which falls in under (b), is the *gult* system. Under this system access right to land is accorded by the ruling aristocracy to those who were known to be loyal or could present evidence of loyality to the state. This system has indeed facilitated the 'settlement scheme' of Menelik II (1865-89) during his southern marches. Since one way of keeping in check opposition forces in the newly acquired territories was to establish gult lords - whom many of them were northern settlers - the system was predominant in the southern provinces. This explains, in part, why tenancy was more visible in this system as compared to others. Neither rist right nor gult right is transferable in the form exchange, mortgaged or bequeathed to someone as a gift. Nevertheless, a transfer of rights could be done in the form of inheretance and in this case it has to be to heirs.

Having given a brief exposé of the tenurial arrangements existing under the *ancien regime* it is now important to point out some of its salient characteristics which, in many ways, have contributed to the state of near starvation and backwardness of Ethiopia's small peasant producers. First, in so far as he has a weak nominal right to land, the peasant producer has to constantly worry about rent payment, tribute and taxes; and if possible to avoid being indebted. Second, the tenants cannot, even under threat of famine, sell their plots of land to buy some food. For land was not, at least to them, a direct-endownment exchangeable by another commodity. This was because they *only* had access right to land. Hence, it can be suggested that the system has implicity denied them access right to food when they are faced with contingencies. Third, all 'real' ownership right to land, ultimately, belonged to the state. Consequently, the tenant not only had to worry about being evicted by the landlord, but also by the threat of the state's legitimacy to evict him. In reality, however, both the tenant and the landlord were subjected to the same threat arising from the state. Fourth, the tenant could not afford to acquire new traction of power for cultivation nor had any capital to invest in equipment which could have improved his productivity. And even if he were to improve his productivity, he would not be its beneficiery, but only the landlord and the state. Either way, he was bound to be the looser.

These elements embeded in the land tenure system had enormous consequences on Ethiopia's small peasant producer's ability to feed himself. It could hardly be denied that the fear of eviction which was hovering over his head was a disincentive for him to invest in his instruments of production. This in turn, had adverse effects not only on his livelihood but also on the environment in which he was living. There

were no compelling reasons for him to make such investments, since he was living under a state of uncertainty. Nor was he interested in acquiring better techniques of production. For, if evicted, the newly acquired techniques could be rendered useless and thereby may even find himself among the ranks of the unemployed. Moreover, improvement on his productivity through investment or for that matter any increase on his productive output was proven to be a disadvantage to him, but a boone to the absentee landlord and the state. At any rate, since his very survival was a subsistence one, he never possessed any capital; and if he had sufficient capital the rational step for him to take would be to move to towns.

It is, therefore, fair to suggest that the farm implements at his disposal were archaic and counter-productive. A survey conducted on the eve of the land reform programme by the Ministry of Agriculture suggests that "in 1974, 30 per cent of all holding in the country had no oxen at all, and only about 29 per cent had a pair of oxen... Holdings with more than a pair of oxen, presumably of the better-off peasants, made up only 8 per cent of the total".[19] A study on the investment of the peasant producer suggests that "the non-land capital per farm is estimated to be not more than Eth $125".[20] And the picture of the peasant tools painted by a FAO report reveals the following:

"The land is filled by means of crude wooden plows or by a type of hoe drawn by oxen. The usage of chemical fertiliser is very limited, while much of the cattle manure is used up as a fuel, thus leaving soil-burning as the dominant fertilising method. Seeding is done by hand and the quality of the seed grain is usually deficient. The harvesting of the grains is done with a sickle using a ripping rather than cutting motion. Threshing is done by oxen. Little effort is exerted to prevent plant diseases and eliminate pests.

> As far as raising livestock is concerned, malnutrition, faulty animal breeding methods, unsatisfactory animal husbandry and in particular, the ravages of diseases and parasitic infestations, cause underproduction, poor quality wastage and heavy losses".[21]

The absence of any real investment in his farm implements, the lack of, in many instances, basic and necessary tools, the backward nature of his tools and agro-practices had adverse effects on his marginal level of existence as well as on his environmental resources. These elements contribute to poor land management, deforestation, soil erosion and to other kinds of degredation of his ecosystem. Moreover, such conditions generate low productivity - and the latter exacerbates his diminishing capacity to cope with starvation.

From the point of view of the landlord who had, over ther years,

grown accustomed to collecting tributes and taxes - and who has shown a preference to living in the urban areas - the aforementioned elements are not crucial. Nor did he regard them as pressing problems which he should pay close attention to. Instead, his concern was with the extraction of marketable surplus. No doubt he would have preferred to see his tenants increase their productivity; since that would mean an increase in his level of affluence and conspicuous consumption, but not when his capital is involved to reinvest in the farms. To some extent, he too, was under fear of eviction, since what he had was a strong, yet tenuous nominal right to land, and a right over the tenants working on his land. In the long run, however, neither the tenant nor the landlord had the 'real' ownership right to land. That privilige was reserved to the state. Parenthetically this issue has, as we shall see later, an important implication on understanding the nature and character of the state under the old as well as the new regimes.

All things considered, unlike the bourgeoisie in a capitalist society, the feudal lord in Ethiopia share some common element of conservatism with the peasant. They were both reluctant to experiment with new ideas or techniquies; for they fear, albeit for different reasons, that a change may upset their placements in the economic structure of the society. This meant to the landlord a continual avoidance of investment in the land but a sustained extraction of surplus from the peasant's labour which he had legal entitlement over it, just like any other commodity.

Once the landlord has collected the surplus through the usual mediums of appropriation he retains some for his own consumption and provides the urban markets with the rest. Since most urban dwellers are market dependent, they would have to pay high prices for grains, thus enriching the pockets of the landlords. Most of the landlords reside in urban centers, the level of income distribution favours the urban dwellers; and many facilities were designed to cater these people. Consequently, it was only logical for both the landlord and the small peasant producer to bring surplus to the urban markets. This process of marketing lowers the peasant's margin of profit. For he had to cover long distances to reach the nearest urban market. This meant that the labour and other costs involved in this journey diminish whatever profit he was hoping to secure. In part, this has to do with the absence of any inter - and-intra-regional transportaion facilites, markets, and the like. The roads were built not with the aim of integrating one province or region with the others, but to connect them mainly to the capital city. Such design has encouraged people to direct their marketable goods to urban centers instead of creating their own markets. Owing to such structural arrangements, the method of surplus extraction, has benefited the urban dwellers. This partly explains why urbanites have often been spared from ravages of famine.

Thus far, we had been dealing with the nature of land tenure system and its implications for the small peasant producer's *ability* to feed himself. Since the land tenure system governs the peasant's relationship to his plot of land, the state, the landlord, and to his family - it is undoubtedly an important factor for understanding the country's political economy, and the peasant's ability to cope with famine. A study of the land tenure system would only give us a partial picture of the country's economic and political arrangements. To establish a holistic undestanding of these arrangements we need to delve into various economic activities in the agrarian, industrial and services sectors. We shall, therefore, direct our attention to them and examine each in turn.

Agriculture is the predominant feature of the Ethiopian economy under the former regime. Hence, we need to say a few words about the performance of this sector prior to the 1974 upheavals. It was an open secret that both the rural population as well as the state derived their income and revenue, respectively, from agriculture. The country's GDP, say for the year 1965, was US$ 1,180 millions and agriculture with 58 percent was the biggest cuntributor, with industry running a distant second and contributing 14 percent, manufacturing with 7 percent and other services with 28 percent.

During the period between 1965 and 1973, the GNP was considered one of the lowest with less than US$ 100 and slightly more than what it was (bearing in mind the annual rate of inflation which was 1.8 per cent) in the 1950s when it registred US$ 54. For the period between 1965 and 1973, the GDP's annual overall growth rate was 4.1 per cent, with agriculture rising a meager 2.1 per cent, industry by 6.1 per cent, manufacturing 8.8 per cent, and services growing by 3.5 per cent, per annum. The bulk of the GDP's expenditure was going to private consumption eating up 77 per cent of it, whereas public consumption including agriculture, was allocated only 11 per cent of the GDP.

Not just the majority of the population, but the entire country as a whole was dependent on agriculture. Despite the fact that most of its revenue was derived from agriculture, and that this sector has contributed more to the GDP than any other, only a small percent of the budget was allocated to it. For instance, in the annual budget for 1958/59, the budget allocated for the Ministry of Agriculture (Including Agricultural Research and Extension Service) was, with Eth$ 7,720,438, a little more than what was allocated to "allowance for unforseen expenses" with Eth $7,092,438. And of the total 122 million hectares available land for cultivation, nearly half was used for permanent pasture, and forests occupy slightly less than the area devoted to cropland. The volume of production between 1965 and 1973, grew by 1.2 per cent per annum,but food production for this period was rising only by 0.3 per cent per annum; and the production per capita for the

same period was - 1.4 per cent per annum for the total agricultural activity, and food production was 2.2 per cent per annum, generally indicating low productivity.

However, during the same period, the population was growing by 2.6 per cent per annum, with a significant rise of 7.3 per cent per annum in the urban areas - suggesting that the urban population was a major consumer of agricultural production. The percentage of the labour force for the period between 1965 and 1973 was estimated to be 53 per cent of the working age of the population (15 to 64 years) - of wich 86 per cent was in agriculture, 6 per cent in industry, 8 per cent in the services. The annual growth rate of the labour force has registered, for the period, only 2.2 per cent.

Mechanized farming was at an infant stage. In fact, it was estimated that when Ethiopian agriculture entered into the 1960s, only 1 percent of the rural population was using some form of mechanization. And in the late 1960s when the effort to intensify commercial agriculture was aided by the *Third Five Year Plan*, we began to see some noticeable size of tractors as well as combined harvester-threshers. Before 1966, there were less than 1000 tractors and only 10 combined harvester-threshers in the entire country. After the *Third Five Year Plan* was enacted in 1968, we saw a qualitative increase in the number of tractors reaching up to 2200, and the combined harvester-threshers up to 30. By the end of 1973, i.e. the end of the *Third Five Year Plan*, there were 3400 tractors and 130 combined harvester-threshers in the country. The mechanization programme did not benefit the majority of the small peasant producers, except for those who had worked as seasonal labourers in some of the larger farm units. In fact, the programme led to the eviction of a considerable number of peasants, in the south and the Afar pastoralists in the Awash valley. This eviction may also have contributed to the development of famine conditions in Hararghe province in 1974 which has caused the deaths of thousands of Afar pastoralists and their livestocks.[22]

During the late 1960s, some people have estimated that food production must increase annually at 4.5 per cent in order to achieve the accepted minimum daily requirement of 2,300 calories per person and maintain exports at the level of that particular period. This was approximately 180 per cent more than the period's annual rate of increase in total food production in Ethiopia.[23] The Ethiopian market has witnessed food shortages; and large grain imports, in 1958-60 and 1965-67; a general increase in grain prices: domestic demand for grains and pulses has exceeded supply. In some parts of the country, the situation during 1964-65 has reached catastrophic proportion. For instance, in the Metekel Awraja of Gojjam province, which will be our subject area later, the indigenous people were starving to death. However, some of them managed to escape to the Sudan, whereas the

border patrols and some of the Agew population had to perish because of the food shortage. The price in that area, for a pint of food grain at that time was Eth $4.00.[24]

The annual increase in the market-dependent population has been estimated in the late 60s, at about 3.5 per cent; in 1980 it was estimated to be about 65 per cent greater (6.8 millions) than in 1960. During the period 1948-52, Ethiopia has exported wheat amounting to 37,000 metric tons; but during the period 1962-66 it became a *net importer* of 20,000 metric tons of wheat, even though it was known that the soils in Ethiopia are most suitable for producing high quality of wheat as compared to most regions in Africa.

A closer examination of the imperial regime's agrarian policy reveals that even though agriculture is the main source of revenue to the country, and the main source of income to the majority of the population, none the less, it gave only a scant attention to its development. The lack of attention being paid by the state to this sector has already been observed by the amount of expenditure allocated to it. And when we look at the various Five Year Plans of the regime, we find an overwhelming evidence that the state has virtually ignored the small peasant producer, even though he is the backbone of Ethipia's economy. Agricultural strategies outlined in the first three five year plans show that the central thrust of the plans is to ignore the peasant sector. The *First Five Year Plan* (1957-1962), gave priority to infrastructural development, i.e., the expansion of industry in the country. The *Second Five Year Plan* (1962-1968), emphasized productive investment in manufacturing, roads, telecommunications, mining and electricity. It also noted the need to increase per capita food production and raw materials to assist the balance of payments by stimulating exports and eliminating imports. Issues such as land reform, agricultural taxation, administration of agriculture were virtually ignored. The agricultural sector managed to secure only 6 percent of the total investment under this plan. *The Third Five Year Plan* (1968-1973) attempts to tackle the road blocks for agricultural growth. But, ironically and perhaps understandably, the emphasis in the sphere of agriculture is on commercial plantations. The peasant sector is, once again, ignored.

What is even more paradoxical is that the plan gave only 1 percent of total expenditures to agriculture. The three consecutive five year plans, have in one form or another, managed to increase mechanized farming; but the consequence of this progress is the eviction of peasants and pastoralists in the non-plantation farming regions of the country. These plans assume that the peasant would develop the agricultural sphere on its own; and the emphasis which the government has placed on was with *industry*. But an emphasis on this sector in the face of an on-going food crisis and impending famine defies any form of rationality. Numerous studies have warned the goverment beforehand about the impending

famines in Ethiopia. The results of a nationwide nutritional survey conducted in 1958, indicate that the overall nutritional status of Ethiopians was below that required for their level of activity. Even during this period, there was a deficit of up to 400 calories per person per day.[25] Another study warned that "urgent action on a large scale is needed if expansion of food production has to keep pace with the rapidly growing population".[26] This study, suggests that without such action, even to maintain the present low level of consumption will be utterly difficult. And the country as a whole may reach a critical level of food shortage in the next decade. This study incidentally, was made in 1967. And in 1969, Bequele and Chole have pointed out in their brief study of the political economy of Ethiopia, that food shortage which has appeared in the 60s will be catastrophic in the years to come. "The food supply is barely keeping up with the population growth. Hence whatever marginal increase exists now, there are indications that there may be serious food crisis in the 1970s ... This critical state of food production and consumption should therefore call for the immediate and serious attention of the government ... The shortage in October 1965 was put as high as one-tenth of the normal production. According to some reports, about 1.5 million people may have been affected by the grain shortage. The shortage was estimated at between 470,000 to 500,000 tons received as aid in 1965".[27]

The deficit may not be that striking when we had a similar shortage roughly around 400 000 tons in 1981. During this period, even though the new military regime denied any food crisis in Ethiopia, it was in fact the period of emerging signals for one of the most devastating famines in the country. By various accounts, the famine which the world has discovered in 1984-85 has given the military regime full warning as far back as 1981.[28]

The imperial regime meanwhile ignored those repeated warnings of food crises in the future. Instead, one discerns almost total indifference by the regime towards the problem. When 30 per cent of the total investment budget of the country went to transportation, and only 5 per cent to agriculture in 1961-65, then one clearly see that the government has intended to pursue the policy of neglect of the agricultural sector. No one thought that agriculture could be the engine for change and development, and the imperial regime's strategies of development have the target not in this sector but elsewhere. But the failure of this planning was unfortunately recognized and acknowledged by the imperial Government, on the eve of the Wollo Famine and the popular uprising in 1973.

The industrial sector which the regime has given the most serious attention to deserves to be assessed briefly. A short line of demarcation between agriculture and agricultural industry cannot easily be drawn in

Ethiopia; in part, because the relative size and the degree of maturity or the lack there of, has contributed to the fuzzy boundary. In the main, much of the industrial activity was contingent upon what was taking place in the agricultural sphere. Some people have attempted to define the agricultural sector as "encompassing the direct product of the farm prior to any off-farm processing", and the agricultural industry sector as " ...(1) the production of goods and services that go into farming and (2) the off the farm processing, handling, or other commercial treatment of agricultural products".[29] The nature of the Ethiopian economy is such that the defunction of the agricultural industry (agro-industry) sector includes approximately 85 per cent of all manufacturing when measured by employment or by the gross value of the product.

The manufacturing industry was barely noticeable in the 1960s, and as expected, it was primarily engaged in food and beverage processing as well as shoes manufacturing. These elements together with the traditional handicrafts industries accounted for less than 7 per cent of the GDP. What was significant about the industrial sector especially during the period beginning in 1961 and ending in 1967, that there was an increase of labour force, albeit small, in industry and this was due to, in part, an uninterrupted decline of agricultural contribution to the GDP during that period. In 1961 agriculture's contribution was 64.8 per cent, in 1962 it was 63,1 percent, in 1963 it was 62,3 percent, in 1964 it was 60.7 per cent, in 1965 it was 58.6 per cent, in 1966 it was 56.7 per cent. Hence,in the span of seven years period, agriculture's contribution has fallen by 9.2 per cent. However, an increment of 4.2 per cent was registered as industry's contribution to the GDP for the very same seven year period. For that matter, all of them but agriculture has shown increments. Commerce & transport with 2.6 per cent and other services with 2.0 per cent.

The significant element of the structure of industry under the old regime was the development of inter-regional inequality. The majority of all industries was concentrated in and around major cities like Addis Ababa, Asmara, Dire Dawa or in an important province like Shewa. These areas generally account "for 227 out of the 248 establishments in the whole of the country".[31] It may be suggested that the reasons for such regional inequality has to do with the fact that these urban areas provide access to wider markets, and in reality they do. I doubt, however, that this kind of farsightedness had entered into the planners' scheme, but had to do with historical reasons. If indeed the planners had thought that such element was important, then in view of industry's close association with agriculture, they would have located them in areas conceived to be agricultural surplus producing regions. But historically, the development of industry has to do, at least in part, with "colonial expansion" in Ethiopia.

Many of the industrial establishments in Asmara were opened up by

Italians, and a good many of them in Addis had foreign affiliation. But in order to understand the intensity and the impact of this inter-regional inequality we need to take a quick look at its genesis. Hardly anyone would blame the Imperial Government for the creation or emergence of this inequality. The root causes lie, partly, in the era of colonial expansion. When Emperor Menilik was in a poor state of health, the three great colonial masters Italy, Great Britain and France concluded a Tripartite Treaty in 1906. "While acknowledning the independence of Ethiopia, they pledged to recognize their mutual rights and to take action to protect their citizens in the event of changes in Ethiopia. Lake Tana and the river Nile were recognised as the British sphere of influence, the area around the Dijibouti-Addis Ababa railway that of the French, and Italy's over a crescent-shaped strip linking Eritrea and Somalia running through to the west of Addis Ababa".[32]

Menelik, aware of this design immediately asked his son Lij Iyasu who was only then 11 or 12 years old to be the successor of the throne, thereby ensuring continuity and attempting to spoil the design. But when Haile Selassie came to power the planned partition were almost realized. The Italians under Mussolini's resolved policy to colonize Ethiopia went ahead with the scheme keeping a precarious balance with the other colonial masters. Mussolini's three phases of settlement plans in Ethiopia were to developed those regions not only agriculturally but also industrially. To this end, we see many of the industrial and agricultural infrastructures were introduced by Italians. "The Italians attempted to make Addis Ababa, Gondar, and Harar into modern colonial towns",[33] and with the exception of Gondar, one finds quite a lot of industrial establishments in these two cities.

"The post-liberation economy of Ethiopia was the legacy of Italian occupation. Expatriate firms prominent in export-import trade had been among the first victims of the new order. The Ethiopian economy was appended to the autocratic economic system of the metropole. While their ambitious agricultural projects evaporated with their military defeat, the Italians left behind an impressive network of roads .. some thousand lorries, a fairly extensive milling industry. a much more expanded cash economy..".[34] There were also other industrial plants and public services of Italian origin located in either Addis or Dire Dawa. "The textile mills and cement factory in Dire Dawa, the fiber mills and four flour mills (including the famous Cerealia) in Addis Ababa, a number of saw mills spread throughout the country, and some timber and furniture works".[35]

After liberation, the Haile Selassie's government under the British patronage inherited these industrial infrastructures, and fail to diversify the economy. "What the emperor has done was to retort to his pre-war programs, and upon return to Ethiopia in May 1941, he reverted to his

earlier ideas about development and reliance on a bureaucratic class as vehicle of control and change".[36] Under the veil of nationalization, the emperor and his associates *inherited* much of the indusrial establishments in these regions either directly or indirectly. This was indeed a quick way of making profits without any substantial investments. This has also strengthened the presence of a fragmented economy and facilitated the expansion of the colonial scheme of development where only those regions selected by Italians for the expansion of industrial and agricultural establishments were being developed and others were virtually ignored. The old regime's vision was that, "with the remnants of the Italian built modern sector, the new undertakings would provide enough profit to stimulate further economic development".[37]

Time and again the Imperial Government placed emphasis on industry but the performance of this sector was not encouraging. Obviously, industry was almost in its infancy in the 1960s. The relative size of this sector can be detected by looking at the gross revenue derived from the various industries and the number of employees. For the year 1967/68, there were only 57,697 employees, and the gross value of the products was Eth $219,7 million. For the period 1965/66 there were 54,800 employess, and Eth $269.8 million for the gross value of product, and in 1966/67 there were 58,694 employees and the gross value of product was Eth $357.1 million.

The foregoing brief survey of the political economy of Ethiopia under the imperial regime reveals that the small peasant producer was virtually ignored by the agrarian policy of the state, and he was the least beneficiary of the state's development schemes, even though he was the major contributor to the country's economy. The scant attention being paid by the state to this group left it with backward agro-technique, primitive tools, lack of resurces and endownment, and with a very low level of productivity. In brief, his potential as an engine for development was left untapped. The small peasant producer, therefore, was forced to become vulnerable to famine and malnutrition. His practices, in turn, have contributed to environmental degradation - and the latter set the stage for frequent mass starvation. The agrarian policy together with the programme of industrial development fail to reach out the rural population. Consequently, all infrastructural developments such as the building of roads, schools, health facilities, communication, and the like were only to promote regional bias favoring the urban market centers such as Addis, Asmara, and Dire Dawa. In fact, these development schemes stood as a hindrance to inter, or intra-regional trade. There were virtually no direct road facilities linking one region with the other. This, in turn, has encuraged a growing regional bias in the distribution of marketable goods and surplus. Hence, the absence of effective distribution pattern, road transportation linking adjacent

provinces and thereby promoting inter-regional trade, has left the rural population to stand vulnerable to famine. This can be seen by the numerous famines which took place in Wollo. When there was a bumper harvest in Gojjam, people in the neighbouring province, Wollo, were starving. But that was not all. In some regions of Wollo, people were having good harvests and the prices were normal, and yet in other regions some people were starving. The reason for this disparity can only be attributed to the absence of effective road system linking Gojjam and Wollo and to the failure in developing inter- and intra-regional trade in the area.

The development of industry, as we have seen above,revolved around those urban centers. The government made no attempt to change this inherited pattern of industrial development which favored the urban centers. Nor any attempt was made to diversify and integrate the economy so that the rural population would also be the beneficiary of these elements. The concentration of industrial establishments in those favored regions also meant the expansion and development of other services, such as health and education in these areas. This has futher exacerbated the already tenuous position of the rural population. The nature and structure of educational policy under the old regime failed to embrace the rural population. Like industry, the establishment of educational institutions were concentrated in the same urban centers. The development of human resources, especially the training of people to master vocational skills was ignored by the state. In reality, the state was accellerating the development of elitists in the sphere of liberal education, and this was not done inadvertently. For the emperor himself was convinced that the development of the country was contingent upon the expansion of the bureaucratic class.[38]

The total number of people involved in either getting education or in providing one was extremely small. Of the percentage of the age group to be enrolled in primary school only 11 percent were enrolled - of which 16 percent was male and 6 percent was female; and of the percentage of the age group to be enrolled in secondary school, only 2 percent were enrolled. In the 1960s, the percentage of the population over 10 years of age regarded to be literate was only 5-6 percent. In 1971-72, only 18 percent of the relevant age group was enrolled in primary schools and 3 percent in secondary schools. The two Universities, namely Addis Ababa University and Asmara University, had a full-time student population of 5200.

In addition to education's limited accessability, the degree of wastage at all levels was quite staggering, and this wastage has denied the optimum use of the system: of 100 students entering Grade I, 40 enter Grade VII, 30 enter Grade IX and only 6 go to the universities. Only 18 percent of 12 graders sitting for the university entrance examination received the passing grade. No doubt the system has managed to

generate quite a large number of drop-outs, with no employment opportunities anywhere in the country. Equally important, the system has succeeded in implementing a correlation of literacy and urban areas on the one hand, and illiteracy and rural areas on the other[39]. The gap between the two regions or if you will the regional inequality, in the sphere of education was so enormous that one may be inclined to believe that 'equal opportunity of education' was denied to the majority of the population and such a majority, of course, was residing not in the urban but in the rural areas.

In 1969, Ethiopia reported "that about 37 percent of the urban population 10 years of age or older were literate, versus 3,5 percent of the rural population".[40] A study conducted by Ginsberg and Smith in 1967, reaffirms the same regional inequality from the point of view of school attendance, ... "in 1964-65 about 69 percent of all young people between the ages of 7 and 14 living in urban centers were in school. This was true of only 3.1 per cent of rural children in the same age group".[41] However, even these figures are deceiving. According to *School Census for Ethiopia* 1967, 409,710 students were enrolled in elementary school in year 1966-67. There were, for the same year, 36,480 students enrolled in junior secondary schools, while 23,832 students were in senior secondary schools. The same report points out that with respect to wastage, say for the period between 1961-1966, 74.3 per cent of all students left school between Grade I and Grade VI, while 72.5 per cent dropped out between Grade VII and Grade XII[42].

To undercore the prevalence of regional inequality in this domain, we need to see the ratio of distribution of schools to population and to regions. These ratios reveal that the very same regions favoured for industrial establishment were once again considered for the expansion of educational institutions. In 1971 about 3.1 per cent of the total population was enrolled in schools, but the region of *Shewa* and *Eritrea* had the hightest concentration of student enrollments; for the two major urban centers, Addis and Asmara are located in these regions. Prior to 1974, there were only 2,518 schools with 16,024 class rooms. In 1965-66 the educational system was served by only 11,501 teachers at all levels of education.[43]

This lack of diversification and a conspicuous presence of regional bias favouring major urban centers at the expense of the small peasant producer is not limited to educational services, agrarian policy and industrial establishments, but includes also health services. There were only 8,415 hospital beds in eighty-five hospital serving the entire country. In the province of Bale, only *two* health care centers were in existence. In 1972 only 347 doctors existed, 45 per cent of these doctors practised in Addis.

The health services expenditures, besides being one of the lowest in

the world tends to favour the urban areas. The rural urban population for 1970 was about 8:1, most of the health institutions are concentrated in urban areas serving mostly the relatively well-off population. For example, Addis Ababa with 4.2 per cent of the total populaton has 51 per cent of the country's physicians and 45 per cent of the country's nurses. Since over 50 percent of the services are subsidized, it is the well-to-do population, the middle and the higher social classes who are rich enough to pay the nominal fees that take advantage of the subsidies.

Two thirds of the hospitals, one third of the health centres and four fifths of doctors and nurses are established in three provinces: *Shewa*, *Eritrea*, and *Hararghe*. It is being estimated that no more than 5 million of an estimated number of 22 million Ethiopians were provided with ordinary health services. And of this figure the majority of the recipient of these services were urban dwellers[44].

The foregoing survey indicates that the entire scheme of development for agriculture, industry and other services under the imperial rule had, in many ways, contributed to underdevelopment of the rural sector, especially the small peasant producers, the pastoralists, and shift-cultivators. The latter two were not even taken into account in any schemes of development, but were often subjected to taxation by the central government. We shall say more about them later on.

What has emerged clearly from the above discussion was the fact that some ailments in the political economy of Ethiopia had persisted for many years - and these ailments were an integral part of the development schemes adopted by the government. Among the most serious dynamic ailments which remained unabated were (a) Inter - and intra regional inequalities which every aspect of the stragtegies of development, including the institutional framework, the land tenure system etc., has been fostering, (b) the structure of marketing and distribution (c) the nature of the tools and agro-techniques which were employed by the small peasant cultivator and which development plans fail to correct, (d) the system of production, (e) state intervention and peasant response , and (f) the hegemony of organised knowledge over the peasant's indigenous know-low.

These elements could have been rectified, but instead they were allowed to continue by successive governments and thereby rendering the small peasant producer and other marginalised people vulnerable to famine. In many ways, these elements were linked with the process of state formation in Ethiopian history - and this process had often been imbued with wars and internal strife. The process of state-formation in Ethiopian history has created enormous displacement, migration, and has interrupted agricultural activity. All resources, including the labour force, were mobilised for war efforts - which in the end left the small peasant cultivator incapable of coping with the slightest vagaries of

climate. Moreover, the process of state-formation has contributed to the disparity in the available resources, in income distribution, and in the development of regions. Therefore, before we undertake the discussion of those elements which we maintain are responsible for the emergence of famine than any other factors, we nedd to say few words about the nature of state formation in Ethiopia.

3.4. State-formation, War and Famine

Ethiopia is the only country with a plough civilization in the rest of Africa, and a country considered by many as one of the eight centers of origin for cultivated plants. The country is also one of the world's greastest and oldest centers of domestic seed plants encompassing such crops as teff, finger millet, and ensete. A country regarded as a major center of indigenous food production has now become a showcase for ravages of famines.[45] The very same country was also viewed by many to be the potential breadbasket of the Horn of Africa. However, such optimism did not materialize, and instead the country turned out to be one of the leading food aid dependent countries galvanized by two devastating famines in only less than a decade apart from each other. The famine which the world and the Provisional Milirary Administrative Council (PMAC) have dubbed as the famine of 1984-85, has actually began to take its toll since 1978. However, its worst effects were felt between 1982-85. As the head of the Early Warning System of RRC has commented, "We allowed them to exhaust all their resources during the bad years of 1982 and 1983, and then left them to face the crisis of 1984 in that state".[46] Nobody knows for sure the scale of this tragedy, nor its impact on the demographic processes of fertility and migration; even though population growth rates in regions experiencing famine is affected more by these two factors than mortality.[47] None the less, famines have been occurring in Ethiopia for centuries and under different regimes. Some Ethiopianists have argued that the genesis of famine in Ethiopia could be traced way bak to the 7th century.[48] Others have maintained 12th century, instead.

Regardless of which period we choose to adopt, the Ethiopian peasants in the highlands and the pastoralists in the lowlands have been, for years, victims of ravages of famines and wars. Be it in crisis or in normal times, these segements of Ethiopia's population, conceived by successive regimes as peripheral and marginalised groups, had been under a permanent state of near-starvation. After having visited Ethiopia, James Bruce wrote in 1790 that despite the "advantages of triple harvests which cost no fallowing, weeding manure or other expensive processes, the farmer in Abyssinia is always poor and miserable ... to these plagues may be added still one, the greastest of them all, bad government, which

speedily destroys all the advantages they reap from nature, climate and situation".[49]

The period which Bruce travelled to Ethiopia, and in general the period between seventeenth and nineteenth century was one where rulers of fragmented kingdoms of Ethiopia were obsessed with, on the one hand, retrieving ancestral territories settled by strangers or establishing hegemony over territiories , and on the other with preserving the national integrity of Ethiopia free from colonial domination.[50] These aspirations, albeit noble from the view point of nationalism , entail, among other things, a process of war either directed against an external force and settlers or other internal kingdoms. War and conflict between various rival kingdoms were an integral part of Ethiopian history. More precisely, the history of 'state formation' in Ethiopia is marked by persistent conflicts. These conflicts which were inherent in the history of state formation in Ethiopia, are in many ways characteristic of present day Ethiopia.

When Emperor Yohannes IV of Tigray (1872-89) came to power and split the country into four administrative regions, namely Gojjam and Kaffa ruled by Tekle Haymanot (1870-1901); Shewa and its peripheries by Menelik (1865-89); Begemeder and Semien to be ruled by Araya Selassie, albeit never materialised; and lastly, the 'king of kings' reserved Tigray and its peripheries, which he called Siyon, for himself. Although some historians have given Yohannes credit as a unifier of a fragmented Ethiopia, nevertheless it is not at all clear what this dissection of the country really amounted to, much less the tittle of 'king' which he bestowed upon the rest of the administrators. At any rate, one thing was clear: he was determined to do away with his ever-present colonial nemesis which were hovering over his head like a Sword of Damocles. Hence, he directed his attention to the hostile Egyptian forces which had occupied Harer in 1875, and who had settled in the Blue Nile lowland states way before Yohannes'time. It was clear from the ensuing effort that Yohannes had underestimated the ambition of his rival kings, ruling the fragmented kingdoms. Soon afterwards, he was confronted with all kinds of problems within his administrative regions - particularly in the ones ruled by Tekle Haymanot. When in 1887 the people of Gojjam challenged Yohannes'throne, he went to the region with a considerable number of soldiers to keep the resistance in check causing a great loss to the peasants in the region. He not only demanded compensation from Tekle Haymanot for drawing him to the war, but also,his undisciplined army went on rampage, destroying properties, burning or looting whatever was visible in the peasants'possession. The following years, 1888-92, the peasants throughout the fragmented kingdoms of Ethiopia, including Gojjam, had to undergo the experience of what is known as the Great Famine of Ethiopia. This is not to suggest that thes famine was the result of the act of banditry committed on Gojjam's peasants; but rather such acts such as

this one, too common in Ethiopian history, had weakened their already precarious capacity to overcome the impact of famine.

While Yohannes was obsessed with waging wars on two fronts, i.e., on the one hand silencing internal forces posing challenge to his throne, and on the other, trying to maintain Ethiopia's national integrity by fighting against colonisers; Menelik, at the same time, was expanding his territorial conquest to the east as far as Harer, after making sure of the withdrawal of Egyptian forces in 1885 - and to the west as far as Gore, in Illubabor - where he knew too well the strategic importance of Gebe river in relation to trade with Khartoum. This expansionism has involved bitter conflicts, conquest, subjugation, and the installation of what is to become a well entrenched tenurial arrangement; namely the *gult* system and with it the gult lords to harnessi opposition forces in the newly incorpored territories. As 'King of Kings', Yohannes himself did not intervene in Menelik's expansionist efforts, instead he reiterated the belief that the latter's jurisdiction extends as far north as Wellega. For Menelik, this positive acknowledgment by Yohannes, meant not only a lack of anatogonism between the two, but also an encouragement to expedite his ambitious march. After having defined the lines of internal jurisdictions, Yohannes, as an ardent nationalist wanted to settle score with the Egyptians, and over a decade later with the Mahidists. He fought against the former in 1875 at Gundat and a year later in 1876 at Gurey. And finally, he turned to the north-west to confront his long time nemisis, the Mahidists, in Metema where he was killed.

This historical discussion is necessarily to underscore the fact that wars and conflicts which were an integral part of the history of state-formation in Ethiopia have contributed to the constant disintegration of maket forces and to the disrruption of the productive activity of the labour force. These entail a decrease in productivity, itself a prelude to vulnerability to famines. During those centuries of internal conflict, the young labour force had to be conscripted to the armies of different rulers, the peasantry which was engaged in subsistence farming, had to produce for the consumption of the household (which was the unit of labour), the army, and at times for armies of different fragmented kingdoms. And when a victorious army leaves the territory, it brings with it looted grains and other assets of the peasantry. And if it stays in a conquered territory, the leaders would allow the establishment of settlements by evicting the peasantry from his land, and therefore denying him the basis of his livelihood. The threat of constant war has virtually demòralized him to produce and to improve his level of productivity. The fragmented states, on the other land, neither paid attention to developing their regions, much less the country, nor was their attention focused on other than forceful annexation and subjugation. The dominant conception at the time was that the peasant, despite the calamities he was confronted with, can manage to develop

his region and improve his productivity even without any kind of assistance. Moreover, he was expected to finance the contention for hegemony between these fragmented states. "Levels of tribute gained a certain constancy ... peasants were always liable to other exactions, most particularly the support of troops passing through or stationed in their areas. Emperors themselves moved from one province to another, after exhausting the supplies of the first. If peasant produced more, they were often liable only to increased exploitation".[51] And prior to the introduction of cash economy in Ethiopia in 1904, the taxes and tributes collected from the peasant was in crop-cash item such as grains thereby threatening the food security of the peasant.
Therefore the attempt to create a modern state where a centralised structure is its most desired feature was accompanied by ravages of war. The latter element, in turn, rendered the peasantry vulnerable to famine. The process of state formation has involved colonisation, annexation, conquest and numerous other brutalities.

An accurate rendering of the historical picture of Ethiopia is badly needed. For the myth attributed to the country, by some scholars, as having a history extending to the unknown and ever remote millenia, blurs the true historical perspective of the modern state. The reference made by early historians such as Homer and Zenophone using the expression 'aethopos' did not help mattters either. That expression, meaning 'burnt faces' was an attempt to distinguish *natives* from *aliens* but was construed as being synonymous with the inhabitants and geographical territory of Ethiopia. At any rate, my aim here is not to show how to best interpret Ethiopian history, but rather that the emergence of the modern state through war and the like has contributed to the development of famine conditions. Although war in itself does not, often times, cause famine, but there were times where war was responsible for the emergence of famine. For instance, the 1944, Dutch Famine was induced by war. That famine, ironically, was one of the few instances of historic urban famines, as well. I am not suggesting that all the historic famines of Ethiopia are analogous to the Dutch Famine. What I am putting forward, instead, is the view that some of the past famines in Ethiopia coincide with the utilization of war to enhance the process of state formation; and moreover, it is evident that the persistence of war exacerbates famine conditions.

Hardly anyone would deny that war and internal strife could cause a decline in production. This decline in turn, *could* be a prelude to mass starvation. It does not follow from this that war or internal strife always causes famine; since it is possible for this phenomenon to be present, causing a decline in production without famine resulted. Therefore, what can plausibly be concluded is that war or internal strife may be a necessary condition for famine but certainly not a sufficient condition. However, much depends on *which* famine we are talking about. That is,

some historical famines were directly induced by wars, and others not. Consequently, we can say that in some instances, war or internal strife is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for the emergence of famine. Bearing in mind this point, we can say that in the Ethiopian context, war and internal strifes which were an integral part of the process of state formation have disminished the ability of the small peasant cultivator to cope with the slightest change of environmental conditions. Even though we do not have emperical evidence to establish a direct causal link between these internal conflicts and the occurrences of famines, none the less, the persistence of these conflicts has indeed exacerbated famine conditions and in many ways had set the stage for the development of those serious ailments embeded in the political economy of the country.

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Chapter 4: Causes of Famine Under the Old Regime

The discussion of the foregoing chapter reveals that some elements in the political economy of Ethiopia under the imperial rule had persisted for a long period of time. These elements were (1) The system of production and agro-techniques, (2) state Intervention in rural societies, (3) the hegemony of organised knowledge, (4)) intra and inter-regional inequality, (5) the system of marketing and distribution, and (6) remnant elements of war and /or internal conflicts. Moreover, these are ailments embeded in the socio-economic and political arrangements of Ethiopia and were left uncorrected by successive regimes. As the result, they have contributed more to the emergence of famine than any other factors. However, this claim has not yet been established, since we still need to show why we view these elements *as* ailments of the country's political economy, and how they should be regarded as responsible for the emergence of famine.

4.1 Outlines of the Arguement

The thesis which we shall defend is very simple but one which has often been overlooked. The details of the argument explore various terrains and involve various twists and turns. In the end, we shall hope that the reader will find his/her way out. These six elements either directly or indirectly have caused resource mismanagement - the result of which entails deforestation, soil degradation, cropland expansion and the like. These, in turn, entail either erratic or a persistently reduced rainfall and land productivity. And even when there is adequate rainfall, the soil is incapable of sustaining it due to longstanding history of persistent land abuse. Consequently, these elements are intergrated phenomenona contributing to some people's vulnerability to contingencies, including famine. Since these people's security system to cope with these contingencies has worn thin, then they have no alternative resource to rely on. Therefore, to these people, the experience of famine becomes almost a *fait accompli*.

These elements not only are exhibited in the political economy of past regimes, they still persist under the present one. Since neither the old nor the present regime has corrected these elements, which we regard as ailments, recurring famine is to be expected. In point of fact, these ailments have now worsened as compared to the past. In short, the root cause of famine in Ethiopia either under the old regime or the present one is the same: the *inability* to correct these ailments. In order to establish and defend this argument we need to spell out these elements themselves in great detail using an interdisciplinary approach.

4.2. The System of Production and Agro-techniques

When an attempt is made to understand the root causes of backwardness, underdevelopment, mass poverty, famine and the like - reference would have to be made to the agrarian structure of that society. Regardless of the weight one attaches to agrarian structure to explain underdevelopment, or develoment, one is obliged to either *explain it away* or explain these issues *with it*. Consequently, in the discussion of development or underdevelopment we find two schools of thought which are attempting to do either one of the above disjunction, There are those who maintain that agrarian structure is irrelevant, for it does not affect either development or underdevelopment. A proponent of this school of thought puts it as follows.

> "One gets the impression from much of the discussion that not much can be done to increase agricultural productivity without vast institutional changes in the countryside. This is not so ... The present institutional framework is in most under- developed countries (but not all) quite adequate for an enormous advance in productivity by means of the introduction of improved technology". [1]

On the other hand, there are those who maintain quite an opposite view, suggesting that in most poor countries the agrarian structure is a very important constraint on the development of productive forces. A proponent of this school of thought suggests the following:

> "Fundamental changes in the traditional agrarian structure and in the attitudes of the people working within it are crucial to a solution of this problem". [2]

The view to be vindicated in this section is the one expressed under the rubric of the second school of thought; and we shall also atttempt to show how, in the Ethiopian context, this view captures the salient features of the underdevelopment of the Ethiopian peasant. Before we undertake these tasks, we need to say few words about how we ought to understand the concept of 'agrarian structure' itself.

The United Nations in 1951 has defined 'agrarian structure' as follows:

> "This term is here used to mean the institutional framework of agricultural production. It includes, in the first place, land tenure, the legal or customary system under which land is owned; the distribution of ownership of farm property between large estates and peasant farms or among peasant farms of various sizes; land tenancy, the system under which land is operated and its product divided between

operator and owner; the organization of credit, production and marketing; the mechanism through which agriculture is financed, the burdens imposed on rural populations by governments in the form of taxation; and the services supplied by governments to rural populations, such as technical advice and educational facilities, health services, water supply and communications".3

Apart from being an inventory of all the elements subsumed under the concept 'agrarian structure', this definition fails to provide any recepie in explaining their interaction or interconnection. Consequently, it is imperative to see how these elements actually work. Our operational definition of 'agrarian structure' shall, therefore be the following:

It is a framework under which a production process, both material and intellectual, takes place. Depending upon the nature of such production, there will be, correspondingly, real and legal expressions of the relations which are taking place in the spheres of production.

Admittedly, this operational definition suffers from weaknesses, such as lack of clarity, precision, and so on; but the essential point here is that it recognizes the indispensability, of a system of production - and the forces governing this system. Turning now to Ethiopia's economy, we can suggest that the system of production, during the pre-revolutionary period, was one which can plausibly be characterised as 'petty production' or 'peasant production' or 'family production' superimposed on a marginal size of industrialisation.

Marx says of 'peasant production' as follows:

"The private property of the labourer in his means of production is the foundation of petty industry, whether agricultural manufacturing or both ... of course, this petty mode of production exists also under slavery, serfdom, and other states of dependence. But it flourishes, it lets loose its whole energy, it attains its adequate classical form, only where the labourer is the private owner of his own means of labour set in action by himself: the peasant of the land which he cultivates, the artisan of the tool which he handles a virtuoso".4

Of course, 'ownership' here has to be taken to mean 'effective possession'. The small peasant producer, who is the direct producer in this system of production, would have to organise the domestic unit of labour - the family - and would have to assure himself of access to land. In the case of Ethiopia, the peasant producers's access to land in order to engage himself in a labour process was facilitated through the various tenurial arrangements. The family, therefore, becomes an indispensable

unit of labour, consumption and production; and the peasant, in reality, would have to exploit the family in this process of production. The family is "charged with production, with the deployment and use of labour-power, with the determination of the economic objective".5 The principal relations of production in rural Ethiopia were inter-familial one.

Although there was no pronounced division of labour on the basis of sex, none the less, "the more difficult tasks, such as felling trees and ploughing of fields are done only by men. In addition to cultivation, animal rearing and other tasks in the field, rural women and girls (in Ethiopia) also do the bulk of the work involved in fetching wood and water, cooking, food-processing, tending of infants and other household chores. They are thus in every sence of the term over-fully employed".6

The main economic objective of a peasant production, as it was seen in Ethiopia - was to produce for consumption and anything beyond this was given of secondary importance. This does not mean that either exchange within a community or between communites did not, at all, take place; nor does it mean that the peasant regarded exchange as unimportant or insignificant. Rather, given the relative size of the family, production, often times, did not exceed consumption. Hence, it can be maintained that the overriding concern of the peasant was with the use-value of production rather than with the exchange-value of it. Moreover, in so far as the family is an important unit of labour in generating surplus as well as in serving as an insurance mechanism for an old age, an increse in fertility was deemed by the peasant as a rational economic choice.

Consequently, the size of the family is large, often imposing an additional demand on the peasant's ability to produce. In many respects, fertility was encouraged due to economic necessity. In rural Ethiopia, we see early marriages, repeated pregnancies, and the like, though accompanied by ills derived from these practices. Hence, the demographic pressure and/or expansion which was taking place in rural communities has tended to contribute to fragmentation of land, petty holdings,and needless to mention its impact on land use. Since in the northern part of pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, access to land was mainly through inheritance, it was not difficult to discern the magnitude of diminutive land-holding. These practices partly prompted by the tenurial arrangements and by an uninterrupted demographic expansion, had resulted in abusive land use. This was seen in the form of shortening the fallow period, or by undertaking cropland expansion. And this has resulted in a decline in land productivity accompanied by a fall in production output. This has often served as a prelude to mass starvation.

Given the fact that the peasant's relation to land was governed by oppressive institutional arrangements requiring him to make payments

or tribute or a payment of land tax to the state; the nature of the system of production had placed him on a rather precarious ground.

A failure to make payments to the landlord was a necessary and a sufficient condition for his eviction. However, since the peasant had no legally enforceable right of continued use of the land, he could be evicted on grounds other than the failure to make payments or tributes, often without notice. This uncertainly itself was counterproductive and had demotivated him to produce more than consumption. This had also served as a disincentive towards building up security system in the event of contingencies, in the form of food reserve. Hence, a slightest change of climate or an erratic climate inducing crop failure could easily render him to become vulnerable to contengencies.

Paradoxical as it may seem, production beyond consumption meant either one of the following or both: more tribute to the landlord without the slightest improvement on the peasant's livelihood or served as an attraction to passing soldiers or bandits for a practice of looting. Both of these elements, had, undoubtedly, discouraged him to build security system in order to cope with contingencies.

> "If peasant produced more, they were often liable only to increased exploitation. This theme was reported by European visitors from Alvarez in the sixteenth century to Grühl in the early twentieth".[7]

Owing to the state of insecurity he was in, the peasant would not dare to produce more than subsistence. And indeed he could have produced more. However, "From the moment when the fruit produced by their (peasants) sweat is given to the soldiers, when the best of the animals which they have raised with so much care are made to fatten the feudal nobles, when the mules and horses which they have kept to exchange for good cows or plough oxen are selected and seized by the local authorities, from that moment they find no use in a will to work".[8]

On the other hand, the landlord had, over the years managed to develop cunning tactics to evade land taxes payable to the state; and this had resulted in the state deriving little revenue, thereby denying the state the opportunity to accumulate capital which could have been invested for improvement purposes. In view of the fact that the country is predominantly agrarian, the state had derived very little revenue from land taxes. "The portion of state revenues drawn from land taxes declined steadily after 1941 until it constituted only about 1 per cent in 1972".[9]

A decrease in the size of the peasant's family, i.e., the unit of labour - would also mean less consumption. The reason for this had to do with the fact that productivity was contingent not on the *efficiency* of labour

but on the *size* of labour. This should not be taken to imply that all labour in rural Ethiopia was fully utilised at all time. As a matter of fact, cropping season extends, in most rural areas, from June to January. This suggests that at least a period of four months can be regarded as a slack period, i.e., a period where labour is not fully utilised. In rural Ethiopia, "the rate of under-employment, therefore, could be anywhere between 25 and 40 per cent".[10] Intensive labour, nonetheless, was required during cropping season - involving every member of the family. Consequently, it can plausibly be asserted that a decrease in the labour unit and/or an increase in productivity, albeit paradoxical, contributed to the peasant's underconsumption. Either way he was bound to be the looser; since for different reasons, they both entail low productivity. And the latter, in many instances was a *conditio sine qua non* to starvation.

Although labour was not fully utilised during the slack period, nonetheless the opportunities for supplementary income did not avail themselves. For the state had no infrastructures to absorb this underemployed labour force and to develop the indigenous craftsmaship it possessed. Consequently, neither was the state able to derive revenues from this kind of income generating economic activity, nor was the peasant able to secure supplementary income from activity, other than agriculture, during the slack period.

This suggests that in Ethiopia's system of peasant production, the peasant possessed niether a purchasing power to command a requisite amount of food in times of crisis, nor a grain reserve as a security system to fall back to in the event of contingencies. The former had to do with the absence of alternative productive activity besides agriculture; and the latter had to do with two points which we noted above, viz the insecurity which production beyond consumption breeds, and an increase in the landlord's level of appropriation of tribute which it creates.

Moreover, as we have already noted, the main purpose of production was consumption; and since everyone in a peasant community was, other tings being equal, in a similar predicament, exchange activity, even if one had a purchasing power, was virtually insignificant. Therefore, the peasant's on-going vulnerablility to contingencies was not difficult to discern. These conditon together with his primitive agro-techniques had aggravated his vulnerability even further.

> "Production technologies are simple, capital consists of rudimentary implements (a sickle a wooden plough or a machete), power is limited to that provided by the inadequate number of draught animals and little use is made of fertilisers and other inputs. Consequently, yield in the peasant sector has tended to fluctuate between 800 to 1,000 kg/ha without any clear trend".[11]

The plough was a significant achievement in the history of Ethiopian agriculture but was not developed to any significant extent since it was first introduced in the country several centuries ago. It was supplemented by a hoe with an iron head. Though the plough was largely confined to northern highlands, in the south the peasants used "a trident-shaped tool, about eight feet long, made of hard wood, the three prongs being sometimes shod with iron. This tool would be plunged into the soil to enable a piece of ground some two feet square to be lifted and turned over. When the land had thus been worked the earth would be broken with a heavy mallet made by fitting a piece of wood into a stone with a natural hole in it".[12] In many regions, farming was done with implements made entirely with wood, such as hatchets.

Weeding and seeding were done by hands. Irrigation was practised in many areas, but of poor design and involving extensive labour and requiring frequent maintainance. Burning was also used for clearing and revitalising the land. Reaping, treading, winnowing were practised, but in a manner reminisent of the practices employed centuries ago. As J.R Harlan noted that:

> "We have in the Ethiopian center a survival of an entire agricultural system little changed from pre-historic times. Ancient methods of tillage, sowing, reaping, threshing, winnowing, dehulling and processing for consumption, all have been preserved, as have the use and attitudes of these people towards their ancient crops. It is as if a vanished world have been rediscovered by use of a time machine".[13]

In the process of production, the peasant begins clearing the forests, often this was done by using fire, then proceeds to cultivate - eventually these elements leading to soil erosion and abandonment. Leaving the land fallow, he then subjects another plot of land to similar procedure and increasing cropland expansion if and when a new tract of land is available. But given the prevalent land scarcity, owing largely to the tenurial arrangements, he was forced to either overuse the existing land or to shorten the fallow period, resulting in the same thing, viz., a decline in land productivity. In the process, he perpetuates untold environmental degradation - and the latter emerging as a significant factor contributing to famine or foood crisis. In order to see the extent and significance of this degradation, we need to note few points. First of all, as has been noted, about 85 per cent of Ethiopia's population derive its income from agriculture. This entails that most agricultural activity follows the pattern suggestd above. Secondly, almost all agricultural activity was taking place in the highlands, hence much of the environmental degradation was taking place in these regions. Third, the highlands consist of 44 percent of land area of the country; and the

population density in these regions was estimated to be at 57 persons per square km, as compared to 7 in the lowlands.[14] This incredible demographic pressure would enter in as an important factor in the fragmentation of land, in the overall picture of land use and in the decline of land productivity.

The foregoing discussion suggests that during pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, the family oriented production system together with the prevailing agro-techniques generated two important consequences: unceasing demographic pressure on land and denudement of the peasant's support system. Through his practices, he has caused forest destruction, soil degradation - and in the quest to increase productivity, he had accellerated the process of cropland expansion and grassland deterioration. The net effect of these was a decline in land productivity - thereby depleting the peasant's security system to cope with contingencies, including famine.

In his pursuit for survival, the peasant was actually destroying his source of survival, i.e., land. All those activities, caused a decline in land productivity; but more importantly, they are directly responsible for the reduction of rainfall. This reduction of rainfall had simply unleashed the dangers of famine which were already present. And since he was without any security system, either in the form of disposable assets or capital or food reserve, the peasant was suceptible to the dangers of famine.

The process of destruction of the peasant's support system was a long continuous historical one - and only when it was accentuated by the presence of famine through lack of rainfall that we recognized its severity and the longivity of its cumulative historical development. Moreover, it was in a way a dis-service to the peasant to talk of the cause of famine as being drought or a lack of rainfall. For even if there was adequate rainfall, he was only able to produce at a subsistence level or just above the margin of starvation. Significant components of his support system such as trees, soil, etc, were denuded and unable to sustain moisture - nor were contributing to the process of rainfall formation. Looking back in history, the country was densely wooded some 100 years ago. As the population began to increase and continued to engage in farming practices, the inhabited areas were gradually denuded of trees.

"The effect was ... ruinous ... especially in the hilly parts of the country. First, the hills lost their covering of forests by *human action*, then torrential rains did the rest; good soil was washed away on the slopes and only poor grass and some bushes remained".[15]

There were several reasons for this deforestation:

1. The country's trees were slow growing, and, when cut down, took too many years to grow.
2. The consumption of fire-wood and timber was very high - and this

was done without replanting or thought for tomorrow.

3. The inhabitants way of wood consumption was uneconomical.

4. Charcoal burning also lead to high consumption. For instance, in the 1870s, the great olive trees of shoa had been completely destroyed for this purpose, 1 000 kilos of wood being burnt to produce 10 kilos of charcoal.

5. The biggest forest destruction was, however, due to burning as a means of felling trees or improving pastures.[16]

The severity of tree shortage throughout the country was reported by many travellers historians who had visited the country between the period of 1860s and 1907. In some instances, the shortage was so severe that no construction of telegraph lines and palaces was possible.[17] The shortage had finally prompted Emperor Menelik to take measures in an attempt to overcome the problemen. He issued a proclamation in 1904 ordering the planting of trees, forbidding the cutting or burning of trees. He also introduced about the same time the Eucalyptus tree; though this tree was subsequently found to be draining the water resources of the regions where it was planted.

The reason why we diverged into this historical aspect of deforestation in Ethiopia, was to show that this problem was caused by human action involving a long period of time and to point out that one of the major contributors to this was the peasant's agro-techniques. This led to soil erosion and to other ecological degradations. Moreover, it is now evident that the process of deforestation has a direct impact on a reduction of rainfall. That is, reduced rainfall could be due to the changes in land use. "Almost all of these changes increase rainfall run-off, reduce evaporation from soil and transpiration from plants, and increase the reflectivity of the land".[18]

In view of the above analysis, it is, therefore, plausible to maintain that in his attempt to secure his livelihood, perhaps with no fault of his own, the peasant has managed to dig his own grave as well as the nation's. There is, however, one important caveat which we would like to make at this juncture;namely, it appears that our analysis could be wrongly interpreted as accusing the peasantry of destroying the country's support system. On the contrary, what we are maintaining is that, although his agro-techniques and the system of production were largely responsible for this act, nevertheless, all his activities were governed largely by socio-economic and political forces.

> "The process of forest destruction followed the southward penetration of the Ethiopian civilisation ... The process of forest and tree destruction is a complex one but is mainly determined by socio-economic forces such as the pre-revolutionaly feudal system and

exploitation of man and land. Forests were the only exploitable resurce available to the millions of poor tenant farmers. Given their insecure rights to land, they made no long-term investments in land such as soil conservation or tree planting. The consequences of this process have ultimately manifiested in recurrent droughts, famines and in extreme poverty..."[19]

This suggests that given the disincentive and insecurity created by the nature of the social formation, the peasant had no choice but to continue abusing it, willy-nilly. While standing helpless in the face of this unbelievable destruction, neither the state nor the landlord came to the rescue of the Ethiopian small peasant producer. Consequently, the question of survival meant, for the peasant, 'nature takes its own course' - perhaps not realizing that nature has, indeed, been running *off course*.

All in all, the peasant production, a characteristic feature of Ethiopia's economy - which has stood on the pillars of the family unit of labour - or if you will on its being exploited, has persisted throughout the course of the country's history. The peasant production system together with the agro-techniques employed, the small peasant producer had exhausted his resources, and thereby his ability to cope with contingencies. All his activities were geared towards making him vulnerable to contingencies, and he saw no effort being made by the state to reduce this vulnerability. Behind the veil of drought, the small peasant producer's plight was left without being understood. When the drought spill is over and production resumes, it is assumed that all is well. The base which had exposed the peasant to become vulnerable to contingencies was simply ignored - but only to discover few years later that his plight has not been addressed. The callousness of the state could be seen by the kind of schemes which it gave priority to, even in the face of impending food crisis. We shall now turn to examine the extent of state intervention on the peasant's pattern of life - and how this intervention has contributed to the depletion and underdevelopment of his base or security system.

4.3. State Intervention in Rural Societies

Political theorists of Marxist orientation, often argue that the state is, in a class divided society, an instrument for the promotion of the ruling class' interest. This is conceived virtually as an analytical statement, or non-falsifiable statement, a denial of it would lead one into contradiction. Even when evidence is presented to the contrary, it is ruled out of court.

Pre-revolutionary Ethiopia was, as we have seen in our taxonomy of classes, a highly stratified society. However, it was not at all clear

whether the state was an instrument of the ruling class, or vice versa. For one thing there was not such a united ruling class standing for a common interest or objective. Although it could be argued that they stand united in using the oppressed classes as a vehicle for their well-being, and this, therefore, should count as a common aim binding members of the ruling class; none the less it does not follow from this that the state was an instrument of this class. This claim assumes that the interest expressed by this common objective is shared by the state. Put differently, it assumes that the state has no distinct interest of its own.

This assumption could have been, of course, well-founded in other societies with different set of social realities than Ethiopia's. However,the state in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia had a distinct interest of its own not coinciding with neither the ruling nor the ruled classes. Moreover, the fact that it did have such a distinct interest of its own was despised by both the ruled and the ruling classes. For example, "real" as opposed to "nominal" ownership right was strictly reserved for the state - and neither one of these classes had such a privilege. The state used this entitlement as a weapon to mobilize support when it needed it; to purge and isolate individuals among the ranks of the ruling class when it was warranted.

As a result of this, some members of the ruling class were deeply entrenched in the state's apparatus, some were mildly placed, and others were marginalised. Therefore, it will be difficult to suggest that members of this class had a common interest - and that the state was merely an instrument for the realization of this objective. Such view overlooks the inherent contradictions and differences between members of this class which had persisted throughout the evolution of the state and thereafter.

It could hardly be denied that, at times, the 'interest' of the ruling class had coincided with that of the state's. What had been the case was that the state had dictated its will on those who were at the 'bottom'. The voice of the people who were at a lower depth were never heard. They were simply the vehicle for the realization of the state's interest and not theirs. This lack of receptiveness to the needs and demands of the people could be seen as 'passive state intervention', viz, by abstaining to respond to their needs, the state has managed to dictate its will and interest on others. For instance, the land-tenure system was without a doubt deemed oppressive by the peasantry. The state, however, chose to ignore its plight, for by doing so it derived revenue from the peasant as well as the landlord, and more importantly, has avoided creating antagonistic contradictions between the state and the landlord class - which could have posed a threat to the very existence of the state itself . When, on the other hand, it tries to implement a certain policy or a project which had very little to do with the needs of the small peasant producer or with his way of life, then such an imposition

on his will could be regarded as an 'active state intervention'. The net effect of these two components of state intevention was precisely the same: the peasant's underdevelopment. Therefore, when we speak of state intervention, our usage of this concept embraces these two components.

It is almost a tautology to assert that the state in any society either directly or indirectly intervenes in the activities of its members. To the extent that this is true, some aspects of state's intervention are welcomed and others are despised. In some cases, we even criticize the state for remaining passive on matters which some of us think are crucial to our own well-being or to others. Therefore, not all state interventions are ruled out of court nor are embraced *apriori*.

10. Depending upon the social formation of the society, some states play active role in dictating their will on the members of their societies, even when the rights of the citizens are gravely infringed upon. These states are often labeled as totalitarians and regarded to show very little respect to the rights of their citizens as persons. These states, on the other hand, do not regard their action to be an infringement, but rather the justification is anchored in the concept of 'paternalism'. Under the veil of 'social democracy', some states have taken the path of a welfare state - and once established their legitimacy they dictate their will on the citizens, thus almost bordering on totalitarianism. In these societies, the state knows what is best or harmful to the individual. Even when the majority disagress with the state's conception of the 'good', or if you will with its omniscient attitude, their protest could not override the legitimacy of the state. Therefore, in these societies we find not only the state intervening virtually in every activity of the citizens, but also calls for a total surrender of their rights to the will of the state. At any rate, what we are attempting to suggest here is that depending on the nature of the social formation, the state either plays an active or a passive role in intervening in the lives of the citizens. In pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, the role of the state's intervention synthetizes both the active and the passive components.

Despite his low placement in the economic structure of Ethiopian society, the small peasant producer had been the backbone of Ethiopia's economy. Since it was an agrarian society, the major contributor to the GDP was no doubt agriculture; and due to the limited expansion of mechanized commercial farms, the small peasant's output was significant. This output was also significant in other ways: it was the means for the monarchy's conspicuous consumption, and has fed the population. In addition many small peasant producers were subjected to surplus extraction by the landlord through rent, crop shares of 33 to 67 percent, compulsory labour and tribute in various forms. Consequently, it can be said that agriculture in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia had three strategic importance, and the small peasant's role in this sector was

equally prominent.

First, it allowed the state to earn foreign exchange through exports. Second, it provided the growing urban population with food. Third, it supplied agricultural raw materials to industries in the country. At the expense of his own declining consumption, the small peasant was carrying out these burdens. Yet he remained the least beneficiary of the state's development plans or policies.

Successive Five-Year Development plans have either paid little attention to, or ignored him completely. In some cases, the budget allocated to agriculture had equalled the one allotted to what the state regarded as "unforseen expenses" - to underscore the lack of importance accorded to agriculture. Consequently, we saw no investment being made in the management of the country's resources, both human and material.

No agricultural research to improve the indigenous technology of the small peasant producer or better access to seeds or fertilisers was initiated and encouraged. It was only in the late 60s that the Imperial Government has decided to establish an agricultural research institution. And this was prompted by foreign interest groups designed to cater the newly emerging and expanding commercial farms. Health, education, and other services were also designed not with a view of responding to the needs of the small peasant producer -but with an eye towards keeping the urbanites relatively satisfied. We have already noted the acute disparity of distribution of services between urban and rural areas; and we have shown how rural communities were rendered hopless by the overall state's development schemes. In fact, it can be suggested that the entire state's policy had successfully marginalised the bulk of rural residents, including the pastoralists.

The state expects its policies to be implemented down to the grass roots level .Along this strech of line, however, many corrupt local and provincial administrators wanted to benefit from the act of implementation. The peasant had no alternative but to accept it, knowing full well at times, that the policy was antithetical to his interest. Ideas, policies and projects were all formulated at the "top"and then transmitted to the "bottom", i.e, to the peasant and to other marginalised groups. In no time, had these elements were encouraged to be initiated at the bottom level to be transmitted to the top. As a result of this one way or undirectional influence, the peasant has realized that the state not only has failed to address to his needs, but also a major

factor for his underdevelopment. For instance, it could have been possible to alter the oppressive land tenure arrangements, but this would deny the state's treasury revenues; it would have created contradictions between the state and the landlords, and this may eventually deprive the state its "real" ownership right to land. Therefore, the solution proposed by the state was to take a "passive state intervention". And this action continued to perpetuate powerlessness, poverty, physical weakness, vulnerability amongst small peasant producers. In brief, "Laws and policies governing resource allocation for agricultural development in imperial Ethiopia failed to promote and often retarded the production of food for domestic consumption by small scale farmers and pastoralists".[20] This was so because the state has expressed in its succesive Five year Development plans that "progress in the agricultural sector can be obtained only by the rapid development of large-scale commercial farms producing crops for export".[21]

The lack of *trust* between the peasant and the state has also fosterd the former's poverty and the latter's conspicuous consumption. From the point of view of the peasant, a state's policy always has some strings attached to it often rendering him to become the least beneficiary of it. Consequently, right from the start it will be subjected to cynicism and skepticism. If the peasant feels the state's programme may alter an essential aspect of his pattern of survival, he resents it, and feels less obliged to cooperate. And if he knew that he *must* participate, then he does so half heartedly and with an element of passive protest to render the project as a cathedral in the desert. He is convinced that his many years of strained relationship with the state had taught him that the state would never encourage him to "participate" in a programme that is meaningful and intrinsically beneficial to his way of life. For that would mean the state is willing to go against its own distinct interest. Hence, the two regard each other with suspicion, rensentment- and talk to one another at cross-purposes. The upshot of all these is that, state intervention - be it in its active or passive form, has always been resented by the Ethiopian peasant under the imperial rule. He resented its "paternalistic" attitude towards him - as if the peasant knew nothing about what is best for him - he also resented its attitudes of refraining from doing something to alleviate his poverty when this was clearly possible. All in all he resents the fact that the state would not remove the barriers to secure his *independence* He simply wanted to be left alone. On the other hand this was precisely the point that brought about the state's resentement of the peasantry. In the end, of course, it was the powerless and the vulnerable peasant who was the looser - a victim of what Chambers calls it, "integrated rural poverty".[22]

The failure to establish a harmonious relationship between them had cost the peasant a diminished capacity to absorb, and to struggle against food crisis, malnutrition, illiteracy and other common diseases of underdevelopment . As the result of state intervention, the peasant has remained vulnerable to famine and a slightest change of climate often caused his doomsday.

4.4 The Hegemony of Organised Knowledge

Closely connected to the issue of state-peasant relationship is one concerning the structure of knowledge. The nature of knowledge in Ethiopia, like in any other predominantly peasant oriented developing societies, suffers from externally imposed division between, on the one hand, organized knowledge - and on the other hand, indigenous knowledge. What we call organised knowledge is one which was refined in most develop countries through trial and error, regarded as scientific, valid, and sound. Indigenous technical knowledge, often referred to as "people know how", "rural knowledge", "peasant knowledge" and so on, is a knowledge acquired by the rural population through years of experience, experiments, observations, and transmitted from one generation to another, from one comunity to another through long standing channel of oral tradition. We retain the appellation "organised knowledge" for the former, but we shall label the latter as "indigenous technical knowledge". The reason for the change of label has to do with the fact that such label embraces the know-low of peasants, handicraftsmen, pastoralists and the like who are traditional inhabitants of rural areas. Such knowledge is technical because to an uninitiated observer it appears to be one contrary to reason, or buffling. Moreover, such label cuts across the dicothomy between developed and developing societies.

These two kinds of knowledge differ from one another in many ways and possess important similarities in some respects. For instance, the way by which knowledge is acquired, accumulated and transmitted is one such difference. Organised knowledge is often initiated in schools, laboratories, books etc. and is transmitted through the same venues - each generation attempting to prove or disprove the purpoted knowledge-claims thus enriching the body of knowledge and clearing the path of progress. Each step of this enterprise is carefully documented and preserved in books, and in other forms. Whereas indigenous technical knowledge grew out of rural societies in the process of people's labouring activity and in their quest for survival. The observations and the experiments were made right at their doorsteps, the anomalies were discovered and corrected in their day to day activities and in the material resources around them. No books, or documents were kept, but only the human brain through the arts of

recollection and oral tradition transmits proven knowledge or the ones which have been falsified. Over the years, they have developed a technique to filter out heresay from countable evidence, and an elaborate system for deciphering knowledge intrinsically meaningful to them from a maze of alternatives and writing-off those which they regard as having little importance.

More importantly, however, organised knowledge is intimately connected with the state and its apparatus. It could not have survived had it not been for the state and its apparatus. Even though the state had created the conditions for organised knowledge, none the less, it needed organized knowledge to maintain its grip on the people. Where one provides the ammunition, the other provides the gun; and where one identifies the target the other one shoots. To wit, organised knowledge and the state are two faces of the same coin. To extend its domination over others, the state had to rely heavily on organised knowledge.

Successive governments in Ethiopia had embraced organised knowledge as their only means in developing the country and in achieving their illusory vision of modernity. To this end, they called on outsiders-regarded as "experts" - to undo the deeply entrenched poverty and to set the path for modernization. The end results had been the development of conditions to facilitate Northern interests, and the constructions of cathedrals in the desert. Yet mass poverty still remains - and the position of the small peasant producer has not improved slightly. In the pursuit of this vision of modernity, indigenous technical knowledge was written off as well as targeted for elimination. It was thought that indigenous knowledge is unscientific, invalid and often times plain false. Consequently, the state refused to be influenced by the peasants at the bottom, nor was it willing to involve them in the design of development strategies. Instead, it dismissed their know-how as too irrelevant and imposed on them what it regarded as a scientific approach to development.

The peasant was equated with an irrational being, having no motivation to abandon his primitive know-how and/or his traditional way of thinking. It was assumed that the peasant was uninterested in changing his way of life nor his method of cultivation nor his attitude towards becoming a "modern man". What was tragic about this is that, first of all, the Ethiopian peasant was never permitted to realize his potential - no effort was being made to tap his knowledge and expand his creativity. He was known as hard-working and industrious individual, but yet his knowledge was viewed as archaic and non illuminating. In fact, it was assumed that the peasant's knowledge of his environment or any of his support systems is backward, invalid and outrightly false. However, the evidence seems to suggest quite the opposite.

For instance, many of his farming practices such as spacing tillage,

shift cultivation and mixed cropping which were once regarded as primitive are now regarded as appropriate and sophisticated. This knowledge of the environment achieved through years of observations is equally impressive. For instance, Couklin noting the Hanunóo swidden cultivators in Philippines says the following:

> "More than 450 animal types and over 1600 plant types are distiguished ... of some 1500 'useful' plant types over 430 are cultigens (most of which are swidden-grown), existing only by virtue of the conscious domestication of the Hanunóo. Partly as a result of this intensified interest in plant domestication and detailed knowledge of minute differences in vegetative structures, Hanunóo plant categories out-number, by more than 400 types, the taxonomic species into which the same local flora is grouped by systematic botanists".[23]

It has also been known that farmers in many parts of the world can classify soils by observing the colour and texture. For instance, "some farmers in Nigeria use colour to identify degrees of soil fertility. In one case in Malaysia soils are also discriminated into three categories by taste, as sweet, neutral and sour - categories which correlate significally whith PH levels".[24]

A study conducted in Nairobi by N. Reed suggests that, at times, indigenous technical knowledge excels that of organised knowledge. "Farmers generally sowed according to the phase of the moon, believing that there were lunar phases in rainfall".[25] Even though the Meteorological Office in Nairobi was sceptical, none the less Reed has "analysed five and a half years of rainfall data which supported the belief. The Meteorological Office was not at first convinced, but a subsequent analysis of rainfall at 200 sites near Nairobi confirmed an association between rainfall and lunar phase. The scientific explanation is that the lunar phase influences the amount of dust entering the earth's atmosphere which seeds rainfall --- 'The experts claimed that such effects could not affect rainfall in the tropics but the local farmers knew better".[26]

It is also known that the rural population's indigenous technical knowledge in medicine has achieved impressive results in various pre-capitalist societies. Indigenous healers are often relied upon in rural societies as primary health care providers. In most developing countries, including Ethiopia, where health services are designed to cater the urban dwellers and where the majority of the health professionals are concentrated in the cities, it is easy therefore to understand why indigenous healers are regarded as indispensable. According to the World Health Organisation, indigenous healers are

"A group of persons recognised by the community in which they live as being competent to provide health by using vegetable, animal and mineral substances and other methods based on the social, cultural and religious backgrounds as well as on the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that are prevalent in the community regarding physical, mental and social well-being and the causation of disease and disability".[27]

In rural Ethiopia, and even in urban areas we find indigenous healers serving their community as traditional birth attendants, faith healers, as herbalists (often compared to nosology of modern medicine) and as spiritualists or diviners. Where malaria, rabbis, bilharzia, tapeworm and other diseases are so rampant in rural Ethiopia, these healers have successfully saved the lives of millions of Ethiopians. In other respects, these activities are also the source of income for many Ethiopians. In fact, it was believed that the mother of Emperor Twedros of Ethiopia was selling tapeworm medicine as a source of income.

However, in the process of its domination throughout rural Ethiopia, the state, assisted by modern medicine, has successfully de-institutionalized indigenous medicine thereby depriving, many Ethiopians, their source of income, and the community an effective health care. On the other hand, the state offered them no alternative. The pervasive effect of the hegemony of organized knowledge on the indigenous technical knowledge is even more significant in urban areas where the state power is concentrated. Here, one finds complete dependence on modern medicine, but the state had no resources to meet the health care needs of the people. As a result, it was not unusual to see people queeing up for days only to be told to come back days later. The state wanted to legitimatise the hegemony of modern medicine without any resources at its disposal to back it with. With the growing costs of health care, people had neither the income to meet the costs nor the opportunity to look for treatment elsewhere. Without the need for an explicit legislation, the state has managed to inculcate in the minds of the people, especially amongst the urbanites, the belief that indigenous healers are insincere and quacks who lived on the neuroses of their illiterate folks. As we go from the core to the periphery - the impact of organised knowledge's hegemony is lessened in proportion to the state's domination.

In other African countries, the state has, by providing legislative instrument encouraged the institutionalization of modern medicine thereby diminishing the role of indigenous medicine. The aim is no doubt to liquidate the native practices of traditional medicine. In these countries, the root causes for this way of looking at indigenous medicine can be traced directly to colonial settlers - who wanted to establish their legetimacy, and to missionaries - who felt threatened by the practices of

traditional medicine

What has been said about indigenous knowledge in medicine can be genrealized to other indigeneous knowledge practiced by the rural masses. The Ethiopian peasant is regarded as ignorant of his environment, soil, trees etc., - and any development scheme by the state does not require his participation or involvement, even if the project has an adverse effect on his well-being. But time and again, he has proven that he knows his support system better than the state and the development "experts". He can easily identify which environment is hospitable, which variety of soil is fertile, which area has water and what crops can grow in which areas and so on. The state was not interested in tapping this knowledge, i.e., in better utilising this important natural resource. In other words, instead of being 'inward looking' and utilize the existing resources effectively - it preferred, instead, to becoming 'outward looking', i.e., an importer of technology and/or organised knowledge from the North. The "experts" are often not even natives, but Northerners who were trained in an environment and social setting quite alien to the country - and in reality, without any knowledge of the country's ecosystem. In the process, they managed to contribute to the underdevelopment of the peasant through the construction of projects which are of little value to his livelihood. Through these, often worthless projects, they have damaged the support system of the peasantry, and even evicted him on occasion from his source of livelihood. All told, the kind of damage these development experts have done could take generations of Ethiopians to undo. In the process, many years of precious of time which could have been deployed for meaningful objectives would be wasted. With all his support system withering away before his eyes, and with very little savings and security, the Ethiopian peasant under the imperial regime stood helplessly. Even though he recognized that his own destruction made him vulnerable to contingencies, including famine, the structural constraints imposed upon him by the state and aided by organised knwoledge did not permit him to improve his livelihood. This unholy alliance between the state and organised knowledge has forced the peasant to do away with his disposable assets, such as trees, so that he was unable to command a requisite amount of food by disposing them in time of crisis. In effect, he was reduced to having no security mechanisms in the event of contingencies.

4.5 Inter and Intra-Regional Inequality

In order to see how inter- and intra-regional inequality has increased the vulnerability of the small peasant producer to contingencies such as famine we need to spell out how we should understand this concept in

the ensuing discussion. In every society, a relative disparity in resource endowmment amongst regions is to be expected. Some regions could be endowed with scarce material resources, fertile land, abundance of water, and so on; and others could have either very little or none. This disparity could become crucial especially if a society happens to be primarily agrarian, like Ethiopia. Land, and what you get out of it could broaden the gap in income distribution, and at times could even decide the fate of one's own livelihood.

In other words, if one region suffers from scarcity of essential resources and others are well endowed it is crucial that some steps be taken to close the gap, not simply out of commitment to some egalitarian principle, but also because the issue of survival is at stake. Hence, disparity in resource endowment is of great importance - and in the Ethiopian context - it could be a matter of life and death. But there is also another equally crucial regional inequality - and it has to do with the concentration of establishments and services only in certain regions.

It has often been pointed out that, under the reign of Haile Sellassie, Ethiopia's industries and public srvices were concentrated in and around major urban centers. No doubt this was true, but we still need to know how this came about. The concentration of these establishments in and around cities was not a phenomenon peculiar to Ethiopia. Other developing nations, especially ones in Africa, suffer from lack of diversification. In many ways and for great many of them, this is a part of the colonial legacy which they had inherited. And urban development in these countries followed the conscious design of colonial planners. Ethiopia, however, had no significant period under which it was ruled by a colonial power. Therefore, it would be implausible to suggest that the origin of this concentration of establishments and services in one region could be traced directly to that brief colonial rule. This claim has some elements of truth in it, but it is not entirely accurate.

In the quest to unify the different kingdoms, to centralise diverse and competing political authorities, and to extend political control from center to the peripheries - different Ethiopian rulers chose to establish different cities to serve them as political, economic and military bases. From fourth century B.C to twelveth century A.D, Axum was considered an important center. Later it was overtaken by Gondar, Debre Tabor, Tegueiet, Debre Marcos, Adwa, Ankober, Entoto, Menagesha, and finally by Addis Ababa. The rise and fall of these cities depended to a large extent by the success or failure of militaristic ventures. The nature of such ventures were so volotile that in many instances had contributed to their destruction, and hindered the expansion of trade. In reality, everything has revolved around with the success or failure of these rulers. During the era of the *mesafint* (nobles), Adwa, once an important commercial center, was devastated by the civil wars waged between the

nobles contending for hegemony. The very same city and its flourishing trade was also subjected to serious setbacks by successive wars: the Egyptian wars of the 1870s and the subsequent Battle of Adwa in 1895-96. The city of Gondar was devastated by the Dervish invasion in 1887, and Mekelle by the war of 1895-96. Expansion of trade suffered from these wars. But on some occasions, local rulers themselves forbid any exchange to take place between regions. For instance, the Emir, local leader in Harar had prevented his coffee cultivators to emigrate to other regions, nor others to pass through his domain.[28]

At any rate, the creation of a stable urban center was much an exception rather than the rule in Ethiopian history; and this had to do with the aspiration and interest of the rulers and their conception of urban center itself. It could be said that urban centers were military headquarters and much of the economic activities were geared towards catering the military garrisons stationed in these places. The population swelled when the military headquarters stabilized, and became desolate when ravaged by wars or when they move to different locations. The constant military movement has caused economic fragmentation, the destruction of cities, the loss of human lives and cattle, and an important natural resource: trees.

The changing of urban centers came to a halt during the reign of Menelik II, who was first King of Shewa and later an Emperor of Ethiopia. Even himself had shifted locations within Shewa, before he finally settled for Addis Ababa. This choice was not accidental, but motivated by needs involving political stability, security, and economic resources. At the time, one of the overriding concerns for establishing an urban center was the presence of a sufficient supply of fuel wood or trees either in the center or adjacent to it. Despite the diminished supply of fuel wood in the northern part of the country, Addis Ababa was relatively better-off than the rest, and its status even more enhanced after Menelik's reforestation decree of 1904 and the introduction of eucalyptus trees in Addis. The general area of Shewa had also facilitated Menelik's southern marches. The completion of Dijibuti railway line extending to Addis legitimatized the choice of Addis and its commercial importance.

When Menelik built his palace in Addis, everything was created to respond to the needs arising from the palace - and whatever has evolved outside of the palace was merely an extension of the palace itself. Trade and other economic activities began to expand largely to respond to Menelik's huge standing army - and to soldiers of other noblemen who were paying him a frequent visit.

During Menelik's reign, Addis Ababa has emerged as an indispensable diplomatic, political and economic capital. His conquest of the city of Harar in 1887 gave Menelik an additional important commercial center. This was aided by improved railway communication to the outside, and by an increase in importance of the production of quality coffee in the

region. In fact, export of coffee from this region via the Dijibuti railway has reached to 2,924,000 kilos by 1910.[29] After having conquered the cities of Gore, Gambella, Buré and Matto, Menelik established Gore as an important commercial center in the western part of the country,and this had to do with the opening of an inland port in Gambella on the Baro River linking the region with the Sudan around 1907. Using this river as an important commercial link with the Sudan, and given the general drive for increased coffee production in various parts of the country at the time, the country export of coffee was raised from 100,000 kilos in 1908 to 4,024,000 in 1927-28.[30]

At any event, before his death, Menelik has managed to accompolish the establishment of three important centers: Addis Ababa, Harar, and Gore. The importance of the latter two has subsequently diminished. Because of its railway link with Dijibuti and Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa has replaced Harar. Since there was no infrastructural developments linking directly Gore with Addis Ababa, Gore's importance as a commercial center began to fed away. Thus, this left the country with Dire Dawa, Addis Ababa and Asmara. The last one was already the administrative capital of the Italian colony of Eritrea; and because of this, numerous infrastructural developments had taken place-developments which by far exceeded both Addis and Dire Dawa put together.

As we have noted above, since the expansion of the city of Addis was contingent upon the needs arising from Menelik's palace - his conception of development was urban biased. That, of course, did not exceed beyond Addis. That also meant neglect of other territories. Although other territories provided the necessary resources for urban growth in Addis, none the less they were not the beneficiaries of any development efforts. For instance, even though Menelik through his expansionist efforts had destroyed vital trees in various parts of the country such as coffee trees in Jimma and Harar, nevertheless his re-afforestation program was designed to cover Addis while other regions denuded of trees were virtually ignored. Moreover, one of the things which Menelik did was to occupy a territory like Beni Shangul, and give concessions to foreigners in return for some percentage of benefit.[31]

That benefit was neither *re-invested* in the regions where the resource has originated, nor in areas where rebuilding effort was most warranted. Whatever benefits accrued from this kind of concessions or from exportable goods such as coffee, musk etc. they were either put to use for the expansion of Addis or were simply kept in the treasury. However, it was not entirely clear whether the safe belonged to the government or to him. For it appeared that no such distinction has ever existed. For instance, when the Great Famine of 1888-92 struck the

country, Menelik himself had lost 250,000 heads of cattle.[32] One wonders whether Menelik was a rancher or an Emperor or both. Nonetheless, he succeeded in establishing a tradition which could be expressed by the slogan: L'êtat c'est moi. A tradition that has persisted throughout the period of Haile Selassie's reign.

During the Italian Occupation of Ethiopia 1935-42, the Italians from their base in Asmara had in many ways fostered Menelik's design in a much more sophisticated way by dividing the country into four administrative regions - Shewa with a capital at Addis, Amara with a capital at Gondar, Galla-Sidamo with a capital at Jimma, and Harar with a capital at Harar. By ignoring other regions, the Italians' concern was with developing efficient road system to link these centers. And this obviosly required enormous investment and the Italians did not hesitate in giving priority to road system as a means of controlling the country. "During their stay Italian East Africa absorbed over 30 per cent of the Italian national budget and of this 85 per cent was allocated for the construction of roads".[33] In Ethiopia alone, they built "a total of 7 000 kms of road, 3 450 kms of which were tarred. By 1941, the Italians had laid down an impressive road network throughout much of the country".[34] It would be, of course, naive to think that these were meant for the benefit of Ethiopians, even though Ethiopia had subsequently benefitted from them. Some of the roads built by them in such a short duration would not have been built in years by the Ethiopians themselves; and the same could be said of the French railway connecting Dijibuti with Addis. The entire distance of the railway was 781 km, when it was first built, - and today, not even an inch was added to it.[35]

At any rate, "the Italian road programme linked Addis Ababa with the following places: Gambella via Jimma and Gore; British Somaliland via Dire Dawa and Harar; Lekemte; and Lake Zwai. Other important routes included those from Dessie to Assab, Wando to Negele, and Gondar to Asmara".[36] The program was also complemented with installations of water supplies, electricity, street lighting, paved roads, hospitals and schools. The Italians also encouraged rural- urban imigration to provide services to the colonisers. Handicraft, shopkeeping and other kinds of trades, including prostitution, began to expand in the urban centers.

The Italians' ambition was, of course, to stay there for a long period of time, and in view of this optimism they introduced farm settlements, manufacturing industries, hospitals and other services in these urban centers. What had evolved out of these was the concentration of establishments in those urban centers initially created by Menelik himself plus the new additions by the Italians themselves. Once again, their view of development regardless of whose interest it served was

urban biased.

Prior to the war, i.e., from 1913 until the mid 1930s, "Haile Selassie continued to build upon and consolidate the fruits of Menelik's newly acquired empire. By extending effective political control nationally he was able to provide the essential ingredients whereby existing settlements could expand".[37] Moreover, during this period there was only one all-weather road with a distance of 58 km linking Addis Ababa with Addis Alem.

After the liberation in 1941, many of the Italians who were running the factories, the shops and other services left the country - and there were no local skilled personnel to run them . These institutions were idle, and in many ways resemble the conditions which were present right after the 1974 revolution when the various foreign run institutions were nationalised, and when many of both foreign and domestic skilled perssonel left the country. In either case, there was very little transfer of knowledge from foreign to domestic perssonel. In the first case, this was due to an explicit "apartheid policy"[38] which segregates Ethiopians from Italians; but in the second case, it had to do with the ultimate economic disadvantage of transferring knowledge to the locals - when in the event some changes were to occur.

At any event, after the liberatuon there was a virtual paralysis in all spheres of the state's institutions. The problem was further intensified by a lack of capital, by the movement of people from urban to rural areas to engage in farming, and by the failure to maintain the roads which were vital links.

From the liberation time until his demise in 1974, Haile Selassie's main concern had been to revitalize and to restore what had been installed and left behind by the Italians. Another aspect of his concern was the acceleration of the inherited legacy of rural neglect. In fact, his reign could be divided into two periods. The first was a period of restoration to rebuild institutions which had suffered from war and neglect using the inflow of foreign aid and skilled man-power. And the second period was the period of urban expansion by adding new settlements in and around Addis Ababa. As a result, what we have achieved by the end of 1973 is the concentration of industries, educational facilities, health and other services around the major urban centers, namely Addis, Asmara and Dire Dawa. In the process, the population is these cities had swelled due to accellerated migration from rural to urban areas to seek employment and to provide sheer physical labour to the urban dwellers.

The process of restoration, the expansion of new settlements and the establishments of industries, services, etc would not have been possible had it not been for the extraction of surplus from the neglected rural population through various means. The rural peasantry was asked to produce food for the conspicuous consumption of the growing urban

population. He was asked to provide, through his labour and hard work, the necessary capital to be invested in industry, education, health and other services in urban centers, He was asked to provide the necessary material for running the industries located in the urban centers. He was also asked to provide the source for export earnings - needed to bring machinaries and equipment vital to these industries and other institutions. Inspite of all his services and the flow of resources from rural to urban areas - not a single effort was made, in return, to improve his well-being. The policy had been merely to diminish his support system without any re-investment in his locality. Not only his labour that had been exploited, but also his other resources. And all these drive were for the sake of urban development; but at the expense of the well-being of rural communities. In the process, his security system to cope with contingencies was gradually being eroded. And without this security system which he has built on his own the peasant stood at the mercy of erratic climate.

Turning now to the sphere of agriculture we find that the regional disparity in resources has severe impact on the large segement of the population, since especially the country is dominated by activities in this sphere. It is an obvious truism that most of the regions in the south are fertile, and under the imperial rule a significant portion of these fertile lands were registered as government property. When the land grant programme in the late 1960s was accelerated, the beneficiaries of this scheme were civil servants, military men and the like; i.e., people who were considered to be loyal to the state but not the landless peasants. Impressed by the initial phase of success of CADU's programme in Chilalo Awraja, Arssi Region, these people began expanding commercial farms. In the process many peasants were evicted.[39] As compared to other regions in the south, Arssi was perhaps the most fertile and it was here many private agricultural efforts, as well as pilot projects subsidized by international organizations were made.

Prior to the revolution, Arssi was considered as one of the surplus producing regions in Ethiopia; and because of some officials and influential men s involvement in commercial farming in the region, much of the road infrastructures were better developed. The average cultivated area per household was 1.64 hectares.[40] This was significant in view of the national average of holding being 0 5 hectare. In addition, given its relative fertile soil, and its access to improved seeds, equipments, and the like, through extension services - its yield was one of the highest among the Ethiopian provinces. Shewa, Gojjam and to some extent Begemder constitute the surplus producing regions of the country.

Gojjam had a lesser average of cultivated area per household with 0.93 ha. as compared to Arssi; yet, it too was endowed with good soil thus producing surplus. The peasants in Gojjam were also known for many

rebellions and their attitude of defiance. Hence, in many ways the region retains an enormous degree of autonomy and less state intervention. On many occassion, the peasants had protested tax reforms - and even at times were exempted from paying taxes.

Since Shewa is a seat of the country's capital, and since the infratructures were relatively better developed - it had all the advantages to produce suplus. From the vantage point of aggregate production, Gojjam, Shewa, Arssi and Begemdir were relatively better off than other provinces. And for historical reasons they have a relatively better developed transportation network. With an exception of Gojjam, commercial farming has made some ways, in all three regions. In Setitu Mera, Begemdir, for instance the commercial farms were engaged in the production of pulses in addition to the important cash crop production, cotton. Since the production of pulses together with cereal production constitute the volume of food production in Ethiopia, then on an aggregate level Begemdir was considered among the four provinces producing relative surplus. In comparative terms, the three regions except Gojjam, practiced better irrigation schemes, improved seeds and fertilisers. As a result, they were endowed with relatively high fertilised land - and land productivity, in these regions including Gojjam, was better than other provinces.

It was obvious that uneven development between regions and within regions was taking place. And as a result of this uneven development, some areas were rendered more susceptible to food crisis and famine than others. For instance, famine occurences in Ethiopia were very rare in regions like Arssi and Gojjam. In the main, the four regions suffered less from famine than regions like Wollo, Tigrai and Eritrea. This uneven development was, in part, prompted by the difference in the land-tenure patterns practiced in the north and south. In the southern regions, including Arssi and Southern Shewa, where the gult system was largely practiced, privatization and tenancy is more significant than other regions. Since this tenure system was strengthened by land grant from the state to the well-to-do people, and this in the end not only has encouraged privatization of land which entails the expansion of commercial farms, but also an uneven land distribution.

"The overwhelming majority of the cultivated land in the south was either rented, or partly owned and partly rented. Ownership of land was highly concentrated. For example, a survey conducted in the very fertile district of Harerghe administrative region revealed that 44 per cent of the landowners owned only 3.4 per cent of the total 'measured' land, while a tiny minority of 0.2 per cent owned 75 per cent; out of this vast area, 95.4 per cent was owned by two people only. Again 0.01 per cent of the population held about 64.4 per cent of the total

kuter gebar (unmeasured) land, of which 63.9 per cent was owned by one person. This same person also held 21.7 per cent of the measured land"[41]

In the north, where *rist* system was operating, privatization of land and tenancy was insignificant. As the result, the region in the north suffer from small holdings and this was further aggravated by the problem of fragmentation which was intrinsic to rist tenure pattern.

Hence, fragmentation and diminutive holding which were prevalent in the north were threatening the peasants' ability to cope with contingencies. In Begemeder where rist system was also operative, the quality of the soil is not as good as Gojjam - but in the former, due to the government's land grant initiative - much of the western part of the region was privatised and the land was under commercial farm expansion.

Consequently, under the imperial rule the peasantry has suffered greatly from uneven distribution of land both in terms of quality and quantity. "In the country as a whole, 57.6 per cent of the holdings were less than 1 hectare in size and accounted for only 18.4 per cent of the cultivated area. At the other end of the spectrum, holding of more than 5 hectares accounted for only 0.8 per cent of the total number, but covered 29.3 per cent of the area".[42] Pre-revolutionary Ethiopia was imbued with uneven development, uneven distribution of land, uneven allocation of services, uneven distribution of income, and the like. In short, it has suffered from intra- and inter-regional disparities. They were exhibited between rural and urban; and within rural areas as well as within urban centers.

These elements should not simply be seen as features of poverty, backwardness or underdevelopment, but more importantly, they should be regarded as mechanisms responsible for depleting the ability and security system of some sectors of the population to cope with contingencies. Either directly or indirectly, these elements were contributors to these people's vulnerability to contingencies.

4.6. Marketing and Distribution

The nature of regional disparity or uneven development was reflected not only by activities taking place in the sphere of production but also by what was taking place in the sphere of circulation. It could hardly be denied that efficient road networks enhance production. Similarly, such an efficient system facilitates the expansion of marketing arrangements, the distribution of resources and the response to crisis. It could also strengthen the security system or the coping mechanism of the people in the event of contingencies through an increase in income level or purchasing power. For example, in Jimma-Agaro area of Keffa province,

the most important product is coffee, and much of the area's food requirement is imported from other provinces. Parenthetically, one may think that this area should be famine prone, since the majority of the cultivators were engaged in the production of a single cash crop. But it is not; and this instance may even serve as a counter-example to the argument which is too often invoked to explain the root causes of famine in various places of post- colonial Africa, i.e., orientation towards cash crop production renders the people to become vulnerable to famine.[43]

At any rate, the Jimma-Agaro area imports food from other provinces and productivity of land is low to produce the requisite amount of food. When an efficient Jimma-Agaro road was completed in 1962, improvements in production as well as marketing had taken place. The road construction has reduced costs of transporting goods to the market, enabled them to dispose of their product and to commond their requisite amount of food and other commodities. The decline in transport cost - estimated to be 20 to 30 percent less in 1972 than what was in 1962 - coupled with safe outlets and high prices for coffee has increased the people's income or purchasing power.[44] A similar case was undertaken in the predominantly food-grain producing region of Gojjam - the Dejen - Bure road, and the result suggests the same conclusion.[45]

This suggests, among other things, that for market expansion, improved production and for developing a better security system or coping mechanism in the event of contingencies, efficient road system, linking regions and areas within regions, is a *conditio sine qua non*.

However, the design of roads during pre-revolutionary Ethiopia was not motivated to provide the rural population access to the market, and to integrate the economy as a whole - so that a self-sufficient marketing system is possible. Instead, they were designed with an aim towards extending political authority from center to periphery in order to insure the undirectional flow of resources from the rural area. In fact, the linkage was described by Pausewang as "... a one-way stream of resources, with the stream flowing out of the rural community vastly exceeding the drip of benefits in return. Each sector of the network (commercial) in fact endeavoured to turn the stream into a river".[46]

As a result of this design, the main roads of the provinces face Addis Ababa - and with few exception, no attempt was made to connect one province with the other; one district to other districts in the same province; one sub-district with other sub-districts in the same district, or to connect the villages by a feeder road to the main road. Many districts, subdistricts and provinces had to rely on two major highways running North to South and East to West always passing through Addis. In the process, a food crisis arising in one region could not be met by

mobilising resources from other regions or within the same region. The lack of good rural infrastructure was a disincentive for the peasant to engage in other income-generating economic activities which would have supplied him with supplementary income during a slack period when he becomes under-employed. In turn, this would have strengthened his security system to cope with famine or other contingencies. Since the development of an adequate marketing system requires an efficient road, when contingencies arise the peasant had no where to go to command what is needed to meet these contingencies. As a result, it was not uncommon to discover some famine victims with a sufficient amount of cash in their possession but unable to purchase the requisite amount of food.[47] It was not because the aggregate supply of food of the country has declined, nor because they lack the purchasing power; but because the supply of food has not reached them nor was it available to them in their locality. This was understandable because an efficient market system has not evolved. In normal times, the peasant and the pastoralist had to travel long distances to reach local markets - But in the end, they find themselves subjected to market exploitation by the merchant-trader classes.

> "The commercial form of exploitation affected the peasanty as much when they sold as when they bought necessities. The local dealers of essential manufactures such as clothing, kerosene, cooking oil, etc., sold to the peasants at prices which included the high profits of the chain of middlemen as well as the relatively high costs of production in industry. This meant essentially that the peasanty subsidised the high levels of living of those involved in the production and distribution of manufactured articles. Many merchants of grain and manufacturers used their profits to acquire agricultural land and joined the landlord class, further increasing the burden of exploitation".[48]

Chapter 5: Famine in Pre-revolutionary Ethiopia

We have been attempting to establish the claim that the arrangement of the political economy of pre-revolutionary Ethiopia was so lopsided that it provided an invitation to occurrences of famine. We know, *ceteris paribus*, that famine does not victimize all people living in the same affected region, nor the destitution is equally shared between the affected people. It appears, therefore, some regions and some people are more vulnerable than others. In pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, the vulnerable group consists of largely the small peasant producers and the pastoralists. But even here we must remember that some are more vulnerable than others. A drought could have, for instance, a more severe impact on a pastoralist with very little stock, than on one who has a bigger and a larger stock. Similarly, a tenant who has neither 'real' nor 'nominal' ownership right to land could be subjected to more destitution than a small cultivator with a *rist* right, albeit 'nominal'. In general terms, however, it could be asked why this group and not others was rendered vulnerable to contingencies, such as famine. In order to answer this question we have proposed a methodology which relies on identifying the salient features of the political economy of pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, and have maintained that these should be regarded as ailments which had contributed more to the vulnerability of this group than any other factors. To this end, we discerned those elements first, and tried to show that a) they have indeed rendered this group vulnerable to contingencies by undermining its resource support base, its risk-reducing strategies, by and large its security system which would have, otherwise enabled it to cope with contingencies; and b) those who were relatively free from this vulnerability would not have been endowed with this position had it not been for the depleted support system of the vulnerable group.

Although important, this is not just a question of mass poverty. With its various shades and colour, the problem of mass poverty had engulfed most Ethiopians; nonetheless most Ethiopians never experienced famine. Malnutrition may be a feature shared by most people. Other things being equal, famine entails poverty; but not the other way around. Indeed alleviating poverty may reduce the vulnerability of people to famine. Reducing the vulnerability of people to famine is not a solution to poverty. For the vulnerable group in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, the most immediate question was not just how to reach above poverty-line, but how to *survive* from one year to another. "When the livelihood of a certain group or society is subject to large risks and fluctuations, household endeavours may put much more

stress on mitigating the effects of downswings in economic fortune than on getting most out of the upswing."[1] The motto, characteristic of this vulnerable group is "safety first." Hence, in its quest for survival it was encouraged either through an act of commission or ommission to commit untold damages to the very bases of its survival, and to plant its own seeds of destruction. The priority of successive regimes in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia was never to reduce this risk, much less to halt it. Instead, the vulnerable groups secured their tenuous existence through accelerated changes in their support system, and in the land-use of the country. The consequence of these efforts brought about a man-induced climatic change, and thereby famine. This is not simply an argument based on ecology, but one which relies on the political economy of environmental degradation. An ecological argument in and of itself has very little force or explanatory utility unless it is firmly anchored in political economy. This should not be construed as a reductionist thesis but as a holistic attempt to explain how interrelated losses of land, rainfall, labour, grain, livestock affect people's ability to survive - and why some people are subjected to pay higher prices for this deterioration than others. It could hardly be denied that what governs ecology are the activities of people in the spheres of production both intellectual and material - and in the end what governs these activities are policies which we design and impose on ourselves.

We are convinced that a reduction of rainfall is caused, among other things, by changes in the pattern of land-use. The science of ecology attempts to explain this purported causal connection. However, such an explanation would be incomplete unless we know *how* changes in land-use could come about. The answer to this would have to be sought by appealing to political economy, more precisely to the political economy of environmental degradation. It was in view of this opinion that we took the liberty to venture into the political economy of pre-revolutionary Ethiopia in order to identify the ills which had persisted for years, and incapacitated some segment of the population, thus unable to cope with contingencies including famine.
In order to appreciate the explanatory value of these elements, we need to direct our attention to examining the famine which had occurred between 1970 and 1975 during the reign of Haile Selassie.

5.1. The Famine of 1970-75

The outburst of famine which had occurred during this period is generally divided into two and regarded as the Wollo Famine of

1973, and the Harerghe Famine of 1974.[2] This division together with the labels, I believe, do not do full justice to the historical picture of what actually happened. I believe that what took place was one continual famine emerging in the north on the eastern side of Ethiopian Plateau as far back as 1970. Following the eastern side of the escarpment of the Ethiopian Plateau, the famine continued its march from Tigray through Wollo down to Harerghe. By the time the famine reached Harerghe and completed its downward eastern march, a time of half a decade has elapsed. When the famine struck Tigray in areas of Raya-Azebo and Wodjirat in 1970, the governor appealed for help to the Central Government. After long delay, aid has reached these areas amounting to a total of E$ 220,000, and the bulk of it came from private individuals and voluntary organizations.[3]

The famine continued from Tigray to Wollo where it not only has caused enormous damage, but stayed for a long period before it moved on across the Awash river to Harerghe. Between 1971 and 1974, the famine was centered in Wollo but the effect of it was felt to the north as far as Eritrea, and to the south as far as Harerghe. A Report which was actually prepared during the period of crisis described the situation as follows:

> "The most serious problem was centered in the lowland areas east of the escarpment road in Tigrai and Wello and the lowlands of northern Shewa, with a less serious problem appearing in Eritrea, Harerghe and Begemdir and Simien".[4]

And when in 1974 it finally got into full swing in Harerghe, the damage was confined primarily to Issa pastoralists who were inhabitants of the southern frontiers of Awash River Basin - and its effect was very little to the agriculturalists.

The persistent food crisis which had evolved into famine mainly in Wollo and which has subsequently moved to Harerghe was a historical famine, not only for its intensity but also because of its origin. Wollo was a tragic example of the country's deeply seated ills which were left without being remedied and even, at times, consciously exacerbated. Frequent occurrences of famine in the eastern side of the escarpment had been noted and some of them were documented. These records reveal that between 1957 and 1979, Wollo for instance, had been under no less than 5 famine years[5]. Between 1800 and 1966, Wollo had experienced an average of one famine every 13 years.[6] These are noted and documented famines, but nobody knows for sure how many went unnoticed. The results of these outbursts of famine had been massive loss of lives and livestock, social disintegration,

displacement, continual interruption of production, and debilitation of the rural work force. In short, the very bases of the region's survival has been severely undermined. The frequency and intensity of famine has hit Wollo more than any other region in Ethiopia. Its topography and geography partly rendered Wollo to be famine prone, and its historical experiences added insult to injury. These elements are inter-connected but we shall discuss them in turn.

Wollo is situated on a drought prone location, suggesting that the region could, in any given year, receive reduced rainfall or none at all. Incidentally it is no good to argue here that there are people who live in an area of permanent drought condition such as the Middle East, and yet there has not been any famine. This argument overlooks people's adaptive strategies under varying conditions. Therefore, for a Wollo peasant to live in arid regions would be to demand a change in his deeply entrenched strategies of survival. In fact, this is what happens when he is faced with drought. Hence, the immediate question here should be not why or how he should change his survival strategies, but rather why the Wollo region is famine prone. This is due to, in part, the rain shadow effect posed by the Ethiopian Plateau restricting the moisture from the southwestern part of the country from reaching regions east of the Blue Nile and Tekkeze river valley,[7] and partly because of the erratic rainfall prevalent along the agro-pastoral lowland of the region.[8]

There are two sources of moisture for Ethiopia as a whole bringing in different seasons and crop production. One of them originates from the Atlantic Ocean and constitutes the main rainy season not only for Wollo but for most parts of the country. The moisture penetrates the region of Wollo from the southwest, "as the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) progresses northward with the equatorial trough. As a general rule, rainfall should decrease as one moves from the south to the north of the country. However, this situation is somewhat modified by the topography of the country; rainfall maxima are found in the southwest and minima in the northeast and southwest of the country" [9]

In what ways does the topography of the country modify the pattern? Quite obviously the presence of the Ethiopian plateau stretching from Shewa northbound to Eritrea has something to do with it. Generally, the mountains do attract rain, the higher one gets away from the lowlands the more rain one secures. Therefore, elevation plays an important role in attracting moisture, but that is not a sufficient condition. There would also have to be sufficient vegetation cover. Apparently, there is not

sufficient vegetation covering the highlands of Ethiopia and this has to do with years of persistent human interference.

> "Human interference, in the form of agriculture and grazing, has greatly influenced the Ethiopian plateau. Human interference decreases from the north-east, where devastation has been extreme, to the south-west, where small tracts of intact forest still remain. Most of what look like jungles from the air in south western Ethiopia are in fact coffee plantations in forest."[10]

The bulk of Wollo's moisture is secured from the process originating from the Atlantic Ocean and brings with it to Wollo the *Kiremt* rain, which constitutes between 10 and 70 percent of the mean annual total rainfall. It begins about the end of May and ends around the last week of August with the retreat of ITCZ. Although the country's 85-95 percent of food crop is produced during this season, nonetheless in Wollo less than 50 percent of crop production takes place during this season.

The most significant rainfall is the *Belg* season (February to May) and about 50 percent of crop production in Wollo takes place during this season; and the season, however, accounts for the production of 5-15 percent of the national food crop. This moisture originates from the tropical depressions of the Indian Ocean. The *Belg* rain is very important for Wollo's agriculturalists, and equally critical for the pastoralists in the lowlands. However, this rain is often erratic and its delay could be deadly for crop producing agriculturalists and for livestock reading herdsmen.

These two moistures which reach Wollo have proven to be unreliable in the last two to three decades; more so in the farther east side of the escarpment where a decline of rainfall since 1965 has been reported.[11] This fluctuation has ushered in drought, and the drought seemingly led to crop failure triggering in turn famine and loss of livestocks. Two points have now emerged from this picture. 1) Rainfall fluctuation was observed in Wollo for years, and this can perhaps be explained by the topography and geography of the region; but the *frequency* of the fluctuation has increased for three decades prior to the famine of 1970-75, and this can be observed, apart from anything else, from the recurrence of drought in the region during this period. Then the question becomes how do we explain this frequency of rainfall fluctuation? 2) The droughts brought about by this rainfall fluctuation have caused crop failure, among other things, but it does not follow that droughts have caused famine nor does it follow that crop failure has caused famine. For there are

societies which were observed to have experienced these phenomena, yet famine has never occurred. Therefore, how do we explain the connection, if any, between drought and famine, and similarly, the purported connection between crop failure and famine in the context of Wollo region. These concerns need not be seen separately, and in fact an attempt to dispel the first may give us a clue to explain the second one.

After years of constant abuse of the environment through various practices, not least of all by the peasant and pastoral modes of environmental appropriations, the land-use of Wollo has changed dramatically in the last three decades. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that such changes had taken place; and one cannot obviously ignore the climatic factors in explaining the frequent recurrence of drought. First of all, due to the population pressure on land and increasing parcelization of land which had taken place for years, the production areas are intensely cultivated. This is a process which had begun many generations ago, thereby paving the way for deforestation and soil degradation. Much of the fertile soil has been washed away and land productivity has enormously declined. This implies that yield is barely at a subsistence level. Since most cultivators had either little or no access to fertilizers, the situation is even more aggravated. Woldemariam has observed that:

> "The northern parts of the country, Eritrea, Tigre and parts of Wollo and Begemdir are almost completely lost to agriculture because of the removal of the soil by the agents of erosion. It is not at all surprising that these northern parts where farming has been practised longest and deforestation completed earliest should now have exhausted their agricultural potential."[12]

Secondly, due to the growing encroachment of the state on land resources of the small cultivators and pastoralists in order to expand commercial farms on some of the most fertile and/or grazing areas of the region, a number of eviction and intra-regional displacement had taken place. This forced the agriculturalists to seek new land to be placed under cultivation with the resulting destruction of forests and other vegetations;or to engage in dry-soil cultivation when land is scarce in the highlands, thereby succeeded in alienating the pastoralists from their rangelands.

Thirdly, the state had furthermore forced the small peasant cultivators in Wollo to allocate a fraction of their land for cash crop production in a country where 94% of the total cultivated land is occupied with food crops, and 3% of it with coffee. The second and the third points reinforce the first one. That is, these

actions entail more population pressure on land resulting from land alienation, encroachment, fragmentation and the like, suggesting a decline in productivity and low yield. For the Afar pastoralists, because of dual encroachments, one launched directly by the state, and the other initiated by land-hungry peasant cultivators who came from the escarpment to the area have managed to alienate the grazing areas of the Afar, hence inducing the problem of rangeland shrinkage with a subsequent result of overgrazing and deterioration of rangelands.
The commission which was formed in 1975 to investigate the causes of the famine referred "more or less" to the problems we have just observed.

> "The primary cause of (the) famine was not a drought of unprecedented severity but a combination of long *continued bad land-use* and steadily increased *human* and *stock population* over decades, rendering a greater number of people and their animals vulnerable when the drought struck".[13] (my emphasis)

It is important to note here that what the Commission has meant by "increased human and stock population" was not clear, since having too many people or too many livestocks in itself does not pose a severe problem, but that the people's activities on the land and the carrying capacity of the land are crucial. At any event, the combination of the various elements we thus far considered had resulted into two things: a) the highland agriculture which was concentrated in the range of 2000 - 3000 m has now moved to areas near the frostline - this meant clearing up more forests and vegetations in order to put new land under cultivation. This has brought grave consequences on the nature of the climate in the region. The moisture which penetrates Ethiopia diminishes progressively as it reaches Wollo, and in the case of the moisture originating from the Atlantic Ocean since the ITCZ requires a certain amount of forests and vegetation for its movement northbound, in the absence of trees on the highlands it either makes an early retreat or simply falls short of reaching north. Consequently, the rainfall in Wollo is either being reduced or showing a pattern of decline. And this would mean for Wollo losing the bulk of its crop production, and for small cultivators and pastoralists the effect of this deterioration is even more severe. b) Some of the small cultivators made their way, instead, to the lowland river valleys which are prone to flooding, malaria and livestock diseases. Traditionally, these regions were barely occupied by highlanders due to the presence of these problems. It is not difficult to

imagine the hardships they encounter in coping with an environment alien to them. This has also implications on their health, resistance, and on their ability to carry on sustained production. None the less, this settlement expansion towards the river valleys has also involved the expansion of cropland by clearing the vegetations further contributing to subsequent erosion and reduced rainfall. Consequently, by putting a) and b) together we are able to explain the fluctuation of rainfall and recurrence of drought in Wollo. Nothing we have said so far suggests that this was the cause of the famine of 1970-75. What we have attempted to show is that some changes on land-use had taken place in Wollo, preceeding the famine, and this in turn has brought a certain amount of influence on the climate. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that these sequences of change could be able to explain the recurrence of drought in the region. In fact, prior to and during the famine, a pattern of declining rainfall in Wollo has been observed, suggesting that indeed these changes have significantly contributed to it.

It seems, therefore, reasonable to suggest that in their quest for survival the Wollo small peasant cultivator on the escarpment and his counterpart, the pastoralist, in the lowlands were forced to degrade the environment in which they live, i e, the source of their livelihood. The effects of environmental degradation take years before their impact is being felt and before they become self-reinforcing. If we could only see an immediate and conclusive evidence that the dollar which we contribute to a famine-relief charity organization does indeed save the starving child from death somewhere in Korem, some of us would not have hesitated to donate more than a dollar. But the absence of immediate and conclusive proof together with the distance involved had perhaps feasiled out our desire to help. And if we only know that the junk-food which some of us eat daily has an adverse effect on us the following morning, then we would have refrained from eating it, or at least minimize the consumption. However, that, we know, does not happen and it takes years for it to take its toll. Similarly, environmental degradation is a slow developing process and compounded by various factors, it would ultimately become self-reinforcing.

> "Environmental deterioration, once set in motion, can become self-reinforcing... The loss of vegetation cover adversely affects the amount of rainfall, and as the former depends on rain its own decline is also speeded up. The natural environment is never a neutral and passive force in the life people make for themselves. People and nature interact. That interaction has become dangerously unhinged in contemporary Africa. Today

methods of agriculture often reinforce the consequences of weather failure rather than providing the means of coping with it.":[14]

However, it would be naive to believe that the environmental degradation which has brought the recurrent drought was due to, solely, the 'involuntary' activities of the peasants and pastoralists in the decades preceeding the famine of 1970-75. The history of Wollo region reveals that during the course of state-formation in Ethiopia, the region had suffered from untold calamities of destruction, burning, looting and so on, which equally have contributed to environmental destruction as well as to human suffering. As the result, sustained agricultural production was virtually impossible, and any effort to build security systems to cope with contingencies not only has invited more suffering but was also considered, under the circumstances, an irrational thing to do.

The Great Famine of 1888-92 had mostly ravaged the northern parts of the country and the damage to Wollo's population had been so severe to the point where, according to some historians, a complete disintegration of, among other things, social values was most visible.[15] And even prior to that famine, Wollo was wrecked by on-going feuds between different rulers, kidnappings and slave trading, property destruction and looting, and frequent burning of villages.[16] Emperor Tewodros and his soldiers were largely responsible for subjecting the region and its inhabitants to hardships, halting the efforts of sustained production. During his repeated campaigns to the region between 1856 and 1867, Tewodros had nearly annihilated the region. "The villages were burnt, the fields laid waste, and men, women and children unsparingly butchered, or dragged into irredeemable captivity".[17] Few years later, "almost a desert owing to the King's (Tewodros) continued oppression of the poor inhabitants... only a field here and there appeared to be under tillage, and the villages - small groups of miserable huts - were few and far between, while the bulk of the inhabitants were said to have died of hunger or disease - the latter brought on by scanty unwholesome food".[18] Another year later, Tewodros raided the region and it became "completely despoiled of everything which the rapacious soldiery could lay hands on".[19] The villages were completely plundered, people were executed, and crops were destroyed. No body knows for sure the extent of the damage he has caused to Wollo during his campaign but it was believed that 80,000 head of cattle in 1866, and 1,000,000 cows and oxen in 1867 were killed. Debilitation of the work force,

displacement, conscription and complete paralysis of productive activity were some of the major ills he has caused to the inhabitants. In the Ethiopian context, a loss of this amount of livestock is not a point to be taken very lightly. It takes years to replenish these livestocks; but more importantly, it tantamounts to loosing an equal amount of tractors and thresher-harvesters. The attitude of the small peasant producer and the pastoralist to livestocks is something significant and intertwined with the foundation of their subsistence. For instance, during the famine of 1970-75, both the small peasant producers and the pastoralists were dying together with their livestocks, when they could in fact have sold them and exchange their requisite amount of food to alleviate their starvation.

> "In 1974 when famine was raging in Wollo the proportion of the livestock that died was almost four times as high as the proportion of those that were sold. The survey made in Harerghe in the same year show a very similar result. According to these findings the attitudes the peasant cultivators and pastoralists have to their livestock appears in general to be almost the same".[20]

The irrationality of this in the face of starvation may be hard to accept. "But if we bear in mind their attitude to their livestock as the foundation of their subsistence, then it may not be difficult to see the connection between their own lives and those of their livestock not only in its immediate sense, but also in the strength of their hopes for survival."[21] Their unwillingness to dispose cattle also stems from the fact that, in the context of their social reality, doing so would lead them to further debt and borrowing of oxen, without which another starvation is only one step away. Hence, the importance of livestock and oxen for a small cultivator is not something to be ignored.

> "In fact, the key institutions affecting household access to resources and overall economic viability are those directly involving the exchange of oxen and their labour".[22]

Hence, Tewodros' destruction of livestock, many of which passed unrecorded, had a wider impact than just a sheer loss of a certain number of livestocks. And if many of the small cultivators were in a similar predicament, then they could not have produced anything for years to come even under favourable climate. The rational step for them to take could have been to migrate to urban centers or to surrender themselves to

begging. Even these opportunities, for many young Wollo Oromos were denied by Tewodros at that time, for he ordered the kidnapping of these people to be distributed to his soldiers as slaves in lieu of pay.[23] This led to further kidnapping and slave trading where the demand for it in the Sudan, Egypt and Arabia was high. The then provincial ruler of Wollo, Ras Mikael did not help matters either. He was in fact, believed to be one of the major exporters of slaves, and given the operational constraints present then, his activities had to be confined to slaves captured in Wollo.[24] The shipment of these able work force elsewhere, and the destruction of property had an impact on the resource support base of the region for years to come.

Even after the reign of Tewodros, the small cultivator's fear of being incapacitated by the destruction of their indispensable survival mechanism did not subside. When fighting the Egyptians, Yohannes had, as a devout Christian, issued a decree ordering the moslem population to either convert to Christianity or to face confiscation of *rist* right to property. Land being the very means of survival for the small cultivator - he embraced Christianity. The impact of the decree was felt mostly in Tigrai and Wollo. After Menelik took power and prepared to wage war against the Italians at Adwa, he has ordered the construction of granaries, among other places, in Wollo. This was done at the expense of already vulnerable small cultivators. During the reign of Haile Selassie, and the then *gultegna* his son Asfa Wossen, Wollo's small cultivators and pastoralists had a series of tragic years. In 1959 a famine has raged the region but it was contained by securing food aid from the United States and other western governments. Despite the vulnerability of Wollo's small cultivators and pastoralists to contingencies including famine, the government never directed its attention to reducing their vulnerability. On the contrary, in 1963 Haile Selassie issued a decree ordering pastoralists to pay land tax on their ever diminishing traditional grazing land. The Crown Prince Asfa Wossen, as the *gultegna* of the region mounted a huge joint scheme of commercial farms expansion with Italian entrepreneurs after having evicted small peasant farmers from their areas thereby confiscating 3,200 ha of land.

"The area under cultivation for the subsistence of local population was severely reduced, both because of the extension of commercial farms and because peasants were forced to set aside an increasing fraction of their land for the production of cash crops. When the drought of several consecutive years culminated in the 1973 famine, it proved that Wollo was, under the given system of social distribution, heavily overpopulated.

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Haile Selassie was never sympathetic to Wollo peasants, nor did he forgive and forget the time when, in 1936, they spat at him for abandoning Ethiopia to the Italian colonizers.[26] Since then, Wollo had been a disfavoured province and this can be discerned from the number of hospitals, schools and roads that had been built. And when, during the famine of 1973, the regional representative of UNDP went to present Haile Selassie with the facts concerning the famine, he found "the emperor surprisingly well informed. The emperor's attitude seemed to be that peasants always starve, nothing could be done about it and, in any case, it was not the Shoan Amhara who were dying".[27] And later he added:

> "Rich and poor have always existed and always will. Why? Because there are those that work... and those that prefer to do nothing... Each individual is responsible for his misfortunes, his fate".[28]

Over the years, successive leaders including Haile Selassie have shown callousness, apathy and animosity towards Wollo's small cultivators and pastoralists. Indeed history has shown that the inhabitants were constantly subjected to destruction, exploitation and crude forms of robbery. However, the question remains how does this history of destruction explain the famine of 1970-75 in Wollo which had spilled over to Hararghe? Indeed, what we have shown thus far are two things. First, the causes for the recurrence of drought in Wollo. Second, the history of destruction and exploitation which the Wollo peasants and pastoralists had endured under successive regimes. *Prima facie*, there is no connection between the two, and therefore, if we want to invoke these two as our causal explanation of the famine of 1970-75, somehow we need to bridge the gap between the two. In other words, clearly an explanation for the recurrence of drought is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for explaining the causes of famine. If it was the case, the underlying assumption would have to be that there is a necessary connection between drought and famine. Clearly, this is false since either one of these is possible without the other being present. Nevertheless, what is true is the fact that drought, among others, causes crop failure, or a decline in production. And many have alleged that the latter is the cause of famine, but obviously many counter-examples could be cited to disprove this claim, since there are societies where crop failure has occurred without an accompanying famine.

> 'There should be no doubt that in some countries drought leads to crop failure. What is challenged here, is the prevalent notion that crop failure almost automatically leads to famine ... We need to *explain* why drought becomes famine and why certain sections of the population, and why some communities rather than others, suffer most from it".[29]

It appears, therefore, that crop failure is not a sufficient condition for the emergence of famine. On the other hand, we cannot simply rule out of court the possibility that either drought or crop failure inducing or triggering famine in the Wollo's case. Indeed, if we could be able to explain how these phenomena trigger famine, then ultimately our task of bridging the gap between our historical account of destruction in Wollo and our explanations of recurrence of drought is nearly completed.

What 'appears' to be a gap between these two explanations is not really so. They actually reinforce one another. What has been ascertained in the discussion of the reasons for the recurrence of drought is the claim that human interference on the vegetation of the highlands of Wollo has a direct role to play in inducing drought. Population pressure on land has increased the frequency of drought occurrence. Prior to the famine of 1970-75, Wollo had a population of 2.4 million, of this nearly 1 million people had lived in the main drought area. It was not a coincidence that half of the population has congregated in the main drought area. What has pulled them together was the pursuit of survival. The largest occupational group amongst these people were small peasant cultivators. They were there because that is where mostly agricultural activity took place in Wollo. In addition, there were also pastoralists and village laborers. Therefore, the only source of attraction was the land itself, but when that was overcultivated, overgrazed, deforested, and so on, then it was inevitable for drought to emerge. However, if they had adequate security systems by way of disposable assets or food grain reserve, then for the most part the drought would have had very little impact. Nonetheless under the then existing system of production, that security mechanism would not have carried them for a long period. Then the questions we need to pose for ourselves are these: 1) Did they not have any security mechanism? 2) If they did not, then why they failed to have a security mechanism to cope with contingencies like drought or crop failure? 3) If they did have, why did it not last them for a long time?

In order to answer these and other related questions, we need to go into the political economy of environmental degradation.

Constant abuse of the small peasants by different successive rulers, landlords and the state - through looting, burning, slaving, taxation and the like had, over the years, enforced the belief that establishing a security mechanism to cope with contingencies even under favourable conditions is an invitation for precisely the same things which they were trying to avoid. Consequently, for an Ethiopian peasant in general to be known as better-off than his counterparts is an attraction to his enemies. That stood as one of the factors hindering the building of security mechanism. However, he usually lived at a subsistence level with very little at his disposal to carry him from one season to another. The only source from which he could establish a security system is nature itself. He has to exploit the land as much as possible to secure at least marginal existence - and others would live by appropriating surplus from him. In the early days, the form of surplus appropriation consisted of establishing granaries for the passing army, feeding the soldiers when stationed there, and through outlandish robbery. During Haile Selassie's time, the surplus was appropriated mainly through taxes, tribute or payments and so on. The landlord class could yield more power and this meant more appropriation of surplus from the small peasant producer. And the peasant in turn extracts surplus from the environment, thus planting the seeds of his own destruction: environmental degradation.

> "Soil degradation and erosion can be explained in terms of surplus extraction through the social relations of production and in the sphere of exchange. The essential connection is that, under certain circumstances, surpluses are extracted from cultivators who then in turn are forced to extract 'surpluses' (in this case energy) from the environment (stored-up fertility of the soil, forest resources, long evolved and productive pastures, and so on), and this in time and under certain physical circumstances leads to degradation and/or erosion".[30]

Therefore, in the quest for survival, the Wollo peasant was forced to engage in performing an 'involuntary' task; a task which generates surplus for others but one which removes him further away from the hope of establishing a security system. Given the difficulties he has encountered in this pursuit, he is rendered vulnerable to contingencies, including drought, crop failure, famine, death in the family and so on. Since many of his counterparts were in the same predicament, it is not difficult to see how a slight vagary of climate could turn him into becoming a famine victim. And what had contributed to the change of climate were his own practices. He was engaged in these

destructive practices not out of choice or ignorance, but by his placement in the hierarchy of societal arrangements.

"In essence their class position often forces them into using the environment destructively and inhibits any adaptive response to its inevitable deterioration".[31]

The famine which occurred in Wollo between 1970 and 1975, albeit tragic, was a nodal point in a series of crisis which had its origin in the social, economic and political forces which were in operation in the country in general, and in the province in particular. As expected, it was not the well-off sector which became a famine victim, but the most vulnerable groups of Wollo: the small cultivators, servants, seasonal village labourers and the pastoralists. Where tenancy was practiced, the tenants were automatically evicted. These and others which constituted the vulnerable group of Wollo were the ones to undertake massive exodus to urban centers, including Addis. These were the ones who had first reported to the hastily put up relief camps. And it was through their migration that the world had come to know their plight. The landlords, of course, were altogether unaffected. The only drawback for them was less direct surplus extraction, and that would have meant less conspicuous consumption. In many ways they benefited from the misfortune of the vulnerable groups.

"At the same time, a surplus existed. Through the drought years, landowners collected their shares as usual and kept stores of grain without selling or releasing it to the starving populace, in expectation of rising prices. At the peak of the famine, they could demand almost anything for their grain, and they bought oxen and land at ridiculously deflated prices from the desperate farmers."[32]

Such callous act of hording had almost cost the lives of thousands of people, because people in the West were indignant of this greed and caused them to think twice before extending their hands to the starving people. The very same grain produced by the small cultivators now horded by the landlords, became dearly inaccessable. The landlords wanted to make profit out of the crisis, but as it turned out the peasants had no purchasing power to match the prices and to secure their requisite amount of food. Even if the prices were low, they could hardly command a sufficient amount of food. While the prices were relatively stable at local markets, nonetheless major urban centers like Dessie and Combolcha were, at the initial period, virtually

unaffected. In fact, many of the landlords had to dump their grain in these centers, for there was no effective capability to buy some food in the local markets, even though the demand was high in the rural areas. In many ways, Dessie and Combolcha were not governed by local market forces, but they were simply market extensions of two market centers, namely Addis Ababa and Asmara. Their strategic locations virtually left them unaffected by what was taking place in rural Wollo. A highway going to Asmara from Addis passes through both Dessie and Combolcha; and the latter also had the added advantage of being located on a highway going from Addis to the port of Assab. In many ways, these two were centers for traders and merchants; and these sectors of the population have greatly benefited from the food crisis.

They knew the high demand for food in Addis and especially in Asmara, and since they have managed to secure unsolicited supply of grain from now desperate landlords who were anxious to dump their grain, they were able to move the grain to these urban centers at ease. Hence, there was indeed surplus in the country, but the aggregate figure of food supply conceal what actually was going on in the drought affected areas. In Addis alone there were 25 major grain dealers which were awaiting for these rural and town merchants to provide them the grain - and when the famine's peak period began to decline, their retail prices began to rise, in urban centers. The famine crisis turned into an advantage to many merchants and grain dealers both in the rural and urban areas. "It has been estimated that ... there were from 12,500 to 25,000 grain merchants active in rural areas and 4,000 to 8,000 merchants in the towns" [33] Ironically, at the peak of the famine in 1973, the country had surplus of cereal. The official trade statistics for 1973 reveal that the country was with a net export surplus of 203,900 MT of cereals, oilseeds and pulses, i.e. the largest surplus since 1962.[34]. And if one looks at the figure for aggregate crop production in Ethiopia, it was clear that there was very little decline in food availability in the country. Some districts including 17 of them in Shoa, had reported above normal crop production for the year 1972-73. (see table 1) One wonders why food has not moved out quickly and efficiently to food deficit areas in Wollo?

The immediate explanation is that the road network was not efficient to reach the starving people. Indeed, there is a great deal of evidence to this effect. The roads were designed to link Asmara and Addis via Dessie and Combolcha, and to link Assab with Addis but with no thought of integrating the various districts and sub-districts with Dessie or Combolcha. Where actual farming was taking place and the villages where the

people engulfed with drought, were hardly accessible. Therefore, the fact that grain was passing through Dessie and Combolcha does not tell us much. It only points out to the fragmented nature of the rural market, and the negligence of successive governments to develop and integrate the rural markets with the urban markets through, among other things, efficient road construction.

TABLE 1

1972-73 AGGREGATE CROP PRODUCTION IN ETHIOPIA

Region	No. of Districts reporting	Normal	Above Normal	Below Normal	Net Below	Substantially Normal
Below Normal						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)=(4)-(3)	(6)
include in (4)						
Wollo	21	10	0	90	90	52
Arussi	20	70	5	25	20	10
Hararghe	22	39	23	39	16	9
Eritrea	23	78	4	18	14	8
Shewa	72	54	17	25	12	8
Tigrai	42	84	6	10	4	0
Wellega	35	86	0	14	14	0
Gamo Gofa	17	82	6	12	6	0
Illubebor	14	64	22	14	-8	0
Gojjam	22	82	14	4	-10	0
Kefa	9	45	33	22	-11	0
Begemder and Simien	29	72	21	7	-14	0
Sidamo	23	78	22	0	-22	0
Bale	11	9	82	9	-73	0
Total	360	65	14	21	7	7

Source: Kumar (1986) Table 2.

This is what has emerged as one of the real explanations for lack of quick response to the areas under crisis. The famine has exposed the government's negligence of market planning for

rural communities, and its obsession with urban development. While the famine was taking its toll in rural Wollo, urban-dwellers in the rest of the country, including Dessie and Combolcha were hardly affected. Ironically, if the crisis did not attract media attention, many urban dwellers would have remained ignorant of the crisis. Many residents of Dessie and Combolcha still remember how they have felt embarrassed when famine struck Wollo, since from their vantage point there was plenty to go around for everyone in Wollo. This could be taken as an indirect expression of their indignation to the state for its failure to move food quickly to affected areas, and indicates also their relatively better-off economic position. At any rate, since there was no efficient road network in rural communities, not only the development of market was ignored but such neglect also posed difficulties to any effective response to famine. However, from the point of view of the interest of the state there was an efficient road system; for its concern was a one-way flow of resources from rural to urban areas. In one way or another, what the rural community has produced inevitably gets to urban markets, available at ease for urbanites. But the converse was not true. Either through an act of commission or omission the state has turned drought into famine, and crop failure into famine, or a food deficit into famine.

5.2. Famine and the Pastoralists

Thus far, we have been discussing the causes the famine of 1972-75 in Wollo with reference mainly to Wollo's peasant cultivators. During this period, the famine was also expanded southward to incorporate Harerghe's pastoralists. Why were the pastoralists rendered least vulnerable and unable to cope with the crisis? To this we shall now turn; but first, we need to say few words about pastoralists in particular. The pastoralists who inhabited the Awash river basin and south from it were 'pure pastoralists' in the sense that only pastoral mode of production was present, and these pastoralists could sharply be distinguished from their counterparts on the western and south-western regions of Ethiopia which include the Mursi, Anuaks, the Boran, the Shangillas and the Gumuz, where the predominant mode of appropriation is either semi pastoralism or shift cultivation. The inhabitants of the former includes the Afar, Issas, Arsi, Kereyu, and Jile. The Issas are primarily of Somali origin, and referred to, at times, as 'Ogaden pastoralists' and even this label divides into two components: Northern Ogaden pastoralists, presumably to include those pastoralists of Ethiopian origin, and Southern Ogaden pastoralists or Issacs to indicate the

Somali origin of the pastoralists, or perhaps their linguistic affiliation.

Although the Issas, Issacs and northern Ogaden pastoralists had suffered a great deal when the famine has reached the Harerghe region in 1974, nonetheless the causes of their plight was similar to those Afar pastoralists. They all suffered from state encroachment on their grazing land, curtailment of their migratory pattern, and the endangerment of their risk-reducing strategies. However, there were also differences between the experience of Afar pastoralists on the one hand, and the remaining pastoralists on the other. First, many of the Afar had traditionally inhabited the floodplains of Awash river, along with smaller numbers of Arsi, Kereyu, and Jile pastoralists. And it was mostly the floodplains which were targeted for development purposes - thus directly confronting these pastoralists. The Issas, indeed, have occupied the region south of the river, but this was not affected primarily and directly by the projects. Second, Afar areas were not only alienated by the state, but also by Oromo agro-pastoralists who had lived in the valleys for many generations and who themselves were pushed down the escarpment by the sedentary agriculturalists who had lived on the escarpment. Third, ecologically speaking the Harerghe highlands are not less vulnerable than the central escarpment, but the environmental devastation has been less severe than the one on the central escarpment, for two reasons. (a) Much of the Harerghe highlands are occupied by cash-crop production, namely coffee, and this was done under shade of forests. (b) The intensification of cereal cultivation on these highlands, even though what has been observed, say in Chercher highlands, is very severe, is only a recent phenomenon. In the light of these factors, the environmental impact on the pastoralists south of Awash river is less severe as compared to Afar pastoralists. Perhaps it was for this reason that the famine was confined mainly to the areas of pastoralists, and the agriculturalist population of Harerghe was very little affected. The pastoralists in Harerghe, however, were caught for years by Ethio-Somali conflict on the Ogaden thus creating considerable displacement to the population. It was not clear how much the on-going feuds have contributed to the emergence of famine in pastoral regions of Harerghe. Nor is it clear how much the insurgent activities between 1964 and 1969 has affected the population. At any rate, it is difficult to ascertain the elements which have pulled the famine towards Harerghe. Consequently, we shall have to confine our assessment of the famine largely in relation to Afar pastoralists.

It has been estimated that the famine has reduced Afar's cattle

population by 90%, camels by 30%, sheep by 50% and goats by 30% and the whole of Afar population by about 25 to 30%. For the most part it was the very young and the old especially those less than five years and over 45 years, that perished. Their total grazing area between 1960 and 1975 has shrank 21% or 1.4% per year. In order to understand the causes underlying these damages, we need to examine their mode of existence, and their relations with their neighbours particularly the sedentary agriculturalists on the escarpment and the Oromo agro-pastoralists along the escarpment adjacent to Afar rangelands.

Pastoral mode of production in Ethiopia, especially with respect to Afar population is one which has been very little studied despite the fact that it raises inavoidable difficulties for development strategists. Even more unfortunate is that a study on the role of drought and famine in this mode of existence - and the lessons to be learned from pastoralists' survival strategies in their arid and fragile environment have not been thoroughly investigated. This has, unfortunately, to do with a peasant-bias academics suffer from in assessing strategies of rural development. Policy makers, too, suffer from this - and their programmes often preclude pastoralists. Wittingly or unwittingly, 'peasantisation' is what we have chosen for them. Whether this is a correct response to their plight will be investigated later when we deal with the issue of resettlement.

The Afar pastoralists inhabit the further east side of the escarpment of the Ethiopian Plateau stretching from eastern Shoa and in Wollo and Tigre Provinces, in what is known as the Denakil lowlands. The Afar population is estimated at 300,000, with a large majority numbering 240,000 living in Ethiopia and the rest in the Republic of Djibouti.[35] In 1955, it was estimated that the density in the Afar region was 1.9 persons per km^2, but in the seventies it soared to 5.3 persons per km^2, an increase of 0.13 persons per km^2 per year.[36] The pastoralists derive their livelihood from animal husbandry under a system of multi-species pastoralism. The large stock consisting of camels, oxen, cows and the small stock consisting of species of goats and sheep. This system of multi-species pastoralism is an indispensable risk reducing survival strategy or a precaution against loss. It also promotes a more complete use of environmental resources and a more even access to food, and needless to say, it reduces the risk of total loss. For instance, the camel is more resistant to drought than cattle, and it also takes a longer period to rebuild a camel herd than a herd of cattle. More importantly, not all animals are affected by the same diseases. Rinderpest and Contagious Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia (CBPP) do not hit camels, but on the other

from the south moved in and created settlement. A process of integration took place between the Amhara sedentary agriculturalists and the Oromo agro-pastoralists. The people under the latter category are the Warababu, Gurra, Worke and Yeju. Although these people are called Oromo, nonetheless, it has been noted that many of them did not speak the language, but the Amhara language, *Amarigna*.

It is interesting to note that while many of the districts in Wollo practiced the *rist* tenure system, the Yeju district on the other hand was practicing predominantly the *gult* system. In fact, 65% of the land in Yeja district was held under the *gult* system, 14% as *semon* (church land) and 21% as *maderia* land - and in Yeju the latter was known as *Galla* land - which was presumably owned by an Oromo and exempted from payment of land tax.[37] It is believed that the *gult* system was enacted in Yiju by Menelik to keep it in uniformity with the other conquered southern Oromo territories. In Yeju, under those tenure patterns, more than 50% of the peasants were tenants, many landowners possess small holdings of 1 hectare or less, but the largest holding was 12.000 hectares and owned by an individual, Fitawerari Yohannes Hailesellassie. 49% of the landowners were absentee, and of this, 15% were deceased. 30% of the tenants paid more than 50% of their crop as rent.[38] As we shall see below, these figures had important implications during the onset of famine.

The Amhara sedentary agriculturalists were being pushed from the West by Asfa Wossens' encroachment on their land, and their subsequent eviction. Many of them were forced to cultivate on the high plateau near the frostline. Some of them were forced to migrate to the eastern side of the escarpment bordering the Oromo areas. This fast expanding downslope of dry farming into grazing areas along the escarpment has led to a considerable clearing and cultivation of steep slopes, leading to erosion and deterioration of highland pastures. "By 1960 this ecologically fragile zone had higher population densities 100-150 persons/km^2 than any part of the Awash Basin."[39] The Oromo agro-pastoralists, are the closest neighbours of the Afar pastoralists in terms of geographical location, religious adherence, economic ties and alliance to counter-act against cattle raids. But they also contribute to some of the most essential problems of the Afar pastoralists: shrinkage of rangelands. As the name itself suggests, these people are semi-sedentary agriculturalists growing maize, sorghum and teff, and semi-pastoralists in the following sense. Since all of them require a pair of oxen as draught animals, the number of cattle is exceedingly high - this is

in light of the density of the population and the lack of arable land. Almost all the arable land is under cultivation. This led to the scarcity of grazing land, implying that the demand for fodder would have to be met somehow. At least during the fallow season, this was not a grave problem, but the situation becomes critical during the growing season. Therefore, the steep hill sides and the Afar rangelands become the only possibility open to them. But this led, on numerous occasions, to open hostilities between Afar pastoralists and the Oromos, particularly with the Gurra Work.

However, this was not the only problem. In addition to land shrinkage or alienation, the Afar territory was also encroached by bushes coming from the Oromo territory. That is, because the Oromos land was overly cultivated, it was constantly subjected to soil erosion, bringing the soil downhill to the Afar lowlands. Hence, as a consequence of erosion, new bushes began to appear in Afar areas, thus causing destruction in the growth and availability of graze. Evidence of the expansion of *sansevieria robusta* and *dissus rotundifolia* was present in the Afar areas. And these were, of course, signs of range deterioration. As a result of competition for resources with their neighbours, the Afar were stuck with a deteriorated rangeland which constituted a 200 km wide belt of the total 75,000 km^2.

As pure pastoralists, the Afar livelihood was sustained by a system of multi-species pastoralism. This entails, among other things, that their primary means of production consists of livestock, 'land' and labour. Livestock is owned individually, whereas access to support base like water and grazing land is established on the basis of clan-dissent or kinship dissent, and therefore can be *utilised* collectively. It can be said that the land was not 'owned' by Afar pastoralists, nor for that matter anyone else except the state has *exclusive* ownership right on the land anywhere in the country. What the Afar had was a very weak 'nominal' right of ownership to land, bordering on an inclusive sense of ownership. For instance, a small cultivator in Ethiopia under rist system can be said to have nominal right of ownership - this in principle, though not in practice, is not saleable to anyone, much less to those outside of kins or the community. At any given time, the state can override this right since it withheld the "real" ownership right to the land. This nominal right, at any rate, is *stronger* than what Afar had since the small cultivators can, at times, dispense with the land.

The Afar pastoralists' sense of 'ownership' really had nothing to do with the exchangeability of the land, nor with the soil which the land has; but rather with an access right to the resources of the land. This access qualification is common to all, who were

from the same clan or if one is from another clan, then permission can be granted by clan consent. Therefore, land is *not* a primary means of production. However, the product of the land is considered indispensable for the production and reproduction of the community. The individual Afar owns livestock, and much of what he could get out of it or could command with it is contingent upon the size and condition of his livestock, the productivity of the support base available to him, the rainfall, the unhindered path of movement and labour. Larger size of multiple species of herd under the conditions mentioned is one which an Afar pastoral wants to establish. Unfortunately, however, some or most of the conditions are difficult to meet, and one of them is the availability and productivity of support base. As we have seen above, the encroachment of the Oromos on Afar rangeland has caused some problem. The source of this encroachment is the state, i e, it has alienated the Oromos from their land, and they in turn had to alienate the Afar from their rangeland. Moreover, due to the expansion of commercial farms the Awash valley which we shall see below, a further encroachment, perhaps the most serious one, was staged by the state on Afar pastoralists. Therefore, the attainment of large size herd is being undermined by the state for the reason we noted. Even if an Afar manages to acquire large size livestock - and if everyone does the same thing - no doubt this overstocking causes a serious problem - actually this problem was evident. Not for the reason that everyone had large stock to maintain, but whatever the Afar pastoralists had together with the Oromo's livestock - was too large to be accommodated by the carrying capacity of the rangeland. It is estimated that the medium-term carrying capacity of an area to be 10 to 15 ha per livestock unit (1 livestock unit is equivalent to 230-250 kgs of liveweight or 1 camel).[40] However, "the aerial surveys carried out in 1972 and 1973 show actual stocking rates between 7 and 8 ha per livestock unit and it was evident that the surveyed area was heavily over-stocked as late as in January 1973".[41]

The expansion of commercial farms which has commenced in 1962 under the auspices of the Awash Valley Authority (AVA) was the biggest contributor to many problems such as the curtailment of migration, erratic and unseasonal discharge of dam reservoir water, and shrinkage of pasture. The Awash Valley is a dry season retreat for some Afar. It has an area of 120,000 km^2 and divided into Upper, Middle and Lower plains. Since 1962, the first two were administered by AVA, but the Lower Plains was run by the Sultan of Aussa - Ali Mira. Until

1975, the total cultivated land in all three was between the range of 40,000 to 50,000 ha. Under the government's land grant scheme, quite a large number of firms, domestic and foreign, were apportioned land, but the same scheme was not applicable to the Afars despite their repeated application for land. Moreover, the government has also established the Awash National Park, and the Awash station on an area of 80,000 ha. All these schemes have not only managed to displace 20,000 Afars, but also have denied them access to their best grazing pastures for different periods: dry season and wet season.[43] As a consequence of this, overgrazing became a significant problem, and when this was coupled by downhill expansionism from the east, the vulnerability of the Afars was much greater than any other sectors of the population. These elements together with the Afar's pastoral mode of appropriating the environment had led to environmental degradation. Such degradation in an environment which is already fragile is more likely to exhaust strategies. Their risk reducing. The Afar region has experienced a decline in rainfall since 1965, this has brought two things to their mode of existence. First, it has diminished the resource base of the pastoralists thereby inducing changes in the pattern of pastoral land-use. Second, a decline in rainfall has forced the pastoralists to become more dependent on market forces, thus compelling them to sell part of their livestock to command food to supplement their diet and other necessities. In the ensuing process, the pastoralists paved the way for the process of peasantization - thus allowing their pastoral mode of appropriation to be threatened. This meant, to pastoralists, an interrelated loss of land, livestock and labour. Without these elements, they were bound to be exposed to a variety of contingencies which could easily turn their state of affairs into famine. As a result, the loss encountered by pastoralists is much more substantial than others'. The table 3 below shows the severity of the disaster on Afar pastoralists:

TABLE 3

Population figures and ratios based on LMB aerial surveys

	Sept 72	Jan 73	May 73	Aug 74
Cattle	351 769	253 255	51 424	77 207
Camels	98 252	75 630	34 903	34 754
Sheep & Goats	586 041	653 906	240 387	277 128
Humans	112 614	70 074	46 771	64 136
Human/Cattle ratio	1:3.12	1:3.61	1:1.10	1:1.20
Human/Camel ratio	1:0.87	1:1.08	1:0.75	1:0.54
Human/Goats ratio	1:5.20	1:9.33	1:5.14	1:4.32

Humen per km^2	3.9	2.4	1.6	2.2

Area surveyed was 29 100 km^2

Source: Grimsdell (1978)

Turning now to the market forces, during the onset of famine it was evident that there was a collapse in the value of the purchasing power in the regions most affected by the famine and similarly there was a collapse in the value of livestock. To explain the reasons for this collapse, we need to see the nature of the markets in the regions, and the difficulties of access to the markets vis-à-vis the pastoralists. As we have noted earlier, a decline in rainfall has over the years, induced more dependency, amongst pastoralists, on market forces to command food and other necessities. Correspondingly, there has been a decline in prices for livestock up to the time when the famine has reached its peak, and a very sharp decline during the peak period. The sharp decline had to do with the decrease in the availability of food in the region, since the grain producers themselves suffered from the decline in production. Therefore, to exchange grain with livestock entails more loss to the value of the livestock. The pattern of surplus extraction was such that, whatever grain was available in the region would be moved out by the landlords and their proxies out of the region to urban markets. Consequently, there was a scarcity of food grain in the region. There was indeed evidence that food was moving out of the region. For instance, at a meeting in Addis Ababa on June 3, 1974 it was revealed by EPID representatives that despite a mounted effort by authorities to halt the movement of grain undertaken by landlords and their proxies, the flow of grain had continued.[43] Thus, such flow had created scarcity of food grain in the affected regions. An attempt by pastoralists to exchange livestock for food was a complete fiasco. And due to an increasing demand for food, naturally the prices went up, hence neither the pastoralists nor the small cultivators had strong purchasing power to command food. The situation was even more unfavourable to pastoralists in that their access to the market was constrained by other important considerations indigenous to their mode of co-existence with their neighbours.

The major market outlet for Afars had traditionally been Hara, a center in Yeju awraja (district) and with minor outlets on Assab-Bati-Dessie road on the north and Addis-Shashemene road. The latter two had been used by Afar for selling charcoal, as a supplementary income, to tourists and merchants who pass through the area. But this was curtailed because the labour requirement for this production was deployed elsewhere. And as

a survival strategy, often the Afar in times of crisis deploy the labour force to Awash settlement area to work in the farms. This enables them to earn some money rather than through selling charcoal; and reduces the number of people being fed in the drought affected areas. Hence, the major market outlet was Hara. Here, however, due to the traditional conflict between the Afar and the Oromo agro-pastoralists in the north stemming from competition of resources, the Afar feel reluctant to venture into the market[44]. Often, it was either the Afar women or intermediaries such as the Harsu whom the Oromos and Afars found difficult to classify their clan origin who were agle to go the market. For an Afar would risk his life by going to the market. Consequently the Afar either stayed with their livestock in their rangeland or went to the market with the attendant risk or simply went begging on the highways.

Moreover, in view of the relative demand for an oxen prompted by greedy landlords and merchants, what an Afar could have sold, amongst his stock, was an oxen and a small stock consisting of sheep and goats. But this relative demand was met by the Oromo agro-pastoralists and the highland sedentary agriculturalists, whom they were not only close to the market but also had acute need for grain. This has foreclosed the chances an Afar had for selling his livestock in order to buy some food. From the point of view of the Afar survival strategy, goats were earmarked not only for their endurance through drought and their ability to provide milk and to recover their weight immediately, but also they are easy to bring to the market for sale. But in view of the cultural preference people had for sheep rather than goats, there was very little demand for goats. If there was one, it was easily met by the agro-pastoralists and sedentary agriculturalists who had very little need for goats and would prefer selling them rather than their indispensable oxen. The real choice which the Afar pastoralists had was to sell their thorough bred *sanga* at a considerable loss and there was a sufficient market demand for them. The pastoralists had to hang on to their other livestock especially camels and cows. With respect to camels, there was neither a sufficient demand for them nor were the pastoralist willing to sell them for various survival strategic reasons among which was the difficulty in rebuilding a herd of camels. They also wanted to hold on to their cows, because a) they give more milk as compared to *zebu* type cows of the highlanders, and b) the prices for them during the drought period was between E$ 40 - 60, as compared to pre-drought prices of E$ 200. As a result, the livestock of the pastoralists had to perish alongside with them.[45]

For agriculturalists, the choices were dictated by the landlords

and other profiteers from this tragedy. Their option was to sell sheep, goats, cows and to try to hang on to their oxen in the hope that the rainfall will return and they will resume farming. However, it was the oxen which was preferred by the profiteers for they saw the possibility of making profits by leasing a pair of oxen to tenants, especially in view of the fact that there was more land available since many famine victims had sold their land. It was, therefore, a reasonable economic choice for landlords to acquire oxen, but with a price, for instance in Yeju district, of E$ 15.[46] The biggest and certainly the easiest option opened to the victims was to sell land. According to a survey made by Ethiopian Nutritional Institute (ENI), it was revealed that a substantial number of the sheltered population had either sold the land or traded it with food. The figure was 60% but in Yeju district, the area adjacent to Afar areas, the figure for those who sold their land was 26% and for those who had mortgaged their land was 10%. And the number of affected population in this region was 25%. They sold 67% of their oxen and 28% of their oxen and 90% of their cows have died - and they were left with 5% of their total livestock.[47]

In view of this lopsided market transaction, and a blatant act of profiteering by landlords and their associates at the expense of the misery of the starving people, Haile Selassie has subsequently issued the following decree after visiting the affected region in November, 1973.

> "To those of you who have not mortgaged your lands in 1964 and 1965 (G.C. 71-72 and 72-73) due to the drought and have now no lands to plough, We have ordered that instead of being asked to make payments at once, you shall pay your debts until the end of 1968 (G.C. 75-76) and you should return to your lands after your creditors have collected this year's harvest. And those of you who held lands on mortgage during these years, you should be aware that your fellow men mortgaged their lands under reduced circumstances and you should return the lands you hold to the owner without waiting for the redemption period or for the immediate settlement of your claims and you shall receive your money until the end of 1968 (G.C.75-76).
>
> ... Those of you who were forced to sell your lands, between 1964 (G.C. 71-72) and the effective date hereof, due to the drought at nominal prices and have lost your lands you were living on and have no other enough lands, you should return to your lands now against payment with legal interest of the money you received until the end of 1968 (G.C 75-76). We have hereby ordered the buyer to collect his harvest and remove

any buildings, if any, and vacate such lands".[48]

This was indeed an interesting proclamation in three ways: a) it vindicates the view that the problem in Wollo was not due to a decline in food availability, but rather the evidence seems to suggest that it has to do with distribution of resources. Clearly there were people with surplus food in the region, and used this as a means to accumulate wealth in the form of land and livestock: The rest of it was moved out of the region. The evidence for that view was further strengthened when it was revealed at a meeting in Addis on June 3, 1974 that 1973 was clearly a *bumper harvest* for Wollo as a whole, but the problem was distributing this to the most vulnerable groups and adequate transportation needed to reach them. b) Knowing full well that it neither has the necessary machineries to reinforce the proclamation nor the support of the landlord class - the state pretended to show a benevolent attitude towards the starving population. It was a well known fact that many landlords in rural Ethiopia, were tyrants - and had created 'states' within a state. Hence, hardly any proclamation would have forced them to do things contrary to their interests; and this, of course, was no secret to the state. As expected, the landlords simply ignored the proclamation. C).Despite the fact that the pastoralists had suffered the most, and were the first to be seen begging for food as early as 1970, when the famine was first detected in areas of Raya-Azebo and Wodjirat of Tigrai provinces - the proclamation made no mention of the plight of the pastoralists.

This complete silence is understandable; for after all it was the state itself which had brought about this misery by its massive alienation of the pastoralists' land; and except for tax purposes they were not considered Ethiopians. This view was also shared by many highlanders in that they regarded the lowlands of Ethiopia as *darager*, literally meaning a country's border. They neither ventured to go there, except out of economic desperation, for fear of malaria and other diseases - and would no doubt have perished; nor had accepted the lowlanders as their fellow countrymen. The state has encouraged this view through various means. Its interest is only in siphoning the resources from these regions without any effort to reinvest in them. On occasion, however, these areas served a different purpose. For example, to send someone to the lowlands was considered as a form of punishment, almost regarded as a moral equivalent of capital punishment. For highlander sent to the lowlands immediately becomes a victim of many diseases which could lead to his death. Incidentally, the Italians used a similar technique on Eritreans as a form of punishment.[49] Anyhow, the highlanders would not

have dared to encroach the Afar areas had it not been for malaria eradication and control program launched by the state in the Awash Basin. This was, of course, not to be seen as an encouragement by the state to venture into the lowlands, even though it turned out to be the case, but it did it primarily for its own commercial exploitation of the region.

All in all, it seems clear that the people most affected by the famine of 1970-75 were the ones who inhabited the areas which have suffered the most from environmental degradation and over cultivation. The agriculturalists who were forced to come to the areas created enormous degradation through population pressure, thereby undermining the support base of their own production system and that of the pastoralists. Their downslope movement from the highland coupled with the state's vicious encroachment had virtually diminished the resources of the pastoralists, changed their pattern of land-use, and exhausted their strategies of risk reduction. The fierce competition for resources in the region forced the pastoralists to change their adoptive strategies in order to cope with the dwindling and ever fragile pasture. As a result, the pastoral mode of appropriation of the environment was creating more ecological degradation than they were willing to accept. Their neighbours, the Oromo agro-pastoralists, also had to go through similar fate. Their multiple activity had, on the one hand contributed to the shrinkage of the rangelands, and on the other hand it has, forced them to cultivate with traditional technology what once had been pasture, thus creating a non-regenerative total pattern of resource exploitation. This is not to suggest that the crisis of 1970-75 is explainable solely in terms of ecological phenomenon. No doubt this has played a role in reducing the affected population's survival base and in rendering their coping mechanisms environmentally hazardous. But such consequences were brought about by socio-economic and political forces aimed at incorporating the pastoral mode of production into a national and global capitalistic economy. Therefore, it was not surprising that the people who had suffered the most were the ones who were targeted for this objective.

5.3. Entitlement Explanation of the Famine 1970-75

It was evident that the Famine of 1970-75 was not brought about by a decline in food availability in Wollo, much less in Ethiopia. Indeed, there was enough food to go around to the starving people, but the distribution and circulation were constrained, in part, by market mechanisms controlled by well-to-do landlords and merchant-traders, and partly by a neglected

rural transport infrastructure. As it turned out the question of food crisis became a question of access, i e.,.who had access qualification to the food available?.

We have argued that those segments of the population who were 'forced' to plant their own seeds of destruction by the socio-economic and political arrangements of the society were rendered to be the victims of the famine. Not only were these victims with least security system either in the form of disposable assets or food grain reserve, but even when they were in possession of disposable assets the neglected market system simply failed them. They stood helpless and in some cases they perished together with their assets. Since the famine was a revelation of a cumulative process of resource mismanagement, the neglect of rural Ethiopia and oppressive appropriation of surplus, the state not only has failed to respond to the needy but also wanted to hush up this embarrassment.

In his interesting analysis of the 1970-75 famine, Sen has argued that the famine was due to entitlement failure. The reason why some people were rendered victims of the famine has to do with their inability to command a requisite amount of food. This inability is anchored in the concept of ownership or entitlement. Some people secure food either by cultivating the land, in which case they have direct entitlement to food, or by disposing whatever they got and exchanging some food with it, in which case they secure food through exchange entitlement. Consequently, the crisis which befell on agriculturalists stemmed from a failure in direct entitlement, whereas in the case of pastoralists it was due to a failure in exchange entitlement. "The entitlement decline here (agriculturalists) took the form of *direct* entitlement failure ... without involving the market in the immediate context. The typical output of foodgrains - was severely reduced and this led to starvation in a direct way".[50] The reason for the travails of the pastoralists has to do with a loss of their livestock exchange vis-à-vis food grain. "Thus an endowment failure (animal as stocks), a direct entitlement failure (animals as food) and an exchange entitlement failure (grains commanded by selling animals) can all be seen in the Harerghe famine.... The Afar community of herdsmen in Wollo had suffered similarly, in 1973, but their distress was further increased by another entitlement shift, viz. the loss of some of their best grazing grounds in the Awash valley due to expansion of commercial agriculture".[51]

Sen calls the Wollo famine, a 'slump' famine due to the reason that the crisis was not accompanied by a rise in prices for food grains in the local markets such as Dessie's. Therefore, a direct food entitlement failure can happen with or without a rise in

market prices. Moreover, "what prevented the Wollo population from having enough food to eat was not the transport difficulty of getting food into Wollo from the rest of Ethiopia, but the inability of the Wollo population to command food through the market entitlement system. The direct entitlement failure applies directly to the farmer - both tenant and rist-owners - and indirectly to farm servants, dependents and others evicted by farmers, and also to those elsewhere the demand for whose products went down sharply as a result of the agricultural population's inability to buy urban goods and services".[52] Sen does not think that transport difficulty has contributed to the failure in entitlement because a) there were highways running through Wollo, b) there were confirmed reports of food moving *out* of Wollo, suggesting that something other than food availability would have also fallen in Wollo, and c) the price of food was hardly higher during the famine year than in preceeding years.

There are, however, difficulties involved in accepting Sen's explanation of the famine of 1970-75. Some of these difficulties had to do with what *actually* happened, and others had to do with the theoretical underpinings of the explanation itself. There was no denying, and indeed as we have shown above, that food was moving *out* of Wollo, but this hardly counts as evidence that there was no transportation difficulty in Wollo. Many landlords in the region had waited with reserve food grain as much as they could in anticipation of rising prices, but this did not happen in and around famine areas. And Sen was quite right in asserting that prices did not rise sharply in the regions. Consequently, together with rural grain merchants, the landlords had to move food out of the region to Addis and Asmara, for these were places where major grain dealers with enormous storage capacity were located, and where prices are *always* high as compared to rural areas. This movement of food was, first of all, not a substantial amount since production in Wollo has declined - and therefore landlords could not have possibly extracted much surplus. Secondly, in the traditional pattern of landlord's practice of surplus extraction - whatever acquired beyond calculated need to the family was always brought to the markets. Consequently, it was not only difficult for many landlords to accumulate surplus grain over the years, but was also risky and economically enviable for them to do so in view of the fact that the market prices were erratic and unpredictable from one season or one year to another. For instance, the year to year price fluctuations can be shown in the following sample.

Between 1971 and 1972 the average wholesale prices in Addis Ababa fell by 43% for horse beans, 45% for maize, 18% for brown

teff, 29% for white wheat, and 21% for rape seeds. By contrast, prices increased between 1972 and 1973 by 60% for horse beans, 59% for maize, 18% for brown teff, 13% for white wheat, and 100% for rape seeds.[53] Hence, the landlords and their associates knew very well that it was economically suicidal for them to hold on to their grains beyond a reasonable time. Thirdly, due to their growing conspicuous consumption of luxury goods and other items, they had enormous financial obligations which they must have to meet, hence the necessity and urgency to get rid of their grains. Fourthly, rumours were spreading at the time that landlords were sitting on their private food grains.[54] Now, apart from the fact that this had almost curtailed food aid from reaching the country, it was also an invitation to looting. And this would naturally have cost the loss of their grain, but also even their lives. Hence, it was in their best interest to move the food out of the region safely, and this safety was readily available because the main highways run through the major markets in Wollo. Moreover, places where high prices and assured grain reserves were awaiting were within reach.

The highways, it should be noted, were merely extensions of Addis and Asmara to facilitate the market demand in these big centers and were not designed with a view towards integrating rural communities. Consequently, there was very little linkage between spread out rural communities in Wollo and these highways. For instance, a farmer in Hara, Yeju district had to walk 10 kms to reach the main Asmara-Addis highway.[55] Hence, if any food is to be transported to these rural communities - not only the movement of food towards the affected areas would have to be a sustained and substantial food operation, but also indispensable to reach these communities. Hence in reality there was no connection between the presence of major highways and food being transported to affected regions. Consequently, it is clear that Sen has either underestimated the difficulty posed by transportation or assumed much hope in the efficiency of the administration or both. In his report to the government dated May 4, 1974, Paulos Abraham claimed that, "partly because of the indifference of the Government to the plight of its people, partly because of the proliferation of ill-functioning committees and the absence of an effective organizational structure coupled with the impotence of the Ethiopian bureaucracy to emergency situations, the famine is estimated to have claimed the lives of some 50,000 to 250,000 people in Wollo alone.[56]

Clearly, there were enormous transportation and logistical problems in reaching those segments of the population who were affected by the famine, i.e. those whose entitlements have failed.

The question, therefore, should be: why did their entitlements fail? It is here where we run into theoretical difficulties with Sen's account of the famine. It seems evident that if entitlement failure is the reason for why people are starving, then it is reasonable to ask three questions: 1) What does the concept of entitlement really amount to, i.e. what does it mean? 2) If entitlement failure is invoked as a causal explanation, then we want to know whose entitlement we are talking about, and whether or not these people under discussion had any entitlement to begin with? 3) If they had entitlement, then why did it fail?

The virtue of Sen's analysis of the famine is the shift in emphasis from food availability decline to that of entitlement failure. The focus of attention in understanding the causal mechanisms of famine is now on the demand side of the picture, rather than on the supply side; very reminiscent of a Gestalt experiment where our perception of the picture changes: one moment the picture was a rabbit, another moment we see it as a duck. No doubt food availability decline approach to famine conceals more than what it reveals. It does not tell us to whom it has declined, and why? And why was not the destitution or calamity shared equally between all members of agricultural and pastoral societies? Entitlement approach, therefore, attempts to shed light on these and other related questions. However, we ought to understand the concept of entitlement itself, since it is so vital to Sen in exploring the outbursts of famine. For this we turn to Sen's own account:

> "The entitlement approach sees starvation as arising from *failure* on the part or groups of people to establish a certain degree of command over a requisite amount of food".[57] (My emphasis)

What does the term 'failure' amount to? How should we take it to mean? Consider the following question: 'Why did Joe Doe fail to go to the movie?' Many plausible answers could be given, among which the following statements could be taken as representative samples:

(1) Joe Doe did not like the movie house.
(2) Joe Doe was afraid to go alone.
(3) Joe Doe was underage.
(4) Joe Doe's father told him not to go.
(5) Joe Doe did not have any money.

The reason as expressed in (1) for Joe Doe's failure to go to the

movie house seems to imply that he *chose* not to go to the movie. But is the element of choice present in the rest of the statements? Well, in the second case, the answer seems to be yes and no. We could view fear as being self-induced, i.e. we allow it to influence our decision. In this case, an element of choice is present. On the other hand, it also refers to the element of *ability*. As for instance, I want to drive to the next town but the weather appears not to be suited. If I drive, it is likely that it might start to snow and the road will get slippery and I don't have snow tires. Here my decision to drive or not to drive is being influenced by my *inability* to determine an accurate picture of the weather condition of the road ahead of me. Clearly, statements (3), (4) and (5) refer to the element of ability, hence choice has virtually no role. Other things being equal, there was nothing Joe Doe could do about his age or lack of money, or his father's order. Notice, however, that statements (3) and (4) differ from (1) and partly (2) in that institutional factors such as order and age restriction have *direct* bearing on Joe Doe's failure to go to the movie. Moreover, statement (5) differs from the rest in that Joe Doe's failure to go to the movie depended on *possession*. Therefore, we are now in a position to make the following observations: a) A failure to do x depends either on one's own *choice* or on one's own *ability*. b) One's own ability is contingent upon either *possession* or *institutional* elements.

Turning now to Sen, he maintains that the failure to command a requisite amount of food can be due to choice or lack of ability.[58] However, the entitlement approach concentrates solidly on the element of ability. Obviously one wonders why the entitlement approach ignores choice, since as we have observed in a statement like (3), a borderline case where choice and ability seem to coincide. This exclusion stemmed from Sen's effort to dispel the belief that people died of starvation due to their unwillingness to change food habits. "And there is indeed no evidence whatsoever of people starving because of unwillingness to change food habits".[59] Indeed the evidence gathered from the incidents which took place during historic famines, such as The Great Famine 1988-92 in Ethiopia lend support to the view that people ate almost anything when they were under the grip of starvation. Notice however that this was so *after* people have been under firm grips of starvation and when they have realized of no possibility whatsoever of securing food. It does not follow that cultural, religious and other traits do not contribute to the onset of starvation. What I am suggesting is this: we need to make a distinction between what people *choose to do* during or after the event has taken place, and what people *choose not to* do prior to the event. Clearly in the former, choice has no place

whatsoever and it is a matter of survival, hence starving people could eat come what may. In the latter case, however, we find both the elements of choice and ability present. For instance, it is not uncommon in Ethiopia for many people to avoid eating certain food, or cultivate on certain days on either cultural or religious grounds. It can be argued that failing to eat this food for these reasons at a time when a modest food deficit is observed could contribute to their vulnerability when a major onset of famine occurs. Similarly, failing to cultivate on a religious holiday could turn out to be critical to the outcome of production. And indeed in Ethiopia such holidays are in abundance. Hence, failing to eat certain food or to cultivate on certain days is influenced by a fear that grave consequences might occur. And this fear could either be self-induced, i.e., we allow it to influence our decision, hence, an element of choice is present; or alternatively, this fear might have been induced by institutional factors such as religion, culture and the like, suggesting that the circumstance is beyond one's own ability. Therefore, it is not entirely clear why Sen's entitlement approach should ignore cases which could contribute to the emergence of famine.

At any rate, the entitlement approach concentrates on the element of *ability*. And we are told that "our ability to command food *depends* on what we own and what we can get by exchanging what we own".[60] (Emphasis added) Clearly, 'what we own' and 'what we can get by exchanging' could not be none other than commodity or means of production or labour power. These include land, livestock, grains, knowledge, skill etc. Hence, in reality our ability to command food depends on *possession*. This, however, as we have noted with regard to statement (5), is just one of the components influencing our ability, and the other, as we have observed in statements (3) and (4), was *institutional* elements. If we accept Sen's analysis of 'ability', then obviously the second component has no role to play - and therefore would have to be ignored. But this would rather be pre-emptory. Hence, we need to follow closely Sen's analysis of *possession* itself. Sen suggests that what a person can command in a given society is constrained by a collection of relationships covering the legal, political system, the economic, as well as social and cultural influences.[61] It is interesting to note here that the element of 'culture' comes in here, whereas earlier we were told, vis-á-vis the discussion of choice and ability, to ignore it. At any rate, the suggestion here is clear: *what* one commands is constrained by *institutional* elements. In so far as what we command is by exchanging what others own with what we own, and since what we own and what we can get by exchanging are *possessions*, it follows that possessions are governed by *institutional* elements.

It is , therefore, evident that Sen does not want to disassociate the two, and hence both elements figure in prominently in the concept of 'ability'. But is there a necessary connection between 'possession' and 'institutional' arrangements? Could we say that whenever one occurs the other *must* be present? Insofar as possession is governed by institutional arrangements, Sen would have to say that whenever the former element occurs, then the latter element must be present. Put differently, 'possession', for Sen, implies 'institutional' arrangements - but this implication is a one way implication, and therefore, the latter does not necessarily imply the other. To be sure, 'ability' is derived from 'possession'. When we own something, then we could be able to command something else by exchanging it, or what we own is what we need, then we use it and therefore, no need for an exchange. Clearly, primacy is given, on Sen's account, to 'possession' over and above institutional arrangements.

However, our analysis of type of statements suggests that a) the connection between 'possession' and 'institutional' arrangements is one of contingency, rather than necessity. In other words, it is possible for one element to occur without being accompanied by the other; and b) 'ability' is also derivable from 'institutional' arrangements without entailing 'possession'. Consider again our statement 'Joe Doe was under-age'. The reason why Joe failed to go to the movie was because he was under-age; and, other things being equal, there was nothing he could do to change this predicament. Hence, a question of choice is ruled out of court. This suggests that institutional arrangements could provide a license or the ability to do x; and conversely, they could deny this ability. Moreover, the statement raises no question of 'possession' in the sense in which we have used the term so far. Therefore, we have an instance whereby our ability to do x depends on institutional arrangements without entailing the element of 'possession'; hence the connection between them is a contingent one. In fact, we can think of all sorts of cases in which the institutional arrangements are present without the other being present. For instance, religious and cultural institutions do not necessarily presuppose the question of possession. How about the other way around. History suggests that before men make institutions, their 'labour' was their first possession If this is accepted, then we can conclude that the connection between the two is a contingent but not a necessary one. But more importantly, we have established that 'ability' depends not only on 'possession' but also, and equally on 'institutional' arrangements. The implication of this claim on our subject at hand is this: Sen maintains that our ability to command a requisite amount of food *depends* on what we own and what

we can get by exchanging what we own, viz. possession; subject to institutional constraints. This is indeed what he meant by 'entitlement approach'. However, it seems clear that our ability to command a requisite amount of food *depends* on institutional arrangements, without entailing possession. This too can be viewed as 'entitlement approach'. Therefore, we have *two* senses of 'entitlement'. One which involves possession, call it Entitlement$_1$, and the other which involves institutional arrangement, call it Entitlement$_2$. Moreover, if famine occurs due to entitlement failure, that failure could either be attributed to Entitlement$_1$, or Entitlement$_2$ or both. To wit, famine could occur due to Entitlement$_2$ failure.

Let us turn now to the famine of 1970-75 in Ethiopia. Our discussion thus far assumes that people have certain entitlement. But do they? Well, this question in a way is vague, so we need to be more specific and ask: who has entitlement to what and who does not in the Ethiopian context? In principle, it is alleged that everyone has Entitlement$_1$ and Entitlement$_2$. It is important to bear in mind that Sen's analysis of the famine is strictly on the basis of Entitlement$_1$. The question appears to be who has Entitlement$_1$ in reality, in the Ethiopian context. We have noted in previous chapter that in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, no one except the state has 'real' ownership right to land, in *exclusive* sense of ownership. Others, even though they, at times, sell their land and giving the aura of 'real' ownership, nonetheless they had only 'nominal' ownership right. In fact, this label is not even appropriate when we are talking about those cultivatiors under tenancy. But it is applied to those *rist, gult, maderia, mengest* and *semon* land owner. Turning now to Sen, he has suggested that famine occurs due to some people's inability to command a requisite amount of food either through direct entitlement, or exchange entitlement. On this view, one's own ability to command food is derivable from elements of possession. This is where, among other places, scepticism arises. Consider the following for example: my ability to drive a car depends at least on four factors. First, it depends on the availability of a car, say in the country. Second, it depends on whether or not a car is available to me, and not just whether cars are available in the country. For cars could be available in the country, but may not be available in my region or locality. Third, it depends on whether or not I have the qualification or a license to drive a car. Fourth, it depends on whether I have the resources to buy one. Now, the first element refers merely to availability of cars, the second refers to whether or not I have access to the market, and the third refers to a right to drive a car, and the fourth one refers

to the resources that I have. Therefore, we can say that one's ability to drive a car depends on a) availability, b) market access, c) institutional approval and d) possession.

Similarly, it can be argued that the ability to command food depends on these elements. On Sen's view, we have seen that only possession is a crucial element, and we have agreed with him that the element of 'availability' does not tell us much. But where we disagree with him is, however, on the issues of 'market access' and 'institutional' considerations. It appears to us that Sen underestimates the role these forces play in constraining one's own ability to command food. We have argued above that ones own ability to do x is contingent upon, at times, on institutional factors as demonstrated by the difference between the statement 'Joe is under-age', therefore, he is unable to go to the movie; and 'Joe did not have any money' as a reason why he could not go to a movie. The former statement entails that Joe's ability is constrained by institutional arrangements, hence he is not in a position to do something with it. The latter entails that Joe's ability is constrained by a lack of possession, in this case money, hence other things being equal, there is nothing he could do about it. In both cases, however, possibilities are open to remove these constraints. But the concern here is not with these possibilities, albeit important, rather with what Joe actually does or does not.

What we need to show is that whether simlar considerations hold true with respect to one's ability to command food. On Sen's analysis, we noted that owning land is not a direct-endownment or entitlement but an exchange-entitlement, since owning land does not bring one the necessary food, but has to be exchanged before one can command food. In principle, all who had 'nominal' right to land did not have land as an exchange entitlement, and needless to mention tenants. In principle again, only the state had land as an exchange entitlement. In practice, however, many landlords, *rist* owners have used land as exchange-entitlement, and a survey conducted among the sheltered population during the famine reveals that many people had either sold their land or traded it for food! However, what one gets *from* the land constitutes a direct-entitlement$_1$. For small cultivators, rist owners and tenants alike, the grain which they themselves produce constitutes a direct entitlement$_1$. Livestocks are direct entitlements (when consumed as food) for those who happen to own one. This applies to small cultivators, pastoralists and landlords. Livestocks could also be considered as exchange-entitlements, for the same group and for others who are in possession of livestocks, when exchanged for food. For rural service providers, servants and other professionals, their labour

power is an exchange entitlement in that it is through selling their labour power that they could be able to command food. Having said that, it could be maintained that for many Ethiopian small cultivators, particularly those who were tenant cultivators and land-hungry people access right to land was a condition for the possibility of direct and exchange entitlement. Similarly, for pastoralists access to resources from the land was a condition for the possibility of direct and exchange entitlements.

As we noted above, land is an exchange entitlement$_1$, for it would have to be traded, or cultivated before one gets anything out of if. Owning land assures one *de facto* exchange entitlement$_1$, but could also be a precondition to direct entitlement. After all, a small cultivator needs land to produce food grains, and the pastoralist needs the land or at least the resources from it to maintain his livestocks. Consequently, their ability to command a requisite amount of food depends partly on what they have at their disposal, and partly on a guaranteed access to possessing something. This access right would be a precondition to acquiring a commodity and to dispensing the commodity when deemed necessary.

A guaranteed access to commodities is not the same thing as owning commodities. Nor is it an entitlement in the sense of (entitlement$_1$), for one could not command commodities with it. However, it is a necessary condition to possess something. Hence, one's own ability to acquire something depends on it. Possession of a commodity, say cash, does not guarantee one of access to food but provides one with the ability to command food. For food itself would have to be *accessable* to people. And not only accessible in general, but also accessible with ease to one who is in need of it.

The foregoing discussion suggests that our ability to command food depends not only on possesson, but first and foremost, on institutional conditions which could even be utilized to explain how possessions are secured. Consequently, it can be suggested that the ability to command food is also derivable from institutional conditions. Access right to food and other commodities is secured when institutional conditions permit one to do so. Hence, the issue should not be seen as simply whether or not some people have the ability to command food, but whether or not these people have the institutional license and arrangements to allow them to secure this ability. Moreover, one of the components of institutional conditions is a marketing system designed to facilitate the exercise of one's own ability. Thus, in the context of Ethiopia, the markets were fragmentaed and designed primarily to secure the flow of resources from rural

areas to urban centers. Therefore, it was difficult for a peasant even under normal conditions to secure the necessary commodities or to dispense with what he has at a local level. The conditions worsens in times of crisis where one is not in good health to travel a long distance to reach a local market, and when one is anxious to dispose what one has. It was not because of the collapse of income or purchasing power of Wollo's population to attract food from elsewhere that they were ravaged by destitution, but by the failure of the market to provide services to them. No doubt the 'pull factor' was there, and even no less than many other regions in Ethiopia, but nevertheless the response or 'push factor' was not there. It could not be there because it was constrained by institutional considerations.

It seems clear to me that even though Sen has rightly identified one of the crucial components on which our ability to command food depends, namely the possession aspect or entitlement$_1$, none the less, he has ignored the two other components, namely institutional and market components which were equally crucial, if not more. The failure of some people to command food could, therefore, depend on institutional and market components. In the context of Ethiopia, the question of institutional condition takes precedence over and above the issue of possession. Entitlement$_1$ failure in itself may be an immediate explanation of why some people experience famine; but this explanation is question-begging. For we still are interested to know why such a failure in entitlement$_1$ has occurred. For this we need to go beyond entitlement$_1$ failure; namely the institutional arrangements or entitlement$_2$ which have hindred some people's ability to secure food. It was this failure which, I believe, has cost the lives of thousands of Wollo's population.

Chapter 6: Famine under the Military Rule

In the preceding chapters we have argued that persistent ailments of the political economy of pre-revolutionary Ethiopia have contributed more to the emergence of famine than any other factors. These well entrenched ailments have prevailed through successive regimes. Despite numerous signs of crisis, repeated out-bursts of famine, and mass poverty, all the past regimes chose to ignore these problems responsible for mass destitution. Nor were they interested to alleviate the problem of human suffering. Following his predecessors, Haile Selassie chose to ignore those causal mechanisms responsible for the emergence of famine until they finally caught up with him. And when they did, they brought an end to his 45 years of iron-rule

A group of representatives from the various military units formed in 1974 what is known as the Armed Forces Coordinating Committe, or better known as the 'Derg'. Through its creeping coup d'état, the 'Derg' has assumed power, dissolved the constitution, the parliament, the Crown Council, the cabinet, the imperial court, arrested the Emperor and terminated the monarchial system. After it has formed the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), the Derg issued a series of radical measures with far-reaching implications, and designed to substantially alter the social relations of Ethiopia.

The Derg believed that those ailments embedded in the political economy of pre-revolutionary Ethiopia would disappear if measures were taken to alter the political economy itself.The strategy which it has adopted to meet those problems head-on was to usher in a new mode of social relations and to release the productive forces. The object of this chapter shall be to assess this strategy, and see to what extent this strategy has enabled the PMAC to tackle the problems responsible for the emergence of famine. *Prima facie* it is evident that the strategy has not paid-off, since another famine ravaged the country almost a decade after the Derg has assumed power. But this would be, however, rather pre-emptory. For we still need to know what has brought the recent famine, before a final verdict on the strategy can be issued.

Various conjectures have been put forward to explain the recent famine. Some people have maintained that the causes of this recent famine are entirely different from that of the previous famines, and therefore, the strategy adopted by the PMAC could not address itself to remedying these causes, nor could the strategy possibly anticipate them. Some people maintained that the causes of the recent famine are not any different from the previous ones; none the less the strategy cannot even in principle tackle them. Therefore, the famine was due to the failure of strategic option. And others maintained that the famine was brought about not because the strategy has

failed, but had to do with the ways by which the strategy was being implemented.

We shall, however, argue that the basic ailments embedded in the political economy of pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, responsible for the recurrence of famine have remained the same in post-revolutionary Ethiopia. Furthermore, the strategies adopted by the PMAC to do away with the previous pre-capitalist social relations and to replace them by a new one have in fact exacerbated the problems and thus rendering the rural masses to become even more vulnerable to famine. This does not mean that socialist oriented strategies are wrong or implemented wrongly. Rather, these strategies are incongruent with Ethiopian reality. The mistakes committed are not ones involving choice of strategies or ideology, but that of failing to read Ethiopian reality correctly from the grass root level. A correct reading of Ethiopian reality from this vantage point need not require ideological spectacles but one which presumes principles of practicability. But before we pursue this argument in some details, we need first to assess the PMAC's strategies, and in what ways they responded to, or failed to correct those ailments. Since the broad outlines of these strategies are expressed in various proclamations, we shall begin with Proclamation No. 31 of 1975.

6.1. New systems of Production and Circulation

Soon after it has terminated the ruling monarchial system, the PMAC has issued a proclamation intended to change the then existing agrarian relations. It is entitled, "Proclamation to Provide for the Public Ownership of Rural Lands" or simply referred to as Proclamation No. 31 of 1975. In the preamble, it is pointed out that "in countries like Ethiopia where the economy is agricultural, a person's right, honour, status and standard of living is determined by his relation to the land ... several thousand *gashas* (1 gasha=40 ha) of land have been grabbed from the masses by an insignificant number of feudal lords and their families as a result of which the Ethiopian masses have been forced to live under conditions of serfdom ... it is essential to fundamentally alter the existing agrarian relations so that the Ethiopian peasant masses which have paid so much in sweat as in blood to maintain an extravagant feudal class my be liberated from age-old feudal oppression, injustice, poverty, and disease, and in order to lay the basis upon which all Ethiopians may henceforth live in equality, freedom. and fraternity ... the development of Ethiopia of the future can be assured not by permitting the exploitation of the many by the few as is now the case, *but only by instituting basic change in agrarian relations which would lay the basis upon which, through work by cooperation, the development of one becomes the development of all*"[1] (emphasis added).

Consequently, the PMAC had ordered all rural lands to be the collective property of the Ethiopian people, private ownership by a person or organization of rural land to be abolished and no compensation to be offered to nationalised rural lands, forests and tree crops. In Proclamation No. 47 of 1975, it has also issued similar provisions concerning the nationalisation of urban lands. Proclamation No. 31 of 1975 also laid the basis for land distribution, transfer of land, expropriation of land by the government, and for the establishment of peasant associations (PAs). Any one, be it landlord or tenant, is entitled to a land-use right not exceeding 10 hectares, and the tiller shall have a possessory right over the land he cultivates. Hired labour, except under certain circumstances specified by the proclamation, is not permitted. Sale of land, exchange or mortgage are forbidden and the only means of transferring land is through 'inheritance'.[2] All large scale commercial and settlement farms became either state or co-operative farms.

In order to implement the provisions of the proclamation, it was deemed necessary to create peasant associations. In fact chapter 3 of the Proclamation calls for the establishment of peasant associations "to carry out the provisions of the proclamation" within a minimun of 800 hectares of land for a single association. However, no mention was made as to how many member households should each PA embrace. It was in this proclamation that the seeds for the development of the country on the basis of co-operatives, state-farms and settlement-farms were planted, and subsequent were articulated by Proclamation No. 71 of 1975, a "Proclamation to provide for the Organization and Consolidation of Peasant Associations".

The peasant associations (PAs) were entrusted with the tasks of land distribution, implementation of the Government's land-use directives, conservation and administration of public property within their jurisdiction, establishment of judicial tribunals to hear land disputes arising within their jurisdiction, establishment of service and producers'.cooperatives and to undertake *villagization* programmes. By 1986, the total number of PAs in Ethiopia has reached 20,157 with a total of 5,594,018 member households. Based on 1984 census which estimates the total Ethiopian population at 42,000,000 the PAs contain 66 per cent of the total 35,000,000 rural population.

It was from the PAs where co-operatives have evolved and thereby the latter laid the foundation for socialist agriculture. Proclamation No. 71 of 1975 specifically declared the necessity "to organise and develop co-operatives in all places and at all levels in order to lay down the foundation for socialist agriculture so that the peasanty may benefit from joint labour".[3]

The co-operatives to be organized and developed were (a) the Agricultural Service Co-operatives (ASCs) and (b) the Agricultural Producers' Co-operatives (APCs). The former

consists of no less than three and not more than ten peasant associations and is subjected to the supervision of the district PA. The ASCs are designed with a view towards promoting several economic objectives with political underpinings. Among them, procurement of crop expansion services, marketing the produce of members and in turn, supplying them with consumer goods, and providing loans at fair interest rates occupy a prominent place in the herarchy of objectives. On the political side, the ASCs are entrusted with the promotion of socialist philosophy, work-ethics and political education amongst the members to ultimately achieve a high degree of consciousness. By the end of June 1985, there were a total of 3964 service co-operatives throughout the country embracing a total number of 17 394 peasant associations. However, when Proclamation No. 138 of 1978, entitled "A Proclamation to Provide for the Establishment of Cooperative Societies" was issued calling for the registration of co-operatives to secure legal status by being subsumed under different ministries, there were only 1190 registered ASCs, providing services to 4.6 million peasant households. And since one of its primary objectives is to sell member's produce to the state owned Agricultural Marketing Cooperation (AMC), the ASCs provide nearly 70 per cent of the grains marketed by AMC.

The creation of ASCs has marked the beginning of a new system of marketing and distribution in Agricultural Marketing Cooperation (AMC) with a view towards centralizing the market as well as regulating price mechanisms. The AMC was introduced in effect, as a new mechanism to extract marketable surplus thereby terminating the old feudal mode of surplus extraction. It was also intended to discourage those grain merchants who were freely operating in the country making exorbitant profits. By nationalizing the market, the AMC buys the grain directly from ASCs and the peasants are required to sell a certain quota of their grain to ASCs with a fixed price. This curtailed the peasant's direct participation in the market, and perhaps has reduced his cost of transportation. In the urban centres, the AMC distributes goods through the Basic Commodities Service Corporation to urban *Kebeles*. And in rural areas, it distributes goods to the inhabitants through the ASCs.

The Producers' Co-operatives (APCs) are formed by peasant associations on *voluntary* basis. A policy statement issued later on in 1979 by the PMAC suggests that APCs can be formed within the jurisdiction of a peasant association by a minimun of three people voluntarily agreed to combine their instruments of production and put them under collective ownership. This Phase 1 collective ownership is dubbed as the *Malba*, and Phase 2 is where a group of *Malbas* transform themselves into; or by-passing the *Malba* phase members of the PA voluntarily decide on collective ownership of the means of production. This phase is dubbed as *Welba*. The third phase, which is the final and highest

stage is known as the *Weland* - here it is expected that more than two *Welbas* would transform themselves by creating a merger. Presently, there are no *Welands* for this requires the fulfilment of material and technical conditions stipulated by the transformation, but this has not been met. As of 1985, there were 1255 APCs that have reached the *Melba* phase and 601 APCs at *Welba* phase. It should be noted here that while ownership of land has been transfered to a collective use, other means of production have not. Consequently, these phases are designed with the goal of transforming these other means of production to a collective use.

The main objectives of the APCs could be characterized as economic and political. The main economic objective, as noted above, is the gradual transformation of ownership of the instruments of production from private to the collective following the phases of *Melba*, *Welba* and *Weland*. Presumably, this will complete the process of agrarian transformation in the country. The APCs were intended to safeguard the interests of the poor and middle peasants, and to administer payments on point system depending on the quantity and quality of work. The political aspect of their objectives is not any different from that of ASCs, namely to raise the consciousness of the members on principles of socialist ideology. The producers' cooperatives embrace 1.5 per cent of Ethiopia's rural population and 2.4 per cent of those who are members of peasant associations. Out of a total number of 1,012 producers' co-operatives established as of 1983, 125 obtained legal status. In 1983/84 the number of producers's co-operatives has reached 1,147, an increase of 11 per cent from the previous year, and in 1985 it has increased by 38 per cent from 1984.

According to the Ten Year Plan, it is expected that by the year 1993/94 the number of producers' co-operatives will reach 15.3 thousand and will have 4.1 million members. Presumably, these members will account for about 53 percent of the total farming population as compared to the 1.4 per cent in 1983/84.

Similarly, the acerage under cultivation will be vastly expanded by the end of the Ten Year Plan in 1993/94. In 1983/84 the farm area under producers' co-operatives was 88.7 thousand hectares. By 1985, it has increased by 41 percent to a total of 216,182 hectares of land. And in 1985, the arable land under producers' co-operatives has reached 491,321 hectares. The Ten Year Plan calls for accelerated expansion of farm areas under producers' co-operatives to reach 3.9 million hectares ceiling and to account for 52 percent of the total area under crop cultivation. The area under coffee will similarly be expanded from the presently 3.7 thousand hectares to 57.3 thousand hectares by 1993.

In terms of production performance, the producers' co-operatives accounted for 1 percent of the total crop production in

1982/83. However, it seems clear that in view of the government's commitment to the system of co-operativisation and to achieving growth with equity, the producers' co-operatives will have a pivotal role to play. Their growth, on the one land, requires the voluntary will of the small cultivators to joining producers' co-operatives, and it appears, on the other hand, that the government anticipates no difficulty with this. This system of production requires the expansion of new cultivable land, more mechanization, and more government's capital would need to be injected in the system. Presently, there is on the average 0.05 tractor for every producer co-operative, 66 oxen, and 1.3 horses.

The second important system of production introduced by the Proclamation No. 31 of 1975 was the formation of state farms. The proclamation reads as follows:

> "As of the effective date of this proclamation, any large scale farm shall be organized as a state or a co-operative farm or shall be allotted to tillers; provided that until the establishment of state or co-operative farms in any manner it deems fit and provided further that until the government decides upon the manner in which such farms are to be administered, the ex-owners of these farms shall have the responsibility to continue administering them".[4]

Prior to this proclamation, there were, in Ethiopia, large-scale farms developed mainly at the expense of pastoralists and tenants. Some of them were state sponsored settlement schemes, and others were state-owned farms. Awassa, for instance, was conceived as a government sponsored settlement scheme for retired soldiers. Others, such as Arba Minch and Abadir, were initially set up for foreign concessions. However, none of them appeared to be interested, and consequently the government got stuck with them. Large-scale commercial farms were located mainly in the southern provinces, particularly in Chilalo district of Arssi, and along the Ethio- Sudanese border in Northwest Ethiopia. Ironically, the expansion of large scale commercial farms were accelerated in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the south largely because the landlords were impressed by the success of what was then Chilalo Awraga Development Unit (CADU).

Between 1975-76, a great deal of effort was made to nationalize and to consolidate these dispersely located farms. The larger ones were converted into either state farms or co-operative farms, and the rest were distributed to tillers. Since these constitute major responsibility to the Ministry of Agriculture and Settlement, it was deemed necessary to establish another institution which could help reduce these burdens. Subsequently, the State Farms Development Authority has

emerged. This was noted in the proclamation issued on the 9th of May 1978. It is assumed by the government that state-farms would play decisive role in transforming the archaic system of production to a higher and more modernized form of production. For this reason, the bulk of agricultural budget went into state farms, and were also assigned manifold objectives. First, to terminate the country's dependency on capitalist markets. Second, to help the country achieve self-reliance. Third, to overcome food shortage and to facilitate the study, development and exploitation of new areas with immense agricultural potential. Fourth, to provide raw materials for the domestic industries and job opportunities to the rural labour force.

On May 2, 1979, the State Farms Development Authority has transformed itself into a Ministry of State Farms Development. The Agricultural Development Corporations which were established under the Legal Notice No. 28 of 1976 to co-ordinate the existing scattered commercial farm establishments throughout the various administrative regions were also subsumed under this new ministry. Due to a high degree of bureaucracy which was observed at the time, it was suggested that they should also detach themselves from the Ministry of Agriculture and be incorporated with the Ministry of State Farms Development.

During 1975-76, i.e., the initial period of state farm management, the total acreage allotted to state farms was 131,000 hectares. Since the smaller units had to be distributed to tenants and landless peasants, by 1976/77 the state farms were left with only 53,800 hectares. In fact, the period between 1975-77 can be characterized as the period of consolidation highlighted by enormous nerve-wrecking difficulties. Many of the people who were empowered to run the farms and to maintain the pre-land reform production level were with little or no knowledge of farm management. Moreover, the bureaucratic apparatus was neither well established nor were the farm managers authorized to make on the spot decisions when problems arise. While the managers had the responsibility of retaining the former farm labourers at high price, and continue to run the farms, a high degree of sabotage of farm equipments by remnant sympathizers of the old regime was present.

The state farms began to make some strides after they have been consolidated, rearranged and the internal as well as the external conflicts were subsided. Hence, in 1978/79 we began to witness an increase in acreage from the previous level reaching a total of 63,900 hectares. The accelerated increase continued progressively upward to 146,000 in 1979/80, to 238,000 in 1980/81, and to 245,000 hectares in 1981/82. By the end of 1984, 3.5 per cent or 223,200 ha of the total cultivated land in the country belonged to state farms. Notice however that there was indeed a decline in farm area in 1984, but in view of the

fact that some of the farms were operating at a loss and with the amount of capital needed to sustain them, it was necessary to abandon them. However, it is expected that this trend will be reversed. In fact, by the year 1993/94, it is estimated that the state farms' share of cultivated land will reach 502,200 hectares, almost an average annual increase of 8.5 per cent.

The contribution of state farms to crop production was 4.7 million quintals in 1983/84, and the productivity is expected to raise to 17.9 million quintals by the year 1993/94. And the increase is expected to come from the expansion of cultivable area by 8.5 per cent per annum and by increasing land productivity by 6 per cent. Although their contribution to-date is insignificant, say as compared to that of small peasant producer, none the less they soak-up much of the inputs and fertilizers. For instance, while the production output of coffee for a peasant farm is 400 kg/ha, for state farms it is 260 kgs/ha. On the other hand, peasants and producers' co-operatives secure 23 per cent of the share of chemical fertilizers and 4 per cent of the improved seeds, the state farms take 76 per cent of the fertilizers and 94 per cent of the seeds.

Although it is not a new scheme, none the less settlement farms are given considerable importance as a means of tackling the country's food problem. These farms are presently running at a loss, and are neither making any meaningful contribution to the country's aggregate production output nor are they self-sufficient. Initially, these farms were introduced to help resettle peasants affected by the famine in the north. However. it was subsequently expanded to sedentarize the pastoralists, unemployed persons and overcrowded farmers. For years to come, the major role of settlement farms is to achieve a complete sedentarization of pastoralists and to settle land-hungry peasants to a new location.

In 1975/76, there were 88 settlement centres accommodating 38,818 households. By 1982, there were 40,723 households in 112 settlement centers, under the plan of "regular settlements". During the same period, settlement farms accounted for 0.5 per cent of the total cultivated land or 37,300 hectares. By 1983, the acerage has increased by 8 percent to a total of 40.000 hectares. The yield for that period was 481,000 quintals of crops, or 1,200 kgs/ha, slightly less than one achieved by the small peasant producer who averages 1,300 kgs/ha. None the less, the government and other organizations have pumped enormous amount of capital into settlement farms. It is expected that crop production in settlement farms will reach 2.2 million quintals mark by the end of the Ten Year Plan. Similarly, the acreage will increase to 122 thousand hectares.

The three systems of production, namely producers co-operatives, state-farms and settlement farms together with the new system circulation and distribution under the rubric of

Agricultural Marketing Cooperation (AMC) were introduced to tackle the country's long standing ills. It is believed that changing the system of production along with the system of marketing will *ipso facto* remedy the traditional maladies of Ethiopian society: mass poverty, famine, uneven distribution of income, unemployment, etc. To this end, the government is pumping in the bulk of its agricultural expenditures to these production and circulation mechanisms. This effort would ultimately result in feasiling out the small peasant producer's farming activity and to absorb him into these state-directed, collectivized, and centrally planned modes of production. Despite the state's active support of these systems of production, the small peasant producer still continues to account for 94 percent of the country's total area of 16.6 million hectares under cultivation for over 90% of food crops production and 97% of the total coffee production. However, in view of the government's determined effort of co-operativisation and to expanding the state and settlement farms, nearly half of the land they presently cultivate will be taken over by the state, and their production output is also expected to decline by 35 per cent over the next few years.

6.2 Review of the Performance

It could hardly be denied that the Provisional Military Administrative Council had undertaken a very ambitions task to combat age-old mass poverty, food crisis and the attendant ills by altering the system and relations of production. The PMAC has conceived that those elements which we earlier have identified as root causes of famine are to be seen as parts of the overall oppressive social relations and the system of production. Hence, instead of attacking these problems directly, the PMAC turned to a campaign to do away with the previous agrarian framework by ushering in new modes of production as well as distribution.

These are indeed important strategies and had they been successful they could perhaps have averted the famine in the 1980s. It is now clear, however, that the strategies have not paid-off for some reason or another. To the extent that famine has occurred even under new and different mode of societal arrangements seem to arouse reasonable scepticism concerning the viability of these strategies to the nature of the ills under discussion. It should be noted that the issue here is not whether a socialist path of development is an appropriate solution to the country's long standing ills. Nor is it in fact an issue of whether what has been launched could properly be regarded as a socialist path of development. Rather regardless of the label these strategies are denoted by, the issue which we need to direct our

attention to is one of appropriateness of these strategies to the problems we have identified. And the evidence seem to indicate to a negative direction. Let there be no mistake that there was a necessary connection between the former agrarian relations and low productivity in the peasant sector. And low productivity often led to famine and starvation. Nor would any one deny that changing the agrarian relations is a *sine qua non* for any reasonable hope of improving the standard of living of the population. The success even in this direction depends on *how* the efforts to change agrarian relations are conducted. For a failure to insure an equitable and egalitarian form of land distribution may, in the end, be self-defeating. In which case a change in the agrarian relations becomes one of 'form' rather than 'content'. In fact, we shall argue later on that this is precisely what has happened in Ethiopia, despite the high flutent revolutionary prophecy.

It is reasonable to assume that the seeds of the new modes of production and distribution were planted in the land-reform proclamation of 1975. It is generally agreed that the land-reform measure introduced in 1975 was long overdue and applauded by many people as one of the most progressive democratic measures undertaken by the PMAC. It has also paved the way for the installation and implementation of the new systems of production and distribution we noted earlier. In so far as it is an indispensable component of the government's strategy directed against the traditional maladies of Ethiopian society, it is, therefore, of a paramount importance to delve into the discussion of the land-reform programme, albeit briefly.

It should be recalled that all along we have argued that 'real' ownership right to land in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia was reserved to the state. Whereas people with *Rist, Delsa* and *Gult* rights to land had only 'nominal' ownership right; tenants and those who were engaged in pastoral mode of appropriation had only 'access' right to land or resources from the land. There are indeed obvious differences in the hierarchy of rights considered here. Since the state had 'real' ownership right, it can evict people from their land arbitarily and regardless of whatever rights they have to land. It was at liberty to alienate land as well as resources from the people without due regard to their status as persons and without any compensatory measures. It has also granted land on the basis of its own criteria of preferential treatment. These elements suggest that *exclusive* ownership of land, access right to land and to resources from the land belonged to the state. But those with 'nominal' rights to land did not have exclusive ownership of land; rather, they were entitled to enjoy inclusive ownership of land with a proviso that dispensing it in the form of sale was constrained by kinship or community considerations. The prohibition to sell land under those tenurial arrangements was either stipulated on them by

the state in the form of implicit consent or was left as an intrinsic element of the arrangements and incorporated to them in the form of customary law. With respect to tenants and pastoralists, their 'access' right was not exchangeable altogether. In fact, on this scheme of rights these two groups had the most precarious ones.

Has the structure of rights to land been changed since the land-reform of 1975? It has been pointed out by several people that the land-reform has brought an end to landlordism and landlessness in Ethiopia. But this is far from being obvious, and indeed *prima facie* it appears that it had. However, a closer investigation into these phenomena reveals that the land-reform has eliminated these elements only in a trivial sense of landlordism and landlessness.

If we understand the term 'landlordism' as referring to a relationship between on the one hand to lords who not only had nominal right to land but also capable of leasing access right to others to cultivate the land in lieu of tribute, payment, and so on; and on the other those with possession of labour power but with a dire need for access right to land, and thereby to allow the former to extract surplus in this form of relationship; then clearly this *kind* of landlordism has been eliminated. Not because there are no lords today or no surplus is being extracted from cultivators - but only because lords as a *class* has been eliminated. But this does not entail that the former lords have not transformed themselves into another class, nor does it imply that another class in lieu of the former has not emerged.

If, on the other hand, landlordism is taken to mean a form of relationship between a certain entity acting as an overseer of the relationship on the one hand, and small cultivators with possession of either nominal or access right to land, on the other, then this kind of landlordism has not been eliminated by the land-reform. This implies that there has been this kind of landlordism under the *ancien regime*. This kind of landlordism is a substantitive form of landlordism and can be conceived of as 'state-landlordism'. What the land-reform has done and succeeded in doing was to do away with the trivial form of landlordism and legitimatized state-ladlordism under the rubric of 'public ownership' of land. Real ownership right to land, like in the old system, still belongs to the state. In fact, this claim is much more pronounced now than it was before.

It might be suggested that the land-reform proclamation asserts that "all rural lands shall be the collective property of the Ethiopian people". This may be construed as implying that real ownership right belongs to the public. It is not at all clear what this really amounts to. Consider the following:suppose I have built a house in a rural community, planted some eucalyptus and coffee trees around it. On the basis of the proclamation, I have ownership right to the house, but not to the rest, i. e., I can

sell the house, but not the trees. The land upon which the foundation of the house has rested *seems* to enjoy a mixed status. On the one hand, it seems that I can *use* it but not in the sense of using it as a disposable asset. But on the other hand, whoever is buying the house is also buying the land as well, since after all the foundation of the house is part of the house, and there would be no foundation without the land. Actually until recently when the PMAC has issued a proclamation concerning housing, it was by and large, not the houses which were sold nor brought but the land on which these houses rested on.[5] Of course, this is not a problem peculiar to Ethiopia, but rather points to the confusion built in the concept of 'public ownership' of land.

At any rate, it can be said that my right to the house involves both land-use right and a right to an exchange-use of the house. That simply means I can use the house or sell it. But strangely enough my trees do not enjoy a similar status as that of the house. For they are subjected to public ownership like the land, hence I have only a plant-use right but not an exchange-use right to them. But this, in a way, is odd. I may have planted them with a knowledge that I have no need for either fuel wood or coffee; but to use them as disposable assets and to derive income from them. What public ownership entails here is that the options open to me are either to use these plants for my own consumption or not to do anything about them. Even more strange, since others also have similar use-rights by virtue of their citizenship, they have equal entitlements to my trees. In principle, if there are people in my community who consume coffee, and have need for fuel wood, then they are at liberty to come straight to my compound and use these plants. I take it that this has not yet happened by and large, but this is what is being implied by the concept of 'public ownership', a concept which almost borders on anarchism. Hence, the concept of 'public ownership' is simply an abbreviated description of use-rights or service-rights people have by virtue of citizenship. But use rights and ownership rights are neither equivalent nor do they mean the same thing. Therefore, it is misleading to talk about public ownership when in fact we are referring to access right people have to property. Public ownership is neither public nor ownership: not public because only certain segments of the population which are being safeguarded, not ownership because people have only use-rights

Clearly, real ownership right to land, even if this is concealed by the veil of public ownership, still belongs to the state. The concept of public ownership invoked to explain some kind of identity of interest between the state and the people is, I shall maintain, an incoherent elliptical expression for access right people have to land. Moreover, under the present system the state has real ownership right to land. The rest of the population

does not even have the nominal right which was present under the old system but that right was even further reduced to access right to land. This arrangement is being legitimatized by the land reform measure empowering the state to evict, to grant access right and when necessary to expropriate land. This is state-landlordism, and this kind of landlordism is today stronger than ever.

It has also been suggested that the land-reform has brought an end to 'landlessness'. Again, this depends on what we mean by 'landlessness'. If landlessness means not owning land in an exclusive sense, then surely everyone under the imperial rule as well as under the present system was and is landless. For only the state had 'real' ownership right to land, and this has not changed presently. I take it that what landlessness signifies was the fact that there were able cultivators with the knowledge and potential to make a living out of farming but were denied of access right to land. A typical example of this case would be evicted tenants, who had no access to land. Strictly speaking, these could be regarded as landless peasants; and indeed the land-reform has brought an end to this problem. But the question still remains: how significant was this problem as compared to other problems in the country?

Various surveys taken prior to the revolution suggests that tenancy and not landlessness as a problem.[6] But right after the land-reform, the picture has changed dramatically. Realizing the benefits accrued to a landless peasant, many were claiming to be landless peasants. Hence, the survey taken after the revolution reduces the size of tenants but increases the ones regarded as landless peasants.[7] Some studies with field work underpinings conducted in the early 1980s seem to indicate that in areas under investigation the problem of landlessness was almost negligible.[8] Therefore, the magnitude of this problem is not entirely clear. But to the extent there were people, albeit few the reform has put an end to it. No matter how small his holding may be, a small cultivator in Ethiopia today has access right to land, not exceeding 10 hectares.

However, this access right to land is unevenly distributed both in terms of quantity and quality. This in turn has led to disparity in the level of productivity, income and consumption between small cultivators of different regions and of even the same peasant association (PA). The slogan 'land to the tiller' which had been a trademark of Ethiopian Student Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s was subsequently proved by the military government to be more difficult to implement than its egalitarian appeal. Apart from recognizing the need for a radical land-reform measure, the Student Movement has never really studied how the slogan is to be translated into practice. Like many proposals during those days, radicalism often took precedence over practicability. And those kinds of extreme

radicalism were later proven to be another face of idealism. The PMAC, following the advice of these old guards of the Student Movement, has annonnced the land-reform without any careful assessment of the implications involved. Like everything else which has been subsequently issued, no planning would enter into a proclamation but only political and ideological expediency. When students and the educated elite were sent on a campaign to explain the reform to the peasants and landlords alike the groups heard different versions of the same programme. This had to do with the fact that the campaigners were divided ideologically. The peasant were also divided among themselves. Some were suspicious of the purported reasons behind the reform, and others found it difficult to terminate the traditional ties between the landlords and the peasant. For these reasons, the land reform was resisted, especially in the north, for quite some time. And when it was accepted, and peasant associations were formed to implement the provisions of the land reform the crucial question became one of distribution. This takes the forms of quantity and quality.

The criteria of land distribution employed by peasant associations were 1) total area available under a PA, 2) the size of the family and c) the number of households in the PA. On the basis of these criteria, some districts were better-off than others. This implies that cultivators under a PA of a certain district could have better access to land than others. In some regions, the area available under peasant associations ranges between 500 to 2,100 hectares, which means that some PAs have a little over 500 hectares and others have more than 2,000 hectares. Since the number of member households in a given PA was not specified in the proclamation, the number varies from one PA to another regardless of the size of the land. Hence, in some cases one finds a congested PA with more members than the land could sufficiently accommodate. In others one finds a household with a plot of land exceeding 8 hectares. Even within the same PA members did not have equal access to land. Some have larger holdings than others; some have access to good quality of land than others. Still some member's holdings were located in certain climatic regions suitable to a certain kind of crop, others were not. Some holdings were unsuitable for cultivation or too prone to flooding.

The problem of uneven distribution still remains a problem posed by the land-reform. It was revealed in 1976, and a redistribution effort was under-way. But that required certain technical and managerial capabilities. These elements were, however, terribly lacking. No doubt in some peasant associations, these elements were sufficiently available and redistribution efforts were carried out. But where these elements were lacking, many of them did, the disparity was left uncorrected. This has subsequently led to inequality amongst peasants in the level of

income, productivity and consumption. In Arssi Administrative gion the average size of land-holding is 1.797 ha. Within Arssi, ifferent districts have different average size of holding. For istance, in Chilalo district, it is 2.9 ha and in Arbagugu it is 2.0 hectares. The yield also varies. And if one compares Arssi with Wollo, the disparity is even more conspicuous. The average size of holding in Wollo is less than 1 ha, and crop production output is 81 kg/capita per annum, whereas in Arssi it is a remarkable 528 kg/capita per annum.

Arssi administrative region is a very interesting case in this regard, and no doubt one of the regions where some cultivators have enormously benefited from the land-reform. First, over 50% of the cultivators were tenants. Second, mechanized commercial farms were expanding rapidly in the region due to the attraction created by the success of CADU in Chilalo district, hence creating a number of evictees. Third, pilot projects like CADU's made the cultivators aware of the benefits of improved seeds and fertilizers. Fourth, Arssi is connected to Addis with one of the better highways in the country. These elements considered together reveal that Arssi could not help but being surplus producing region.

After the reform, many tenants and evictees secured access to better developed lands. Due to the presence of CADU in the region their usage of fertilizers and improved seeds has increased thus securing high yield. For instance, in 1966 the yield for Wheat in Arssi was 5,8 qts/ha but that has increased to 20 qts/ha in 1980; and the yield for barley for the same periods was 10 qts/ha and 17 qts/ha, respectively.[9]

In its effort to do away with inter and intra-regional inequalities, the military government has succeeded in exacerbating these inequalities under the rubric of land-reform. It is clear that some tenants and evictees have benefited from the measure; and it equally true that quite a number of peasants particularly owner-cultivators have lost because of it. In the north, where tenancy was insignificant the land-reform has created more population pressure on land. Quite apart from differences in holding between individuals of different regions, or of the same region, or of same peasant association, the previously favoured regions for agricultural development purposes retain their same status without their benefit being distributed to other less endowed regions. Food crop production is still concentrated in few regions, while some others are unable even to feed their population.

It is clear that prior to the implementation of the land-reform, a profound study of how land should be distributed should have been conducted. The responsibility to distribute land was vested on the shoulders of peasant associations. From the outset, it was even difficult to create peasant associations. And when they were formed, in many instances the people who held the

leadership positions were either the same old landlords chosen by the poor peasants themselves who were unable to free themselves from the traditional ties, or highly discontented peasants who held grudges on their fellow peasants and determined to get even by taking distributional revenge. The landlords who were sitting in the executive committees retained their most fertile 10 hectares of land together with their farm implements and allowed the rest of their land to be distributed. The rest of the peasants were stuck with either a formerly grazing land or fragmented plots or very diminutive holding or no farm implements at all.

Obviously the majority of peasant associations did not know how to implement distributional measures. For such undertaking required a through knowledge of land-use, agro-climatic conditions, quality of land, and the technical know-how of delineating boundaries of peasant associations. And despite enormous protest by peasants for redelineation of boundaries, the government simply has ignored it. As a result of this ill-prepared effort, uneven distribution of access to land became deeply entrenched in peasant communities. And because of this uneven access to land, a disparity in the level of production, consumption and income became a trademark of these communities. Furthermore, land insecurity and lack of investments to raise productivity, by and large, remain intact. To be sure, those who benefited from the reform now feel secure and they even invest in their farms; but these are very few. For a great many of the peasants, the unwillingness to invest on their farms and the insecurity of land-holding still persist. They still believe, quite rightly, that land belongs to the government, or they still feel threatened by producers' co-operatives or their size of land-holding could at any time be changed at the discretion of the PA. And because of this lack of security, a great many of them are not moved by the reform measure to make investments.

What emerges from the foregoing discussion is that the land-reform has instituted a far-reaching inequality embracing every sphere of economic activities, and every individual farmer. Dissolving those inter- and intra-regional inequalities or narrowing the income gap of the different occupational groups or the construction of an egalitarian society was undermined by the land-reform. This measure was also the cornerstone of the systems of production and distribution installed subsequently. These systems as we shall see below squeezed out the small peasant producer, and once again he is rendered to be the looser in the new form of social relations. It should be recalled that the land-reform and the introduction of these systems were designed to improve his livelihood and thereby to reduce his vulnerability to contingencies. In reality, however, he has now become even more vulnerable to contingencies than ever before.

The new systems are not in his best interest, but rather in that of the state.

6.3. The Small Peasant Producer and the New Systems

The cornerstone for the new systems of production and distribution was the land-reform programme. As we have seen, the land-reform measure has laid out the basis for the production systems of producers' co-operatives, state farms, and settlement farms. The attempt, however, to eliminate or reduce long-standing inequalities between regions and of individual peasants was reintroduced under a different cover leaving the nature of the problems intact but with some reshuffling being administered. In other words, some peasants are now relatively well-off, but the status of others was further reduced. For example, some owner cultivators who had access to somewhere between 8-10 hectares of land are now having between 1-2 hectares of land. Others who had no access at all have managed to secure as much as 10 hectares of land. Clearly, the nature of the problem has not changed, but only some people have exchanged their economic positions. A great many peasant cultivators are now forced to improve their livelihood through producers'co-operatives, state farms or settlement farms. However their preference for cultivating their own plot of land is stronger than the 'choices' which are available to them. This aspiration is now being challenged. For the state is convinced that what is desirable for them is not individualized farming activity but co-operativised farming systems. As a result, the state has directed almost all its resources to the expansion of collective farming system in order to render individual farming system obsolete. Thus, the small peasant producer is, more than ever, under pressure. His very survival is being directly threatened by the state trough its formidable machineries.

The state is obviously committed to co-operativizing the peasant sector. By the end of 1993, it plans to co-operativize 50 percent of the peasants in Ethiopia. The introduction of institutions designed to promote co-operativization is evident in the county. Through these institutions, the state systematically denies material, technical and financial assistance to individual peasant producers. Through a policy of active state intervention it denies the small peasant producers infrastructural facilities, rural credits and loans. Despite the scarcity of arable land in the peasant sector, the state is committed to expanding the acreage for cooperatives, state and settlement farms. Services in the form of health, education and improved technology are geared towards cooperatives. Even the loans which the government has secured from International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and from African Development Fund (ADF) are intended for the development of service and producers' cooperatives. It is

clear that the state is unfolding numerous designs to do away with the farming activities of individuals and to render the cultivators optionless. In principle to join the cooperatives is a *voluntary* matter. However, by denying services to the individual peasants or if you will by making their activity a difficult one to pursue the small cultivators are being *forced* to joining co-operatives.

The state-farms which were designed to meet the country s food demand through employment of transferred technology are equally posing a threat to the very survival of the peasant household. The state encourages acreage expansion under state farms as well as their mechanization. Thus far, they have achieved these goals, but their productivity is extremely disappointing and the amount of capital pumped into them is extremely high. Presently, however, they are running at a loss. One of the objectives of a state farm was to open up employment opportunities for rural poor. This is indeed quite perplexing. On the one hand, it is already extremely mechanized and continue to be so; and this means that not many people would be needed to run state farms. On the other hand, the state maintains that these farms would open up job opportunities. First of all, the wages offered by state farms are not attractive. In fact, they are not encouraged to pay more than the minimum wage of 1.92 birr per day. If they attract any worker, it is often a rural labourer with no skill of state farm management or training, thus unable to contribute to its productivity. When they succeeded in employing some one competent to work on these farms, one worker would suffice to run several hectares, thus avoiding the need to employ more people. In fact it is estimated that on the average one worker can run as high as 14.28 hectares.[9] It seems clear that state farms cannot achieve the goals they set for themselves, but will no doubt succeed in absorbing the cultivable land and the financial resources which should have been diverted to the small cultivators.

For the next several years, settlement farms will also play important role in agricultural production alongside cooperatives and state farms. In fact, it is expected that settlement farms will be cooperativized. It is believed that through settlement farms, overcrowded farmers, famine stricken people, jobless urban dwellers and nomads will participate in agricultural production. As we noted above, so far its result has been insignificant. But there are reasons to be concerned about these schemes. It is not entirely clear as to whether the solution to population pressure on a plot of land is settlement farm. It is also unclear whether pastoralists should be sedentarized. We shall spell out these reservations later on when we deal with the government's resettlement scheme. But it suffices to note at this point that the success of settlement farms depends upon the amount of study, planning that go into them and on the kind of knowledge the

state possess of these people's anthropological make-up.

Although all the three systems of agricultural production compete with the individual small cultivator, the performance of the settlement farm has not yet made any impact on the overall production pattern. Despite the state's commitment to state farms and producers' co-operatives, the small peasant producer still remains the beast of burden. However, when it comes to resource allocation, he is the condemned looser.

The co-operatives are also making life for small cultivators very difficult through the system of marketing and distribution. The Agricultural Marketing Cooperation is entrusted with a task of buying their grains through service cooperatives and distributing essential goods to them. The AMC has introduced a quota system to meet certain targets. This means that peasants would have to come up with a certain amount of food grain to be sold to the AMC at a fixed price. This, in a way, has the benefit of reaching those peasants with no access to the market, and reducing their transportation costs. However, this rigid quota and pricing systems have turned out to be causes for the small cultivator's growing discontent and underdevelopment.

First of all, they receive a very low price for their grains, but at the same prices for other commodities, including fertilizer and other inputs are beyond the reach of the small cultivators. As the result, the peasant is demotivated to produce, for he sees no compelling reason to raise his productivity. In a very paradoxical way, he is being placed in a similar predicament to where he was prior to the revolution. In the old days, the more he produced, the more tribute he would have to pay to the landlords and the lesser he keeps for himself. Hence, it was a rational choice for him not to produce beyond consumption. He has reached a similar conclusion after the revolution. For if he produces more, then the beneficiaries are the urban elites who earn higher wages, and above all the state. He finds it that it does not pay off to labour hard, since what is available to him in return is extremely low prices.

For their quota products, they receive prices based on unknown criteria, which neither reflect their labouring activity nor take into account the rising prices for other commodities. And in some cases, peasants still face the growing difficulty of transporting their grains to AMC centers. Yet, this difficulty does not figure in any price calculation. Nor does the calculation takes into account the number of labour days put into each crop, or the competing prices at local markets (see table 1)

TABLE I

Cost of production, Prices and Terms of Trade, ARSSI 1981

Crop	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Wheat	11.47	31.0	19.53	7.5	2.60	40.0	3.80	3.5	2.7
Barley	11.06	27.0	15.94	8.1	1.97	32.0	2.59	4.0	3.4
Teff	9.56	36.0	26.44	10.2	2.59	55.0	4.45	3.0	2.0
Maize	3.53	17.0	13.47	7.2	1.87	26.0	3.12	6.4	4.2
Sorghum	2.94	20.0	17.06	3.4	5.02	35.0	9.43	5.4	3.1
Horsebeans	11.16	25.0	13.84	14.4	0.96	33.0	1.52	4.3	3.3
Field peas	11.04	34.0	22.96	8.3	2.77	40.0	3.49	3.2	2.7

Notes: (1) Material costs of production: birr per 100 kg.
(2) Purchase prices offered by the AMC.birr per 100 kg.
(3) Difference between (1) and (2).
(4) Labour days required per 100 kg.
(5) Value of a labour-day implicit in AMC prices: birr (=(3)/(4).
(6) Prices at local markets: birr per 100 kg
(7) Value of a labour-day implicit in market prices: birr.
(8) Ratio of fertilizer to crop prices fixed by the AMC.
(9) Ratio of fertilizer to crop prices prevailing in local markets.

Source: Saith (table 9), ARDU 1982

Consequently, it is not unusual for many peasants unable to fulfil their quota, and in fact some studies show that some peasants had to buy their own produce in the local markets at high prices in order to meet their quota[10].The attempt to unify the market, to administer fair prices for producers and consumers, to distribute grains from surplus regions to food deficit regions has been a fiasco with no solution in sight. And all these efforts were made for the benefit of the urban elites at the expense of the small cultivators. Presumably, the changes were targeted to benefit the latter.

Local exchanges between peasants are forbidden. This meant that in the event a farmer has produced more than his need, he cannot, by exchange it, command other essential commodities. The AMC attempts to discourage local merchants operating in the rural communities forcing them to sell their grains to the AMC. In the absence of fair prices, the only outlet the peasant has to improve his livelihood are these local merchants. This restriction has proved to be an encouragement in expanding black marketing and corruption. The peasant realizes that by hoarding what he has produced and by subsequently selling it to merchants is more profiting than selling it to AMC. But since in some regions the merchants are forbidden to operate, their way of making profits is through cooperating with the AMC workers. At first, small local merchants in the villages buy directly and illegally from the small peasant producer say 5% more than what the peasant would get from the AMC. Then, after hoarding it

secretely, he makes contacts with the big merchants in urban centers. Since the big merchants had already established a network with the AMC workers in the region, they contact the workers and make arrangements to transport the grain to urban centers without any hussell at checkpoints. The big merchants would pay the smaller one, say 10% more than what he has paid for the producer. When the big merchant sells it to the urban consumers he will sell it with almost 100% profit margin. He then splits the profit two ways with the AMC workers, each getting a 50% share. This was one way how corruption is conducted in Ethiopia today.

Another way would be as follows: The AMC directly buys grains directly from the peasants through ASCs, and comes in to the big dealers in urban centers, sell the grain making profits without spending a dime on the whole transaction. It might at times involve changing records or figures, and this was done very easily. The other most common practice is one which involves local leaders of peasant associations, checkpoint militia and so on. Hoarding is illegal, therefore, if it is discovered it will be confiscated. The local armed squad of the PA searches the peasant household, and if hoarded grain is discovered, it will be confiscated. The peasant will feel grateful if allowed to escape imprisonment, but the people who have confiscated the grain could sell it in a number of ways, to all kinds of disguised merchants who are awaiting eagerly to buy and sell it in urban areas. There are indeed many ways by which the hard work of the peasant have enriched many people's lot. Urbanites have not stopped paying high prices for food grains produced by the small cultivator; and the high prices are not what the latter is getting. Obviously, neither the consumer nor the producer is benefiting from this exchange, but only the middle-men. Those are AMC workers, local officials at various levels, and merchants. And whatever marketable surplus extracted by AMC is clearly not sufficient to even get around those favoured centers like Addis, Asmara and Dire Dawa, through the Basic Commodities Service Corporation. The supply of important cereal like *teff* through urban *kebeles* is often extremely meager, and when it is available it runs out so quickly. The latter has to do with the fact that as soon as the supply of grain reached the *kebele* stores, merchants will be contacted by their planted people in the stores. The merchants will recruit the poor urban villagers with ration cards and send them to buy their share of their grain. And these poor people will receive few *birr* for their services and the grain will go to the merchants. Consequently, many urbanites would have to go to the big market centers to secure their supply of grains, even at higher prices. Even when the supply is readily available in *kebele* stores, for fear of political harassment by local cadres working in the stores, many urbanites avoid going to them. They would rather pay, instead,

high prices at the big markets. For many urban dwellers in Ethiopia today view those institutions such as *Kebeles*, *Kefetegna* (higher) and *Ketena* as independent kingdoms, with their own rules and regulations, reminiscent of zemene *mesafint* (era of nobles).

The AMC, obviously, has neither the monopoly on trade, nor the means to distribute supply of agricultural goods. Its areas of operations are confined to those connected to Addis with good road networks, and it can neither control supply outside of these areas nor capable of distributing grains to those regions which are frequently food deficit. Outside of the major AMC suppliers' regions, the AMC simply buys the grain locally and distributes it locally, virtually leaving most of the rural markets fragmented. The most obvious reason for this market fragmentation is the lack of adequate roads, and this had been a problem in the country during successive regimes. The land-reform has abolished the old system of extracting surplus from the peasants and also the manner of marketing the surplus. In its attempt to compensate for this gap, the PMAC has introduced the AMC to work in close co-operation with ASCs. This in turn contributed to the underdevelopment of the small cultivator.

The systems of production and distribution have not benefited the small cultivator. Nor has the land-reform improved his standard of living. On the contrary, these elements stood as hindrance to his very survival. Yet in spite of all these, he is still being asked to feed the population, to generate cash crops for the country's export earnings, to provide the bulk of the raw materials needed for the domestic industries, and to subsidize the importation of arms to the country so that the state could harness internal conflicts. Ironically, not only has he failed to get anything in return for all he has done, but also the conflicts which he is forced to finance are destroying him in more ways than one. The raging conflicts in the north, northwest and southest of Ethiopia between the state and liberation fronts demanding self-determination and independence have depleted the resources of the country in material as well as in human terms. Young men, often with less than three months of military training, are sent to the war fronts only to become easy victims and to contribute to the growing toll of the loss of the future labour force of the country.

Presently, the state is one of the largest spenders on arms in Africa with nearly 40 percent of the GNP going to finance it.[11] The value of arms transfer to the country between 1979 and 1983 has reached $1,900 million. Of this figure, the Soviet Union has provided $1,800 million, Italy with $20 million, Chekoslavakia with $10 million, and the rest was secured from a variety of sources.[12] Between 1974 and 1982 war related deaths involving only two regions, namely Eritrea and Ogaden, has reached 72,000. Nearly half of this figure was for civilian

population, and does not take into account the so called enemy forces.[13] Clearly, the human resources could have been saved, and the material resources could have been deployed elsewhere for development purposes. For instance, the state has spent $ 447 million for arms in 1980, whereas it has allocated only $ 57 million for health. And this is in a country where protein supply per capita is 58 grams, the calorie supply per capita is 1,729, the population per hospital bed is over 3,000, and the population per physician is over 70,000.[14] This does not mean the problems of the country would be alleviated if the resources are diverted from arms and deployed elsewhere. That depends on how meaningfully the state wants to use these resources. For there is no necessary connection between alleviation of problems and the diversion of resources from arms.

The PMAC has, none the less, ruled out the possibility of a political settlement. This means, among other things, that the state would continue purchasing arms, and the small cultivators would have to keep financing this pursuit. Nobody, including the warring parties, really knows the solution to the so called nationalities problem. I am not even sure whether there is such a thing as a problem of nationalities. It is clear that it is *not* the nationalities which have a problem, but those of us who are speaking on their behalf. In our minds we have created a gap between what *ought* to be the case, and what *is* the case. Whereas in the minds of these nationalities such dichotomy does not exist. We want them to make one, for we believe that they should. But this is *our* problem, but not *theirs* It would have been a great service to these nationalities whom we have usurped the right of *representation* without consent, if we have done a good anthropological studies of these nationalities. It is true that some efforts in the general direction of this study were made by the Institute of Nationalities Study. But paradoxically, the researches are economists, political scientists, and a public health officer, and not a single *anthropologist* is a member of this group.

It seems clear that the solution to the purported problem is war. The repercussion of this attitude to the peasant world is enormous. Quite apart from the revenues which he has to generate to subsidize these wars, the small cultivator is being asked to produce under a state of seige. Each warring party intimidates, harasses and suspects him of being an accomplice of the other. He is not in a position to resume a normal productive activity; and as the result, production has been steadily declining.

6.4. Prelude to a Famine

Our aim in this chapter had been to describe the PMAC strategies introduced and subsequently modified by various proclamations to tackle the country's long standing problems. We have described and analyzed the systems of agricultural production, distribution, and the land-reform measure which is more less the foundation of these systems. The PMAC believed that problems of inter- and intra-regional inequalities, the peasant system of petty production and agro-techniques, state-intervention, market fragmentation, the hegemony of organised knowledge, and conflicts could not be solved in isolation from the country's agrarian relations. Consequently, the PMAC chose to replace the agrarian relations with new modes of relations. We have argued that those problems were factors responsible for the emergence of famines in Ethiopia than any other elements. As we have shown above, the PMAC strategies did not solve any one of these problems, and perhaps it was not expected that these strategies should solve these problems right away. The PMAC has indeed been in power for the last thirteen years and hence it may be unreasonable to expect any meaningful solutions to these deeply entrenched problems of the country in such a short period of time.

For this reason, we focused on the performance of these strategies thus far vis-à vis the small peasant producers. This occupational group has been one of the groups which has been most vulnerable to famine. Hence, we were concerned whether the strategies adopted by the PMAC are reducing its vulnerability to famine, or if they are at least in the process of reducing it. However, our analysis suggests that based on the performance of these strategies so far, it is clear that all of the efforts of the state have in fact increased its vulnerability, and it appears that the state is determined to pursuing this effort despite the disappointing results. One way of detecting whether the strategies have paid-off or not is to see not just the performance of one occupational group, but the key indicators of the entire economy. Hence, if we juxtapose the current performance of the economy under the military rule and that of the country under the imperial rule, we see that the country is in trouble. For instance, table II, below, indicates

TABLE II

Growth of Agriculture (Annual Growth Rate, %)

	1965-73	1973-84
Volume of production		
Food	0.3	2.1
Total Agriculture	1.2	2.3

Production per capita		
Food	-2.2	-0.6
Total Agriculture	-1.4	-0.4

Source: World Bank Report, 1986

that despite an increase in the growth rate in agricultural production the increment is way short of feeding the growing population estimated at 2.9 percent per annum. No doubt that food production has increased in 1975 right after the revolution. But that has nothing to do at all with the efficiency of the strategies for they were not even in place in many areas as late as 1977. Hence, the increment had to do with good weather rather than policy. Normally, one expects a decline during this period, partly because it is the aftermath of a big upheaval, and partly because of the subsequent impact of the earlier famine. However, this was not the case. The famine did not affect those regions producing large surplus of grain, hence there is no reason why production should decline.

After the revolution, a decline in the growth rate of the labour force and the working age of the population is witnessed (See Table III). Ironically, one of the items which the PMAC has promised

TABLE III

Labour Force (in %)

	1965-1973	1973-83	Difference (in %)
Agriculture	86	80	-6
Industry	6	7	+1
Services	8	13	+5
Annual Growth rate of Labour force	2.2	1.4	-0.8
Population of working age (15-64 years)	53	52	-1

Source: World Bank Report, 1986

was to provide more job opportunities. As it is evident from the table, this has not been materialized. Instead, we see enormous growth in expenditures and in external public debt. (Table IV)

TABLE IV

Revenue and Expenditures (millions of US$)

	1976	1977	1978
Revenue	375.7	489.0	574.0
Expenditure	552.8	637.6	805.7
Deficit	-177.1	-148.6	-231.7

Source: IMF, April 1983

Either due to war efforts or due to the importation of technology for purposes other than war, the country has been exporting more goods every year, and this was despite the restrictions imposed by the state on private import of goods. The table below shows such an increment. (Table V)

TABLE V

External Trade (in Millions of US$)

	1978	1979	1980	1981
Imports	517	567	722	738
Exports	297	418	425	374
Balance	-220	-149	-297	-364

Source: IMF, April 1983

TABLE VI

External Public Debt and Debt Service (in million US $)

	1970	1984
Official Sources	140.2	1,202.7
Private Sources	28.7	181.5
Total	168.9	1,384.2
Debt Service	21.1	84.1

Source: World Bank Report, 1986.

These key indicators seem to suggest that the performance of the economy has not been very good, and there appears to be a trend which even suggests that it is getting worse. These are, of course, aggregate indicators, and the crisis which besieged the country is not being shared equally by all occupational groups. Similarly, if there was a rise in the economic performance of the

country, the benefits may not be shared equally by all groups. Hence, we thought it was of paramount importance to analyze the improvements, if any, made by the PMAC's strategies, and we discovered that the small peasant producer has once again lost out. He is being squeezed out by the newly adopted systems of agricultural productions and distribution, and the problems which he has faced earlier under successive regimes not only are still present but even more exacerbated.

Since the economy as a whole and his placement in that economy has gotten worst the small cultivator was once again faced with famine. Instead of tackling the causes which had brought ills to the country, the PMAC has decided to employ strategies which had no direct relevance on increasing the security system of the small cultivator. On the contrary, the strategies have increased his risks of vulnerability to famine by depleting his mechanisms of survival. It was, therefore, inevitable for him to face another famine in less than a decade. A famine, as it turned out, which was even more catastrophic than the one in the 1970s. As we shall see in the next section, the root causes of the recent famine are the ones which had persisted through successive regimes, and no regime has yet made any effort to correct them and to reduce the vulnerability of the most vulnerable groups.

6.5 The Famine of the 1980s

Soon after the downfall of Haile Selassie which was precipitated by the famine of the 1970s, the PMAC has established the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission to avert the danger of famine in the future. The RRC took up the challenge and immediately formed a committee to investigate the causes of the famine of the 1970s. The committee promptly reported the following findings:

> "The primary cause of the famine was not a drought of unprecedented severity but a combination of long continued bad land-use and steadily increased human and stock population over decades, rendering a greater number of people and their animals vulnerable when the drought struck. Insecure and inequitable land-tenure systems, communal or tenancy, were another primary cause of the disaster, but not the most important"[15]

The PMAC began attacking the problem of famine beginning not with the committee's major reason for the famine, but with one regarded as "not the most important" As a result, a land-reform programme was launched in the hope of alleviating the problem of famine once and for all. As it turned out, the land-

reform has even aggraviated what the committee has pointed out as the primary cause, i.e., population pressure on land, thus changing the land-use. This has subsequently became evident when the USAID Mission reported in 1978 that "there is an environmental nightmare unfolding before our eyes ... over 1 billion tons of top soils flow from Ethiopia's highlands each year".[16] The spread of wind and water erosin in the entire country has been observed by a number of people. One such observation reveals that "in March 1981, for instance, the long dry spell was ended at Alemaya (Harerghe) by a deluge of 39.4 mileometers of rain during a 10 hour period. In that single rainstorm, land with a slope of 3 to 6 percent lost three to 3.5 centimeters of topsoil. This represents about 500 tons of topsoil per hectare, or 40 *times* the maximum tolerable soil loss rate per year".[17] In Wollo province, another study indicated that the "sediment measured in a stream draining a heavily farmed watershed indicated soil loss of less than two tons per hectare each year. But individual fields within the same watershed experienced annual soil losses as high as 80 tons per hectare".[18] The cost involved in replenishing the lost nutrients with fertilisers could exceed more than a billion dollars. A FAO study conducted prior to this recent famine has argued that Ethiopia by the year 2,000 cannot be able to feed nearly a quarter of its population unless current agricultural practices "using traditional crop varieties and cropping patterns, without fertilizers, pesticides, or long-term conservation measures are continued".[19]

All of these studies indicate that the land-use pattern must be the focus of attention if any successful efforts were to be launched to avert the dangers of famine and food crisis. Changing the framework of the agro-practices through land-reform measures without changing the agro-practices themselves would not be an answer to the problem of abusive land-use. A change in the framework of these agro-practices has in fact further exacerbated the land-use pattern. For the systems of productions instituted by the land-reform continued to be expanded at the risk of spreading wind and water erosion. For instance, it has been estimated that.

> "The waste from forests cleared each year to establish state farms in the southern provinces could reportedly supply the entire annual charcoal demand of Addis Ababa. The crop residues of state farms and coffee plantations, sawmill wastes, and charcoal burned inefficiently could match the annual energy yield of an estimated 163,000 hectares of intensive plantations".[20]

Once again these state farms, or as they sometimes referred to as Ethiopia's 'state latifundia'[21] due to their enormous size, are

not the answer to ecological degradation. As we have observed in table II, food production has increased in Ethiopia after the revolution. The growth rate is even more striking when we compare grain yield per hectare in Ethiopia for 1950-52 with that of 1980-82. The yield in the former period was 703 kg/hectare whereas between 1980-82, it has increased by 52 percent to reach at 1,066 kg/hectare.[22] This productivity was not achieved by raising *land productivity* but by ploughing new land. This expansion of new crop land was mainly due to 'state latifundia' and producers' co-operatives. The table below shows the contribution of the various systems of productions to land expansion, forests and grassland clearance.

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TABLE VII

Area and production of crops under peasant, cooperative and state farms holding

	Unit	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	Growth Rate (annual) 1975/76 1978/79		1979/80 1980/81	1975/ 1981/
Peasant farms												
Area	1000 HA	5485	5214	5392	5594	6057	5409	5118	0.93		(-)8.8	0.35
	%	98.1	98.2	98.2	96.7	96.2(94.2)	94.6	93/6				(-0.0
Production	1000 MT	5205	4972	4482	4511	5447	6237	5735	5.17		2.61	3.42
CO-operative farms												
Area	1000 HA	62	45	43	46	139	83	119	8.96		285.68	35.49
	%	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8	(2.2)	1.5	2.2	(-9.86)		(-8.0)	(-16.
Production	1000 MT	44	18	31	33	20	69	79	7.33		198.75	16.28
	%	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.3	1.0	1.3	(-7.9)		(98.75)	(11.7
State farms												
Area	1000 HA	46	46	55	146	231	224	231	43.95		0.00	26.17
	%	0.8	0.9	1.0	2.5	3.7	3.9	4.2				(40.1
Production	1000 MT	97	102	135	242	337	354	382	35.50		6.47	34.86
	%	1.8	2.0	2.9	5.1	5.8	5.3	6.2				(30.8
All farms												
Area	1000 HA	5592	5306	5490	5786	6296(6427)		5718	5468	1.37	6.81 (+6.81)	0.73
Production	1000 MT	5343	5103	4648	4786	5803		6660	6197		-4.15	3.34 4.69

Source: Maxwell (1986), Table 4, p 45
Note: Percent was computed
Editorial Note: Figures in brackets correct apparent errors in original table

What the PMAC has done was to change the country's institutional setting without efforts being made to do away with the small cultivator's practices of land-use. In fact, the newly introduced institutional settings have accelerated the process of environmental destruction. For the small cultivator is being placed under pressure by the competing interests of the state. Since he has to meet his needs and other obligations, the demand imposed on him to produce and to exploit the environment more has been greatly enhanced. As a result, considerable forest destruction either to overcome the scarcity of arable land or to meet his need for fuel wood has been observed by many studies. A recent ILO study reveals that:

> "In 1955, the forests that remained covered 17 million hectares or 15 percent of the land area. The 1986 coverage is estimated at 2,5 - 4 percent or some 3 to 4.5 million hectares. The savanna woodlands which once amounted to some 72 million hectares presently amount to only some 20 million hectares".[23]

The PMAC is aware of the problem of environmental degradation, and more than any other past regimes it has made concerted efforts to upgrade the environment. To this end, it has created institutions and the like, to asses the country's environmental conditions and to tackle the problem through these institutions. However, these institutional measures do not address to the real causes of environmental destruction. Nor are they consistently put into practice. While these measures on the one hand call for conservation, the government is, on the other hand, accelerating the process of destruction by competing against the interests of the small cultivator, and by undermining his ability to make a living. Nor is the government creating conditions for the small cultivator to take good care of his environment.

These institutional measures do not attempt to find out why the small cultivator is doing the things he does to the environment. The accelerated destruction of forests, for instance, in the recent past has to do, among other things, the fact that the small cultivator perceives agriculture no longer a reliable activity as far as his income is concerned. Whatever he has produced is not supported by reasonable agricultural prices, and the state bias towards cooperatives and state farms keeps his primitive techniques intact, chemical fertilizers and other inputs out of his reach. The income the small cultivator receives by selling fuel wood in towns, albeit small, is significant. And in some cases the income he derives from selling wood account for as much as 30 percent of his cash income.[24] And on the other hand, no constructive efforts were made to curve the growing

demand for fuel wood in urban areas.

It seems clear that the most important priority of the PMAC should have been to deal with changes taking place on land-use, since this after-all, is a life support base of not only the small cultivator but the entire country. It did, instead, pursue the establishments of institutions which not only have failed in curving abusive practices on land-use, but also succeeded in making the problem even more acute than before. To be sure, the destruction has been raging for centuries, but neither the previous regimes nor the present one has taken constructive steps to halt or to reduce the inevitable outcome of environmental degradation. It is, therefore, not surprising that a famine ha revisited Ethiopia for a second time in less than a decade. Nor is it surprising that the regions which suffered most from environmental degradation, bitter conflicts, scarcity of arable land, demographic pressure and acute fluctuation of rainfall should now be revisited by the familiar visitor: famine.

6.5.1. When did the Famine Start?

It has often been a journalistic curiosity to find out when the famine has started to engulf the regions of Wollo, Tigrai and Eritrea. This curiosity stems, in part, from the belief that if in the event the famine has been covered-up for a certain period of time, then it will arouse some kind of moral indignation against the callousness of the state. No doubt this is not just a journalistic curiosity, but also one of human concern. We need to know not just when, but what the state presumably responsible to its citizens has done to alleviate the suffering of its people. It is also a question of the well-preparedness of the state or the country's economic capacity to absorb shocks of even minor magnitude. Hence, famines could be seen as tragic pointers of, the ill-preparedness of the economy to absorbing disasters, the poor infrastructural developments and the lack of sufficient logistics which facilitate a quick response to famine. All of these concern emerge when we investigate the recent famine.

The famine which has affected nearly 10 million people by the end of 1985[25], had given sufficient warnings to the Ethiopian state and to the world as early as 1978. Looking back at the statistics of food production output and the amount of food aid as well as commercial imports required to feed its propulation beginning with the mid 1970s, one finds indications of the impending crisis ahead. The 1975/76 figure for net cereal availability shows an increase of nearly 15 percent from that of 1974/75. The increase had nothing to do with policy changes, but the weather had been favourable during this period. For three years in a row (see table VIII) availability of cereal was declining reaching its low point in 1977/78. That year has been an awful one for Ethiopia

TABLE VIII

Estimated production of Mayor Food Crops (1974-1987)
(tons'000)

Year	Cereals	Pulses	Total
1974/75	4,183	574	4,757
1975/76	4,698	462	5,160
1976/77	4,370	624	4,994
1977/78	3,985	515	4,500
1978/79	4,080	470	4,550
1979/80	6,367	933	7,301
1980/81	5,611	816	6,427
1981/82	5,328	801	6,129
1982/83	5,671	847	6,518
1983/84	5,526	711	6,237
1984/85	3,803	498	4,301
1985/86			(5,035) 5,495
1986/87			5,930

Note: The figures in brackets are CSO estimates
Source: World Bank Report, Volume II, Ethiopia Recent Economic Development and Future Prospects, May 31, 1984
FAO Crop Assessment Mission Report, November-December 1985
FAO Crop Assessment Mission Report, November-December 1986

in general, and for the Harerghe population in particular. The Ethio-Somali conflict during this period coupled with internal unrest has contributed to a decline in production. The decline would have, in fact, been extremely sharp had the conflict been waged in surplus grain producing regions such as Arssi and Gojjam. A year later in 1978/79 a slightest improvement in production was observed, but the country was still food deficit. To compensate for it, the country had to rely on commercial and food aid imports. That import for the year 1978/79 was the highest since 1973 when the country was at a peak of the famine crisis of that decade. (see table IX)

TABLE IX

Commercial and Food AID Imports 1975 -1985 (tons'000)

Year	Commercial	Food Aid	Total
1975/76	32.0	60.6	92.6
1976/77	119.8	65.0	184.8
1977/78	84.0	113.0	197.0
1978/79	116.2	132.4	248.6
1979/80	188.9	188.4	377.3
1980/81	52.0	203.0	255.0
1981/82	38.6	172.9	211.5
1982/83	37.0	249.7	286.7

1983/84	38.0	207.7	245.7
1984/85	162.7	1,221.5	1,384.2

Source: AMC for Commercial Imports
WFP Addis Ababa for Food Aid

The highest production output recorded was in 1979/80, when it was 7.3 million tons, with a sharp increase in both cereal and pulses production. That figure represents not only for the highest output for the entire decade of the 1970s, but also remains to be the highest output as of 1986. Yet despite this impressive performance, the country has secured 377 thousand tons of commercial and food aid imports, marking the highest such imports in the 1970s and second only to the year 1984/85. This anomaly points to the growing crisis in the marketing and distribution pattern which was by that time in high gear. For it is clear that a noted increase in commercial and food aid grain was taking place since 1977 in spite of a good harvest in 1979/80. During the same period the marketable grain was declining due to the Agricultural Marketing Cooperation's (AMC) pan-territorial pricing policy, and to the steadily increasing population reaching an annual rate of 2.9 percent.

Less than 25 percent of cereal and pulse production enter the market, and this also includes imported food grains. Nearly all the production from state farms and less than 20 percent of peasant production constitute the marketable surplus. Of this total marketed surplus, the AMC could only account for less than 25 per cent for supply to distribution outlets. The AMC data for the period 1980/81 to 1984/85 suggest that the AMC could only provide less than half of the grain per capita requirements of the residents of Addis Ababa.[26] Hence, in order to compensate for a deficit caused by the failure of the market system the country was forced to bring in more and more food imports. The system was further constrained by a lack of adequate road and transportation facilities. And when this is coupled with a loss of harvest due to a rainfall failure, the consequence of the impending food crisis is not difficult to envisage.

This was, indeed, what happened in the early 1980s. In 1981, reports of food shortages were coming from northern provinces due to cumulative years of bad harvests as well as intensifying insurgent activities. Even during the best of times, the production output for Wollo, Tigrai and Eritrea regions is not that impressive. When their vulnerable position was exacerbated by a series of harvest failures and by an insufficient market response the magnitude of the crisis cannot easily be contained. However, an adequate distribution mechanism would have minimized the impact of the crisis by transporting food from surplus regions to the food deficit areas, before the surplus producing regions themselves succumb to the crisis. In this connection, it was interesting to note that when a delegation led

by a politbureau member visited the drought areas of Bale, Gomo Goffa and Sidamo in Nov. 13, 1984 it has observed that even relief efforts were not reaching those drought areas from the highlands.[27] Clearly, the mechanisms for distributing surplus or relief grains were inefficient.

The 1982 Belg season has failed in Tigrai and Eritrea further exacerbating their vulnerable position. And most notably, the belg-producing regions of Wollo and Gonder in the north were seriously affected. By this time, reports were coming out of feeding centers in the north about the growing food crisis in the regions. Various NGOs and RRC were making appeals for relief but hardly any response was forthcoming. Similarly, the Belg-producing regions of the south such as Shewa, Bale and Sidamo were being devastated. The regions' condition was aggravated further by meter rains which fell below the expected average. At this point, there were nearly 6 regions and about 3 million people being affected. Entering into 1983, the belg season has failed for the second consecutive time affecting the entire Wollo and the eastern parts of Gondar regions.

In 1984, virtually all the rains have either failed completely or came off-season or were very little. The belg season has failed for the third consecutive years, the meter rains came late, and the main season rain has also failed. To seal things off, the off-season rainfall in December 1984 has poured high amounts of rainfall destroying whatever little unharvested crops remained in the country. Tragically, the highest amounts of rainfall during this particular month were recorded in Wollo and in northern Harerghe regions. For instance, in Sirika, Wollo, it brought 51 mm of rainfall in two days. And during the same period in Jijiga, Harerghe it brought 42 mm.[28] The effect of this off-season rainfall on *teff* was significant. The impact was acutely felt in July-August 1985 when the prices for this cereal rose sharply everywhere except in Illubabor, Gomo Goffa and Harer Zuria, registering a record high price of 350 birr per quintal in Addis.[29]

The first official statement issued about the famine by the PMAC on October 26 reveals that as early as *March* 1984, close to 5 million people were affected. They were provided with drought relief at 21 shelters and 187 relief stations in 54 provinces and 137 districts within 12 administrative regions of the country. The statement further noted that the lives of 339,000 children suffering from malnutrition and desiccation were saved through a special food programme. About 38 special stations were established for this purpose and to care for the health of emaciated children. During this time, the statement noted, care was also taken to provide 30,000 people with special assistance to help them *resettle* in their home localities which

they were forced to vacate due to the drought.[30]

On December 6, 1984 when RRC gave a briefing to the US delegation, it has pointed out that 80 per cent of the people in the northern part of the country, and 20 per cent of those in Harerghe, Bale and Sidamo regions were affected by the disaster. Twelve out of 14 regions, including those previously hitherto famine-free were affected. Fifty percent of the affected population were children under 15 years of age. It further noted that 7,000 drought victims are being mobilized *daily* to rehabilitation centers and that the utmost efforts are being made to rehabilitate 225,000 famine stricken people by Dec. 19, 1984.

Almost five days later, on December 11, 1984 the commissioner of RRC has stated that the number of victims has reached 6.5 million and that 1.3 million metric tons of food and nutrients are needed to solve the problem. He further announced the government's plan "to rehabilitate a total of 300,000 families over the next twelve months from the over-populated and overused highlands in the north to the unused or underused land in the west and the south".[31]

It is important to note that the march of famine which had begun near the end of 1970s was aided by numerous internal strifes in various parts of the country, particularly in the north. Consequently, of the affected population (see table X) at any given time during the march of famine at least one-fourth of them were victims afflicted by these internal conflicts.

At any rate, the famine which was devastating the country recently has done more damage than any other famine, save perhaps the Great Famine of 1988-92. Nobody really knows for sure the mortality figure for that famine, but it is definitely bound to surpass the one for the 1970s. In many ways, this famine took many casuality due to the indifference of the world public, and the cold world food politicking, when the country was crying out for help. If immediate relief efforts had been launched as early as 1982 and 1983 many lives would have been spared.

TABLE X

Total number of people affected

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Wollo	450,000	592,400	1,100,230	1,820,970	2,587,420
Shewa	239,000	533,000	195,000	204,310	851,830
Tigrai	500,000	600,000	1,000,000	1,300,000	1,400,000
Gonder	67,000	202,000	424,600	324,500	363,000
Harerghe	420,000	384,000	285,000	278,830	875,080
Sidamo	NA	303,000	145,000	355,040	532,500
Gamo Gofa	232,000	NA	NA	79,880	106,330
Bale	275,000	109,000	35,000	52,950	192,870

Arssi	185,000	220,000	60,000	20,530	81,610
Wellega	NA	NA	NA	NA	23,420
Illubabor	NA	20,000	NA	NA	20,400
Keffa	NA	NA	NA	NA	58,000
Gojjam	NA	83,600	20,000	35,250	76,120

Source: RRC Early Warning System Reports (1982)

6.5.2. Response to the Famine

The callousness of the West, particularly the Tory government and the Reagan administration, towards the starving people in Ethiopia has been noted by many observers.[32] For the Reagan administration, in particular, the tragedy was a field day to undermine the socialist path which the country had adopted, and a timely opportunity to test Spencer's strategy of hunger to overthrow the regime.[33] The administration assumed that by playing a delaying tactic in giving aid, the Ethiopian government will make important concessions. The Reagan administration knew about the famine as early as 1982, but decided to use the tragedy as a political weapon. When this has failed, it tried to sabotage relief efforts by a propaganda campaign suggesting that relief efforts were being withheld by the PMAC from the people in guerilla controlled areas. The Tory government had followed similar suits by delaying response to repeated appeals for help. In retrospect, these governments had succeeded in using the tragic state of affairs to flex their political muscle on a poor nation like Ethiopia. When thousands were perishing in Ethiopia, FAO authorities were also debating as to whether or not Ethiopia has the facilities to carry the full amount of emergency aid.[34]

It was clear that many exogenous political factors were against the starving people; and a timely relief effort would have saved many from the ravages of the famine. What has the Ethiopian government done, on its part, to minimize the ill-effects of the disaster by way of emergency relief? In reality, what had taken place in Ethiopia by way of responding to the famine is not any different from the response of Haile Selassie's regime. The only difference is that the former hidden famine had precipitated the downfall of Haile Selassie, whereas this one has enabled the regime to strengthen its grip on the rural masses. The famine which the world has discovered in 1984 through the excellent camera work of Mohammed Amin was revealed to Ethiopians officially for the first time on October 26, 1984 in a statement issued by the PMAC. Until now, many Ethiopians do not even know that a film entitled 'Seeds of Despair' depicting the recent famine has ever been made.

On March 22, 1984 a very faint reference was made on the *Ethiopian Herald* to the 'drought' problem in the northern part of the country, and to the formation of a high-level committee

under the Council of Ministers to seek solutions to the problem. Between March 22, 1984 and June 11, 1984, no mention was made about the famine which has engulfed 12 out of 14 administrative regions, by this time. One would expect, at least by this time, some statement about the famine by this high-level committee which was touring the drought-affected areas since the end of March, is forthcoming. Nothing was said about it. On June 11, 1984 the chairman of the PMAC has made a reference to 'drought' during his opening address to the 10th Ministerial Session of the World Food Conference which was held in Addis. He said that,

> "Ethiopia is currently suffering from the severe drought that has hit most African countries ... and conditions are becoming worse even now... The revolutionary Government has taken immediate and concrete measures to *rehabilitate* thousands of people who had become victims of the drought which resulted from abnormal global climatic conditions".35

What he meant by 'rehabilitation' is resettling people from drought to non-drought areas. Indeed, the PMAC statement issued late in October indicates that resettlement efforts were undertaken, relocating 30,000 people somewhere within their home localities. However, no mention was made about the fact that 5 million people were affected as of March 1984. Way before March, *drought has turned into famine*, and yet no one has ever mentioned the term 'famine'. In no time has the chairman of the PMAC or any other official referred to the drought as famine. Presumably, they wanted us to believe that it was nothing more than a drought, when in fact thousands were dying by the month prior to June 1984.

It was not because of naivety or ignorance that officials chose to ignore the term famine, but rather it was a deliberate attempt to obscure causes and to belittle the magnitude of the crisis. To many Ethiopians, even today, that drought has a connotation of a phenomenon which is an 'act of God' or an 'act of Nature'. When drought is construed in such a way, then many believers would have to accept the state of affairs with stoic silence. The usage of the term 'famine', on the other hand, raises questions of culpability either directly or indirectly, hence fingers might start pointing at the state.

Right from the start the tragedy was viewed as a phenomenon resulting from 'acts of nature', and it is easy to guess as to what would be the solution. This was what the chairman of PMAC has said of the solution in September 1984 on the occasion marking the formation of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE):

> "From now on, our slogan 'We Shall Control the Forces of Nature' must be put into action. We must mobilize our

collective efforts of natural disaster".[36]

Clearly the causes of the famine are construed as nature-induced, the solutions are to control the forces of nature by some kind of collective means. And as to the 'drought-stricken' population, the remedy is 'rehabilitation'. One wonders as to why it took another experience of famine to reach such a conclusion, for clearly the analysis of the previous famine by the Commission investigating it has pointed to the general direction of freeing agriculture from dependency on the vagaries of climate. What has been done since 1975 to avert such dependency?

What should have been an appropriate slogan is "We Shall Control human interference on nature".This does not mean that we should be spectators of nature and refrain from interacting with it. To point out, rather, that what we do on nature and *how* we do it has an effect on the climate to which we depend on. Thus, the relationship of dependency is not a one-way street but a reciprocal one. In effect, we have been tampering with this delicate environment badly in our pursuit of survival.

At any rate, the causes of the 'famine' and what ought to be done to the victims were mentioned on June 1984. It is important to note here that as of June 1984, it was evident that there was a failure of *three* consecutive failure of belg season; and with respect to Tigrai and Eritrea they have gone through, by this time, *six* consecutive failure of harvests.[37] Despite this evidence, the PMAC still wanted to contain it as drought - ignoring the fact that it had transformed *into famine* a few years ago. However, until June 1984 many Ethiopians did not know what was taking place. No media coverage was given to the problem. The educated elite was, none the less, informed about what was taking place in its own backyard by tuning in to foreign broadcasting services.

After June 1984, some references began to be made to relief aid donated to, as the newspapers call them, "our compatriots affected by natural calamities".[38] Through the months of July, August and September, only donations provided by foreign governments or donor organizations were reported, and no mention was made to the mortality toll in the various camps. While so many were dying, the state had the audacity to open up a TV transmitter worth 950,000 birr in none other than Dessie, Wollo region.[39] And on September 2, a multi-purpose weapons factory was being inaugurated.[40] On the same day, the TV service for Nekempte and Mettu in Wollega region was inaugurated.[41] Between September 6 and 14, the newspapers were celebrating the formation of the WPE, and everyone of them was praising how glorious and historical the revolution had been, while not far from Addis, in Kembatta and Hadaya and in

Menze provinces of Shewa region people were starving to death.

On September 19, mention was made to the EEC's donation worth 14 million birr, and for the first time it referred to "compatriots affected by *man-made* and other natural calamities";[42] and the same phrase was repeated on September 23. On October 3, 1984 the Second Plenum of Politbureau of the Central Committee of the WPE was held and discussed, among other things, the drought conditions in Ethiopia. After a two-days meeting, it suggested three items: to seek ways of further strengthening the measures taken so far by the Revolutionary Government, and it drew up an emergency relief programme dubbed as "action programme", and the necessary means for its implementation. Furthermore, it was decided that the members of the Politbureau are to guide and co-ordinate the activities of the various aspects of the emergency drought relief programme.[43]

The measures taken so far by the Government was to dispatch a Ministerial Committee to tour the drought affected regions in March 1984. Nobody knows for sure what the committee has done, but on the basis of the statement issued by the PMAC on October 26 that it has succeeded in establishing relief centers and local resettlement plans. What the Politbureau is suggesting is that these efforts should now be strengthened and accelerated. In order to enhance these efforts, the Politbureau needed to draw a plan for "action programme" under its control. It was from this point onwards that the government was fully involved in launching an orchestrated effort to respond to the famine. Up to this point, the task was left to RRC and donor organizations; and the government was too busy with the preparations of the Founding Congress. The action programme now takes the burden away from RRC. Sure enough, on October 8, the commissioner of RRC gave a briefing to international donor organizations and informed them of the creation of two committees.[44] A high-level committee of six ministers chaired by the minister of Interior and an executive committee of commissioners and permanent secretaries to implement the directives of the central government were formed. It was not clear whether the Ministerial committee was the same one formed in March or a new one. At any rate, the commissioner made this announcement, and on this occasion a film about the drought prepared by RRC was shown to the participants.

From this point onwards one sees a campaign by political officials calling for peasants to construct dams, harness rivers, to plant trees, and so on, in short, to put the forces of nature under control. The newspapers and other media were also participating in this mobilization efforts; and by this time hardly a day had passed without an editorial on the drought and the need for mass participation.

On October 24, 1984 the commissioner of RRC once again gave a

briefing, but this time it was to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Here he disclosed some of the elements contained in the "action programme" designed by the Politbureau. He pointed out that settlement sites had been prepared and development projects had been designed for the attainment of relief and rehabilitation objectives. Furthermore, he noted that preparations are underway so that in the coming three months nearly 50,000 compatriots would be moved from drought affected localities to newly prepared settlement sites. He asked the NGOs to participate in the resettlement scheme.[45] It is interesting to note that the "action programme" was designed between October 3 and 4 when the Politbureau was in session. But what the commissioner is indicating is that the choice and preparations of settlement sites were accomplished. This implies two things: the preparations were made in a matter of 10 days, or else such a scheme was underway before the Politbureau was in session. The evidence, however, militates against the second implication. There was no evidence whatsoever that the government was undertaking a study to choose settlement sites when the drought was raging in twelve administrative regions. And if there was such a study on settlement preparation going on at the time, it must have been top secret. To be sure, the Ten Year Plan approved by the Politbureau in October makes some mention of resettlement but does not say whether a study has already been undertaken or will take place in the future. In fact, it was between October 25 and 27 that the chairman of the PMAC went on a tour to Wollega, Illubabor and Kaffa regions, suggesting that the choice of the would-be resettlement sites in these regions was far from being materialized.

The first official statement of the famine by the PMAC was issued on October 26. This was in many ways a startling revelation for many Ethiopians. For it was at this time that the people was made aware of the extent of the drought. The statement reveals that as of March 1984, there were 5 million people who had been affected, covering twelve regions. The statement noted that the absence of the small rains earlier this year, i.e. in 1984, during the belg period in some parts of the country had seriously affected grain production and livestock. The statement went on, however, to suggest that the Revolutionary Government *was able to defuse the problem* through a co-ordinated measure within a short period in line with a recommendation made by a high-level committee set up under the Council of Ministers last March which made a field assessment of the drought situation.[46]

If indeed the problem was defused at the time, then there is no reason why, even at a time this statement was issued, 100 people were dying everyday in Korem alone.[47] In the month of September the figure was 40 people a day in Korem.[48] No one

knows how many people were dying in other feeding centers elsewhere in the country, but it was clear that the figures are no less than what was reported in Korem. It was tragic that no mortality figure was ever mentioned when the toll of death was mounting in the country. And the official statement wanted to assure the Ethiopian people that the drought was efficiently contained.

At any rate, the statement of the PMAC has further announced the formation of a National Drought Relief Committee entrusted with the task of expediting emergency drought relief through centrally co-ordinated ways and is accountable to the Politbureau of the CC of WPE. Of course, this was established at the meeting of the Politbureau between October 3 and 4. For months to come, this committee will play decisive roles in relief effort. Its main objectives are short-term and long-term relief efforts. The basic structure of the committee looks like the following:

Politbureau of CC of WPE
Chairman: Mengistu

National Drought Relief Committee

Propaganda & Agitation Committee Chairman: Feleke	Daily Aid Co-ordinating Unit Chairman: Amanuel	Control & Inspection Unit Chairman: Teka	Resettlement Co-ordinating Unit Chairman: Legesse	Construction Unit Chairman: Kassa	Project & Programming Unit Chairman: Mersea	Agricultural Co-ordinating Unit Chairman: Wole

Zonal Drought Relief Committee

Central	Northern	North-West	Southern	Eastern	South-Western
(Shewa, Addis Ababa)	(Eritrea, Tigrai, Wollo)	(Gondar, Gojjam)	(Arssi, Gomu Goffa, Sidamo)	(Bale, Harerge)	(Kaffa, Illubabor, Wellega)

After the announcement of the formation of National Drought Relief Committee (NDRC), many of the politbureau members were dispatched to various drought affected regions of the country to assess the conditions and to subsequently file a report to the politbureau when it convenes for its 6th regular session on November 6th.[49] The chairman of the PMAC, on the other hand, went on a tour of potential resettlement sites but not to the areas affected by the drought. On its 6th regular meeting, the Politbureau discussed tour reports, and gave directives towards promoting the resettlement programme in accordance with the "action plan" which had been worked out during its Second Plenum session on October 3 and 4.[50]

The following day, on November 7, the first branch of "Zonal Drought Relief Committee", namely the Western branch embracing Wollega, Illubabor and Kaffa regions was established. During the establishment ceremony, it was revealed that the branch has a *two-phase* plan to resettle drought victims in three regions. Under the first phase, 50,000 drought victims will be resettled, of which 20,000 heads of families will be settled in Wollega, 20,000 in Illubabor and 10,000 in Keffa regions. Under the second phase, it was pointed out without specifying the figures that the drought victims will be settled in Gambella in Illubabor, Bege and Kelem in Wollega and the necessary preparations are underway.[51]

The next day, the chairman of the PMAC met with the Secretary General of the UN and explained to him the resettlement scheme and the Secretary General expressed his enthusiastic support of the programme.[52] During the month, the Commissioner of RRC went to Rome to meet the FAO director-general to secure an endorsement of the scheme, and he did. The entire month of November was devoted to preparing sites and resettling people in these newly and hastily prepared sites. Later in that month, we learned clearly that the resettlement scheme was a hastily designed scheme, without any prior studies and decided upon between October 3 and 4, by the Politbureau. For on November 27, one of the members of the Politbureau told Mr. Timothy Raison, the British Minister for Overseas Development that preliminary studies have been made for the resettlement programme by a high-level team headed by the Chairman of the PMAC, who gave directives at the resettlement sites where shelters, health care and other necessary infra-structures were being built and prepared.[53] We know that the high-level team was formed in October, and it was only after the formation of this team that the Chairman began touring resettlement sites. Clearly, if this was indeed the team which was conducting the preliminary studies, then the whole process must have taken less than *three weeks*. And this could be regarded, by any

standard , as a hastily put up scheme.

The whole month of December was also devoted to implementing resettlement schemes, and as we turn into 1985 some hope of relief was in sight. The meter rains in 1985 brought some signs that the drought period was about to be over, but the mortality rate continued through the first half of 1985. Even though there were some rains, none the less, the soil was in poor condition. Consequently, production output was very low in 1985, thus escalating the prices for food nearly everywhere to a record high.[54]

The foregoing discussion of the PMAC's response to the famine suggests the following points:

(1) It could hardly be denied that RRC was making appeal for assistance as early as 1982. RRC has rightly predicted the growing food crisis in Ethiopia and has requested assistance on time. A very prompt response on the part of affluent nations would have averted the crisis. These nations came too late and with very little help. They made promises of massive assistance, as it turned out, it was too many thunder but very little rain.

(2) While RRC was on a begging-spree in other countries, the people of Ethiopia were not informed of what actually was happening in their own backyard. Clearly, in view of the PMAC's priority to form a party, to conceal the famine from Ethiopians was, it believed, a correct political risk. For it could always argue that it was out begging for help and no effort was made to conceal the event. Disclosing the extent of the damage, on the other hand, would tarnish the image of the historical Founding Congress in September 1984. As much as possible, the PMAC wanted to minimize the publicity of the drought problem until this political priority was met and then to devote its entire effort on the problem. But that was too little too late; for the mortality rate was accelerating at an alarming number. The PMAC was left without any reasonable choice, and time was not on its side. Consequently, it resorted to resettlement scheme.

(3) If the effort shown by the PMAC after September has been launched in 1982 or even in 1983, then the crisis would have been minimized greatly. Instead, it engaged itself in misleading Ethiopians that the situation *is one of drought and not one of famine*, knowing too well that thousands were dying every month, and thousands were desperately migrating to towns in search of food. The government's response was no less than absolute callousness. The following was what the Commissioner of RRC himself has said:

"At the time the ceremony was being conducted, thousands were dying (from the famine) every day, thousands had

abandoned their homes in search of food and shelter, or had walked all the way from the northern part of Ethiopia to the gates of Addis Ababa. My agency (RRC) was instructed to stop them. The police were sent to make a human fence around Addis Ababa to make sure none of these people could enter the city and spoil the show".55

(4) Since the crisis has reached, in October, beyond the PMAC's ability to contain it, it hastily set-up resettlement schemes in a desperate attempt to curve the growing mortality rate. Once the PMAC is assured of assistance from donor organizations and other governments, it saw the possibility of linking emergency relief with long-term development efforts using resettlement schemes as a vehicle for this linkage. For many years to come, resettlement would be the commitment of the PMAC not only as a solution to famine but also as a strategy of rural development. In view of the importance of this scheme for the country's ability to survive, we shall turn to assessing this strategy by directing our attention to one of the most important resettlement sites in Ethiopia, namely Metekel. Before we do this, however, we need to say a few words about the historical genesis of settlement schemes in Ethiopia.

Chapter 7: Resettlement

The root causes of the famines in Ethiopia which have occurred under successive regimes remain the same. The measures taken by the PMAC to combat these causes were by instituting new institutional arrangements in the form of new agrarian relations, systems of production and distribution. However, after the advent of the recent famine it became clear that the measures had, over the years, worsened the already vulnerable condition of the small peasant producer and the pastoralist. When the drought besieged the country for consecutive years the onset of famine was pre-eminent. After long delay to respond to the famine, the PMAC chose to adopt resettlement scheme as a lasting solution to famine and as a strategy of rural development.

Critiques from all schools of thought have casted doubt on the viability of this strategy to achieve these objectives on the basis of humanitarian considerations. Some have compared the implementation of this scheme to Stalin's Gulag Archipelago, others equated it with the kind of experiences the aborigenes, the American Indians and the black South Africans have gone through in Australia, the United States of America and South Africa, respectively. Many of the critiques point out that the resettlement scheme is a clear violation of the rights the people have as humans, for it involves coercion. Many of the oponents of the scheme seem to have used this opportunity to undermine the kind of ideology adopted by the state, and hence it is not entirely clear how concerned they are with the scheme as a strategy of rural development and as a measure of famine-avoidance. Proponents of the scheme, on the other hand, have made a brief tour of some show-case resettlement sites and became anxious to defend the scheme without a sober assessment of the implications involved in the scheme. In the process, what resettlement means to the future of the settlers and to those indigenous people whose way of life being intruded is being ignored. The concern in this chapter shall be to examine the PMAC's resettlement scheme and to see if it could in fact be employed for the purposes suggested.

7.1. Some Historical Notes on Resettlement

Resettlement had been a way of life for many Ethiopians for several generations when faced with crises which threatens their survival. Such crisis are too frequent and too common for many Ethiopians. Food crisis, political conflicts, tribal and ethnic feuds, land scarcity and the like were some of the elements which provided the people the 'push factor' to resettle elsewhere. The movement of people in Ethiopia had involved either a short distance where the risk factors are minimal and not far from their cultural ties, or a long distance where they traverse across

plateau while still retaining their traditions. The latter, however, involved considerable risks and even hardships to the settlers. For despite new environment and better soil conditions, they continued to ulilize their implements and technical know-how regardless of their adaptability. As a result, they were led to face hardships. On the other hand, in some cases they had brought prosperity to themselves and to the indigenous host population by introducing plough civilization to areas where such method of cultivation was previously unknown.

Historically, the pattern of resettlement consists of downslope, upslope, across-plateau and within-plateau movements. Earlier in Ethiopian history, settlement movements were confined to within highlands by subsistence farmers who shared common cultural ties with the host population. Later on this began to expand in involving people across-culture and across-plateau, prompted by internal conflicts. This led to hostilities between host and settlers, and also to an impedement of settlement movements. In part this had to do with the fact that settlements were largely confined to already settled lands. The movements were often en masse and backed by the existing economic and legal order. In fact, settlers were used as means to solidifying new colonial territories by rulers. Often these rulers would have large garrisons, and the number of indigenous farmers was not enough to feed the soldiers. Consequently, many settlers would have to be enticed by land grant schemes to come to these territories and to cultivate land to the invading forces.

For a long period of time, settlements were confined within the highlands, either involving within-plateau or upslope movements. These patterns of movement began to change during the reign of Menelik II, who for good or for worse rearranged the demographic composition of the country. But before we go into settlement patterns during his reign, we need to distinguish *five* resetttlement patterns in Ethiopia: (1) spontaneous resettlement (2) non-spontaneous resettlement (3) planned resettlement (4) unplanned resettlement, and (5) emergency resettlement. The boundaries between some of them are, at times, not very sharp and difficult to draw. None the less, these patterns display important differences between them.

Spontaneous resettlement has usually been understood as a *voluntary* form of response to crisis. No doubt this is true, but it does not really tell us the whole story. It is voluntary in the sense that when a person is aware of the available opportunities elsewhere decides to resettle hoping to maximize his gains, even though the person is not within the purview of immediate threats to his survival. We can call this, a *voluntary-spontaneous resettlement*. The usual kind of spontaneous resettlement in Ethiopia had been an involuntary one. This was so not only because of *direct* threat by the state in the form of eviction, land-encroachment, conquest or internal conflicts, also because

of *indirect* threat by the state in its economic order or by its inability to curve the demographic expansion. In the latter case, the overriding consideration of an individual for undertaking spontaneous resettlement would be the maximization of income through land acquisition rather than through an increase in land productivity. We shall call this kind of resettlement as an *involuntary-spontaneous resettlement*. Both forms of settlement involve trial and error.

Non-spontaneous resettlement is not the same thing as planned resettlement, nor are they equivalent. Non-spontaneous resettlement usually involves *some* element of planning, but the primary concern for a person undertaking this kind of settlement is one of a *possibility* for a better survival. Planned resettlement, on the other hand, involves an enormous amount of agronomic survey of the region to be resettled, research of various kinds and at different level, organisational apparatus and skilled personnel, technical know-how and financial resources. Unplanned resettlement should not be construed as equivalent to spontaneous resettlement. Strictly speaking, unplanned resettlement is mainly a rural-urban movement pattern. This happens often when a person residing in a rural area leaves to visit relatives in an urban area, and having considered the merits and demerits of the chances of better survival in an urban center, then decides to stay. This resettlement pattern should also be distinguished from an emergency resettlement pattern. The latter entails a desparate attempt to avoid crisis without due consideration to the further consequences and hardships such resettlement might induce on the settlers as well as on the indigenous population.

All or some of these resettlement patterns continue to pervail in Ethiopia even today. The settlement patterns vary from one regime to another, and therefore, it may be useful to design a time frame in order to place them properly.

(1) *Pattern of Settlements prior to Menelik II*

The history of Ethiopia is really a result of a history of conquest, movements and the establishments of setellments either through force, or very rarely by persuasion. Every ethnic group has been affected, albeit to varying degrees. Some ethnic groups together with their kingdoms, such as Inarya and Dewaro have been annihilated or assimilated; some like Argobba and Gedicho became remnants and other like Oromo, Amhara and Tigrai became formidable forces.[1]

The Aksumite Christian state established by Geez speaking people in the north created settlements through continued wars and aggression against the Begga people and the Nubians in western lowlands of Ethiopia. Actually, that downslope settlement pattern from the highlands marked the beginning of

such movements. The creation of settlements in these areas was largely motivated by the desire of the rulers to expand Christianity over their non-christian neighbours. The Christian state also marked the beginning of southward expansion within the Ethiopian plateau.

For a while, this was checked by invading Arabs who wanted to establish settlements near and around the Red Sea coast. But the most serious blow to this southward, and downslope settlement expansion came from the Beggas and the Agews, whom they were not only hostile to these semetizied Ethiopians but also in dire need of new territories. However, their success did not last long; for soon another semetizied group, the Amharas during the reign of Amde Siyon (1314-44) resurge and put an end to these groups. More importantly, Amde Siyon resurrected the ideal of a Christian state and continued the march south-bound. In the process, he created settlements within the plateau.

His expediton to the south has established a pattern which many of his successors followed until the middle of fifteenth century. The Amhara expansion was an attempt to establish settlements by conquering new territories by subjugating the people and by imposing on them the Amhara tradition. The attempt to create a Christianity-centered state meant for many who identified themselves with the ideal of the state to come to the highlands and to settle there, but for others it meant continued alienation and marginalisation.

Southward settlement expansion was checked once briefly by the Turks, and later by the Oromos in the sixteenth century. The Oromos were pure-pastoralists who lived in the southern part of Ethiopia somewhere between the middle lakes of the Great Rift Valley and the Bale plateau. For the first time upslope settlement movement in massive scale was undertaken by Oromos.

> "In contrast to the Amhara expansion, the timing and style of the Oromo expansion were not calculated to extend political dominion. The Galla did not seek to gain recognetion for a central authority, to collect tribute, or to impose a national religious culture. their expansion was triggered by two motives: A need to carry out ritually prescribed military expeditions against enemies and a search for new land to accommodate a rapidly growing population".[2]

The Oromo settlement expansion, from lowlands to highlands, was motivated by demographic pressure which they had encountered. However, since they were pastoralists acclamatized to a lowland environment, survival in the highlands has imposed a demand on them to change their survival strategies. As a result, many became sedentary agriculturalist acquiring the plough civilization of the conquered highlanders; and some have settled as agro-pastoralists.

Again, this was reversed by the then King of Shewa, Sahle Selassie (1813-47), who pursued a policy of reconquest and settlement of shewa province. Until about early nineteenth century, this policy was pursued with vigour, and the entire province became, once again, under the control of the Amhara. In the North, a policy of reconquest spearheaded by Tewodros was accellerated and many notherners have managed to reclaim their earlier settlements.It was clear that the pattern of resettlement prior to Menelik involved virtually every nationality and tribe. It also involved movements from the lowlands to the highlands, and within the highlands. None the less, what has emerged as a clear pattern of direction of settlement movement is towards southern territories. In fact, had this movement not been checked by the Oromos' upward surge, the entire southern territories would have been settled by Amhara settlers by the end of fifteenth century. The southern marches of the Amharas had also another important aspect, namely settlers had moved following the movement of who happened to be the king at the time. It was rare for settlers to establish settlements preceeding a conquest of territories. When Menelik came to power, the policy of reconquest was replaced by a policy of conquering new territories with intense move towards the southern territories.

(2) *Pattern of Settlements during the reign of Menelik II*

Menelik's policy of settlement expansion was subtle as well as vicious. He annhillated those who put up resistance and rewarded those who did not with limited autonomy. His drive to establish a centralised government meant the creation of permanent settlements everywhere his army was stationed. Menelik could at any given time mobilise a standing army of 100,000 people with their dependents to subdue a certain territory. He was compelled to establish an army of this size because almost everywhere he was met with stiff resistance. During his initial period of attempts to establish permanent settlements, many of the Oromos in the South created a united front to challenge him under the banner of *Jihad*, even though , they had between themselves a long on-going feud, they rallied behind the cause of a holy war rendering Menelik's forces helpless. The Gurages, similarly, rallied behind a religious cause to contribute to the weakening of his forces.

At any rate, Menelik has managed to subdue these territories, set up permanent settlements, and converted the indigenous people into becoming *gebbars*. He uprooted their traditional *gedda* tenurial arrangement and replaced it with the *gult* system. This system had strengthened his power over these territories by allowing him to establish *gult-lords* drawn either from the ranks of his own army or from the clan leaders who

allied themselves as collaborators with Menelik.

However, Menelik soon discovered that it was difficult to feed his huge army and their dependents, for there were few peasants in the newly conquered territories. Hence, he enticed the nothern peasants to come and settle in southern territories with his land-grant policy. He gave large tracts of land to the northerners , and they came to the south with their plough civilization. The northerners did not venture further south to the lowlands. Instead, they concentrated in the more fertile highland parts of the region. The hostility between the indigenous people and the settler population discouraged many to go further away from the highlands. The northern settlers preferred the highlands not only for its fertility but also for its *security*. As a result, most of the highlands are densely populated, whereas the lowlands are sparsely populated.

(3) *Pattern of resettlement under the Italian Occupation*

During their brief occupation of Ethiopia, the Italians were determined to bring Italian permanent farmer settlers to the country. Not recognizing the intricate tenurial arrangements of the country, the Italians went ahead and divided the country into four arbitrarily drawn regions: Shewa, Harar, Amhara and Galla-Sidamo. In doing so they ran the risk of alienating the peasants whom they could have rallied behind.

Without a clear knowledge of the land tenure system and the various land-holdings both private and state owned, they went ahead and expropriated land from lawful owners. But this turned out to be damaging to the Italians for it precipitated the Ethiopian rebellion.[2] They realized later that their objective would not be met unless they courted the support of the peasantry by respecting their rights to land. Subsequently, they started compensating for the land and other agricultural concerns which they had expropriated. The amount of land concessions range from 50,000 to 248,729 hectares.[3]

On a priority basis the Italian Government was determined to establish settlement farms in fertile areas where they are easily accessible. Moreover, like the Amhara expansionists they directed their pattern of settlement southbound. In fact, most of their model settlement farms were located in the south. The Italians spent a great deal of effort to entice settlers to come to Ethiopia and resettled there. To this end, they launched a campaign of *three* settlement programme heavily financied by the government. In the end, the Italian Government managed to settle only 800 farmers in and around Debre Zeit, Mojjo, Guder and Lake Zewai.

(4) *Pattern of resettlement under the reign of Haile Selassie*

After his return from 'exile', Haile Selassie began to accellerate a policy of land grant, giving away land to his loyal friends and relatives. The road networks laid by the Italians greatly enhanced the policy, by allowing people to reach territories which were hitherto settlers-free.

Many small peasant producers on the highlands were, however, suffering from the problem of land scarcity and population pressure. It was also hopless for them to contemplate that the government would undertake a land-reform programme. Hence, many of them decided that the best way of improving their livelihood is by acquiring new tracts of land. This took the form of downslope movement towards the areas inhabited by pure pastoralists and semi-pastoralists; and involved bringing in new grazing land, woodland, grassland and forested land under cultivation.

Since the pastoralists'rights to land were not recognized by the state, their territory was, as usual, the first to be subjected to downslope invasion by settlers. It has been estimated that between 1950 and 1974, "the area settled and utilized by cultivators expanded by 25 per cent and that more than one million people settled in these areas".[4]

At first, resettlement effort was concentrated *within* the highlands, by people moving upslopes with a recognition of the fact that the highlands have better return than the lowlands. When this upslope movement was accellerated, then the highlands carrying capacity was severely impaired. Later, when the Imperial government was reminded of the consequences of this demographic pressure on the highlands by the World Bank Group in Ethiopia, it took no immediate action to avert the danger. The peasants, then, shifted their movement towards the escarpment of the Ethiopian Plateau, and in some cases the movement involved resettlement across the plateau.[5]

Later on however, the Imperial government established the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs and entrusted it with a task of resettling people. At first, the Ministry was involved in resettling retired soldiers, the unemployed, and the like by establishing settlement farms in Arba Minch and Abadir. Later this was expanded to involve all the valleys in the Awash Basin, and Setitu Humera. In 1973, the World Bank has more or less reiterated the proposal made by the US Aid mission report in 1964 about the basis of future agricultural development in Ethiopia, namely resettling people from the highlands to the lowlands.[6]

The US Aid report calls for developing the lowlands of Ethiopia, particularly the ones in the north-west of Ethiopia, including Metekel and Setitu Humera. In 1969, the World Bank Group extended assistance through the Development Bank of Ethiopia

for an agricultural project in Wolamo region in southern Ethiopia with a view of resettling 7,750 farmers to produce better crops and earn high cash income. Actually, the Wolamo project was a multi-faceted scheme involving both highland and lowland development. Its aim was to improve yields and quality production in three densely populated highland areas consisting of 6,000 farms, and to resettle 1,050 farmers in two new settlement areas in uninhabited savanna land by providing all the necessary infrastructural arrangements for a planned resettlement pattern. In 1973, the World Bank Group has argued that "this approach to agricultural development in Ethiopia is expected to provide valuable experience and techniques for application on a larger scale elsewhere in the country....Because of population pressure in the highlands and the limits on expansion of coffee exports set by International Coffee Agreement quotas, there is an urgent need for Ethiopia to develop areas of low population density for production of food, and to diversify agricultural output and exports".[7]

These proposals together with hefty assistance from IDA Bank, encouraged the Imperial government to accellerate commercial settlements in the lowlands, thus attracting labourers from Wollo, Tigrai and Southern Shewa to settle in these regions. In the south, landlords began to realize the benefits of mechanized farming and began to evict tenants particularly in Arsi region. The evicted tenants, at least many of them, began to settle in forested areas of Illubabor and Keffa, and in areas formerly ulilized by pastoralists in Sidamo and Gemu Goffa.

Resettlement patterns during the Imperial regime were mostly spontaneous, some non-spontaneous, some planned and in the case of urban areas the pattern of resettlement was unplanned. That is, rural residents often remain in cities after paying a visit to relatives in the hope of finding jobs in these urban areas. A recent study of industrial establishments in Addis reveals that many workers were not near from areas close to Addis, but, on the contrary, from areas further away from Addis, and from regions where the severity of survival crisis is the strongest.[8]

It was clear that involuntary spontaneous resettlement was, for many small cultivators, the last and the only solution to a declining income, unjust land-tenure system, and demographic expansion. The Imperial regime eoncouraged this pattern of resettlement either by an act of commission or ommission. For, after all, it was not ready to solve the land question. Hence, this involuntary resettlement reduced the pressure of land-reform on the government. But this meant that a sacrifice would have to be made by pastoralists through paving the way for settlement expansion. As far as the Imperial regime is concerned, the pastoralists are the least important segment of Ethiopia's population, and its policy always reflected a bias towards the peasant.

It is clear that resettlement patterns in Ethiopia have, in the past gravitated around state-centers. That is, generally people have created settlements following where the regimes established their centers. Since they all preferred to establish their centers in the highlands, largerly for security reasons, then these attracted people to establish settlements in the highlands. Except under Haile Selassie, no regime was willing to establish permanent settlements in the lowlands. They wanted to conquer those territories only for purposes of demanding tributes and loyality. This policy left the lowlanders marginalized, and the highlanders to become land-hungry. All regimes fostered the march of settlement southbound, albeit checked briefly by northbounds Oromo counter-expansionism. Haile Selassie's regime, on the other hand, realized the necessity and the political expediency of expanding settlements in the lowlands. With this background in mind, we shall now turn our attention to examine the resettlement policy of the PMAC.

7.3 Resettlement under the PMAC

When the PMAC came to power, it recognized the pastoralists' rights to grazing land, thus indirectly halting the involuntary spontaneous resettlement by the small cultivators, and ending the expansion of non-state commercial oriented planned resettlement pattern. The pastoralists became organized under the grazier's association, and the peasants under peasant's associations. These institutional settings have curtailed settlements, albeit not entirely. These actions, either directly or indirectly, aggravated population pressure on land. The PMAC was, therefore, faced with the problem of how to relieve this pressure while simultaneously improving the livelihood of the people directly affected by this pressure. To this end, the PMAC established Settlement Development Authority under the Ministry of Agriculture and Settlement entrusted with a task of handling all settlements prior to 1974. The task and the concomitant bureaucracy was, however, too much to be handled by this department. As a result, in 1979 it became a part of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC).

RRC was given the go-ahead signal by the PMAC to prepare a resettlement plan with the aim of relocating people from crowded regions to less densely populated areas, and to conceive a scheme for sedentarizing the pastoralists. The finance for the first task was drawn from the government's budget for development purposes, whereas for the latter it was secured from the UNDP.[9]

TABLE 1

RELIEF AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION: RELIEF-REHAB CENTRE AND SETTLEMENT POPULATIONS IN 1982

Group 1. Relief-Rehab Centres

Administrative Region	No. of Settlements	No. of People
Bale	256	417,806
Sidamo	18	51,774
Total	274	468,580

Group 2. Regular Settlements

Administrative Region	No of Settlement Units	No of Families	Total No of Settlers
Arssi	19	773	10,911
Gamo Goffa	6	1,871	7,515
Gonder	3	936	2,196
Hararghe	4	1,864	8,261
Illubabor	1	222	342
Kaffa	7	1,513	5,433
Shewa	21	8,444	23,291
Sidamo	5	1,588	5,390
Wellega	28	11,532	16,435
Wollo	5	5,626	28,754
Total	112	40,713	121,179

The types of settlers in Group 2 are as follows:

Drought affected	-15,525
Nomads	-10,595
Unemployed persons	-8,000
Overcrowded farmers	-6,603
Total	40,723

Source: RRC

TABLE 2

RRC REGULAR SETTLEMENTS, BY DEGREE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY, 1982

Ser. No.	Administrative Regions	Total		Settlements and Number of Households					
		No. of Settlements	No. of H.Hs.	Deficit in Food Clothing&Agr Serv.		Receive Agricultural Service Only		Self-Sufficient	
				No of Sett.	No of Households	No of Sett.	No of Households	No of Sett.	No of H. Hs.
1	Shoa	18	6170	-	-	6	885	12	3428
2	Sidamo	3	1164	-	-	3	960	-	-
3	Wellega	8	11295	-	-	5	9587	3	396
4	Hararghe	5	1872	2	3527	-	-	3	1209
5	Wollo	4	5257	-	-	-	-	4	4422
6	Gemu Gofa	4	2294	-	-	1	450	3	1310
7	Bale	2	6723	1	723	-	-	1	6000
8	Gonder	1	963	1	1500	-	-	-	-
9	Illubabor	1		1	457	-	-	-	-
10	Keffa	2	(1569)	1	131	-	-	1	148
	Total	48	37307	6	6338	15	11882	27	16913

Source: RRC

RRC promptly took up the task, designed two settlement schemes, namely Relief-Rehabilitations and Regular Settlements; and resettled 468,580 people under the first, and 121,179 under the second by the end of 1982 (see tables 1 and 2). By the end of that year, it has established 386 settlements, of which 112 settlements are under Regular Settlements scheme. Table 2 shows that out of 48 settlements under the Regular plan, only 27 nere regarded as self-sufficient. However, RRC drew from this experience that the task of resettlement is not only taxing but also requires careful planning, skilled personnel, enormous financial resources, and daily-relief assistance to settlers before they become self-reliant. However, the Ten Year Plan calls for intensifying resettlement efforts and for relative expansion of settlement farms to free the country from food deficient. It is not clear whether the intensification of resettlement effort suggested in the Plan is on the basis of those considerations pointed out by RRC. None the less, it appeared that the PMAC was inclined to accept planned resettlement on the basis of those elements pointed out by RRC as recently as 1984.

This planned resettlement programme has two components. One of them is to relocate small peasant cultivators *outside* of their localities, particularly in the south and southwestern parts of the country where population pressure on land is less severe. It seems that the main concern of this component is to solve the problems of overpopulation on the highlands, the declining productivity of small cultivators, increasing environmental degradation, drought affected population, pastoral mode of appropriation and jobless urbanites.

The other component is villagization programme. It attempts to relocate people *within* their localities. When the villagization programme is announced in 1985, its officially stated goals include (a) the achievement of viable development of the rural community and agriculture by extending services, (b) the exercise of more useful and meaningful land-use patterns and practice methods of protecting natural resources and wild life, (c) the establishment of social and economic services like clinics,schools, stores, electricity, water supplies, roads, flour mills, shops, etc., and (d) the establishment of self-defense and village security.[10]

I shall maintain that villagization and resettlement are two sides of one objective, namely to transform rural community on the basis of socialist principles by relocating its inhabitants. However, we need to say few words of caution here. The origins of villagization programme and that of resettlement are the same. Both were first mentioned in the land-reform proclamation of 1975. Chapter 3, article 10, section 8, of Proclamation No 31 of 1975 suggests that one of the functions of peasant associations is "to undertake villagization

programmes".[11] The same proclamation, but Chapter 4, article 18, reads that "the Government shall have responsibility to settle peasants or to establish cottage industries to accommodate those who, as a result of the distribution of land in accordance with the provisions of this proclamation, remain with little or no land".[12] The proclamation further adds and calls for 'peasantization' of pastoralists under Chapter 5, article 27 stating that "the Government shall have the responsibility to improving grazing areas, to dig wells ant to *settle* the nomadic people *for farming purposes*".[13]

The implementation of both resettlement and villagization programmes got under way since 1975, although the latter was not labelled as such, at the time. The circumstances surrounding the implementation of these programmes were also similar. The resettlement effort was prompted by the desire to relocate those drought affected people in the 1970s, and by the need to correct uneven distribution of land arising from the reform measure. During this time, villagization efforts were undertaken to provide shelters *within* their localities to those affected by the drought during that period. Strictly speaking, nobody at the time referred to them as results of villagization programme, even though settlements were established for the affected population within the same regions. Subsequently, however, villagization embraced a different posture when the PMAC undertook the creation of protective hamlets in Harerghe and Bale regions following the Ethio-Somali conflict of 1977-78. Under the veil of providing shelters to the pastoralists, the settlements in these regions were designed to undermine the successionist bases, and to establish the dominance of Christian groups who had been previously slaughtered by the Muslim splinter group of the Oromo Liberation Front. Like the resettlement programme, the villagization scheme was also prompted by the need to correct landlessness or inadequate land-holding. This was evident when the PMAC following the tradition of Imperial regime, evicted small cultivators around Wabe Shebelle river to pave way for the expansion of state farms. The Arsi-Bale region was selected to design 'Wabe Villages' as a model to accommodate the evicted cultivators. These villages came into the scene between 1978 and 1983. Except with few references here and there, no one really referred to them as efforts of villagization programme. The success of Wabe Villages has made a strong impact on policy makers. In 1985, the government announced the villagization campaign, but made no proclamation concerning it on the assumption that it was clearly stated in the land-reform proclamation of 1975.

It is interesting to note here that since 1975, both resettlement and villagization were imbued with considerable elements of planning. However, planned resettlement came to an end in October 1984, whereas planned villagization came to an end a

year later in 1985. They both were terminated in those respective dates and were replaced by an emergency resettlement, and an emergency villagization schemes. No one has ever said, however, that the villagization scheme was an emergency measure but the *speed* by which it was undertaken militates against any rational supposition that it was planned. According to the National Villagization Coordinating Committee, between December 1985 and March 1986, 48 *awrajas* and 8 out of 12 administrative regions, were involved resettling 4.6 million peasants or 12 percent of the rural population into 4,500 villages. At the same time 5,530 out of 20,157 peasant associations had launched villagization campaign.[14] The speed by which the campaign was conducted was a feature shared by an emergency resettlement. The government made no secret about calling it as such. In fact, the way in which it was spelled out to the public was under three phases of emergency measures to the drought problem. In November 1984, the government has announced to resettle 1.5 million people by the end of 1985. Though it did not reach this goal, it has none the less managed to resettle 800,000 people by March 1986. It was said by the chairman of PMAC that the target 1,5 million people is far too small as compared to the whole 8 million drought affected people needed to be resettled.[15] Interestingly enough, they both came to a halt by temporary moratorium in March 1986.

Although we need to keep them separately for the sake of clarity as well as to avoid breeding confusion, none the less, resettlement and villagization campaigns are two sides of one implicit objective. That objective, as we noted above, is to transform the rural community from its backward agrarian relations into socialist production relations. Resettling people *outside* of their localities implies villagization. Similarly, relocating people *within* their own localities, viz, villagization, implies resettlement .Resettlements are established as village units so that they become convenient to providing services and to swiftly control the rural population by the central government. These two *aspects* of planned resettlement are meant to be steping stones to reaching the objective we noted above. They are de facto embraced and implemented, by peasant associations; for they are entrusted with these tasks. Once settlements are established, the options which are open to settlers are either to join co-operatives or state farms or settlement farms. The last disjunct is not, strictly speaking, a choice at all; for settlement farms are expected to be co-operativised.

Both aspects of this planned resettlement imply that the possibility of pursuing individual cultivation is ruled out of court; and joining co-operatives will no longer be a *voluntary* option but rather one that is a *must*. Participation in planned resettlement schemes tantamounts to *renouncing* one's own

right to refuse joining co-operatives.

It is true that villagization has often been viewed separately from resettlement. However, a closer inspection of these schemes reveals that they are two sides of the same coin whose origin is traceable to the land-reform proclamation of 1975. Planned resettlement, with its two components, was designed to achieve those stated objectives. It was also intended to de-motivate the small peasant producer from pursuing individual cultivation and to ultimately force him to surrender to the state directed, collectivized and co-operativized economic policy.

It seemed, at first, that planned resettlement in the form of moving people outside of their localities was an effort to provide settlers with opportunities to improving their livelihood. It also seemed that quite a lot of preparation, study and other pre-requisites had preceeded such a major operation. As it turned out, however, the real objective was to increase agricultural production through co-operative mode of operation regardless of the small cultivator's explicit desire to own and cultivate his plot of land. In any event, neither production has increased nor the small cultivator's condition has improved. Yet despite this failure of strategy of rural development, the government has vowed to continue pumping enormous capital into it.

The reasons for this failure are not difficult to discern. Admittedly, many cultivators had volunteered to participate in the initial phase of resettlement hoping to improve their condition. However, they soon realized that they are labouring on a land 'borrowed' from the state, have very little say on the process of production, and the fruits of their labour are not entirely theirs. Everything was initiated and decided upon at administrative level. Their task is to carry out whatever decision reached at that level. They were being baptized into becoming 'rural proletariats' despite their compelling need to remain independent cultivators. The small producers saw no benefits or any other compelling reasons to increase their productivity by a co-operative mode of operation. From their vantage point, they prefer to be allotted a sizeable good quality land and when these are scarce, they want to have access to improved or high-yielding seeds and to agricultural extension services, and to be left alone to pursue their activity.

When this independence is coupled with an encouragement to participate directly into the open market by a ban on price regulation, then they will be motivated to increase agricultural production. These are the conditions *sin qua non* which they want to see created and these happen to be the very conditions which the government is unwilling to compromise. As the result of this impasse both the small cultivator and the nation continue to suffer.

The villagization component of planned resettlement suffers from similar problems. It is to be recalled that villagization's

goals include, among other things, providing services to scattered rural communities by relocating the inhabitants in organized villages. However, the moment these people were relocated, then they lose their right not to participate in producers' co-operatives. The conditions would not allow them to pursue individual farming nor could they withstand the mounting pressure by the state if allowed to continue this activity We already noted that the voluntare nature of joining co-operatives is rather pointless when it comes to those farmers who happened to be under the umbrella of planned resettlement. The stiff resistance which farmers put on, at times, against villagization has to do with this fact.

Given the reality of Ethiopian rural communities, many Ethiopian observers would agree that villagization is one feasible alternative for providing services to them. However, what these people have failed to see is that by consenting to this scheme, the small cultivators are also agreeing to forego their right to sustain their livelihood as independent cultivators. It would be naieve to view the small peasant producers as people refusing to be provided with services.

First of all, it is not entirely clear as to what the services *really* amount to. Presumably, they consist of clinics, schools, electricity, clean drinking water and the like. If these are the services, then it is difficult to see why the inhabitants must be relocated. For a center could be established close to where they live so that they would have access to these services. If the distance one has to travel for these services is reduced even by 5 kms., then the peasants would prefer remaining in their traditional environment and travel for the sevices.

From the peasant's point of view, by far a better strategy than relocating himself away from his roots is to travel for these services. His traditional tie to his environment, though seemingly trivial, has quite a lot of weight in his belief-system. The gains to be secured by relocating himself must outweigh his decision to abandon the place of origin where his forefathers had ploughed, buried his embilical cord, and the *Adbar* which he annually pays tribute to. And not only the gains must outweigh these considerations, but also he has to be absolutely convinced that they do.

Secondly, these services no doubt are very expensive. Then the question becomes how is it possible for the state to provide these services when 46 percent of its GNP is going to defense purposes. It seems reasonable to bring first the war campaign to a halt. These considerations lead us to cast doubt on the professed aim of villagization. For it is clear that the peasant as an economic person is not convinced of the worthiness of this scheme vis-a-vis his position, nor is he willing to abdicate his last hope of survival, i.e. to become an independent cultivator.

While the planned agricultural settlement is being

implemented under a modest pace, the drought problem began to influence the speed and direction of the scheme. The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) entrusted with the task of implementing this scheme together with other agencies was forced to expedite the process thereby altering the modality of its operation. The planned resettlement in the form of relocating people *outside* of their localities was replaced by an *emergency resettlement pattern* to curve the effects of the ravaging famine in the country.

This meant that instead of relocating people gradually in small number, massive amount of people would have to be relocated in a hurry, and resettlement sites would have be chosen and prepared at similar speed. This raises suspicion as to the viability of this emergency resettlement to responding to famine and its utility as a strategy of development. In order to see to what extent this skepticism can be justified, we shall trace its development from October 1984 until September 1985. Here, the focus will be first to come to grips with the policy itself since that stage. Second, to examine the preparations for the resettlement by focusing on the campaign effort undertaken by students, staff and workers in the summer of 1985. And lastly, we shall examine the actual conditions in the settlement sites by taking our study of Metekel Resettlement site as a sample representative of emergency resettlement programme. We shall, therefore, begin our task with the first.

7.4 Emergency Resettlement Policy

Between October 3 and 4, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) held a meeting to discuss the problem of what appeared to be one of the most devastating outburst of famine in Ethiopian history. The meeting adjourned noting some important points which for years to come would have far-reaching implications. The Politburo decided to seek ways to further strengthen the measures taken so far to combat the drought. That meant providing more and immediate relief assistance to the victims; and the construction of more relief shelters in areas affected by the drought. Moreover, this meant also expediting what it is often labelled as 'rehabilitation' efforts, but in reality it is none other than resettlement. In order to purse these tasks, the Politburo believed necessary to draw a plan of action, and this plan shall be monitored by the Politburo itself.

The plan of action calls for the establishment of a committee known as National Drought Relief Committee under the jurisdiction of the Politburo. The NDRC has seven units, of which Resettlement Co-ordinating Unit chaired by Legesse Asfaw is one of them. Under the NDRC, there is a national sub-committee divided into six zones, known as Zonal Drought Relief Committee

(ZDRC). Each zonal committee co-ordinates relief and resettlement efforts in its own region, and transmits its findings directly to NDRC for a decision.

The announcement of this work plan, however, came on October 26, but two days earlier the Commissioner of RRC gave a briefing to nor-governmental organizations (NGOs) stating that settlement sites had been prepared and development projects had been designed for the attainment of relief and resettlement objectives. He added that preparations are underway so that in the coming three months nearly 50,000 people would be moved from drought affected localities to newly prepared settlement sites.[16] His briefing points out two items. One is the claim that settlement sites were chosen and prepared in less than 20 days. No mention was made, however, as to what criteria were employed in the selection of sites. The other is that more effort of this nature is underway to resettle the drought affected people. Again, he did not mention where the preparations are taking place, but this became evident when the Chairman of the PMAC began touring various regions of the country.

Between October 25 and 27, the Chairman visited Wollega, Illubabor and Kaffa administrative regions which are embraced by Western Zonal Drought Relief Committee. He continued his visit to the regions embraced by Northwestern Zonal Drought Relief Committee consiting of Gojjam and Gondar administrative regions. At the same time, a team led by Berhanu Bayih, a Politburo member, toured Tigrai, Wollo and northern Shewa, regions under Nothern Drought Relief Committee.

When visiting Metekel province of Gojjam region on November 2, 1984, the Chairman pointed out that Metekel holds great potential both in the implementation of the government's programme of alleviating the drought disaster and in long-term development projects. He said that Metekel holds a leading place in the emrgency resettlement and agricultural development programme on accounnt of its fertility, adequate rainfall, bountiful river systems, and rich forestry and mines resources.[17]

He then gave directives on immediate measures to development programmes and to establish an agricultural research center. It became apparent after the visit that his tour was to confirm the selection of sites already decided upon at a local level in each regions, and on a next higher level at Zonal regions which the Chairman has toured were the ones which setters later on moved in. It also became clear that the actual task of selecting sities and making the necessary proparations for resettlement got underway in these regions following the meeting of the Politburo between October 3 and 4, 1984.

That meeting was of some historical significance; for RRC which was advocating for a gradual and cautious plan of resettlement has reversed its position and argued that the 1973 World Bank

Report which calls for resettlement of people from highland areas to the lowlands in the southwestern and northwestern parts of the country be implemented.[18] This argument apparently was accepted at the meeting, and its decision was immediately communicated to party officials first at regional level, and later to provincial and district levels. The officials were told to choose sites in the respective lowland areas of their regions, and to make the necessary preparations for resettlement by mobilizing the government and other resources in their jurisdiction until further directives are issued after the Chairman's visit. During his tour of the resettlement sites, the Chairman was briefed about the local conditions, what has thus far been accomplished and about the remaining tasks ahead. He was impressed by the performance of these tasks in a matter of *three weeks* and agreed with their selection of the resettlement sites.

After he, and other members who were touring other regions of the country concluded their visit, they met for the first time since October 4. That was the 6th regular politburo meeting. Tour reports by Politburo members were discussed, and the meeting adjourned by issuing directives towards rapid promotion of the resettlement programme in accordance with the action plan worked out earlier in October.[19]

The following day, on November 7, the Western Zonal Drought Relief Committee disclosed its two phase plan to settle drought victims in Illubabor, Wollega and Kaffa regions. It was pointed out that, under the first phase, 50,000 drought victims will be resettled, of which 20,000 heads of families will be settled in Wollega, 20,000 in Illubabor and 10,000 in Keffa regions. In the second phase, it is pointed out that the drought victims will be settled in Gambella province of Illubabor region, in Bege and Kelem in Wollega region; and that necessary preparations are underway.[20] It was not disclosed, however, how many people and within how many months they will be settled under the second phase of the plan.

On November 14 and 15, two teams, one led by the minister of interior, and the other led by the Chairman of Resettlement Co-ordinating Unit of NDRC, Legesse Asfaw, began inspecting tour of the shelters under construction in the resettlement sites and the ones in the drought affected areas. The first team was dispatched to Assossa resettlement site in Wollega; and the one led by Legesse left to Tigrai and Wollo regions. During his visit of these regions, Legesse issued directives *to begin registration of victims volunteering for resettlement.*[21] The next day, on November 16, the first group of settlers were drawn from six provinces of Wollo, presumably all volunteers who have been registered the previous day in accordance with the directives issued by Legesse. On the 17th of November the first group of settlesrs

totaling 2,600 families drawn from Quiha district of Enderta province, Tigrai region were send off to Toba district, Bunno Bedele province in Illubabor and arrived there on November 19. The second group of settlers from Tigrai were dispatched the next day.

On November 23, the second batch of settlers numbering 4,000 households from Wollo, but the first to be resettled in Assossa arrived there. A week later, Legesse went to Assossa to inspect the Assossa resettlement site, and he was briefed about the settlers' condition, and the various activities which took place in the area. He proceeded to visit Illubabor. There he was briefed by chairman of the Western Zonal Drought Relief Committee about all the activities in the regions of Wollega, Illubabor and Kaffa. The chairman has pointed out that fertile areas capable the on-going first round of the resettlement drive. He said that the people of Illubabor have built 28,552 dwellings, the people in Wollega are constructing 350 shelters for 22,500 people, and 824 shelters have been built in Kaffa. Impressed by these statistics, Legesse has commented that the fact that 28,000 homes could be built and drought victims moved into them in a single region *in less than one month* attests to the strength of the Party and the fact that the Party belongs to the people and the people to the Party.[22] He then went on to visit the agricultural activities of the resettled people in Jimma and Kaffa provinces of Kaffa region.

It is interesting to note here that no document indicates who were these settlers in Jimma and Kaffa; and where they came from. Based on the available evidence, we can discern that they came from Wollo or Tigrai or from both regions between November 19 and 20 at the earliest date. Now, Legesse's visit of the agricultural activities of the resettled people seems to suggest the following points: (a) the resettled people who came to the region have began farming activity *within two weeks* since they arrived in the region; for his visit of the region was on December 6 (b) This seems to suggest that the resettled people could hardly be famine affected people; for famine victims could not possibly engage in farming activity within such a short period of time. (c) That means either one of the following things must have taken place. The resettled people who were engaged in this farming activity must have been resettled in the region few months or years before or when screening the people to be resettled, some kind of 'triage' must have been utilized, hence the ones resettled are able bodied people.

The available evidence confirms both of the disjuncts. There were people resettled in Kaffa under the planned resettlement scheme of RRC since 1975, and the region since then has established 7 settlement farms, of which only one is self-sufficient. This seems to suggest that the farmers Legesse had visited must have been the earlier settlers, and not the ones who

came under the emergency programme. The selection process, on the other hand, has involved some criteria, albeit not frequently adhered to. One of them suggests that resettlers must be *voluntary*. Another criterion gives priority to those who are capable of undertaking agricultural activity soon upon arrival to a new site.[23] In effect, the screening process calls for a priority to be given to those able-bodied people who volunteer to be resettled. That means those who are famine victims are either automatically excluded from resettlement or were the least preferred people for resettlement. In either case, they are the most likely people to stay behind in relief shelters, even if they show willingness to be resettled. But it is possible, however, for many people who fulfil the physical criterion but prefer to stay at relief shelters until such time that the worst period is over and in the hope of resuming their agricultural activity. Indeed they were people of this kind, but were *forced* to be resettled. From the government's point of view, their refusal to stay behind would undermine the economic viability of the resettlement programme; both in the short and in the long-run. For feeding millions who are physically fit but drought affected at feeding centers for an indefinite period of time, while they could be used for development purposes, requires enormous relief assistance to be drawn from the government budget allocated for development purposes as well as from donor countries or organizations. Consequently, it was obvious that force has to be used, and the evidence, however, is not entirely a direct one.[24]

In any event, the government continued to mobilize or forced many to be resettled. When RRC briefed the US delegation visiting the country, in December 1984, it pointed out that 7,000 drought victims are being mobilized daily to be resettled. It also pointed out that by December 19 of the same year, 225,000 people are expected to be resettled.[25] By December 8, there were 51,000 people from Wollo alone who were resettled.[26] That means within sixty days since the programme was first started, over 700 people a day from Wollo alone were resettled. On December 11, 1984, the Commissioner of RRC has announced the plan "to rehabilite (resettle) a total of 300,000 families over the next twelve months from the over-populated and overused highlands in the North to the unused on underused land in the West and the South ... The rehabilitation (resettlement) programme is actually a shift of the relief centers from scorched and arid environments, to environments conducive for relief programmes and for the eventual complete rehabilitation (resettlement) of the victims".[27] (emphasis added)

That means 1.5 million people would have to be resettled by December 1985. However, the statement is rather confusing. It attempts to define resettlement as a change of relief locations to

a better environment, an environment which is neither scorched nor arid. Such a statement belittles the magnitude of the problems involved in resettlement; and of all the agencies RRC with years of resettlement experience behind it should know better. The statement merely asserts that what is being done is the establishment of relief centers in the lowlands, and people should come if they needed assistance. The statement is also misleading, for it is not accurate to suggest that the new environment in these lowlands is not arid. If anything is accurate about the lowlands of Ethiopia where nearly *all* resettlement sites are located, it is that they are arid environments. And for highlanders who had lived all their lives above 1000 meters above sea level, it is hard to see how conducive this environment could be.

At any rate, the figure of the people to be resettled was quite staggering. It became evident that moving this size of people would require considerable mobilization of resources as quickly as possible; for the time span allotted to it is only 12 months. The first group of people whom the government turned to for this campaign were the political cadres. About 2,259 cadres were drawn from various governmental agencies to be deployed to resettlement sites so that they could carry the task of constructing dwellings, counseling and organizing the resettlers. And when they completed their tasks, they will be judged, in the words of the Chairman of PMAC, "by their performance in discharging the historic and patriotic responsibility entrusted upon them".[28]

The cadres were supposed to be selected on a voluntary basis. In every government office, there is a primary organization of the WPE. The cadres who are members of these primary organizations are expected to volunteer. They should not do so *only* when their administrative position in the offices is critical to running the day to day affairs of the offices. Knowing this criterion very well, many cadres in key postions volunteered to go to resettlements pretending to show to others how dedicated and patriotic they are. However, they could not and did not go. On the other hand, the cadres who did not volunteer, and whom they had all kinds of family obligations as well as health problems were recruited.

These recruited cadres were given a preparatory seminar between January 16 and 19, 1985 to enable them carry out their duty at places where they will be deployed. After various ceremonial addresses by high ranking officials including the Chairman of the PMAC, they were dispatched to the sites in Gondar, Gojjam, Kaffa, Illubabor and Wollega regions on January 22. On the same day, 200 agricultural workers from Jimma were mobilized to be deployed to resettlement sites located within the jurisdiction of Western Zonal Drought Relief Committee. They included Assossa, Gambella, Gura Ferda and Decha resettlement

sites.

On the evening of February 10, 1985, the Chairman of the PMAC addressed the nation on television and radio calling upon the people "to shoulder historic responsibility". This was *his first address* to the nation on the famine which was taking the lives of hundreds of people everyday. In his address, he listed *seven* urgent measures to be taken to cope with the worsening drought situation:

1. Every Ethiopian national, whether residing at home or abroad, and whatever his or her area of activity, should contribute money commensurate with his/her income.
2. All Ethiopians, whatever their calling or work should serve at relief shelters or rehabilitation camps for a specified period of time on a shift bases to help drought victims embark upon a new life.
3. The import of automobiles and light vehicles privately or by government institutions as well as unnecessary luxury items should be stopped
4. Individual use of government cars should be stopped and their use confined to group and essential state services.
5. The import of textiles be stopped and use be made of localy produced wear.
6. The thrifty use of petroleum and lubrication oil to be limited to production and social service to public transport.
7. A stop to be made to the abuse of individual home building and selling through loans acquired from the banks or other sources and to the sale of urban land as these have been found to cause hardship to the broad masses.

The speech was moving to many people in different ways. It was couched in a very patriotic language to arouse a feeling of nationalism to respond to the call. He informed the public that 7.5 million fellow compatriots are suffering from the drought, and he also pointed out that the reasons why Ethiopia is suffering from this kind of crisis has to do with its backwardness. This backwardness was caused, among other things, by internal and external conflicts. He cited that prior to the fascist invasion of Ethiopia, there were 40 attempts to colonize the country. This kind of speech could easily arouse the sense of patriotism of many Ethiopians. Indeed, Ethiopians are proud of their unique history, and of the sacrifices of their ancestors to protect the country from colonial-agressors. The speech has inculcated into the minds of many Ethiopians the cold reality that their compatriots are dying of hunger. This was emotionally moving. For a people proud of their deeply entrenched tradition of generosity, who go out of their way to please and to care for others despite its poverty, but for the sake of honour and family dignity, this was a very sad moment.

Some were moved differently. For them it aroused indignation. Had this kind of scenario taken place in democratic countries, it

would have precipitated the downfall of who ever happens to be in power. Their indignation stemmed from the fact that the state which is clearly philistine and complacent, had been watching the famine ravaging the people for three years, and yet *only in February 1985* they were asked to make a donation to save their own people from hunger while others from different countries were doing this for Ethiopians for years. Whatever little money they may have contributed, it could have saved some lives. Why not earlier? Their indignation was heightened further by the kind of measures now taken to combat the famine.They failed to understand, for example, how a ban on the import of private automobiles and textiles, and a halt on construction works could help solve the problem of famine. The individuals who were importing cars were few in number, and besides, these were mostly people who had lived abroad and upon their return they brought their cars; or people whose relatives living abroad send them cars by paying enormous import duty. Therefore, it appeared that the government would have been better-off if import was encouraged, for the revenue it derives from this practice could have been deployed for other purposes. Similarly, it seemed odd to suggest that a ban should be put on import of textiles when the country is not self-sufficient in producing its own. To be sure, textiles are manufactured in Ethiopia, but the chemicals necessary to produce them are imported. It seems, therefore, that these measures were meant to be austerity measures, but not measures to solving the problem of famine. As austerity measures, they are even dubious. For it is the state pursuing its war efforts which is a big spender and not individuals.

None the less, the two items on the list, namely giving donation and a duty to serve in resettlement camps are relevant to the problem of drought under discussion. It appeared that in its effort to resettle masses of people, the state needed to mobilize enormous human resources. The Chairman of the PMAC has pointed out that under a two-phase plan worked out by the Politburo, 50,000 families or 250,000 people have been resettled in the *western* and *south-western* parts of the country amidst sparsely inhabited areas of organized peasants associations. However, he pointed out that the second phase envisages the settlement of 250,000 peasant families or 1,250,000 people in *fertile* and *virgin* lands in the country's *north-western, western,* and *south-western* parts by December of 1985. Therefore, it is clear that the mobilization of the masses is needed for the implementation of this plan under the second phase. It became also clear that the settlement of people in Gojjam and Gondar regions is mapped out under this phase. He also pointed out that "the amount of money for the campaign during the current fiscal year is close to the annual budgetory allocations of the country for its overall economic development".[29] Hence resettlement not

only demands a mobilization of human resources, but also very *expensive*. And the campaign by being conscripted to provide their labour power.

Moreover, the government believed that the only means available in order to save the lives of millions of people is resettlement. In an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) on February 28, 1985, the Chairman of the PMAC emphatically suggests that "the two alternatives we have are either to make these people productive and link them with productive land and to provide them all the opportunity to produce, or simply leave them there to their fate".[30]

In view of the government's commitement to the belief that resettlement is the *only* solution to the famine it became necessary to involve as many Ethiopians as possible in the prepartion of sites and in the construction of dwellings in the north-western, western and south-western parts of the country. Presumably, this massive involvement to move 1,250,000 million of people will make the resettlement campaign a success. Hence, the people targeted to be dispatched to these sites following the cadres were students, instructors and workers in higher learning institutions. Nobody knows for sure *why* this group of people were targeted for deployment to the resettlement sites, since many unemployed people were available. The offical explantion given on various occasion is that Ethiopia's intellectuals have an outstanding record of precipitating and spearheading radical changes, including the downfall of Haile Selassie, hence they are now called upon to play another exemplary role by working in resettlement sites.[31] Paranthetically, we should add that it was the educated elite, rather its lack of unity, which enabled the *Dergue* to assume power. At any rate, that official explanation appeared to be question-begging; for what resettlement requires is, among other things, man-power and if this happens to be a skilled one, then so much the better; but what resettlement does not need is ideological heros.

Although the evidence is rather sketechy; nevertheless, the Chairman of the PMAC was the one who has proposed this call. Despite arguments pointing to the difficulties involved in deploying this group to resettlement sites, he insisted that they should be dispatched and view this opportunity as their national duty. The sooner they are deployed the better the success of resettlement shall be. Hence, the veredict was reached to dispatch them. And they were promptly sent to two resettlement sites, one in Gambella province in Illubabor and the other in the Metekel province of Gojjam administrative region. In the next section, we shall follow up the campaign effort in the Metekel province.

7.5. The Deployment of members of higher learning institutions: Metekel province, Gojjam

In may 1985, the government has instructed the Commission for Higher Education to close all the universities, junior colleges and teacher training institutes; and to send the students, the academic and administrative staff to the two of the three newly selected resettlement sites: Metekel province in Gojjam, and Gambella province in Illubabor.These institutions were nearing their scheduled closure time in June, but suddenly the order came to dispatch them to these sites so that they will help build dwellings for the alleged victims of famine who will be moving from areas affected by the drought.

The instruction was communicated to officials of Commission of Higher Education, and subsequently to the institutions concerned, following the visit made by the Chairman of the PMAC to Metekel on May 4, 1985. Prior to his visit, two groups of settlers dispatched on April 6 and 9 have already been settled in the region with the help of the regional WPE Committee, in close co-operation with public and mass organizations. After his return from Metekel the Chairman made it clear to officials concerned that many of the famine victims are without shelters and urged a speedy deployment of the members of higher learning institutions before the approaching rainy season finally sets in.

The deployment, however, did not get underway until June 24, already in the rainy season; and ordinarily the institutions would have been closed by this time if interruption did not take place in May. The delay was caused by the lack of finance, bureaucratic inefficiency and by the absence of any plan. The government did not have the faintest idea where the finance is going to come from, nor had any idea of how much is required to implement the scheme. Nor did it have a plan to transporting thousands of campaigners to these sites, and how their subsistence to be provided during their stay. These details, apparently, had to be worked out *after* the institutions were pre-maturely announced to be closed in May. While these details being worked out, the institutions could have continued their function, and the senior students would have graduated.

The deployment of the people not materializing on time, they had to stay idle for nearly two months awaiting for their departure date. Similarly the urgency to deploy the campaigners before the rainy season did not materialize. The settlers came to Metekel, instead, in September, i.e. at the end of the rainy season.

While the Chairman of the Resettlement Co-ordinating Unit, was touring Metekel and inspecting the arrangements for the campaigners, the Commissioner of RRC together with other officials was giving a seminar to the campaigners. The two day seminar ended on June 15, and the Commissioner informed the

participants that necessary preparations for the supply of food and health care in the areas of deployment have been finalized.[32]

In the meantime, a screening committee to issue exemption to those who meet a set of criteria was in the process of concluding its task. Anyone meeting one of the following criteria could, in principle, be exempted (1) A pregnant woman, (2) handicapps with evidence from a medical board, (3) those with severe and persistent health problems, subject to medical board approval, (4) divorcees, and widowers with responsibility to look after children, (5) those with key positions in the administration whose absence could impede the day-to-day activities of the institutions. (6) those who shall be going abroad on scholarship during the campaign period but who have already began the visa process at least one month prior to the date of departure for the campaign; and (7) those who are above 50 years of age.[33]

Some 4,000 applications were submitted to the committee in less than two weeks period. The growing number of applicants seeking exemption began to raise suspicion. The committee, troubled by the desire of so many people to be exempted, screened the applicants not always on the basis of the stated criteria but on speculated motive of individuals for wanting to remain behind. Some who have applied for exemption were viewed as politically suspect, as it were unwilling to support the government's national call. This kind of categorization has successfully served as deterrent to those deserving applicants.

Admittedly, some were seeking exemption for no good reason at all. Others, however, thought that the resettlement campaign is utterly insane, as it were another fun fair in the series of fun fairs which was unfolding since twelve years ago. Consequently, they used every conceivable opportunity to secure exemption. Recognizing this element, the committee wanted to play the game of 'politcal Sherlockholmism' thus undermining the cases of legitimate applicants. For instance, many with a proven long history of illness and verified by the medical board were sent to the campaign. Hence, 97 people and 26 pregnant women whom the committee has refused exemption status were sent back from the campaign after having spent one month at the resettlement sites.[34]

In some higher learning institutions, the exemption criteria were not even disclosed. As a result, many pregnant women came to the campaign. Unaware of the consequences of taking anti-malaria pills, the pregnant campaigners found themselves in those hastily set up clinics for abortion. At least two mother succeeded in giving birth at resettlement centers where there were neither adequate facilities nor privacy nor food for newly born enfants.

On June 24, the first batch of campaigners arrived in Debre Markos, the capital of Gojjam administrative region. After

spending the night there, they continued their journey the following day reaching at their final destination in Pawe resettlement site late in the afternoon. The remaining batch undertook its journey following the first. Three settlement sites were prepared, namely *Pawe, Gublak* which is 45 kms west of Pawe, and Aisid which is 107 kms west of Pawe. The first arrivals were stationed at *Pawe* and the remaining campaigners were dispatched to *Gublak* and *Aisid* settlement sites.

The campaigners stationed at Pawe began clearing up woodlands, grasslands, cutting and pilling up *acacia* trees and bamboos, on June 30. Pawe resettlement site is 545 kms away from Addis Ababa , located in the catchment of Beles River, a major tributary of the Blue Nile. It is also the first resettlement site in Metekel province already accomodating the settlers who arrived in April. 3,032 capaigners were allotted to this site. In Pawe, there were two water tanks with a total storage capacity of 10,000 litres, and since there is a shortage of water in the region, the tanks would have to be filled daily by transporting water from other regions.

Some 45 kilometers west of Pawe and 590 kms from Addis,was the location of the second settlement site, Gublak. Except for some surveryng work done in the region by Tigrai Surveying Team, the Gublak resettlement site was virtually untouched. The number of campaigners in this resettlement site was 3434. As far as water is concerned, this site is better off than others in that 10 litre of water per second could be pumped from the well in the area. Bamboos and woods which were neededd for building dwellings were, however, extremely scarce.

The third and last resettlement site is Aiside. Located 107 kilometers west of Pawe and 652 kilometers from Addis, near Ethio-Sudanese border, Aiside is a site for 4529 campaigners. Two kilometers east of it, there is Guba airfield under construction. Similar to Pawe resettlement site, the demand for water is met by transporting it with trucks from a village called Mankush, some 30 kilometers east of Aiside. The effort to dig boreholes in both Pawe and Aiside sites turned out to be a failure.

Nobody knows how and why Gublak and Aiside resettlement sites were selected. A document prepared by the regional WPE Committee reveals that as of March 1, 1985, the settlement sites selected in Metekel were Pawi, Jura Aisis and Babizenda. No mention was made about Gublak and Aiside. Clearly, the selection of these sites was made between March and June; the evidence further suggests that the setting up of administrative structures was done without including these two sites. Even the surveying work of Aiside was not completed as of August 1985.

7.5.1. The Conditions in the resettlement sites

The conditions in all these sites where the campaigners stationed were appauling. The health facilities were hastily set up and inadequate to meet the increasing number or people who became ill. Food shortage was another problem. This would have led to a riot had it not been for the ever present Klashinkovs of the cadres and the army stationed there. The health problem was further intensified by an insufficient supply of water in Pawe and Aiside.

Given the arid environment in which the campaigners had to perform hard labour, the demand for water was acute. This water shortage compelled some people to bath in bilharzia infected streams, thus contracting the disease. These and other problems like overcrowded conditions of the camps and the lack of proper sanitation facilities were threatening to invite an outbreak of epidemic.

Precisely because of this threat, the campaign authorities moved the campaigners to new locations. They moved nearly half of Pawe's campaigners to an area 10 kilometers away from the original site. Similarly, in Aiside they moved the entire campaigners to a new settlement site in Aisika equipped with new sanitation facilities. The move was also intended to overcome water shortage. As it turned out it did not meet these objectives. First, only 0.5 litre per second could be pumped out of the well in Aisika, thus water still had to be transported from elsewhere. Second, the toilet facilities were dug at a depth less than 4 meters. Moreover, they were located approximately 50 meters away from the crowded tents, and poorly covered.

These facilities in Aisika degenerated fairly quickly. It reached to a point where the awful odour was disconcerting to the tent dwellers. This was compounded by the absence of shower facilities, thus encouraging people to shower and to wash their clothes behind their tents. The food provided to the campaigners often poorly prepared and without protein led to massive diarrhea epidemic; often giving the people with little time to reach toilet facilities. At night, the condition gets worst since people are deterred to go to toilets or to the bushes by the massive presence of species of reptiles.

It was not unusual for people to encounter snakes and scorpions in their tents, suit cases, and sleeping bags. The region of Metekel is well endowed with reptiles ranging from scorpio to pythons, and the clinics did not store even antivenum. Should someone get bitten by a snake, he would be taken to Bahr Dar Hospital, which is roughly a three-hour drive from Pawe. Fortunately, however, only very few cases were reported. This was credited to the fact that it was a rainy season. The inhabitants of the region informed ust that during the dry season, the reptiles are seen everywhere and become more

dangerous as well as venumous.

The real casuality, however, came from a different source. During the two months stay in Metekel, there were 31,644 people who were ill. That is, for eight weeks period, the number of people who fell ill was 10,477 in Pawe, 11,473 in Gublak and 9,694 in Aisika.[35] The table below shows the number of people reported to the clinics weekly, and the total at the end of eight weeks period.

TABLE I

Number of patients at each station per week

	WEEKS								
Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Pawe	1151	1695	1441	1286	1199	825	1288	1592	10,477
Gublak	1567	2218	1979	1296	1194	936	1319	964	11,473
Aisika	1300	1425	1220	1002	1135	1132	1283	1197	9,694
Total	4018	5338	4640	3584	3528	2893	3890	3753	31,644

Among the major illness reported were diarrehea , respratory air tube problem, parasitic diseases and dermetological problems. These were diseases which were visible and easily detectable, especially considering the caliber of health personnel and the diagnostic facilities available.

TABLE 2

Diarrehea

	WEEKS								
Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Pawe	291	809	666	426	269	175	257	342	3285
Gublak	180	299	1038	789	404	248	267	160	3385
Aisika	462	479	413	263	282	242	300	368	2809
Total	933	1587	2117	1478	955	665	824	870	9429

Parasitic Diseases

	WEEKS								
Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Pawe	555	81	69	62	58	45	89	156	615
Gublak	90	71	103	73	123	66	108	78	712
Aisika	82	56	53	33	53			32	309
Total	227	208	225	168	234	111	197	266	1636

Demetological Diseases Allergies

	WEEKS								
Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Pawe	81	38	32	48	51	76	60	151	537
Gublak	232	48	23	30	24	38	80	36	511
Aisika	102	61	10	49	65	50	70	77	484
Total	415	147	65	127	140	164	210	264	1532

Problems causes by undetermined sources

	WEEKS								
Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Pawe	198	246	355	330	298	138	236	271	2072
Gublak	254	136	169	135	123	164	238	160	1379
Aisika	157	268	212	176	167	187	161	248	1576
Total	609	650	736	641	588	489	635	679	5027

Source: Abaye Task Force, Metekel pp. 28-29

Except in Pawe, there were no doctors, available in the resettlement sites. For the entire resettlement sites, there were 35 medical students, 30 nursing sutdents, 15 health assistants, 7 lab technicians, 3 pharmacists, 54 first-aid assistants and 8 health inspectors.[36] As table 2 indicates, for eight weeks period, there were altogether 9,429 people suffering from diarrehea, 3,584 people from respiratory problem, 1,636 from parasites, 1,532 people from dermetological problems and 5,027 people were suffering from diseases whose causes were not known. In addition, 4 people were suffering from tuberclosis, 2 from kidney, 4 from malaria and 24 were suffering from bilharzia. There were 517 people who were getting treatment in a make shift hospital beds in the three camps. The most serious cases were taken to hospitals in Bahr Dar Hospital in Gojjam and to the Black Lion Hospital in Addis. The total number of people taken to these hospitals was 42, out of this 4 were reported dead.[37]

It is important to note here that these people were, prior to the campaign, healthy individuals. The figures above reveal how difficult survival in this arid environment could be. Consequently, it is not hard to see how survival is even more difficult in these regions to those famine affected population, already weakened by all sorts infections.

In July, a team of doctors visited the camps and were stunned by appauling conditions there. As a result, they made the following recommendations:

(1) The toiletes need to be solidly constructed.

(2) The conditions in and around the kitchen facilities be improved.

(3) Toiletes need to be built adjacent to clinics, and stool dishes need to be available in the clinics.

(4) The conditions around and between the tents require considerable improvement.

(5) The causes for the growing diarrhea epidemic are poor sanitary condition, and the regions happen to be breeding grounds for certain family of bacteria responsible for causing diarrhea.

(6) Some of the campaigners who had a long history of illness be sent back.[38]

During the same month the intensity of rainfall began to pick up. The tents donated by foreign governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations started to leak. In addition, it became virtually impossible to withstand the heavy rain and the thunderstorm which was threatening to blow away the tents. Inside the tents there was no room to walk around; and each tent is occupied with no less than 20 people .It is prohibited to go outside of the camps after 6:00 pm, and inside the camps the curfew begins at 9:00 pm. After 9:00 p.m. it is not permitted to go from one tent to another. At every corner of the camp, there was a watch-tower occupied by government troops armed with Klashinkov.

What people were told time and again by the campaign officials is that they have to do everything possible to make the campaign a success, even if this involves starving and humiliating oneself. This attitude of forced Good Samaratan was intended to justify the state's inability to provide sufficient amount of food to the campaigners. Food shortages in the camp were so critical that at times people had to sneak in the kitchen in the middle of the night to steal some food in violation of, among other things, the curfew. No protein diet was provided to them, hence they had to rely on their own bodies'ability to convert the starch into protein. But gradually most of them began to loose weight and malnutrition became very visible. By the time they returned back to their respective places of origin, many have lost roughly between 7 and 10 kilos of weight.

7.5.2. The Activities of the campaigners

What did the campaigners do to make resettlement a success? The initial plan designed by the campaign authorities has set the target at 24,000 huts to be built by the end of the campaign. In the end, the campaigners managed to build 18,372 huts or nearly 70 per cent of the initial target. However, only a handful of them were suitable for habitation. The campaigners spent a great deal of time in an attempt to *resettle* themselves in these camps, and in making preparations for constructing the intended dwellings. Until late July, collecting bamboos and other kinds of wood, clearing up the forests, and the like, were the major

activities. These are important components of the main objective; for it is using these materials that the villages are to be built. The main objective is to build huts using the available materials in the surroundings, so that these huts shall constitute villages. The villages were constructed following the main road from Pawe to Aised covering a total distance of 107 kilometers, but later reduced to 82 kilometers following the closure of Aised camp and the opening of a new site in Aisika. The villages were divided by a zone. Coming to Pawe from Aisika, i.e., from west to east, the villages on the right hand side were marked Zone 1, and on the left, they were marked Zone 2.

Each village has an area of 600-630 meter in length and 1.2 to 1.5 kilometers in width. It consists of 500 huts, 5 toilets, and 1 storage. Each village is separated from the other by a distance of 200 meters. The total villages which the campaigners were instructed to build was 79. This means that a total of 39,974 huts, including toilets and storages, would have to be build before the campaing was over. However, given the amount of time remaining in the campaign, this was not a feasible target, thus it was adjusted to 24,000 huts or 48 villages.

Even this revised target was an extreme challenge given the distance involved between the camps where the campaigners live, and the village sites where they work at. For instance, in Gublak, the campaigners had to travel on foot upto 7 kms and in Aisika upto 14 kilometers. Hence, with the amount of time spent on the roads, it was deemed impossible to reach the intended target. Consequently, the campaign officials decided to provide the campaigners with canned food at their work sites. That was, incidentally, a donation to RRC for the victims of famine. This strategy has saved time and energy, and enabled the campaigners to spend the whole day working on the villages.

That, however, did not help very much. For a time spent on walking to reach the furthest locations was a total minimum of *four* hours. This took much of whatever little energy people have, and by the time they reach the work sites they are completely exhausted. The scorching heat did not help matters either. Some, especially the women and the old, could not bear the trip. As a result, some people began to protest often refusing to go to work by hiding themselves in the forests or by pretending to be ill or by invoking some kind of excuses. Once this was recognized, the cadres launched an all-out bed-check from tent to tent, searched the forests and other conceivable areas where campaigners are believed to take refuge.

To avoid this kind of harassment and the risk of punishement many decided to go to work on foot and when possible mounting on the four trucks available. However, many fell down trying to mount these jammed trucks and ended up with fractured skulls, broken legs and so on. The trucks often had, hardly any fuel, at

least not sufficient to transport many people. The roads are virtually impassable with the trucks since the time was a rainy season.

What has the campaign accomplished in Metekel? The campaigners managed to buid 18,372 huts without doors, roof covers and without any protection from either wind or rain. In short, only with few exception they were virtually *uninhabitable*. They spent two months in the camps, and another two moths prior to being deployed to these sites. The first two months'experience are comparable to, by any standard, *labour camps*. The government has spent, at least by our estimation, between 15 to 20 million dollars, for the campaign effort. The work accomplished by the campaigners could have easily been done by mobilizing the unemployed labour force from Gojjam or other regions with a cost of less than $500.000 dollars.

The blankets, the tents, medicines and some of the food used or consumed by the campaigners should have been saved and directed to those famine victims whom donors had intended to assist. Many campaigners became infected with malaria, bilharzia and other unknown diseases. The lives of many, including the returnees of an overturned truck, have been sacrificed.

At any rate, the survivors of the campaign returned to their original destination on September 1, 1985. Two weeks before making their return journey, the new batch of resettlers began to occupy the newly constructed dwellings in Pawe and Gublak. This time the officials decided to put some plastic cover on the roofs in order to save them at least from the rain.

On October 1986, about a year later, the following points are observed. First, the 7,114 huts built in Aisika were abandoned. The reasons are the lack of water in the region, and the threat posed by the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Army (EPRA) in the region. Second, nearly 60 percent of the huts built in Gublak is abandoned. Third, nearly all the huts built in Pawe were occupied. It seems, therefore, that the major site for resettlement appears to be in the catchment of Belese River, namely Pawe. Fourth, those who were resettled in Gublak tried to grow various crops in the resettlement site, but to date they have not succeeded. Hence, they still live on a handout. Fifth, the regions not far from Gublak could more or less be described as liberated zones of the guerilla forces, and it is only a matter of time before the other camps fall into their hands. In fact on December 27, 1986, the EPRA attacked the Tana-Beles Ethio-Italian project near Pawe, killing 40 government troops and kidnapping 22 workers, including 2 Italian construction engineers.

Chapter 8: Resettlement in Metekel Province

Metekel is one of the seven provinces of Gójjam administrative region in the north-western part of Ethiopia. With an area of 32,000 square kilometre, Metekel is the largest of all the provinces in Gojjam roughly constituting 50% of the area of the administrative region. Metekel alone makes up 23% of the area of north-west Ethiopia, which includes Gojjam and Gondar regions. Except for Metekel which is found along the lowlands of the Ethio-Sudanese border, all the provinces which are smaller in size but densely populated, are located on the central plateau and eastern highlands. Metekel has a population density of 10 persons per sq/km with 228,500 total inhabitants. The major reason for this disparity has to do with the fact that the Metekel region is infested with malaria, bilharzia, and Tsetse fly. In fact, the Metekel region is a breeding ground for three varieties of Tsetse fly, namely Glossina Morsitans Vgandensis, Glossina Tachinoides, and Glossina Bervpalpis. As a result, the highlanders did not dare to establish settlements in the region.

The inhabitants are Agews, Shankillas, Amharas and Gumuz people.The size of the average household is between 4.5 and 4.9, and the ratio of male to female is 101 to 103, indicating the presence of more female population than the male.

TABLE I

Area and Rural-Urban Population by Awrajas (in '000)

Awraja/Administrative Region	Area in sq km.	Population Rural	Urban	Total
Gojam	64.4	2981.5	263.3	3244.8
Bahir Dar	7.7	612.5	79.2	691.8
Motta	3.9	339.1	25.0	364.1
Bichana	2.6	306.4	20.6	326.7
Debre Markos	5.4	551.1	61.6	612.8
Kola Dega Damot	7.9	648.0	38.7	686.6
Agew Midir	4.7	316.1	18.0	334.1
Metekel	32.2	208.2	20.3	228.5

Source: Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission, Population and Housing Census, Preliminery Report Addis Ababa, September 1984

Metekel has climates which can be described as Tropical with winter dry season arid with Steppe-Bunch Grass, Scattered short trees and Tropical highlands with a winter dry season. The agroecological map of the region reveals that Metekel has both warm and humid lowland zone around the area of Beles River, a major tributary of Blue Nile, and further to the west; and the rest of the region lies in hot and humid zone. The regions as a whole

lies in Kola Zone way below 1,500 meters above sea-level. However, almost 8% of Metekel lies in Dega Zone.

The temperature in the region is hot most of the year with an average temperature ranging between 25-30° C. During Bega season (October-January) the temperature ranges between 25-30° C, during Belg season (February-May) it gets very hot with a temperature ranging between 30-35° C, and begins to cool off during the Keremt season with a temperature floating between 25-30° C. The Metekel region receives very little rainfall, and the major rainfall season is Keremt, during which it receives between 400-800 mm. In the remaining seasons it receives less than 200 mm of rainfall.

In general, the North-Western region of Ethiopia, which Metekel is a part, is divided into two major Topographic divisions. The Eastern highlanads and the Western lowlands. The Eastern highlands are divided into massifs and plateaus. The massifs are the dominating relief features of the eastern part of the region characterized by mountains, deep river gorges and irregular broken surfaces, thus posing a hindrance to infrastructural development such as road, communication and the like. The plateaus, with an average elevation of 1500 to 2500 meters above sea level, occupy the central and eastern parts of the region. They are suitable for arable farming and road construction.

The Western lowlands have elevation ranging from 700 to 1000 m. It appears that the flat topography makes these areas ideal for the development of mechanized farming. Because of the low rainfall, high temperatures, and prevalence of pests and diseases, the lowlands are sparsely settled and very little farming is carried out.

The North-western region of Ethiopia is divided into two drainage basins, namely the Abbay (Blue Nile) Drainage Basin and the Tekeze Drainage Basin. The Abbay basin, the largest of the two, contains more tributaries than Tekeze. Although most of the rivers in the region flow through deep gorges making them suitable for generating electricity; their potential for agriculture is limited. The situation changes slightly in the lowlands where stream ingredients are flatter and flows are gentler thereby making them suitable for irrigation. The 1964 USDI report suggests that 350,000 ha of land in Metekel can be developed for irrigation.

The soils in Metekel show some variation but in general are very shallow, extremely stony, with low organic content and potassium, low in available phosphorous; and almost to a depth of 20 cm, the PH of these soils approaches 6.5, suggesting high degree of acidity. One finds in Metekel four varieties of land-use, namely bushed/shrubbed grass land, grass land, dense wood land and moderately cultivated land. The vegetation here

consists of various types of acacia, 'Sesa' (Albezzia gumiferra)'Acat' (phoenix reclinata), 'bamboo' (Oxythentra abyssinia) and gum trees (Boswellia spp.). These forests have traditionally been one of the main sources of income for the inhabitants of the region.The state, however, began to encroach the region in 1979 after it has first formed Natural Gum Processing and Marketing Corporation to carry out the task of collecting and processing natural gum for commercial purposes. The inhabitants of the region are now forbidden to use these resources, but instead are allowed to work as seasonal labourers to collect the natural gums from the area. In 1983, the government has collected 15,373 quintals of natural gum from this area. In addition to these forest resources, Metekel supports various wild animals like the lion, leopard, gazelle, and numerous species of birds including the Wattled Ibis, the Thick Billed Raven and the Fish Eagle.

The choice of Metekel as a resettlement site was made not on the basis of a recent study of the agronomic conditions of the region, but on the basis of recommendations made by USAID in 1964, and by the World Bank Group in 1973.[1] The first report was prepared after an aerial survey of North-west Ethiopia, and points out that this region holds great potential for agricultural development.The same report argues that by and large all the lowlands of Ethiopia are suitable for mechanized agricultural development. With respect to Metekel, it asserts that some 350,000 hectares of land could be used for irrigation development. By 1969, IDA subsidized what appeared to be a pilot project, entitled the Wolamo Project in Wolamo district in the hope of finding a solution to low productivity in the crowded highlands. The project had a dual objective. On the one hand, it attempts to raise productivity in the highlands by providing farmers with high yielding seeds, improved fertilizers and extension services. And on the other, it attempts to reduce population pressure on land by resettling 1,500 farmers in the lowlands.

The World Bank Report calls for this performance to be expanded on a larger-scale involving north-western,Western and south-western regions of Ethiopia. This expansion involves resettling highlanders into lowlands. Towards this end, IDA gave U.S. $3.1 million dollar loan to the government.[2]

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and RRC knew too well of this design. When the Politburo met between October 3 and 4, they promptly argued for the implementation of this plan. The idea was accepted, and thus relayed to regional officials concerned, following that meeting. After the message has been conveyed to regional officials some preparations by way of sight-seeing got underway. Between November 1 and 3, the Chairman of PMAC began touring the targeted regions for resettlement, giving directives and policy blueprints at each stop.

When visiting Metekel on November 1, 1984, the Chairman was impressed by what he has seen of Metekel. He said that Metekel holds great potential both in the implementation of the government's programme of alleviating the drought disaster and in long term development projects. Furthermore, he pointed out that Metekel holds a leading place in the emergency resettlement and agricultural development programme on account of its fertility, adequate rainfall, bountiful river systems, and rich forestry and mines resources.[3]

He then issued a 20-point working plan and directives as a blue print for the regional strategy of resettling the drought victims. These included the establishment of an agricultural research center and measures for launching resettlement and agricultural development programmes. His visit of Metekel marked the beginning of any kind of concrete activity in the region. The First Secretary of Gojjam's WPE said, "Comrade Mengistu's working visit and the directives he gave for the regional WPE Committee *marked the beginning* of our efforts to plan and construct rehabilitation villages in parts of Metekel"[4] Since his visit, the regional WPE Committee in close co-operation with mass organizations in the region began mobilizing the public and undertaking the task of selecting sites within Metekel. At first, they chose three settlement sites - Pawe, Jura Aisis and Babizenda, as being suitable areas to build new villages. It was not clear why they chose these three nor on what criteria were they selected. Later on, however, Jura Aisis and Babizenda were dropped, and Pawe was chosen as the sole resettlement site.[5]

A significant factor influencing the choice of Pawe resettlement site was, no doubt, the presence of Beles River. It was suggested that a total of 16 villages be constructed along the Beles River. At this point construction workers from the Ministry of Construction began building new roads and clearing air-fields. Peasant associations began mobilizing the peasants in their own jurisdictions to participate in clearing up the forests and in the construction of dwellings, on shift basis. The Tigrai Surveying Team which was deployed in the region, began to accelerate the locations of the villages needed to be constructed; and the Committee of Agricultural Development was seeking ways in tapping the agricultural potential of the region. The co-ordinator of the committee was impressed by what he called the rich soil of the area with its rare potentials for agriculture. He added that the richness of the soil and the availability of essential oil minerals is such that there is no need of using fertilizers for years to come.[6] However, the main task of the Committee was to apportion land for agricultural and pastoral uses; and to establish model farms in Pawe area. The Surveying Team was concerned with the availability of building materials such as wood, bamboos and the like.

All these activities were taking place since November, and on January 24, the cadres arrived in Pawe. Soon after their arrival they also got involved in clearing the forests, help construct the villages and their own headquarters. On April 6, the first settlers arrived in Pawe, and three days later 5,900 settlers arrived. The villages were not ready, hence they had to wait in hastily put up shelters before they were deployed to their respective villages. This had to be done in a hurry because the visit of the Chairman of the PMAC is due only two weeks later. At this stage, road works were hardly half way completed. The villages were utterly left disconnected, and communication from one village to another was virtually impossible. To provide relief assistance to the inhabitants of some of the remotest villages cut out by the lack of roads was one of the most difficult jobs at the time. Many had to walk for hours to reach distribution centers for relief assistance.

On May 4th the Chairman of PMAC came to visit Metekel. He inspected the 200 tractors assembled by the Ministries of state Farms Development and Agriculture for an exhibition. He was briefed about the plan being designed to embrace the settlers into state farms development schemes. They pointed out to him that as a result of the current deployment of expertise, equipment and machinery 172,000 quintals of various food crops will be harvested within a year by settlers themselves.

Between April and June of 1985, 30 villages were set up all along the Beles River. The concentration of the villages along the river stemmed from a desire to avoid the problem of water shortage which is so acute in the region. But when the rainy season began to unfold, the villages were discovered to suffer from water.logging problem and some of them were in fact located in swampy areas. The regional officials then began to recognize the necessity to relocate the villages, and the campaign to be undertaken by higher learning institutions during the rainy season provided the man-power solution to the problem. At this stage, the Surveying team began to spread out its activities to cover the areas as far as Aisid, 107 kilometres away from Pawe. The surveying task consisted of selecting new sites for villages to be occupied by the settlers due to arrive in September under the second-phase of resettlement programme, and to relocate those already precariously settled in Pawe.

It is important to note that the Surveying Team was not concerned with soil or other agronomic conditions, but to quickly select sites and get over with it. However, since the work involved a vast tract of land and not more than 10 surveyors, the task was carried over even after the campaigners had completed their term in the region. When the campaigners were building the dwellings, some of the village sites were again in swampy areas, some were in the middle of dried up streams or simply in areas where no sane person would want to construct a

village.

However, this revelation came late, after the rainy season when for the first time any detailed analysis of the soil conditions was undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture. By this time, 19,535 heads of family with 64,733 family members have already been settled. The soil study conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture reveals that the 22 out of 30 villages constructed before June be abandoned and moved to new location, The campaigners had built nearly 30 villages by the beginning of September. The option appeared to be either relocating the people from the abandoned villages to the new ones, thus stopping the inflow of new resettles due to arrive in early September, or to allow new settlers occupy the new dwellings and to let the early settlers stay where they are.

A compromise, however, was issued when the second man of the Politburo visited Metekel and gave directives to shrink the estimated landholding size of 5 hectares to 2 hectares. This has generated a high concentration of settlers in few villages, thus allowing more settlers to come in. This meant a reduction of the agricultural surface area per household, and a beginning of another adaptation to new villages for those already settled. In effect these people had to abandon their vegetable gardens. From the point of view of officials, this was not important. What is important, however, is to fit the settlers into state farm development schemes, which was already cultivating thousands of hectares of land.

What we can discern from the resettlement programme in Metekel are enormous hardships and sacrifices for all concerned, but most of all, to the settlers and to the host population in the region. In the following sections.we shall attempt to outline the notable problems which the programme has entailed, and see whether the strategy of resettlement has laid the basis for famine-avoidance as well as rural development. We shall argue that this strategy will, without a doubt, reintroduce the very same problems which it attempts to tackle.

8.1. The Problem of human rights

Some critiques of the resettlement programme have argued that the programme was implemented in clear violation of the rights settlers have, often involving coercion, intimidation and the like. In view of what has taken place to resettle people in Metekel, this criticism is justified. But the violation of human rights could be seen at different levels. The first involves the settlers and the indigenous inhabitants, and the second involves that of the campaigners who were drafted to prepare resettlement sites.

Today in Ethiopia a violation of human rights is more of a rule rather than an exception. At any given time, individuals could be called to report to local *Kebelles* for as little crime as for failing

to post flags, slogans or even to turn on a light on the veranda of one's own house. It is not unusual today, for Revolutionary Guards to go to somebody's house in the middle of the night and to wake up the residents for a an interrogation. It is only yesteryear that the state has ordered some segment of the population to wear uniforms when in fact at the same time people were dying for lack of food. Hardly anyone in Ethiopia would be surprised if the state has tomorrow ordered everyone to report to work without any clothes on, and without exaggerating everyone will comply. This may be difficult to believe, even more difficult for those who have an illusory vision of Ethiopia as a country trying desperately hard to construct an egalitarian society against so many odds marshaled by capitalist forces. The hard reality is, however, for people to live with compliance, absolute submissiveness, even knowing full well that this involves a violation of human rights.

The point we are trying to drive home is that a violation of human rights in Ethiopia, be it either in the process of implementing resettlement scheme or just living, is so common that one tends to ignore it, and to be indifferent to this violation, as one could be indifferent to the differences of the colours of the eyes people have.

Participation in the resettlement effort was not voluntary, but rather was posited as a national *duty*. What makes it a duty? The assumption here is that people are affected by drought, and since they are Ethiopians, then everyone has an obligation to come to their rescue. This claim does not, of course, respond to the question: why should one be obligated to those who are less fortunate or in need? Obviously, it would be nice if people save the lives of others, and in fact it is commendable. But it does not follow from this that they should be obligated. I suspect a further argument is required to establish such claim. In many instances, however, if the act requires only a minimal sacrifice on our part, then we do it. But, on the other hand, a smaller increment in what one regards as a minimal sacrifice could lead one into taking acts which could be described as heroic, or beyond the call of duty. Heroic actions are not necessarily moral or legal. Actually, what has been stipulated by the resettlement national campaign is a call beyond one's own duty. People are asked to perform acts which are extremely difficult to be realized; acts which are inhumane, and even involving a sacrifice of human lives. Indeed some of the campaigners as well as a great many of the settlers did.

The element of individual choice was absent. The campaigners were guarded by cadres and military unit in the region. They were told to get up and sleep at certain hours, their freedom of movement was virtually ignored. The harsh environment, the amount of hard labour which has to be performed, and the futility of all the sacrifices makes the experience of the

resettlement campaign as no less than Stalin's Gulag Archipelago. The Ethiopia's version of this Gulag did not even have the subtlety of its Soviet counterpart. As compared to the sacrifices, and the hardships which the settlers have endured, the campaigners'ordeal could be seen as a drop in the ocean.

The settlers' hardships could be looked at from different angels. First, a great many of them were forced the join the resettlement scheme. The evidence for this claim is derived from what some of them have openly said in Pawe resettlement. To our knowledge, nobody has escaped from Pawe resettlement. The settlers in Metekel have good reasons as to why they do not want to escape. The Gumuz inhabitants are not too keen in having the settlers to begin with, for the settlers are taking away their land. As a result, there is a considerable Gumuz animosity towards the settlers. This meant that the movement of the settlers outside of their villages is checked by Gumuz's Poisonous arrow. Moreover, the military unit stationed in Metekel, in addition to the well armed cadres, to keep an eye on the insurgents' activities discourages the settlers from entertaining the thought of escaping. Furthermore, a great many of the settlers were Kembattans from southern Shewa. This means that any effort to return to the place of origin would be met by all kinds of check points, including the peasant associations, which are particularly strong in Shewa region. Without a doubt many of the settlers came to Metekel by force and they stayed there by force.

Any form of organized effort by the villagers to escape was further undermined by the ethnic and the village composition. As we noted above, over 60% of the settlers were Kembatta speaking Kembattans and the rest were from Tigrai, Wollo and very little from Gondar and Gojjam. Communication between settlers of different origin was a very difficult task. This problem was heightened further by the fact that settlers were taken to villages on the order of the buses' arrival. People from entirely different villages of similar place of origin, and from villages of different origins were placed together without any thought of the social effect of this kind of placement. As a result, settlers from different origins but now placed together are suspicious of one another and any plot to escape is bound to be discouraged by this arrangement.

As we noted in the previous chapter, for the resettlement scheme to have any chance of success it has to focus on able bodied, adult and productive members of the drought affected population. Regardless of what, these people would have to be given priority. If they happen to be heads of families and their families are all fit, then that made the task of the drafting or registering committee easier. On the other hand, if only the heads of the families are in the preferred group, then two possibilities are open. The registering committee will deploy first

those heads of the families promising the remaining members that they would soon join them; or depending upon the availability of seats in the buses they will be deployed together with the heads of the families.

As it turned out, it was not always easy to deploy all members of the families to join the heads of the families, nor to send them together. Much depended on the availability of transport and on the nature of settlers' registration. It was evident that recruitment and registrations were made daily, reaching in some cases as high as 7,000 people per day. In other cases, deployment to resettlement sites a day after registration and with no time to put their belongings in order has been witnessed. The massive recruitment and the speed of the subsequent deployment made it utterly difficult for the handful local cadres to systematically organize things so that family members could be traced and located. And these officials soon developed an attitude of indifference to these problems. The number of transport needed to move the settlers has further complicated matters.

The government tried to mobilize its own transports by recalling those already deployed elsewhere in the war fronts. That, however, did not materialize on time. Its other alternative was to mobilize buses owned and operated by the private sector often through intimidation. All things considered, the available transport was not sufficient to deploy the settlers in these remote lowlands, often involving a three to four days journey. Therefore, who should go first is not only contingent upon the physical fitness of the settler concerned, but also on the availability of transport.

It was not unusual for many settlers wanting to stay behind with their family members, when they discovered that they would be separated. This is one of the areas where force has entered. Moreover, the desire of an individual who is physically fit, albeit drought affected, to remain in the shelter camps of his own locality to avoid the drought period and to ultimately resume his cultivation, has warranted the use of force on the grounds that this was neither cost-effective nor contributes to the success of resettlement.

Once the settlers board the buses, the remarkable conditions which they had to endure is another matter. Almost always, the buses are filled way beyond their maximum capacity and with no room for movement. The drivers were only allowed to make a very brief stop for toilettes only in the rural areas; and contrary to often asserted claim that they are fed while being transported, they were given one of their daily rations prior to departure, and when they stop at overnight camps or at their final destination. The inhumane condition of the way they were being transported was deplorable.

It was clear that the selection of the settlers and the way by

which they were transported have involved force, cruelty, and were performed without due regard to their rights as persons. For instance, the selection criteria adopted by the screening committee in Wollo region. Suggest that any productive adults with their families can resettle provided they meet one of the conditions stated below: "(1) farmers who were/are willing to move of their own free will; (2) farmers who for various reasons failed to use the main growing season to produce and those who are under emergency relief programmes; (3) farmers who cultivated their land but for various reasons were/are not expecting enough production; (4) farmers who consumed their agricultural produce when it was/is still green and those who were highly indebted and what they were expecting to produce was only enough to pay their debt; (5) farmers who were released from the various convalescent feeding centres; (6) farmers who are cultivating lands with slope over 30 per cent".[6]

On these criteria nearly all the farmers in Wollo would be resettled, and the ones remaining would have to be either invalids or dead people. In other words, farmers who would *not* satisfy any one of the above criteria would be the deceased and the invalids.

The second sphere where violation of human rights has taken place can be divided into two. One generally involving all settlers, including those resettled elsewhere other than Metekel. The settlers are linked to, what is regarded as, 'productive land'. This alleged 'productive land', in most cases including Metekel, is where model state or settlement farms are designed by members from the Ministers of Agriculture and State Farms. Consequently, the settlers are expected to 'fit' in the model schemes. They are not expected to refuse involvement in these designs. Nor are they permitted to exercise their rights as individual small cultivators. What they are expected to do on their own, however, is to keep a vegetable garden around their dwellings. This leads us to the second element, namely where abandonment of villages, as it happened in Metekel, was eminent, some of the settlers were asked to move elsewhere. This was despite the fact that they have done enormous reconstruction work on their huts, and expended a great deal of energy and time in developing and maintaining vegetable gardens.

8.2. The Problem of Site Selection

RRC maintains that a selection of resettlement sites was made on the basis of a set of criteria even endorsed by the UN Secretary General and FAO's Director General. There is reason to believe that these two officials have endorsed the criteria presented to them during their visit to Ethiopia during the closing months of 1984, soon after the resettlement programme got underway.

Some of FAO's press release suggests that the Director-General was too keen to see the scheme being implemented.[7] The set of criteria these officials were presented with; and which the public officially came to know, are the following:

"The new areas identified by a multi-disciplinary team are selected on the basis of the following:
1) Suitability for human and animal habitation
2) Adequate and reliable rainfall
3) Fertile soil for production purposes
4) Sufficient water for human and animal consumption
5) Accessibility
6) Availability of sufficient unscattered and unoccupied land".[8]

When we investigate how Metekel, much less Pawe, Gublak and Aisika, was selected, we discover that none of these criteria was utilized. We know that the choice of Metekel as a site for resettlement and agricultural development was made not by this government, but by the previous one utilizing the findings made by the USAID survey in 1964, and by the World Bank Group in 1973. On the other hand, the choice of particular settlement sites *within* Metekel was made by regional authorities of the present regime. A sequence of casual and non-scientific surveys were made from the middle of October until November 1, 1984. These surveys showed preference to Pawe area. When the Chairman of PMAC was given a tour of the area, he also expressed his liking to the Pawe area and gave directives on the spot to launch the resettlement scheme immediately.

Clearly, there was neither a land-use survey, nor analysis of soil conditions nor any kind of anthropological study of the inhabitants of the region, and the eco-system in which these people live in. We know, for instance, that any kind of scientific analysis of the soil conditions of the region was made for the first time after the rainy season of 1985, i.e., after the settlers have moved into the region. In short, the choice of Pawe was a sheer mechanical and intuitive decision prompted by consideration none other than the presence of Beles River.

All the activities prior to the arrival of the settlers in April, were concentrated on clearing up forests, apportioning land for agricultural and pastoral use,and on how to set up the villages and the availability of materials to be used in the construction. Even the shortage of water in the region was first noticed few days before the campaigners from higher learning institutions arrived in June. The inter-disciplinary team referred by the government's set of criteria, was actually a team consisting of the Tigrai Regional Survey Team, and the Agricultural Development Co-ordinating Unit which came to the region in October whose main task was neither to study the ecology and the inhabitants of the region nor to choose settlement sites, but to accelerate the

implementation of the resettlement scheme.

The unsuitability of the area for human as well as livestock habitation was evident by the increase in mortality rate amongst settlers during their first four weeks of stay in Metekel, and by incidence of reported and documented illness amongst the campaigners during their stay in Metekel. The area is also a breeding ground for three varieties of Tsetse fly, and as a result, the livestock population in the region is insignificant. Conversation with the inhabitants of the region reveals that it is almost an impossible task for them to maintain livestock in the region due to the presence of Tsetse fly and other veterinary diseases. They have managed to maintain small stocks of goats for their meat and milk, and few donkeys for transportation purposes. Looking at their livestocks, it was evident that they are suffering from loss of weight and some look terribly sick.

The area is infested with malaria, bilharzia and meningitis, to mention only a few. As evidence of this fact, campaigners were given anti-meningitis vaccination, and anti-malaria tablets, prior to their departure to Metekel. Moreover, during their stay and after they have returned from the campaign, quite a number of people were treated of malaria, and some number of deaths due to malaria have been reported. There were 24 campaigners officially known to have suffered from bilharzia, since its incubation period takes longer than malaria. The number of people who had been treated of bilharzia upon return was quite staggering. There is no way of knowing the actual number of campaigners who died in Metekel or after their return, for this kind of statistics is believed could be used by counter-revolutionaries to undermine the resettlement effort. For instance, we know in Aisika resettlement site that there were 5 deaths; but the report by Abay. Task Force maintains only 4 deaths for the entire three resettlement sites. What was clear, however, is the fact that many were suffering from different kinds of ailments induced by climatic conditions. As evidence of this, the number of people reported to the clinics suffering from respiratory problem was no less than 10,000 people for the span of eight weeks period covering all the three resettlement sites.

Climatic conditions of the region has played a significant role in the growth of mortality rate amongst the settlers. The RRC document itself reveals high mortality rate among settlers everywhere as compared to the settlers' places of origin. In this respect, Metekel resettlement sites hold the leading place in high mortality rate as compared to all other resettlement sites.

By RRC estimate the mortality rate for Metekel for a fifteen-week period beginning in mid-October 1985 and ending in late January 1986 suggests that it was only 11 per cent. For settlers in Keffa, Wollega and Illubabor regions are 4.2 per cent, 3.8 per cent and 6.8 per cent respectively. When these figures are seen in light of the national average of mortality rate for Ethiopia,

which is 2.2 per cent, they are still quite staggering.

However, there are reasons to believe that the RRC figures underestimate the real casuality in these regions, and even more so with respect to the figures for Metekel. The data collected by the WPE office in Pawe indicates Metekel has, for the same period, a weighted average of 22.4 per cent mortality rate. That is almost over a 50 per cent gap between the RRC estimate, and that of the WPE's. The weighted rate of infant mortality for children between 0 and 5 years of age is 52 per cent, for children between 6 and 13 years of age is 27 per cent, for people over 14 years of age it is 13 per cent. Thus indicating that there was high mortality rate among the settlers in Metekel, and particularly for age groups between 0 and 5.[9]

These evidences together with the geographical and topographical data we have, suggest that the selection of Metekel as a resettlement site was a wrong one. Had the purported set of criteria was utilized to evaluate the area, then the conclusion to be reached could not have been other than avoiding Metekel. The region is a desolate place where it neither receives adequate rainfall (less than 500 mm per annum) nor endowed with fertile soil. Moreover, the issue of suitability was never entertained vis à vis the people from the highlands. After all, the highlanders are the ones targeted for resettlement in these lowlands regions. But how will this movement affect them is a question which was left entirely for fate to answer it.

It is obvious that Metekel province is the most sparsely populated region in Gojjam. While the other provinces are settled by over 88 per cent of Gojjam's population in an area of a little more than 32 000 sq. kms., Metekel maintains similar area size with less than 12 per cent of Gojjam's population. It would have been a reasonable choice for many over crowded highland farmers to voluntarily resettle themselves in Metekel given its enormous size. Unfortunately, however, the area was neither tempting to the highlanders who knew very well of the infertility of the soil, and the inhospitable nature of the environment as well as the indigenous inhabitants who regard such an encroachment as a threat to their survival. Nor was Metekel endowed, as we shall see in a moment, with unoccupied land. To be sure, some voluntary settlers had come to live in Metekel and in its adjacent province, Agew Midir, in the early 1960's[10] from other provinces within Gojjam, Wollo, Tigrai and Gondar. There is evidence that one of the sub-groups of Agew nationality, the Qimants, albeit few, live in Metekel; and some Amharas presumably who came from Wollo and Gondar and some Tigrai people live in this region.

The hasty and intuitive decision to resettle people in Metekel has brought hardships and a high rate of death to the settlers. It has also brought enormous consequences both to the indigenous inhabitants of the region, and to its ecology. We shall pursue an

examination of these consequences, beginning with the element of environmental degradation,

8.2.1. Ecological Degradation

There appears to be a consensus among development 'experts' who are involved in launching viable projects, that Pawe has a good deal of potential for irrigational development. The Tana-Beles project which is subsidized by the Italian Government has been launched in an attempt to develop the area using irrigation schemes. Once this is completed, however, it will no doubt pose serious problems in the region. First, it has already been pointed out, that the area suffers from drainage problem, and this had in fact prompted officials to abandon villages. Looking at the Beles River, the silting problem could cause serious set-backs to irrigation effort. There is nothing in the plan which suggests that the government has a concomitant plan to construct a drainage system, nor is it easy to speculate where the money to finance such a construction would come from.

If, on the other hand, the attempt to harness river Beles for irrigation is withdrawn, then the other option is to use an extensive irrigation system from Lake Tane. Still the problem of drainage is crucial. But now, instead of silting problem, we shall have *salivation* problem. In either case, a drainage system would have to be constructed. There are two ways by which such a drainage system, as expensive as it is, could be constructed. One way is to drain the salt in the Beles River; and the other is to dump it somewhere, come what may. However, both options could seriously affect the environment, and will endanger the livelihood of the inhabitants of the region.

If the salt water is drained in Beles River, then it is not difficult to see how this will impaire the resource base of the natives who use this river for their drinking water and fishing. Basically, it will deny them supplementary food and water resources. Nor could one fail to see how essential a construction of drainage system is. For without it, a rise in the salt level of the soil will gradually eat up the roots of the crops and consequently, no crops could grow. This, therefore, will ultimately render the whole effort self-defeating.

On the other hand, the salt water could be drained elsewhere rather than Beles river. However, this option is not very helpful either; for dumping salt water in certain area could seriously affect the ecological balance of the region by contaminating the region, thus rendering it incapable of supporting wild life. Either option which the government adopts would have serious implications for the environment in the region and the inhabitants who live in it. Ironically, one of the professed stand of the government in launching resettlement scheme is to put an end to the ecological stress and the environment degradation

which was taking place in the populated highland region. What the implementation of this project will do is to reintroduce a different magnitude of environmental crisis in areas where previously, hitherto, less affected. These observations are, of course, in anticipation of what will happen to region and to the people in this region. Hence, it does not say much as to what actually happened or is happening to the area and the people concerned. In order to asses this, we need to turn to the resettlement scheme itself.

It is to be recalled that the resettlement scheme under phase one calls for resettling 50,000 households or 250,000 people in the region. As of January 1986, the population which has moved to Metekel is 101,122. Ideally, to move 250,000 people using the village format we have discussed above, each village consisting of 500 huts would require building 50 villages, even though RRC has estimated it at 60. Actually, RRC's estimate compensates for the fact that some villages could not possibly allow the construction of 500 huts, for in many cases the terrain is not suitable to do so. To accommodate the 101,122 people in village settlements would require 23, or following RRC's allowance, 30 villages. Now we know that by the end of June 1985, there were 30 villages completed, and according to Abay Task Force report, 79 villages have been completed between June and the end of August, giving a total figure of 109 villages. This was actually way below than what was planned. For according to the regional planning office, the plan calls for a construction of 130 villages in Gublak and Aisika alone without including Pawe.

Assuming that each village consists of 500 huts, the 109 villages would ordinarily have given us 54,500 huts. However, the actual figure for huts completed by the end of August 1985 indicates only 30,000 huts covering 109 villages. The plan outlined by the regional planning office further suggests that 1 village will have an area of 0.72 km^2, and each village is separated from one another by a distance of 200 meters. Thus, the total area needed to set up the entire 109 villages including the space between them covers 98 km^2 or 9800 hectares of land. Assuming 1.0 ha of land for each 20,224 resettled household, the total area of land to be alienated for residential, individual gardening, and state farm amounts to 33,244 hectares of land. This figure includes the 3,200 ha. of land developed for state farm, and presumably, this is the amount of cultivable land allocated to it at the initial period, and is expected to be expanded enormously.

The 33,244 hectares of land developed at the initial phase of resettlement is bound to expand in the years to come, in part, due to the government's commitment to settle more farmers in the region, and in part, because the young settlers population would soon reach the age to form an independent household. Moreover, since the land is not suitable for mechanized farming,

it is very likely that productivity will be enhanced not on the basis of land productivity, but on expanding more land. Still, the amount of land to be expanded for various purposes, including residential, may not be significant when viewed vis-à-vis the area of the region. This way of looking at it is somewhat misleading, for the region consists of vast-terrains which could not possibly be used for productive purposes. Unfortunately, we have no information as to how much land is considered a wasteland or covered with swamps, etc. Our estimate runs between 20 to 25 per cent of the region, or 8000 km^2 or 800,000 hectares of land. In which case the net available land in the region would be approximately 2.3 million hectares. Still, by any standard this is a vast size of land even though a good portion of it could not be used for cultivation. However, assuming the present population density of Metekel to be 10.3 persons per square kilometre, and assuming the national growth rate of population at 2.9% per annum, and assuming further the initial area of the region at 3,2 million hectares, the population density in the region will exceed the highly densely populated province in north-west Ethiopia, Debre-Tabor with 129 persons per square kilometre roughly in a century and a half.

However, since the cultivable land in the region is quite small, all things considered, Metekel would be one of the most densely populated region in north-west Ethiopia, in less than 60 years. This still would not perhaps give as a sufficient reason to be concerned about the region, but when this element is seen in light of some of the inhabitants' practice of shift cultivation; the region has already run out of cultivable land. And if the resettlement practice continues then the land under-cultivation as well as the ones left fallow would be rendered useless, thus the entire region will fail to support the indigenous and the settler population.

This problem is further aggravated by other resource base in the region which has been undermined by the construction of the villages. For the construction was undertaken by using the materials available in the region, namely a species of bamboo tree which requires some 8 to 10 years to grow, acacia and gum trees which normally take longer to grow than the bamboo trees. On the average, a minimum of 500 bamboo trees, 13 pillars which are either gum or acacia tree are required to build *one* hut. Consequently, the amount of trees that were used to erect 30,000 dwellings was 15 million bamboo trees, 390 thousand acacia and gum trees, and needless to mention other vegetations cleared in the process.

But this may not be a staggering amount of tree used or destroyed and may not even be seen as forest and grassland destruction. The fact, however, is that these vegetations were cleared *indiscriminately*. How the trees were cut is crucial. Nobody had any idea how this should be done, and at any rate

one has to remove the trees and the vegetations on the village sites. That meant regardless of what, those trees would have to be cut to be used for building purposes, and given the amount of area covered by the villages, it is very unlikely that any tree would grow in these areas. The concern here is not only with the amount of trees being cut down, but also by the region's inability to replenish those trees. It is important to note here that our consideration did not even take into account the inhabitants demand to use additional amount of trees as fuel wood, for they have no other source, but to use those around their villages.

Not only has the state managed to destroy the forests and vegetations in its effort to implement the resettlement scheme, but also has deprived the supplementary income of the indigenous people of the region as well as its own revenue. In other words, by destroying the forests, including the gum tress, it has deprived the indigenous people the supplementary cash income derived from the gum trees. Moreover, since some of the indigenous people are engaged in hunting to supplement their diet or cash income, a loss of these forests would now mean an end to this activity. In short, their resource base is now being undermined. As a result, the ill effects of famine are not far away from being felt by the indigenous people in the region. Sooner or later, they will be compelled to become dependent on the state for their own subsistence. Given how the agricultural policy is designed, this could be the disguised objective of the state. And given the low productivity which has often resulted from the agrarian policy of the state, their meager demand for survival will hardly be met. Unless they somehow become productive, they cannot survive in this agrarian arrangement. The state has, in effect, presented them with *fait accompli:* produce more, then survival is possible but a failure to do so tantamounts to gambling with one's own life: These people's dependency on the state is not viewed as incurring a heavy burden on the state's treasury. Rather, it is an investment towards the state's aim of co-operative survival.

In its purported effort to seek solution to the persistent hunger in the country, the state is preparing the groundworks for the problems of land scarcity and famine through untold ecological degradation in areas where these problems were previously absent. The province of Metekel consists of 90 percent of the Savanna woodlands, and forests of north-west Ethiopia.

However, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that very little of these would be remaining after the ordeal is over. That tragic finale is not even yet in sight. What is paradoxical about this is that on the one hand, the state professes to be ecologically sensitive, and even made some efforts, albeit unsuccessfully, to reforest some regions of the country. But, on the other hand, the resettlement scheme in Metekel is undermining that objective. To create settlements in areas where much of the remaining

forests of the country are located, namely northwestern, western and southwestern parts of the country, without due consideration to what these settlements would entail is mind-boggling. At any rate, in view of the government's resolute determination to go ahead with the resettlement scheme, it would not be very long before all the forests and the Savanna woodlands are gone. "In 1955, the forests that remained covered 17 million ha. or 15 per cent of the land area. The 1986 coverage is estimated at 2.5 - 4 per cent or some 3 to 4,5 million ha. The Savanna woodlands which once amounted to some 72 million ha. presently amount to only some 20 million ha".[11]

8.2.2. Resettlement and the Gumuz People

The Gumuz living in Metekel province are known to outsiders as members of the Begga people. The Begga are regarded as Hamitic people, some of them speaking Cushitic dialects but with culture quite distinct from semetic and cushitic people of Ethiopia. It is believed that the Begga came across the Red sea, and settled in areas between the Nile and the Red Sea in the Sudan. They live mainly in the Sudan and consists of tribes of Early Pre dynastic Egyptians from Naga el Deir, Middle Nubia, Beni Amer, Hadendowa, Amarar and Besharin.[12] The Gumuz tribe is also part of the Begga, but it is not known whether it is an independent tribe within Begga people or one which is an extension of one of those tribes. Linguistically, the Gumuz have no connection with any one of the Begga tribes, nor do they share a similar mode of appropriation. Their way of life, in fact, has much resemblance with other non-Begga people like the Anuaks, the Mursi and the like. Whereas the Begga in the Sudan along the Ethio-Sudanese border practice camel pastoralism, the Gumuz are engaged in shift cultivation.

It is believed that around 700 A.D.the Begga invaded the Axumite kingdom from the north through Eritrea.[13] Since the Begga were pure pastoralists with no organizational structure required to administer the sedentary agriculturalist population of the highlands, nor to bind them together as an adhesive tribe, they withdrew before making any kind of impact on the region or establishing settlements in the hinterland. The invasion was regarded as retaliatory measure against the hegemony of the Axumite kingdom. Upon their retreat, some of the Begga settled in the north-western regions of Eritrea bordering the Red Sea hills of the Sudan. Having weakened the power of the Axumite Kingdom, some settled on the Ethiopian side of the border for fear of Islamic expansionism from the west. Through years of interaction with the highlanders to the east, particularly the various tribes of the Agew people such as the Sahalla, the Kemant, and the Kumfel, they settled as cultivators. The hypothesis here is that the Gumuz were one of those groups of

Begga who were settled down during that time. At first, their territory was confined between Metema in the north and Dinder River in the south. When the Amharization process was expanding, and when slave trading was threatening their way of life, they began to be squeezed from both the Islamic west and the Amhara east. As a result, they began moving downward along the Ethio-Sudanese border extending their territory from Metema in the north to Mendi area in Wollega. Today, one find the Gumuz people in three administrative regions of Ethiopia: Gondar, Gojjam and Wollega.

The migration of Gumuz people in Wollega was a recent one dating back in the 1880s and it was prompted by fear of religions persecution and slave trading in Gojjam administrative region.[14] Presently, however, they are also caught by the resettlement scheme. For the resettlement sites selected in these regions involve the Gumuz territories. Metema in Gondar, Metekel in Gojjam, Guduru and Horo, Assossa in Wollega involve the settlements of the Gumuz people. The study here however focuses on the Gumuz people in Metekel.

The Gumuz are believed to be approximately 80,000 people of the total 228,000 inhabitants in Metekel.[15] Other nationalities present in the region are the Kemant and Kumfel tribes of Agew nationality, some Amharas who migrated to the region in the early 1960s from Wollo, Gondar, parts of Gojjam and some people from Tigrai region.[16] Many of the non-Gumuz settlers came to the region in the late 1970s as labourers and service providers when the present government began to collect the natural gums in the region for commercial purposes. It could be said that the truly aborigines in the region are the Gumuz people.

The Gumuz in Metekel are exogamic and patrilocal. They are organized into clans, but nobody knows for sure how many clans exist in the region. Each clan is divided into sub-clans and the sub-clans are divided into agnatic lineages. Families of different agnatic lineages, and sub-clans but of the same clan form a settlement. Gumuz practice polygomy, and 'exchange mariage'.[17] A settlement consists of not more than 20 families congregated in a village. This has to do with the fact that for years they have been subjected to slave raiding, and they found that arrangement of this sort will reduce their vulnerability to this act. The settlements are generally located not far away from small streams. These streams demarcate the clan territory. In each settlement, an individual known as *Aba Mussa* would be elected to assume leadership position on the basis of old age, wisdom and respectability. *Aba Mussa* has multiple role to play. As a spiritual leader, he performs various rituals including funeral rites. As an overall leader of the settlement, he announces the time table for sowing seeds and harvesting, serves as a liaison officer between settlements

Each settlement village consists of thatched roof houses made out of bamboos and mud walls for residential purposes. These houses are cool during the day time when the heat is disconcerting, and warm at night. Few flat roof-tops where gathering and discussion take place, and some half a meter raised or stilted houses where they keep goats and sheep at night, and some chicken coops set up on high stilts are also seen. Each village is surrounded with shrubs and bushes which serve as wall. Adjacent to a village, and close to a stream is where usually burial sites are located. When a member of a village dies mourners are expected to fire into the sky; and the number of bullets one fires is proportional to the degree of deep seated respect one has for the dead. My informant told me that the reason why the mourners fire into the sky is a way of making an effort to stop the evil-spirit from taking away the soul of the dead and/or to scare it off from taking more souls. During burial ceremony, members of different clans further away from the village of the deceased would come to participate. In some settlement villages we have observed some Gumuz profess to have accepted either Christianity or Islam. It is not clear to what extent are these people practicing either one of them. What was clear, however, in Gumuz villages close to the Sudanese border, some claim to have accepted Islam and many of them speak Arabic. When we come to the ethnographic boundary separating the Amhara dominated highland and the Gumuz, we find some claiming to embrace Christianity, and some speak Amharic language.

The Gumuz people's primary mode of appropriation is shifting agriculture. They practice shift cultivation using the hoe, the digging stick, the planting stick and the sickle. The hoe has multiple function. It is used for weeding, turning over the soil, cutting brush and digging holes. The digging stick is used for digging deeper holes and for harvesting roots. Using a digging stick, they plant seeds by making individual holes and very seldom do they broadcast crops. They use crop rotation, but the Gumuz in Metekel do not practice intercropping which is common among shift cultivators. Harvesting is done with a sickle, and for winnowing they use what appears to be a brush made out of grass and wood. Threshing is done by beating the cereals with supple sticks. Often grain storage are built outside, and left unattended. The clearing and preparation of land is with the method of slash and burn.

Due to the high infestation of diseases in the region, the Gumuz do not raise cattle. Instead, they keep a small stock of herd animals consisting of goats and sheep. These animals are very rarely used for consumption. Nor do the people consume the milk very often. They keep some donkeys for transportation purposes. Their diet basically consists of cereals, fish, and some meat acquired through hunting. On occasion they brew some

malt beer known as *Korde* out of sorghum, maize and wild plants. The main food crops consist of a red-seeded type of sorghum, maize and finger millets. Neither root crops nor fruit trees is known by the Gumuz of Metekel.

The Gumuz are not the only agriculturalists in the region who are practicing shift cultivation. The Kumfel tribe of Agew nationality who migrated to the area from Gondar administrative region and from Agew Midir province of Gojjam do practice shift cultivation also. There are, however, enormous differences in the kinds of techniques and farm implements used, by the practitioners. Nevertheless, they all use the hoe for covering the seeds and for weeding.

Beside shift cultivation, the Gumuz derive cash income and/or supplementary diet from hunting, gathering natural gums, beekeeping and fishing. For hunting purposes, they use a 3-shaped bow, and metal-pointed arrows coated with poison. Although the arrow is not coated with poison when for fishing purposes nonetheless their remarkable accuracy is exhibited when they are engaged in this activity. They trade the hides, honey and natural gum in the markets in the highlands or in the Sudan. In return, they buy salt,tobacco, oil and other essential commodities. Market economy has infiltrated their way of life.

A Gumuz could identify which land is cultivable as well as fertile on the basis of the kind of vegetation cover and the colour of the soil. Depending upon the location of a village, and the terrain on the banks of streams and rivers, a Gumuz sets up at least one cultivable land adjacent to a stream or a river, then the rest of his plots of land could be located elsewhere in the forest. At any given time, a Gumuz could have 3 to 4 plots of land spread out in different location. The size of the plots varies from one family to the other depending upon the size of the family. On the average, each plot covers between 2,000 to 3,000 m^2 land area.

Each field is used until the colour of the soil changes and suggests infertility. In which case, it will either be left fallow for a considerable number of years or it will be abandoned completely. And when an individual abandons the land, then it could be claimed by a member of the same clan after having confirmed the total abandonment by the last owner. It could be said that the entire land carved out by a particular clan had, prior to the revolution in 1974, a real ownership right to the area, and the member of the clan had only nominal right to the land he is cultivating or leaving it fallow. In effect, the real ownership right to land a clan had was a 'second-order' right, in the sense that the government had the first-order status, but ignored the exercise of this right in the region it on account of its lack of importance. However, the government could invoke its real ownership right at any given time, if it finds the region important for whatever purpose. During post-revolution,

Ethiopia, the clans' ownership status has changed. First, the Proclamation No 31 of 1975 virtually ignores the ownership status of shift cultivators. The proclamation focuses on two kinds of mode of appropriation. Those who are sedentary agriculturalists and those who are engaged in pure-pastoralism. However, the proclamation does not address those who are engaged in multiple system of production, such as mobile or immobile semi-pastoralism or shift cultivation. These latter groups were expected to take up either pure pastoralism or sedentary agriculture. In reality, the state would ultimately like to narrow down their option to one, namely sedentary agricultural practice. Second, the second-order real ownership right a clan had under the old regime is now dissolved. Instead, the state has reasserted its first order real ownership right to land, regardless of the land's importance. This means that the practice of clan communal ownership is now dissolved, and the individual member is not even entitled to cultivate a plot of land unless organized by a peasant association. The organizational structure, i.e., the peasant association, which is entrusted with a task of land distribution is not a suitable framework for a system of production such as shift cultivation. Essentially, it is a framework compatible with sedentary agricultural practice.

What is actually happening is that the Gumuz and the local peasant associations are at odds with one another. The Gumuz do not recognize what has been imposed upon them by the central government through the peasant associations; and on the other hand, the PAs do not seem to know how to implement the directives given to them from the top in the context of shifting agriculture. Some of the impetus for initiating resettlement campaign in the region was provided by peasant associations through their confused understanding of what actually was taking place in Gumuz's mode of appropriation.

The authorities in the executive committee of the PAs assumed that there is an excessive amount of land lying unused by the inhabitants in the region. That information was communicated to provincial, regional authorities and finally to the authorities of the central government. The scattered plots of land throughout the forests belonged to Gumuz are not easy to detect neither by local peasant associations nor by surveyors. The former neither had the technical know nor the resources to portray an accurate rendering of the land-holding. The latter did not venture to go into the forests to see what was taking place, and when it did so it ran into lands which were left fallow. Hence, it concluded that the lands were abandoned. As a result of this incorrect assessment of what was taking place in the region, the authorities decided to build resettlement sites directly on areas inhabited by the Gumuz people.[18]

What is problematique about this move was not that the 32,000 km^2 is not a sufficient area to accommodate quite a

number of people; but rather the availability of fertile cultivable land is so little. And whatever fertile land available in the region has a very short span fertility age; and as a consequence, it is suitable neither for sedentary ploughing agro-practice nor mechanized farming system. These two practices would expose the land to severe erosion, and to compensate for it the state would have to rely on excessive amount of fertilizers. Since the region is not suitable for livestock rearing due to the presence of several veterinary diseases, dung could not be collected and used as fertilizers. Hence, the fertilizer would have to come either from other regions where the cattle population is concentrated or from other countries .It is very likely, however, that it would have to be imported with hard earned foreign currency, because the dung collected in the highlands is usually utilized as the only or supplementary source of fuel, and even as supplementary income and fertilizer. The land in the region covered with black soil, often avoided by the Gumuz, has none the less, attracted the resettlement authorities on the assumption that it is fertile. As it turned out, the land suffers from water-logging problem. And this was, of course, the reason why the Gumuz did not cultivate those areas.

The point we are trying to make here is that despite its enormous size, Metekel has very little fertile land, and that was not even sufficient for the Gumuz people who, over the years, have gravitated around it, and who have used the hoe-technology suitable to the ecology of the region. The establishment of settlement on the Gumuz territory meant (a) the destruction of the environment through inappropriate technologies, (b) the loss of whatever meagre fertile land available for Gumuz's shifting cultivation (c) a disruption of their agricultural mode of appropriation, (d) and the creation of extreme land scarcity amongst the Gumuz people.

We have noted above what (a) and (b) entail, now we need to mention few points concerning(c) and (d). By creating settlement sites in the Gumuz territory, the number of land-holding of an individual Gumuz has shrank. This suggests that he can no longer continue practicing shifting agriculture, but rather he should become a sedentary agriculturalist. From the point of view of the state, this is precisely what has been desired, and targeted for. After all, the existing institutional structures are unable to cope with those who practice shift cultivation. Once he becomes a sedentary agriculturalist, however, the Gumuz is not able to sustain his livelihood either because the fertility of his land will soon be exhausted after few years of cultivation, hence will be forced to abandon it and seek alternative means of survival, or would be forced to shorten the fallow period of his land thereby securing very little yield. In either case, he will soon realize that agricultural activity in the region would not sustain his life. However, given the absence of any viable alternative in the

region to pursue, and considering the fact that he is not accepted by other ethnic groups in the highlands, and given years of marginalisation and neglect by the central government, the Gumuz has nowhere to go but simply to be uprooted.

This is one consequence of land scarcity. However, it could also lead the Gumuz further into hunger and famine. Given their marginalised existence famine is not something new to the Gumuz people. However, they had managed to cope with famine using whatever means available to them in their surroundings without any help from the central government. Their proneness to famine has previously stemmed from low or erratic rainfall and the neglect by the central government. This situation coupled with land- scarcity has now increased their vulnerability to famine. In effect, land-scarcity has now become to the Gumuz people a prelude to famine.

What is tragic about the consequence of resettlement on the Gumuz people is that it is not only their agricultural activity which has suffered from the campaign, but virtually every other source of their income. Fishing, hunting, gathering and beekeeping were their other sources of supplementary income. Due to various projects which are underway on the Beles River, and due to increasing population around it, it seems unlikely that they will have their usual access to fishing activity.

As the result of increasing encroachment by the state, their other economic activities have also been curtailed. A major income-generating activity for Gumuz has, through the generations, been the gathering of natural gum from the trees in the area. They collect the gums and exchange it with traveling merchants or in the markets in the highlands or in the Sudan. Through this exchange, they used to earn supplementary cash income. Since the establishment of Natural Gum Processing Corporation, the state has denied the inhabitants access to these resources. Instead, the state offers seasonal employment to the inhabitants of the region with a wage of less than 2 birr per day working in an extremely hazardous condition and scorching heat. Often this offer is taken up by the Agew population and not by the Gumuz. Moreover, in an attempt to clear the area for farming and residential purposes necessitated by the resettlement campaign, much of the gum trees has been used as building material. As a result, whatever little revenue the state has been securing from this resource is virtually disappearing. Clearly, neither the state nor the Gumuz people is the beneficiary of this campaign in the region. For the latter, it has eliminated that important source of cash income, and as a result it has exacerbated further their already precarious existence.

The forests are big assets for Gumuz in more ways than one. The destruction of these forests has meant that their other supplementary sources of income, like hunting and beekeeping are being undermined. As the result of this destruction and

increasing population in the region, the forests which have supported so many wild animals could no longer be regarded as their sanctuary. Not only are the Gumuz forbidden to engage in hunting but also unable to find animals for this purpose even if this restriction is lifted. The Gumuz were engaged in hunting for purposes of supplementing their diet as well as earning cash income by exchanging the hides in the neighbouring markets. They are no longer allowed to pursue this important economic activity. Moreover, unlike the highlanders, the Gumuz keep their bee-hives in the forests further away from their villages. This required an element of trust between members of the same clan or between different clans. No clan or a member could raid somebody's bee-hive, as it was so common, say for instance, between the Mursi and the Ari people in the southwestern part of Ethiopia. Beekeeping has been a major income generating activity for the Gumuz. Forest destruction in the region entailed the disruption of this activity. The conspicuous presence and encroachment of the state in the region has induced fear amongst the Gumuz. As a result, the element of *trurst* which is vital to the practice of beekeeping is now being impaired.

It is apparent that resettlement has brought great harm to the Gumuz people by undermining *every* aspect of their economic life. They could no longer practice shift cultivation, fishing, hunting, gathering and beekeeping, In one form or another these have constituted their basis of survival. Yet, it is these elements which are now being eliminated by the resettlement programme. In its effort to tackle the problems of hunger, demographic expansion, and land scarcity, the state has reintroduced the very same problems in regions inhabited by people who were pursuing a life of marginal existence. By so doing, the Gumuz people who were ignored by successive regimes in the past are now targeted to become a means for a hopelessly futile end. It is not only in Metekel that the Gumuz are victimized by the resettlement campaign. Places such as Assossa, Horo Gudru, Gimbi in Wollega, Metema in Gondar where Gumuz live are also subjected to similar treatment. Moreover, these people's right to compensation is not recognized by the state.

Almost every resettlement site along the Ethio-Sudanese border has caused displacement of the people engaged in shift cultivation or semi-pastoralism, and a conscious disruption of these modes of appropriation. The fate of the settlers in these regions is not any better either. Regions such as Metema and Metekel were known in Ethiopian history as places where police officers, civil officials and school teachers are sent to as punishment. They, at least had the option to leave their families safely behind in the highlands. The new settlers, at least a great many of them, are with their families and they have no choice. Neither the settlers nor the indigenous population nor the country by and large has benefited from the resettlement

campaign. The effect has been a *complete marginalisation* of those people concerned, namely the settlers and the indigenous people. This marginalisation campaign has engaged these people to compete for resources which are scarce. This entailed conflict and tension between settlers and the indigenous people. Given the growing activities of insurgent forces operating in these regions from the Sudan, it will not be very long for these marginalised people to challenge the state, and to reconsider its style of administration reminiscent of Stalinism.

The foregoing discussion suggests that the state has proposed resettlement as a political solution to a famine which was in a sense brought about by a political crisis. The solution in turn, has caused ecological stress. There appears to be a dialectical interplay between a political crisis and ecological stress when one examines the genesis of famine in Ethiopia and the solution proposed to do away with the problem.

8.3. Villagization and Resettlement: Lessons to be learned

Ethiopia is not the only country in Africa which has experimented with villagization and resettlement as strategies of rural development or as measures of famine-avoidance. After independence, a number of African countries tried either one of these programmes to promote either some kind of agrarian socialism or capitalist objectives. In one of the most remarkably ambitious project, Ghana had, in the late 1960s, launched the Volta Resettlement Programme. The goal was to create a man-made reservoir by flooding the river basin so that it could generate hydro-electricity for aluminium extraction in the region.

However, the flooding of the river basin required the resettlement of the inhabitants in the region elsewhere. A Preparatory Commission was initiated to study where the nearly 80,000 inhabitants of different ethnic origin could be resettled and what kind of compensatory measures should be taken to the flooded properties of the inhabitants. The Commission spent years dealing with detailed plans of resettlement, and by the time the new resettlement sites were set up, some were moved in, and the basin was flooded, the project siphoned over 213 million pound, most of it was financed by the World Bank. It could be said that the Volta River Resettlement programme was one of the most carefully planned project, and one which attempts to inject into the programme the human element. Yet despite all these efforts, the scheme was marred with all kinds of problems ranging from logistics to cultural. Many of the resettlers were compensated for their loss in various ways, but none the less a great many of them were not. Still nobody knows to this date what happened to the rest. The kind of agricultural development objectives intrinsically connected with the

resettlement scheme were never materialized. The resettled people were inflicted with all kinds of shock and stress in the new sites, thus integration and adjustment could not be achieved. Apart from the Project generating electricity, the resettlement side of the project is now regarded as a failure.

In the wake of the 1968-73 drought affecting the Sahel region, Burkina Faso launched planned resettlement as a means for achieving goals of famine relief and drought recovery under the auspicies of *Amènagement des Vallées des Volta* of Burkina Faso. The majority of Burkina Faso's population live on less than a quarter of the land area of the country on Mossi plateau, thus causing a high density of population per square kilometre ranging between 50-100 persons per km^2. Despite this overcrowded feature of Mossi Plateau, hardly anyone was tempted to resettle in the valleys of the Red.White, and Black Volta Rivers. This lack of interest is explained, in part, by the presence of Onchocerciasis (or river blindness) in the valleys. In order to reduce population pressure on land, to increase productivity, to generate surplus grain, and the like, the government believed it was necessary to settle almost 650,000 people in villages, some in rainfed agriculture and others in irrigated agriculture, after first launching a joint programme with WHO to control the disease Onchocerciasus. In the end the resettlement scheme has managed to accommodate only 1,800 families by the end of 1979. This was not because the programme was unattractive to many poor and overcrowded farmers, but because there was not a sufficient farm land to accommodate many. This 20 year resettlement scheme, mostly financed by the government of France was appropriated nearly a quarter of a billion dollar, and the result to date did not show that resettlement is an answer to the problem of famine or drought. Neither has Burkina Faso avoided the recent famine, nor increased its production output.

In 1973, the government of Tanzania began a full scale villagization program as a strategy of rural development, relocating small cultivators in *ujamaa* villages. By the end of that year, 2 million Tanzanians were members of 5628 ujamaa villages. By 1976, 13.1 million were living in 7650 villages. Like many African rural societies, Tanzania's rural communities are scattered. Therefore, it was believed essential to relocate these settlers so that they could be provided with necessary services. This massive relocation was done largely by political cadres who were eager to see agrarian socialism penetrating the grassroots at the periphery, and beheving that such a collective arrangement would enhance productivity. As it turned out the state's objectives were neither fulfilled, nor has the livelihood of the small cultivators improved. In fact, the country's economic crisis deepened, and the government felt obliged to quietly bury it. However, eight precious years were devoted to it, and the

state has also made it impossible for the farmers to go back to their places of origin.

The experiences of the Ghanian Volta Resettlement, the Burkina Faso's Volta Valley Resettlement, and finally Tanzania's Ujamaa should have been rich sources for the government of Ethiopia to draw lessons of considerable importance. Instead, the government repeated the same blunders with a magnitude unparalled with any one of these previous experiences. Ethiopia's resettlement scheme shares many of the objectives of those countries' resettlement or villagization programmes. The effect of resettlement on Gumuz and Annuak people in Ethiopia reminds us of the marginalised people whose places were denuded by the Volta River Resettlement in Ghana. There are, however, important differences between the two experiences. The Volta River Project was, other things being equal, trying to compensate for the land and other properties these people may have lost. The Ethiopian resettlement scheme completely ignores any compensatory measures to the loss caused by the programme. For this has to do with the fact that the government is not willing to recognize any other mode of appropriation than peasant oriented collective farming. The marginalised and the peripheral Gumuz and Annuaks had no real ownership right to even what they regard as their traditional land. The Ghanaian Project was, moreover, preceded by an extensive planning financed by the World Bank. Whereas the Ethiopian experiment has neither involved planning nor some sober agro-ecological study of the regions selected for resettlements. Despite the financing of the project drawn from the salaries of Ethiopians, (donation from) countries and organizations, and the enormous labour force which was mobilized for this effort, the government has failed to provide the settlers even with the most basic minimum necessities.

In many ways, the Burkina Faso's experience was prompted by similar problems to that of Ethiopia. Both countries suffer from population pressure on land in some regions, low productivity and food crisis. As the result, they saw resettlement to be the solution, and initiated their respective projects in the aftermath of the drought crisis. Both projects attempt to link resettlement initiative with development objectives, as well as overcoming food crisis and demographic pressure on land. The Burkina Faso's resettlement programme was one which was voluntary and targeted at settlement sites where traditionally have been uninhabited. Furthermore, the programme was launched after the government has established Onchocerciasis Control Center to make the area suitable for human habitation. The Ethiopian resettlement scheme, on the other hand, was neither *completely* voluntary, nor were the resettlement sites uninhabited. Nor has any effort to control malaria, bilharzia, meningites, Tsetse fly preceded the programme to make it suitable for human and

livestock habitation. At least, the settlers in Burkina Faso were relatively healthy people; but in Ethiopia's case a good number of the settlers were not healthy, thus underscoring their vulnerability to diseases, and their low resistance to them. In the case of Burkina Faso's resettlement scheme, cultivable land was prepared, implements were provided to settlers, and the like; but in Ethiopia, the settlers were presented with state farms and heavy machineries.

Of all these experiences, nothing more could have been regarded as crucial to Ethiopia's both villagization and resettlement schemes as the Ujamaa's programme of Tanzania. It is to be recalled that we have suggested that villagization and resettlement are two sides of one common objective. We maintained that villagization is a programme of relocating people *within* their own localities, whereas resettlement involves relocating people *outside* of their own places of origin, or localities. It is interesting to note that *Ujamaa* has never been called resettlement even though, it embraces both kinds of relocation. There were people resettled in villages away from their localities, and others were relocated not far from their own localities.

The *Ujamaa* experience, and Ethiopia's two kinds of settlements share a similar and most important objective namely to transform the backward rural communities into adopting socialist production relations, to replace the plough and the hoe culture by mechanized farming, to dissolve and replace individual effort by a collective, and to make the entire rural communities suitable for political control from the center. The professed stand of Ujamaa is not any different from that of Ethiopia's villagization or resettlement scheme: to raise agricultural productivity. That objective has not materialized in Tanzania using Ujamaa, and the Ethiopian government is using similar method in trying its luck. So far it has not worked in Ethiopia, but of course, this is no argument that it will not. Put differently, Tanzania has failed in its experiment with villagization, but it does not follow from this that Ethiopia will end up in similar predicament. For doing so tantamounts to asserting that villagization or resettlement is *intrinsically* wrong. But is it so?

Looking at the issue of resettlement from a broader perspective, it could be said that in the past all resettlement efforts have failed, hence this constitutes a sufficient ground for believing that it will not work in Ethiopia. The logic behind this argument is one of induction. Given the experiences of the past and the present, then we can conclude what will be like in the future. However, no inductive argument could be conclusive, and consequently, even though past and present resettlement efforts have failed, nonetheless, it *might* work in the future. This suggests that resettlement is not intrinsically wrong, but rather

under certain conditions it could conceivably be used as a strategy of rural development. Experiences of past resettlement efforts have shown that certain sets of circumstances, such as the absence of planning, excessive speed, ecological insensitivity, lack of skilled personnel and finance, ideological obsession and the like, have undermined the success of resettlement as a strategy of rural development.

Therefore, it could be argued that resettlement as a strategy of development could work provided that these sets of conditions are met. This raises the question of as to what would be the *ideal* picture or framework under which such a programme could indicate some hope of success. No one would deny the fact that resettlement is an extremely drastic measure to uproot people from their places of origin. This could bring enormous psychological stress and physical hardships to the settlers even in the best of conditions; for the difficulty of integration and adjustment to the new environment is always present. Under what conditions could resettlement minimize these and other hardships, yet could succeed as a strategy of rural development?

Ideally, a number of necessary conditions would have to be met. First, the places of origin which are now being abandoned have no sign of being revived for productive purposes. Second, the regions which the people are now being resettled must be fertile, and suitable for human and livestock habitation. The evidence for this would have to be supported by a series of on the spot scientific and agronomic study of the region. Third, preventive mechanisms to insure that the new settlements will not experience the same fate as the places of origin must be in place. This entails the establishment of institutions to educate the peasants about efficient land-use and soil management, It also presupposes the availability of farm inputs and better techniques of production. Fourth, the implementation of this scheme requires the willingness of the people to be resettled and an assurance of their independence, after being resettled, by way of providing them alternative systems of production. Fifth, such resettlement would not cause damage to the region nor to the indigenous people. Six, the implementation of such measure requires the availability of land for cultivation as well as residential purposes. This would have to be determined by a concrete agro-ecological and land-use survey. Seven, the resettlement areas would have to have climate agreeable to the settlers, and if the areas are known to be infested with diseases then these would have to be controlled before resettlement could be undertaken. Eight, a long term plan to resettle people would have to be drawn, and this would have to be preceded by a pilot-resettlement project. Nine, the plan must not only calls for a gradual resettlement of people, but also the money required to finance the scheme must be secured.

It could be argued that given these conditions are met jointly,

then resettlement could be seen as a viable option for rural development, and even as a measure of famine avoidance. It is obvious that the resettlement scheme which was launched beginning in October 1984 does not even meet any one of the above conditions. Obviously, the programme was meant as an emergency measure, and the ideal model of resettlement necessarily requires an investment of a considerable amount of time. It might be said that given very little time the government had to save the lives of its citizens, it had no option but to implement emergency resettlement. Consequently, the government has perhaps regarded saving a human life an overriding obligatory act over others. All things considered, most people would agree that the duty to save the life of a human being cannot be overridden by duties of lesser weight. When a state uses resettlement as an emergency response to famine, it may be suggested that it is recognizing the duty to save life as the most important duty. One may perhaps feel unhappy about the resettlement scheme as a *means* to achieving this important objective. None the less, this should not be seen as a reason for disquiet, since we feel important to save the life of another human being by telling a lie or by performing acts which involve minimal sacrifice on our part, even though these acts may be condemened as immoral. Therefore, it is not difficult to see people employing various unapproved means to achieve an end, regarded by many, as noble. In this sense, one can say that the state's desire to save the lives of its citizens is quiet noble even though it used resettlement scheme in order to achieve this end.

However, the issue is not whether this is a noble end but rather can this objective be realized using resettlement. Evidently, it did not. Since as we noted above, the mortality rate amongst settlers population is abnormally high as compared to places of origin. This therefore, raises suspicion as to whether resettlement scheme could be equated with an emergency response to famine. In fact, it could be maintained that what the state has implemented is not resettlement at all when once it has decided to use it as an emergency response to famine. For resettlement as a strategy of rural development and famine avoidance necessarily requires the fulfillment of those set of conditions which we have outlined above. Consequently, criticisms of resettlement in general on the basis of experiences we have observed in Ethiopia, in particular may not be criticisms of resettlement proper, but directed against the state's conception of how resettlement ought to be implemented. Consequently, there is good reason to believe that resettlement in the way I have proposed it may work, and therefore, it will be difficult to rule it out of court *apriori*.

None the less, the ideal model of resettlement itself is not immuned from difficulties. For instance, it is not clear that a resettlement scheme meeting those conditions could *post facto*

guarantee people access to food. Settlers' production beyond subsistence level depends in part on *how* they are allowed to lead their remaining productive lives. In a predominantly peasant oriented societies, like Ethiopia, the option which is proven, time and again, to be suitable to the small cultivator is a possession of land in an exclusive sense, and the freedom to cultivate it individually. In other words, they should not feel that they are camping on government property but rather on their own private plot of land. This assessment entails that the programme of intensive agriculture through co-operatives or state farms is not one which small cultivators in Ethiopia are enthusiastic about. Moreover, they do not regard this scheme as voluntary but one imposed upon them by the authorities.

It has been proven beyond any reasonable doubt that in Ethiopia collective farming is not a workable solution to food crisis. These farms fair less than the small individual farming. They undermine the motivation of the farmer to produce, and his ability to exercise his own creativity and freedom. Consequently, it is very unlikely that small peasant producers will produce more than self-consumption. And if production remains at subsistence level, then the development objective of resettlement will not be materialized. And more importantly, the settlers who are able to produce only at subsistence level could once again be at risk of suffering from food crisis.

No doubt the conditions stipulated to render resettlement as a viable alternative to rural development and famine avoidance may be stringent. But that may also be the reason why resettlement is a difficult and a controversial programme to implement. Especially in least developing societies, like Ethiopia, where the money to finance such an expensive programme is not available, and where the technical personnel to carry out a large scale resettlement operation is absent, it is difficult to see how most of the conditions could possibly be met, and much less the programme to be successful. For this and other reasons the resettlement programme in Ethiopia is in dire need of quiet burial.

Chapter 9: Famine Prevention, Rural Development and Peasant Societies

What we tried to show in the preceding chapters was how a the PMAC's purported solutions to famine have failed to address to the root causes of famine in Ethiopia. The PMAC's diagnosis of the causes of famine has focused on the archaic agrarian relations which have facilitated the development of famine conditions, and consequently, its purported remedy lies in replacing the relations by new systems of production realized through institutional settings. This solution has turned out aggravating those elements which I regard to be the root causes of famines in Ethiopia. As a result, another famine of tremendous severity besieged the country once again. This time, while still retaining the earlier measure taken against famine, the PMAC proposed emergency resettlement as a radical solution to famine. Moreover, the PMAC believed that resettlement has the added advantage of being a strategy of rural development while not losing sight of its role as an immediate famine relief measure.

By focusing on the resettlement effort in Metekel, I have argued that the resettlement programme is neither successful as a measure of famine-avoidance nor feasible as an alternative strategy of rural development. Our investigation of Metekel resettlement effort reveals, furthermore, that the programme is unfolding an irreversible damage to the environment, generating high mortality among the settler population and causing famine and land-hunger among the indigenous population. In short, the programme of resettlement turned out to be self-defeating. The famine and ecological problems which the scheme was designed to tackle were being introduced in areas where previously regarded as relatively free of these problems.

It is clear that unless those ailments which we have identified as being responsible for the emergence of famine are eliminated, there is no way that the occurrence of famine in Ethiopia could be avoided, not likely at least in the present decade. However, the dissolution of these problems is not a sufficient but a necessary condition for famine-avoidance. The assumption here is that once these elements are dissolved, then they may pave the way for the generation of surplus. The issue before us appears to be a double-fold one: how are these elements to be dissolved, and how is it possible to generate surplus in pre-capitalist social formations like Ethiopia. Another way putting the issue is this - how is the agrarian question to be resolved in pre-capitalist societies?

We have observed in the analysis of the political economy of Ethiopia that the country has a backward agricultural sector and this, more than any other factor, renders the economy famine-prone. The root causes of famine in Ethiopia are the poor techniques and agricultural implements, regional inequality, the

absence of effective mechanisms for marketing and distribution, state-intervention, and the hegemony of organized knowledge. A radical positive change in these elements would have to take place if the rural population is to be spared from recurring famine. This entails a radical transformation of the backward agricultural sector and the concomitant institutional framework under which it operates. Such a transformation is a *condition sin qua non* for preventing famine, but not a sufficient condition. However, there are reasons to believe that once a transformation of this sort has taken place, a production of surplus, which is an important step towards famine prevention, is within reach. This does not mean that a production of surplus would free people from the experience of famine, or once such an objective is achieved there would be no more famine. We know from Ethiopia's experiences of past famines that some regions capable of producing surplus would have easily satisfied the demands of those food deficit regions. Hence, the production of surplus is by no means a sufficient condition for guaranteeing the absence of famine. Other important mechanisms which insure the movement of grain from one region to another must be instiled. The question of what kind of mechanisms are needed for such an undertaking would have to be postponed for a while, until we first come to grip with possible ways by which surplus can be generated.

It is generally agreed that rural development is the answer to the problem of backwardness, poverty, food crisis and the like, which are so prominent in peasant oriented societies. Rural development entails, at least in the long run, production beyond self-consumption, and an improvement on the instruments of production which facilitate the aim of production. However, there is disagreement amongst development experts concerning viable strategy of rural development suitable to producing surplus and to transforming the rural communities. One such an approach is the classical Marxist theory of social transformation which many people are attempting to make use of it with regard to peasant societies. A variant of this theory is one espoused by Lenin, which many Third World scholars and leaders seemed to be very keen in embracing and translate it in their own societies, for reasons of relevance. A closer investigation of these approaches reveal that they fail to address to the plight of rural communities as evidenced by Ethiopia's recent experience; and that peasant oriented societies like Ethiopia need to direct their attention not to these theories but to realities of their own societies where important lessons and theories of rural development could be drawn from.

9.1. The Marxist Approach to Rural Development

Admittedly Marx has never put forward an articulated theory of how peasant societies could be transformed. However, his study of capitalist societies lend some insight into the nature of peasant societies. He believed that the development of pre-dominantly peasant oriented societies is only possible because of capitalist's penetration of these societies. To this end, he argued that capitalism has a progressive historical role to play in the development of these societies, even though later in his life as expressed by his correspondence and his letter to Vera Zasulich, he entertained doubts about this role. However, time and again, he argued that capitalist penetration of backward societies is not only necessary for developing their productive forces, but also in securing a higher state of development. Such penetration is historically necessary for pre-capitalist social relations to disintegrate, and to release the forces of production. "The bourgeoisie ... draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization".[1] The full development of productive forces is possible under capitalism. "The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future".[2]

Marx noted in the 1850s, the French peasantry was united with other classes in opposing the bourgeoisie, for the presence of a bourgeoisie state meant increased taxation, and turned the peasant in reacting against the church, army and state. Late in the 1860s, Marx was ambivalent of the radical nature of the French peasantry. In fact, he ignored his earlier claim that "the entire state edifice erected on his small-holding would fall to the ground and the proletarian revolution would obtain that chorus without which its sole song becomes a swan song in all peasant countries".[3] On the basis of the experience of England's land enclosure and development of agricultural methods, Marx developed the confidence that the peasantry will disappear, and that "the irrational, old fashioned methods of agriculture are replaced by scientific ones".[4] Echoing what Marx has previously said in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Engles writing on the *Peasant Question in France and Germany*, has said that the peasant "like every other survival of a past mode of production, is hopelessly doomed. He is a future proletarian".[5] Hence, both Marx and Engles believed that the peasant economy would dissipate; and as a result of his increased indebtedness and technological change, he is preparing the groundworks for transforming himself to becoming a rural proletariat.

In his work, the *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin also tried to show that the nature of this transformation entails the creation and enlargement of a 'home market', and the

freeing' of agricultural labour for industry. He noted that:

> "It appears... that about one-fifth of the peasants have already reached a position where their "chief-occupation" is that of wage-labour for rich peasants and landlords. We see here the first group of the entrepreneurs who present a demand for the labour power of the rural proletariat. These are the rural entrepreneurs, who employ about half of the bottom group of the peasantry. Thus, there is to be observed a complete interdependence between the formation of a class of rural entrepreneurs and the expansion of the bottom groups of the 'peasantry', i.e., the increase in the number of rural proletarians".[6]

Marxists appeared to be divided in their interpretations of peasant oriented societies. Some of them maintain, in defense of Marx's *Manifesto* position, that when a blocking of the real subsumption of labour by capital takes place, then it creates the development of a peripheral economy. That is, the blocked transition becomes 'peripheral capitalism'.[7] Some people on the other hand, maintain that capital penetration will necessarily raise the productive forces, and will subsequently lead peasant oriented societies to capitalist path of development in the manner adopted by European societies.

Both positions are, however, attempts to revise Marx's pronouncements in the *Manifesto* concerning the demise of pre-capitalist social formations due to the emergence of capitalism. Yet peasant societies still persist, and one wonders as to why capitalism has not eliminated these backward social formations, and why they still are not transformed into capitalist social relations. The revisions of the *Manifesto* attempt to answer these questions either on the basis of uneven or constrained development of capitalism or on the basis of the laws of world capitalist economy. Presumably, these are also explanations to the backwardness and underdevelopment of these societies. Under one of the positions, regardless of how capitalism is formed, the subsumption of labour by capital beginning from the core to the periphery is blocked, leaving the transition in question to be no more than peripheral capitalism. Consequently, the gap between centre and periphery or between urban and rural remains almost unabridgeable leaving the latter underdeveloped. On this view, in order to understand the specific reasons for this blockage and backwardness we need to examine and articulate the specific elements of the mode of production in question. Hence, no generalization can be made on the issue of transition.

The other position urges us to view the backwardness and underdevelopment of pre-capitalist formations on the basis of the world capitalist market economy, and the exchange relations

between the metropolis and the satellite states. The penetration of capital in the satellites is possible only arising out of the need of the metropolis states. That could be the need to extract surplus, or due to a need for cheap labour or raw material. Consequently, no generalization of capital penetration is possible.

The resolution of the 'agrarian question' by the development of capitalism appears to be an insurmountable task in developing countries. These countries remain peasant oriented; the productive forces still backward, and the peasants are far from becoming rural proletariats. For whatever reason, the prediction about the demise of the peasants has not materialized. They still are far from producing beyond self-consumption. Despite this obvious evidence serving as a counter-example to the claim that peasants will turn into rural proletariats, Third World scholars and leaders are hanging on to this view, or its variant as expressed in Lenin's analysis of transition.

These people see much of Lenin's works as being most relevant to developing countries while simultaneously viewing it as a continuation of the theories of Marx and Engles. Lenin's contribution on the subject is his emphasis on productive forces rather than on capitalism to achieving a rural proletariat oriented societies. He pointed out the advantages involved in by-passing capitalism to attain this objective. Following Marx, he emphasized the necessity of achieving the material and the technical requirements of socialism. Unlike Marx, he believed that such requirements can be met without introducing capitalism. History shows that the social formation where productive forces are extensively developed and where surplus is abundantly generated is capitalism. None the less, Lenin insists that this could be achieved without introducing capitalist social relations.

It has not been shown how specifically the productive forces would develop in peasant oriented societies, except to point out the necessity for laying the institutional foundations, presumably required to developing the forces. Many Afro-Marxist regimes including Ethiopia, following Lenin established the institutional frameworks but the productive forces remain stagnant, and paradoxically, the level of production has even sunk below self-subsistence. As a measure of self-consolation these regimes have often cited the Soviet experience as a model country where productive forces have developed without undergoing capitalism; and when this is historically falsified they resort to their vacuous rhetorical defense usually dubbed as the 'problem of transitional period'

These tactics are no more than attempts to conceal failures. The Soviet Union has undergone limited capitalist transformation, and had developed its productive forces way before launching a socialist revolution. In other words, the base from which it has started its socialist transformation is distinctly different from

these Afro-Marxist regimes. Consequently, unless we want to indulge ourselves in historical distortion, the Soviet experience could not be cited as a model case. Moreover, the Soviet Union has continually been developing its productive forces since Tsarist time, yet such development has not resulted in the generation of more surplus now than before the revolution.

The dogma that has been well entrenched into the hearts and minds of Afro-Marxists leaders is the claim that as long as they can develop their productive forces through institutional settings or transfer of technology, sooner or later surplus would result. It is possible however, to see a society where the forces are highly developed, and yet surplus is not being generated for one reason or another. Hence, the development of forces is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the procurement of surplus. Conversely, one could imagine a society where the forces exhibit low development, yet surplus is being generated. It seems, therefore, that the question is not one of developing the forces but what kind of agrarian policy must be enacted in order to motivate people to produce more than self-consumption. This is not to undermine the importance of the role forces play in society. Rather, the obstacle to developing the forces has often been, at least in Ethiopia, unrealistic policies which are deduced from theories without any basis in reality. As a result, neither were the forces developed nor surplus is being produced.

The government of Ethiopia has chosen the path of non-capitalist development. The Leninst guiding principle adopted by the state to shape the direction of the country's development has left the country barren of marketable surplus and developed productive forces. The state's vision of the means to developing the forces is to introduce mechanization on state controlled farms, with no regard to improving the traditional farm implements of the small cultivator. The state still sees the transfer of technology in either embodied or disembodied form as an irrevocable way of replacing the backward instruments of production. Without any feasibility studies or cost-benefit analysis, tractors are chosen by fiat. Undoubtedly, the traditional farm implements of the small cultivator are in dire need of undergoing refinement. But this does not necessarily call for a total abandonment or a replacement of these implements by tractors. The Ethiopian small cultivator who still uses a hoe or a plough has high yield per hectare than a state farm which utilizes a tractor.This, obviously, says quite a lot.

Obviously, the traditional farm implements have not been rendered useless nor were they shown to be inferior to tractors in terms of productivity. If, on the other hand, mechanization is the answer to the absence of surplus in Ethiopia, given the advantages state farms have over small peasant producers, they are in a better position to generate surplus. Clearly the answer to the lack of surplus lies not in the introduction of mechanization,

nor in the state's effort to control the peasant economically and politically; but in creating the conditions necessary for the realization of the small cultivator's freedom and creativity.

The state as the peasant's new landlord is not making these conditions possible. From its point of view, surplus production trough co-operative blindness would increase its own appropriation, satisfies the demand for raw materials by the existing industries, feeds its population and perhaps enables it to develop food security. In order to achieve these objectives, the state would have to tighten the screw on the peasant by introducing control mechanisms extending from the centre to the grassroots level. The implicit assumption here is that the more control the state has over the peasant, the more surplus is being produced and the less access the peasant would have to blackmarket activities. This strategy is not grounded in Ethiopian reality, but was derived from a theory of rural development as conceived by Lenin and other Marxists.

However, in reality the peasant is neither interested in producing for the state nor enriching its treasury, but in improving his livelihood and thereby reducing his risk of vulnerability to famine. This is not necessarily an egoistic pursuit. Rather the peasant, as an economic person, would like to see the benefits derived from his labouring activity to better his own access qualification to resources. Nor could the state force him to produce surplus by introducing laws or by indoctrinating him with political dose. No matter how important these political theories may be in their own right, they have failed to assimilate to the *weltanschauung* of the peasant, and vice versa.

Policy makers have professed to put the people first in their articulation of theories, but in reality the 'masses', as they often called, are always taking the back seat. This is not due to, on the part of policy makers, a desire to consciously harm the masses. On the contrary, in their efforts to extend benevolent attitude towards the masses, these policy makers had to embrace theories uncritically which, as is often turned out to be, having no bearing on the reality in question. Ideology takes precedence over practicability; and their enslavement to theories has blinded them from seeing what is real and actual. In the process, precious time and energy which could have been deployed elsewhere were expended in digging the graveyard of the nation.

It is clear that the proposed development theories for transforming rural societies have succeeded in lowering the income level of the small cultivator, and in increasing his vulnerability to contingencies. As much as one would like to make a distinction between 'policy' and the 'implementation' of a policy, nevertheless, in the Ethiopian context the policies which were formulated necessarily call for strategies of implementation quite compatible with the policies themselves. In other words, our criticisms of the state's strategies of development which are

rooted in Marxist tradition are not, strictly speaking, confined to the implementation of policies as such, but more importantly are attempts to question the very viability and appropriateness of these policies to Ethiopian reality.

The state maintains that through agricultural marketing arrangements, price policies and villagization/resettlement, agricultural surplus could be secured. And this would lead one step closer to preventing famine. The peasant sees these efforts as undermining his ability to survive, and is therefore, unwilling to support them. As a result, he has either withdrawn from participation in the government schemes; or diversified his economic activities even though these activities are less rewarding than agriculture proper. As evidenced by the growing intractable crisis in the agricultural sector, the tension between the state and the peasant is calling for a resolution. Whatever solution one proposes to do away with this tension, the withdrawal of these strategies of development is a prerequisite. This tantamount to imposing a demand on the state to wake up from its dogmatic slumber, as it were to come out from its shell and face the blinding light of harsh reality.

The foregoing discussion suggests that the theories of rural development under the rubric of classical Marxism, although point out to the importance of developing productive forces and the need to generate surplus, nevertheless how these objectives could be achieved is left unanswered. Even if it is possible to achieve these objectives, it does not follow that they will prevent famine. That depends, at the very least, on the nature of market arrangements, price policies, and on the degree of freedom which the state is prepared to grant the peasant. In so far as these elements are viewed by the peasant as means of appropriating surplus and not as incentives to produce more, then it is very unlikely that the peasant will produce beyond self-consumption.

The question we need to explore in the remaining section is therefore, how is it possible for the peasant to cope with famine and to what extent is it possible for the state to assist the peasant in his quest for survival, even though the state appears to be unwilling to compromise its ideological stand. What we shall be suggesting is an alternative approach to rural development which entails mechanisms to cope with famine. This approach is a peasant-centred, rather than state-centred approach. To this extent it is possible, given little assistance from the state, the peasant can reduce his vulnerability to famine. On the other hand, given the environmental nightmare unfolding in the country, it is imperative for the state to support these peasant-centred initiatives. Consequently, it is in the best interest of the parties involved to support one another in the realization of these efforts.

9.2 Security System Approach to Rural Development

The basic point of departure of this approach is that, in Ethiopia the small peasant producers and other marginalised groups such as pure pastoralists, and mobile or immobile semi-pastoralists are under crisis. They had been under crisis conditions for generations with persistent ailments of the policies of successive regimes chipping away their resource base, at least forcing them to do so, thus rendering them incapable of coping with contingencies such as famine. The security system which they have built on their own, in the absence of a national state security system, is now virtually gone. The question is, therefore, what must be done to rebuild their security system such that, on the one hand, it allows them to cope with crisis, and on the other, it contributes to rural transformation. The discussions below are attempts to tackle this question in a manner which is suitable to achieve these objectives. But first some points of clarification are in order.

What I mean here by a 'security system' consists of both disposable and non-disposable assets. An asset is disposable if and only if it is exchangeable in either crisis or normal times. For instance, a jewelry would be a disposable asset, and when one is faced with contingencies, then one is able to meet them by disposing them with cash, or with the needed commodity. An asset is non-disposable if and only if that entity is non-exchangeable but has use-value and/or what is derivable from it has use and exchange values. For instance, land could be a non-disposable asset *now* in Ethiopia where selling it is forbidden. But one could use it to derive certain cash income or one's own direct food entitlement. It is important to note, however, that the gamut of a non-disposable asset ranges from a non-exchangeable commodity to that of an organizational entity.

The focus of attention below shall be on identifying *some* elements which count as either disposable or non-disposable assets and see how they could be utilized as mechanisms of famine prevention and rural transformation.

9.2.1. Fuelwood and Security System

It would seem paradoxical to talk about fuelwood or biomass fuels when dealing with famine prevention. However, it will soon become evident that there exists a connection between these two elements. It should be recalled that one of the claims which we wanted to establish in this book has been that ecological degradation has been committed involuntarily by the small peasant producer. By doing so, he has been sowing his own seeds of destruction. Deforestation and subsequent erosion made it difficult for him to avert the ever present galvanizing dangers of

famine. Consequently, some drastic measures must be taken as quickly as possible to reverse this trend. To this end, rehabilitation of his environment is not only imperative and bears on his ability to increase his agricultural production, but also has various socio-economic implications.

More and more, the rural population is engaged in destroying forests and other vegetations to increase its productivity and to earn some supplementary income by selling them as fuelwood. The first element was encouraged by land-scarcity, lack of access to fertilizers and improved seeds; and the latter by the peasant's desire to withdraw from the state's programmes of development and to diversify his sources of income. As a result, the carrying capacity of the land to sustain his agricultural activity is exhausted. The vegetations he has cleared would have held groundwater from rainfall, when that is available, and regulate the flow and portability of water in river systems. Forest resources are, no doubt, essential component of soil and water conservation. The accelerated demand for fuelwood, especially in urban areas, gave impetus to the peasant to expedite the process of clearing forests, hence securing supplementary cash income. Naturally, this resource is also on the verge of extinction. In fact, by the end of this century, it is estimated that Ethiopia will have no forests remaining. This depletion of forests is also causing not just a decline of agricultural productivity, but energy crisis. For most of Ethiopia's population is dependent on fuelwood as the main source of energy. Almost 95 per cent of the country's energy requirement is met from fuelwood.

Reliance on fuelwood for years to come is inevitable, since the energy requirement of the great many Ethiopians will not be met from biomass substitutes. Only 110 towns and villages are electrified in Ethiopia, 65 per cent of the consumers being in Addis Ababa and Asmara. The use of electricity and other commercial fuels accounts for only 9 per cent of energy consumption based on fuelwood equivalent. The present supply position of non-biomass fuels precludes their use by the rural population and the lower income groups of urban societies.[8] Fuel, in the form of wood, charcoal, leaves and twigs, dung and agricultural residues are traditional and basic needs throughout Ethiopian society. Their levels of usage depend upon availability, distance of transportation, the price factor, itself dependent upon the foregoing, and traditional methods of cooking and heating. The consumption of fuelwood as a source of energy has been declining increasingly with the growth of population and in proportion with the decline of forests and woodlands. Although the only survey conducted on fuelwood consumption in Ethiopia was in 1976, none the less it reveals that the consumption for that year was estimated to be equal to a per capita yearly consumption of 0.7 m^3 or a total consumption of 20.3 million m^3.

The Ethiopian National Energy Commission (ENEC) analysis for

fuelwood and other biomass fuels in 1976 shows that:

1. Fuelwood consumption of 20.3 million m^3.
2. An estimated 6.5 million tons of dung cakes, based on a cattle population of 27 million head producing a dry-matter dung production of one ton per animal of which 20-25 per cent was collected. At an assumed dung cake net caloric value of 2,900 KCal/kg, this was equivalent to 7.3 million m^3 of fuelwood.
3. An estimated 7 million tons of agricultural residues from a main crop harvest in excess of 5 million tons which provided 10 million tons of available wastes. As a large part of this source is used for animal feed, the balance is made up of leaves, twigs, etc. from woodland and from bushes etc, on farmhand. At a net caloric value of 3,200 KCal/kg this source represented 6.6 million m^3 of fuelwood equivalent.[9]

Hence, the total fuel consumption in m^3 fuelwood equivalent from all these sources can be presented as follows:

TABLE 1

Total Biomass Fuel Consumption

Year	Fuelwood Mm^3	Other Biomass Fuels Mm^3 (Fuelwood Equiv.)	Population Millions	Per capita Equivelent Consumption m^3/annum
1976	20.3	36.4	27.9	1.3

Source: The Ethiopian National Energy Commission (1976)

This suggests a national average consumption of 1.3 m^3 per annum in 1976 . And for the same year the consumption rate in Addis Ababa is 1.15 m^3 and for other urban areas 1.05m^3. But the 1984 census has now put the population at a conservative 42 million, suggesting that this growth in population accounts for forest depletion and the resultant decline in energy consumption. Resettlement and villagization efforts have their share of contribution in depleting the existing forests with the attendant results. Therefore, in view of the practices of the small cultivator, the growing population and the government's commitment to villagization and resettlement schemes, the acute energy crisis to be felt throughout Ethiopia is not difficult to see. The crisis is even more acute to people with low income and in the Ethiopian context many people are. In fact, people with low income spend more money on fuelwood from their meager income than those people with high income brackets. This could be for a number of reasons. The people in the latter category usually are urban dwellers and have access to biomass substitute fuels. Even then, the total amount they spend to meet their energy requirement

as a percentage of their income is not significantly high. The table below shows that a family with an

TABLE 2

Family Income Birr/Month	Per cent of Population	Percentage of Income Spent On Food	Rent	Transport	Energy
0 - 99.99	35.23	42.3..	11.51	1.46	12.15
100 - 199.99	22.96	42.63	6.97	1.99	10.09
200 - 299.99	15.20	42.46	6.35	2.37	9.23
300 - 599.99	15.75	40.10	10.49	5.83	9.13
600 and above	10.71	31.18	13.57	6.91	4.36

Source: ENEC, Addis Ababa.

annual income of birr 1,200 constitutes 58.3 per cent of Addis Ababa's population spends 11.7 per cent of its income on fuel. Clearly, with this level of income it cannot be suggested that the demand for fuel is met other than with biomass fuels.

The foregoing discussion suggests that there is an accelerating decline of available forests. This in turn feeds on the decline in energy consumption. We have already noted the reasons which are contributing to these declines. However, the decline is not confined only to these elements. It also embraces agricultural productivity. It is not far from the truth to suggest that energy crisis exacerbates the on-going food crisis in Ethiopia.

Both types of crisis are the off-shoot of forest depletion. Consequently, it would be vital to seek a solution to rehabilitate the environment. The obvious one is to launch afforestation campaign, while simultaneously improving the technical know-how of the small cultivator. The latter does not entail the introduction of tractors. For various ecological and economic reasons tractorization is not the appropriate technology for the small cultivator. Rather, given the technology at his disposal, it is possible to refine it and to be able to avert the danger of wind and soil erosion. But before delving into this component, it is important to see how an afforestation campaign is possible and what this entails.

It is important to note that our aim is to seek mechanisms for prevention of famine. We noted above that energy crisis and food crisis in Ethiopia are inseparable. A prevention of one would provide relief to the other. In other words, if people produce more food; then the effort to generate supplementary income through selling fuelwood and charcoal would be minimized. This will in turn contributes to agricultural productivity in two ways: by maintaining the moisture and by releasing supplementary supply of energy to go into the land itself. That is, when fuelwood plantations supply the energy for cooking and heating, twigs and leaves, dung and agricultural wastes can be returned to the land. This will result in enhanced agricultural crop yields.

maintenance of soil fertility and structure. The use of agricultural residues as livestock feed will increase animal live weight and reduce grazing on poor quality grazing land. And high grazing incidence is a potent factor in ecological degradation.

It is, therefore, imperative that a campaign of re-afforestation begins. This effort has been underway on institutional level under the auspices of Forest and Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority (FAWCDA) since as far back as 1975. It has made substantial attempts in Tigrai, Wollo, Harrarghe, Eritrea and Shoa administrative regions. Unfortunately however, the efforts were not met with success. For instance, in 1977 the government launched a massive program to build soil conserving terraces and drains in various regions of the country. Using 'food-for work' and 'cash-for work' programmes assisted by WFP and the United Nations, the government mobilized small cultivators through Peasant Associations. By 1984, 590.000 kms of contour ditches called 'bunds' had been constructed and trees had been planted on 150,000 hectares of erosion-prone slopes. Yet of 500 million tree seedlings distributed from nurseries for planting, *only 15 per cent survived*. This was clearly a failure. But the failure could be attributed to either one or all of the following. drought problem, careless planting to fill quotas, poor choice of tree species or the absence of market-oriented strategy.10

The re-afforestation effort should begin with the small cultivator's interest in planting trees, and what this activity, in the long run, would mean to him. The small cultivator would have to see that trees are disposable assets with multiple purposes. And in so far as trees are assets, he would have to take care of them just as in the way he takes care of other assets, say jewelry. Trees have been assets for every occupational group and every person concerned be it biologically or economically. In arid lands, pastoralists plant and maintain a certain species of trees as indispensable assets for the good of the community. For example, Afar pastoralists in Ethiopia plant and maintain *Ficy* trees for multiple reasons. They bear fruits which are edible, and in times of drought they rely on them for an extended period of time, and in normal times they use the fruits as fodders for their livestocks. The trees provide the only shaded spots in this arid area under which their herds could take rest. Moreover, every member of the community is entitled to fix his beehive on these trees, thus securing a source for cash income by way of selling the honey. Knowing well that these trees are susceptible to destruction by some their own livestocks particularly goats, they protect them by covering the trees with thorn bushes.

Agriculturalist in Ethiopia have used trees mainly as a source of fuelwood for their own consumption or as a means of securing supplementary income by selling them. The cash income enables

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Agriculturalist in Ethiopia have used trees mainly as a source of fuelwood for their own consumption or as a means of securing supplementary income by selling them. The cash income enables

them to command other essential commodities. While nearly all cultivators do not depend on trees as a primary means of income most of them use trees as supplementary cash income. However, some people of Gurage nationality residing in and around centres used to be dependent on trees as the main source of income. They used to buy trees grown on certain hectares of land, cut them properly and sell them to house builders in towns or to fuelwood customers.

What Ethiopian agriculturalists have not done with trees is using them as a conscious means of survival in the face of crisis. Essentially, this involves a conscious selection of species of trees, planting and taking care of them so that on the one hand they could be used as direct food entitlement during crisis or normal times, and on the other hand, they could be used as fodders for their cattle or as a source of income. It has been and still is a tradition on the highlands of Ethiopia to grow eucalyptus trees which have no value as a strategy to cope with drought. First of all, they do not bear any fruits. Secondly, they soak up much water from the ground. In fact, Lij Eyasu after having assumed the throne following Emperor Menelik, wanted to destroy eucalyptus trees and replace them with mayberry trees on the grounds that the former species of trees were responsible for water scarcity in Addis Ababa by soaking-up too much water. Of course no one would deny the medicinal value of eucalyptus trees . None the less, their strategic importance in coping with food crisis is virtually non-existent.

The suggestion here is that once the peasant understands the strategic importance of growing trees around his plot of land, then falling back on his own years of experience of the various species of trees, he can choose what species to plant. No doubt, he is not always an expert even in his own environment, hence a need for assistance would always arise. In this case, the state could come to his aid by way of providing him with seedlings, by giving him better clues in cutting and nursing certain species of trees or by informing him of better techniques, which would enable him to realize his objectives. This area would be a converging point for organized knowledge and indigenous technical know-how, where the involved parties namely the state and the individual cultivator have a vested interest in growing trees. The peasant would have good reasons to regard trees as indispensable assets.

We are not underestimating the institutional constraints governing his activity. For one thing, the emphasis on re-afforestation campaign must be shifted from the state to the individual cultivator. The ownership of land and of crop trees is still an unresolved source of worry concerning land insecurity. The peasant feels that he is camping out on government property and not on his own. These constraints would have to be removed as a minimum requirement for any hope of success.

4.2.2. Traditional farm implements

It could hardly be denied that afforestation effort is organically linked with soil and water conservation measures. Areas denuded of trees are no doubt suceptible to erosion. The only real way of controlling erosion rates is through vegetative protection. This could be done no doubt with high input farming methods or through fertility-enhancing farming systems. These methods, however, must be geared towards benefiting the small peasant producer. Another important method suggested by a study in Nigeria is the attempt to grow crops without having to plough the land at all.

The plough and the hoe which the Ethiopian farmer has been using for ages are not the source of erosion, but his attempt to secure productivity by expanding his plot of land and his desire to overcome land scarcity by ploughing slopes were responsible for erosion. In either case, clearing the vegetation cover is an essential pre-requisite. These traditional implements are found to be more cost effective and more productive than tractors. Even in terms of reducing the risk of erosion or seed-bed preparation, the plough turned out to be more advantageous than the tractor. Often the moisture content at the seed-bed bottom is higher when the land is cultivated with ox-plough rather than a tractor. Moreover, the disc-implements render the seed-bed too fine, thus increasing the risks of erosion and crust formation. [11]

One way of building the security system of the small cultivator is to strengthen and to refine implements which he is familiar with and to make them easily accessible to him. Therefore, a mechanization effort which rely heavily on imported technology compete with the peasant for resources both in terms of land procurement, access to fertilizers etc, and in terms of channeling resources to improving his implements. Instead of the government being 'outward-looking' to secure technology from outside, it is reasonable first to be 'inward-looking' and see how to better manage its own existing and indigenously developed technology. By so doing, the government would be relieving the peasant from the pressure which he is in presently.

9.2.3. Traditional organizations

In many respects, traditional social organizations has been indispensable assets throughout Ethiopian society. Next to the immediate family of the person, these social organizations are often the first ones to come to his rescue. No doubt they breed dependency on them, but none the less, that is one of the elements which entitles them to become a security system of the individual. In the absence of any viable security system

instituted by the state, traditional social organizations fill its role. *Edir, Equibe, Mahebar,* etc, are all social organizations established since time immorial in Ethiopia history.

Generally speaking, their function is to enable the individual to cope with contingencies if and when they arise. In a way, these organizations can be described as a system of reciprocity where upon entering any one of these organizations one promises to fulfil his/her obligation when called upon. Unfortunately however, their economic potential of these organizations have not been fully explored. For instance, if a member of *Edir* is deceased, then the organization makes sure that the family is not burdened with funeral and related expenses. In many cases, *Edir* is designed with only that objective in view. However, there is no reason as to why this and the other organizations could not be used as localized food reserve or as units of resource distribution.

Even though there is a campaign staged by the state to replace them with politically infested mass organizations, none the less, these traditional organizations are deeply entrenched in the hearts and minds of a great many Ethiopians, and they still persist. Their full potential remains to be realized, and their realization should consist of how to use them as mechanisms for famine avoidance.

This suggests that the military government has now begin to give priority to the realization of ideological purity rather than to the real problem which has besieged the people viz. hunger. It is in a way paradoxical. For when the military has usurped power it was never ideologically committed to any of those popular brands. It saw its mission as bringing justice and equality by dismantling the aged old pseudo-feudal regime and by uniting all Ethiopians under the banner of "Ethiopia First". Once this mission is accomplished, it promised to return to its barracks. Neither its assumed mission was accomplished nor its promise was kept. Instead, it became committed to an ideology which is even alien to itself. In the process, it has ignored the real basic needs of the people, such as adequate food supply, clean drinking water, shelter and health services. In short, practical matters were simply set aside by the Dergue. This became evident in the government's resettlement campaign.

Planned or emergency resettlement is not the solution to food crisis, for what this measure basically accomplishes is the reintroduction of the very same problems which it was expected to do away with, and thereby to accelerate mass destitution, ecological degradation and the like, over areas where the inhabitants are already leading a precarious existence. Organized or planned resettlement had been underway in Ethiopia for a long time, but only a handful of them were judged, after several years, to be self sufficient. To launch an emergency resettlement programme encompassing 1.5 million people knowing too well that organized resettlement has been a disappointing effort defies any standard of rationality. In order to support this allegation, we have examined the Metekel resettlement site. There we showed that such a programme in the region is not only a fiasco but most importantly it is inhumane and genocidal.

Looking at resettlement from socialist oriented ideology, it will remain, I am convinced, the most favoured programme of the government not as a solution to the problem of hunger but as a formidable mechanism of political control on the rural population. In the years to come this objective will override any other concerns. Hence, resettlement is bound to be seen as a means to promote agrarian socialism without any value as a strategy of rural development. The persisting food crisis will remain intact, at least for years to come. It is, I think, reasonable to speculate that another famine which will soon besiege the country again may also precipitate the downfall of the present regime as it did to the the *ancient regime*. It would indeed be surprising if the military regime survives another ordeal in less than a decade.

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39. Helmut Kloos, 1982, p. 33.
40. Johan Helland, 1980, p. 96.
41. Ibid.
42. Bondestam, 1974, p.
43. Karl Johan Lundström, 1975, p. 60.
44. For a discussion of raids against Afar, and about the political and economic climate in the northeast of Ethiopia between 1927 and 1935, see James Mc Cann, 1984.
45. Ayele Gebre Marian, 1986, p. 184.
46. Lundström, 1975, p. 55.
47. ENI, 1974, p. III.
48. Ethiopian Herald, 1973, December 1.
49. The frequent practice of this form of punishment in Eritrea was pointed out to me by Tekeste Negash.
50. Sen. 1983, op. cit. p. 101.
51. Sen. op. cit.
52. Ibid.
53. Johan Holmberg, 1977, p. 11.
54. Pausewang, 1983, p. 97.
55. Lundström, 1975, op. cit.
56. Ministry of Agriculture, EPID, March 29, 1974, (Mimeo).
57. Sen,
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.

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1. Negarit Gazeta, 1975, Proclamation No. 31 of 1975.
2. The nature of 'inheritance' here appears to be different from the one employed under the old system, but in reality there is not a substantive difference between the two systems in the way in which the notion of inheritance is being understood and practiced.
3. Negarit Gazeta, 1975, Proclamation No. 71 of 1975.
4. Negarit Gazeta, 1975, Proclamation No. 31 of 1975, p. 96.
5. It is interesting to note here that during the past several years, many influential people who had access right to the best urban land, had exercised this right as many times as they could possibly manage. On each occasion they sold the land while at first investing as little as 1,000 birr in building a hut, and selling it for no less than 50,000 birr. In the process, several people have achieved the status of nouveau riche in a newly emerging socialist relations of production.
6. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, 1967, pp. 20-22.
7. Impact of Agrarian Reform-1960, ARDU Publication no. 16, pp. 23-24.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Alemneh Dejene, 1985, pp. 53-54.
10. Griffin and Hay, 1985, pp. 53-54.
11. Mengistu Woube, 1986, p. 106.
12. Shindo, 1985, pp. 6-8.
13. U.S. Arms Control and Disarmanent Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1985, p. 131, Table III.
14. Ruth Leger Sivard, World Military and Social Expenditures, 1983, p. 21.
15. Ibid., p. 35, table II, p. 40, table III.
16. ILO, 1986, p. 92.
17. Haile Lul Tebicke, 1985, p. 39.
18. Soil Conservation Research Project, Compilation of phase 1 Progress Reports. Addis Ababa, June 1964.
19. Haile Lul Tebicke, 1985, p. 40.
20. Lester R. Brown and Edward C. Wolf, June 1985, p. 52.
21. Griffin and Hay, 1985, p. 54.
22. Brown and Wolf, June 1985, p. 61.
23. ILO, 1986, p. 9, 2.
24. Brown and Wolf, June 1985, p. 50.

25. RRC, various documents, 1986.
26. Simon Maxwell, December 1986, op. cit. p. 10.
27. Ethiopian Herald, November 14, 1984.
28. Ethiopian Herald, December 14, 1984.
29. Gopalakrishna Kumar, 1986, table 7.
30. Ethiopian Herald, October 27, 1984.
31. Ibid., December 12, 1984.
32. Peter Giles, op. cit. New Statesman, May 1985, pp. 20-21.
33. Quoted in Tesfatsion Medhanie, 1986, p. 209.
34. FAO News Release PR 84/79 p. 2 (I/R 2199)
35. Quoted in Peter Giles, p. 10.
36. Ibid. p. 13.
37. Kumar, 1986, op. cit. pp. 22-26, Ethiopian Herald, October 27, 1984.
38. Ethiopian Herald, op. cit., June, 1984.
39. Ibid., August 13, 1984.
40. Ibid., September 3, 1984.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., September 19, 1984.
43. Ibid., October 4, 1984.
44. Ibid., October 9,. 1984.
45. Ibid., October 25, 1984.
46. Ibid., October 27, 1984.
47. Peter Giles, 1986, p. 186.
48. Ibid.
49. Ethiopian Herald November 7, 1984.
50. Ibid.,
51. Ibid., November 8, 1984.
52. Ibid., November 10, 1984.
53. Ibid.,
54. Kumar, 1986, table 7.
55. The Times, October 29, 1986.

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1. Donald Levine, op. cit.
2. Sabacchi, 1985, p. 105.
3. Ibid, p. 109.
4. Adrian P. Wood, 1982, p. 157.
5. The World Bank Group in Ethiopia, February 1973, pp. 9-10.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Bekure Wolde Semait, 1962, pp. 608-611.
9. UNEP/RRC.
10. Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Villagization Guidelines, Oct. 1985.
11. Negarit Gazeta, 1975. Proclamation No 31 of 1975.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.

14. Ministry of Agriculture, Villagization Guidelines, Oct. 1985
15. Ethiopian Herald, February 11, 1985.
16. Ibid., December 12, 1984.
17. Ibid., November 3, 1984.
18. The World Bank Group in Ethiopia, February 1973, pp. 6-10.
19. Ethiopian Herald, November 7, 1984.
20. Ibid., November 8, 1984.
21. Ibid., November 15, 1984.
22. Ibid., November 25, 1984.
23. WPE Office in Pawe.
24. This is based on what the settlers themselves have said in Pawe,
and on research reports conducted in the Sudan, by Clay & Holcomb, 1985; Peter Niggli, 1986.
25. Ethiopian Herald, December 4, 1984.
26. Ibid., December 8, 1984.
27. Ibid., December 12, 1984.
28. Ibid., January 20, 1985.
29. Ibid., February 11, 1985.
30. Ibid., March 1, 1984.
31. This was one of the major explanation that has emerged during
Lemma Gutema's briefing to the campaigners at the Founding Congress Hall in May 1985.
32. Ethiopian Herald, June 16, 1985.
33. A memorandum issued by the University's exemption committee.
June, 1985.
34. Abay Task Force, 1986, p. 31.
35. Ibid.,
36. Ibid.,
37. Ibid.,
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2. World Bank Group in Ethiopia, February 1973, pp. 6-10.
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4. Ibid., March 2, 1985.
5. Ibid.
6. Regional Committee for Settlement, Wollo
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8. RRC Press Release, Ref. No. 28/11/85, p. 2.
9. WPE Pawe, and see Giordano Sivini, 1966, pp. 233-235.
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11. ILO, 1986, p. 9.2.
12. A. Paul, 1971, p. 21.

13. Donald Levine, 1974, pp. 70-71, Frederick Simoons, 1960, p. 13, Map. 13.
14. Patrik Wallmark, 1981, p.81.
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17. Wendy James, 1986, pp. 119-147.
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2. Marx, Capital, first edition 1976, p. 91.
3. Marx and Engels, 1968, Selected Works, p. 175.
4. Marx, Capital, 1976. p. 505.
5. Marx and Engels, 1968, p. 629.
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