Editorial

Revolution in Ethiopia: 15 Years on ..

As it rounds off its fifteenth year, the revolution in Ethiopia appears to have completed a distinct phase with the institutionalisation of the regime that came to power in 1974. Military rule has been supplemented, though not supplanted, with the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), founded in 1984, whose prescribed role is to be 'the guiding force of the state and the entire society'. The state itself, renamed the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, was given a constitution in 1987, in which the dominant role of the Party is enshrined. Considerable care and time were given to fashioning these institutions, and much effort expended in mobilising popular involvement in the process. The obvious intention was to draw the curtain on the previous phase, marked by military rule, lawlessness and violence, and to usher in a period of 'socialist construction' under the aegis of the WPE.

Christopher Clapham completed a study of Ethiopia just as the process of institutionalisation neared its end (Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia). It is the first detailed study of the regime, and his article in this issue offers a concise description of it, as well as his assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. While he gives little credit to the regime's Marxist ideological assertions, viewing them essentially as instrumental to the purpose of mass mobilisation and organisation, he is impressed with the strength and organisational capacity of the state, which has been able to make its authority felt directly at the base of society — though not everywhere in the country — for the first time in Ethiopian history. This enhanced capacity for organisation and mass control accounts for the success with which monumental tasks like resettlement and villagisation were carried out, not to mention the massive, prolonged war effort against the Eritrean and Tigrayan rebels in the north. In Clapham's opinion, the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, whose 'leninist' structure parallels and reinforces the structure of the state, will further enhance the state's capacity to control and manage the destiny of the Ethiopian people.

According to Clapham, the hallmark of Marxism-Leninism everywhere is the aggrandisement of the state, which then becomes the prime mover in the struggle for economic transformation and development. Insofar as Ethiopia's rulers have made progress in this direction, he is willing to grant their claim that theirs is a Marxist-Leninist regime; their ideological shallowness notwithstanding. Even within its own terms of reference, which we ourselves would not share, however,
this judgement was rendered dubious by recent developments, which have revealed the regime's vulnerability (see 'Briefings').

Michael Stahl examines the regime's record in the field of agricultural development. His article is based on a lengthy, recent personal involvement with peasant production in Ethiopia as administrator of the Swedish aid programme, the showpiece of which was the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU) in Arsi province. Set up in 1967, and designed to promote smallholder production through a 'package' of inputs, the project was initially hampered by the quasi-feudal land tenure system of the ancien regime that robbed the tenants of much of the surplus they produced (see M.Stahl, Contradictions in Agricultural Development, 1973)). In recent years, the programme was completely undermined by the policies of the successor regime, which deprived the peasants of initiative, replaced the market with a system of compulsory purchasing by the state at fixed prices, and promoted collectives and state farms as opposed to smallholder production. As a result, the Swedes recently decided to wind up the programme.

Stahl's article examines the whole range of policies promoted since 1974 that have affected agricultural producers in Ethiopia, and assesses their impact on production. The high point of the revolution for those Ethiopia's peasants, especially in the south, who were tenants came with the sweeping land reform in 1975, which not only gave the land to the tiller, but also afforded a considerable degree of self-administration in the rural areas through the newly established peasant associations. This was when the new regime and the state were at their weakest point, but it was not to last long. In the rural areas, where over eighty per cent of Ethiopians live, the strengthening of the state noted by Clapham was reflected in the incorporation of the associations as state adjuncts, and their use for the purposes of facilitating military conscription, tax collection, forced contributions to the war effort, and compulsory grain delivery at low prices. More recently, they played their part also in resettlement and villagisation. While the peasant sector was thus drained of initiative and surplus, the regime poured resources lavishly into a small number of collectives and state farms, whose performance as a model of socialist production has nevertheless been quite unimpressive.

Economic stagnation, famine, a huge and widening foreign trade deficit, and regular budget deficits on one hand, and a very high growth of state expenditure due to the war on the other, should spell bankruptcy. Why this has not happened is the subject of Roy Love's article — an issue that Clapham had earlier raised. It appears that one way of financing the state has been increased taxation of the rural sector, whose contribution to state revenue more than doubled, as well as increased taxation of exports, almost entirely agricultural, which means that the producers got less. In return, this sector received little from the state, and most of what it got went to state farms. Credit and money supply expansion, as well as foreign indebtedness, the level of which can only be guessed at, since most of it is owed to the Soviet Union, were other ways of bridging the financial gap.

The revolution and the regime in Ethiopia are approaching the end of a phase in another and more critical sense. The stalemate in the war against the Eritrean and Tigrayan liberation fronts in the north came to an end in mid-1988, suddenly and disastrously for the Ethiopian forces. Since then, they have been pushed out of Tigray province completely, and are hanging on precariously to a few towns in Eritrea where they can be supplied only by sea or air. It is obvious that ten years
of inconclusive warfare sapped the fighting capacity of the Ethiopian army, while the effect on the insurgents seems to have been rather the opposite. The likelihood that the Soviet Union will scale down its military aid to Ethiopia magnified the peril. With the moment of truth approaching rapidly, the regime in Addis Ababa was politically paralysed. The recently adopted constitution included a scheme providing varying degrees of self-government to five autonomous regions and twenty-four administrative units. Eritrea and Tigray were included among the former, though sub-divided and shorn of some of their districts. The scheme is chiefly remarkable for the range of possibilities it offers to foster rivalries among ethnic groups and thereby dilute regional solidarity. Although it was rejected out of hand by all groups fighting for self-determination, the regime clung to it as its definitive 'peace proposal'.

In the second week of May 1989, a spectacular convulsion at the highest level of the military establishment might have represented an attempt to end the political impasse produced. A large number of high ranking officers seemingly attempted to force Mengistu's removal while he was on a visit to East Germany. When things went wrong, the plotters were left defenceless, and a veritable massacre of the generals ensued. Thirteen generals and sixteen other senior officers were, in fact, killed, and about 150 top officers were implicated and arrested. Among the dead were the Minister of Defence, the Chief of Staff, the Commander of the Air Force, the Commander of the Second Army in Eritrea and his deputy. Though it failed, the attempt shattered the image of solidity depicted by Clapham and, given the rumoured withdrawal of Soviet military backing, bodes ill for the regime's capacity to carry on such costly internal wars. It should be remembered that the fate of Haile Selassie's regime was sealed when its main pillar of support — the military — cracked.

John Markakis
THE STATE AND REVOLUTION IN ETHIOPIA

Christopher Clapham

The sustained restructuring of the military regime which has taken place in the 1980s is an essentially 'leninist' project with three components: new and enhanced structures of institutional and centralised control, down to the grass roots level kebelles and peasant associations but one that has not succeeded in many regions; a drastic, state-controlled restructuring of the economic base; plus a limited but significant expansion of political representation essentially through the new Workers' Party.

Some of its institutional forms and the economic and social changes (e.g. land reform) are probably irreversible but there has been over-reliance on the use of state power as the solution to all problems.

Introduction

Ethiopia has since 1974, and especially since the creation of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) in 1984, made the most sustained attempt by any African state to create a Marxist-Leninist structure of government along broadly Soviet lines. This enterprise has often been criticised, from the left no less (in fact, generally more) than from the right, as the brutal imposition of an autocratic military leadership, using a largely meretricious Marxist rhetoric — a charge summed up in John Markakis' widely cited phrase, 'garrison socialism'. Much of this criticism is justified. The Ethiopian regime does indeed have a substantial military element in its top leadership and has readily resorted to force as a response to the chronic economic and political problems which it has faced — and which its own rigidly centralist attitude has often exacerbated. But it is not enough to use this as a pretext for dismissing the Ethiopian experience as a serious attempt to apply 'socialist' solutions to the peculiarly intractable problems facing African states. It may be more helpful, indeed, to regard socialism (in its Leninist form) as a doctrine specially apposite to state consolidation in the third world, which may be expected to appeal to elites whose primary goal is the creation of a centralised and disciplined structure of political control. This is of course a goal which the military, as the most hierarchically organised section of the state bureaucracy, may be expected to share. The problems of revolutionary state consolidation in Ethiopia, along with many of its achievements, must be ascribed at least in part to the Leninist model itself.
That military rulers do not more often use Leninism as a tool for state formation may be due, not so much to the unacceptability of the goal, as to the difficulty of reconciling this means to achieve it with the military's existing interests and alliances. Military regimes which depend on Western (and especially American) support readily regard 'communism' as the arch-enemy. They may be engaged in warfare against guerilla opposition movements which draw their inspiration from Marx and look to anti-communism as an ideological prop to their own nationalist mission. The officer corps often have strong links with social classes whose interests are the first to be threatened by a Leninist ideology which seeks to centralise economic power in the hands of the state. And a Leninist party structure undermines the institutional autonomy of the military itself, which must be subordinated to the control of the party apparatus in a way which undercuts the military command.

All of these obstacles stood in the way of a Leninist military regime in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian military's longstanding dependence on the United States was reinforced, at the time the revolution broke out in 1974, by heavy Soviet support for Ethiopia's main regional rival, the Somali Republic. The insurgency in Eritrea, supported by radical Arab states with Cuban assistance and the indirect backing of the Soviet Union, was articulating an increasingly Marxist rationale for its struggle for separate independence. The army, whose members had been regularly rewarded over the previous century with grants of land in the conquered territories of the south and west, had an evident interest in maintaining the highly exploitative relations of production which this system of land tenure created.

In the hands of the revolutionary regime, Leninism nonetheless provided a means to consolidate and extend the power of the state, while divorcing it from the bankrupt formula of absolute monarchy which had previously been used to maintain it. Though the outcome of the revolution was at one level the result of bloody power struggles between contending groups and individuals, it also represented an effective synthesis of the Marxist-Leninist ideologies promoted by a wide range of Ethiopian intellectuals, and the military's determination to maintain state power and national integrity. In adopting a Leninist path to this end, the military reversed its superpower alliance (exposing itself in the process to the Somali invasion of 1977-78), took over the ideology associated with its secessionist enemies, pushed through a series of far-reaching reforms which destroyed the economic base of the aristocratic and landholding classes, and created a Leninist vanguard party which is rather more (in my view) than a mere front for the maintenance of military dictatorship. Though the regime's overriding goal is, as under Haile Selassie, the maintenance and extension of a centralised Ethiopian state, the revolutionary transformation of the means to achieve this goal deserves rather greater recognition than it has usually received.

This transformation consisted in three interlocking elements: first, the creation of a new structure of institutional control; second, the drastic reorganisation of the economic basis of state power; and third, a selective widening of the base for political representation. All of these ends were systematically and (for the most part) sincerely pursued, and contributed to the vast extension of state power and effectiveness which has taken place since the revolution. All likewise contained flaws which help to explain the current crisis of the Ethiopian state.
Institutional Transformation

The first point to make about state consolidation in revolutionary Ethiopia is that it could draw on a powerful indigenous tradition of statehood, derived from the broadly feudal social and economic structure of imperial Ethiopia, built on highland ox-plough agriculture. It was, after all, the organisational strength of the pre-revolutionary state which enabled the central Ethiopian highlands to sustain a recognisable political structure over a period of some two thousand years, and to preserve Ethiopia's independence through the colonial scramble for the continent. The revolution turned a previously largely personal set of relationships, within a characteristically feudal structure of deference and subordination, into institutional relationships of much greater complexity and effectiveness; but it did not have to cope with the problem of creating either the state itself or the attitudes to authority which sustained it.

The key base-level institutions of revolutionary Ethiopia are the peasants' associations and the urban dwellers' associations (or kebelles), which were both established as agencies of local self-administration, replacing mechanisms for rural and urban control which had been destroyed by the great revolutionary reforms of 1975. The rural land reform, which abolished all private land ownership and the private hire of agricultural labour, could only be implemented through an organisation which allocated land within a given area (notionally of 800 hectares, but in practice very variable) among the peasant families which farmed it. The urban land reform, which abolished privately rented housing, likewise required an organisation to allocate housing and collect rents on a communal basis.

These two institutions have now become so firmly established that their disappearance is inconceivable, regardless of what further upheavals Ethiopia may yet have to suffer. They were given from the start a wide range of administrative functions in addition to the basic ones for which they were established, and these have steadily been added to, as each new government programme calls on them for its local level implementation. Every urban house is numbered and registered. The kebelle provides (and can, as a punishment, take away) the ration cards which families in major towns need to buy their allocation of subsidised food. It has its own administrative headquarters, its judicial tribunal, its shop, and its women's and youth organisations. It provides the structure through which to run aid projects and literacy campaigns, to get out the crowd for obligatory demonstrations, and to enforce the military conscription. Its armed guards police the streets at night, enforce the curfew, and help to make Ethiopian cities remarkably free from violent crime.

The peasants' association provides a similar range of services, with additional responsibilities imposed by the requirements of control over the rural economy. Its most important function is to allocate the basic economic resource — land — among its member families. It may also select families in eroded highland areas for resettlement in the south and west, and serves as the basic unit for the villagisation programme, under which scattered homesteads are being concentrated in villages laid out on a uniform grid — a process which brings peasants much more directly under the control of their associations. And while kebelles supervise the distribution of food to their inhabitants, peasants' associations have the much less popular task of extracting quotas of grain from farmers at government controlled prices.
While pre-revolutionary landlords and local governors had a position which depended to a large extent on their personal status, the role of kebelle and peasants' association chairmen is much more directly created by state power. They are therefore more easily displaced, and more amenable to incorporation into an administrative hierarchy. Initially, they had a good deal of autonomy, but since the end of the terror in 1978 they have become government agents under an electoral veneer. Kebelles are grouped into 'highers' (or keftenyas), or in the largest cities, zones. Peasants' associations come under the regional administrative hierarchy. These hierarchies are in turn being progressively permeated by party (rather than state) officials. A similar process of centralisation and party penetration has taken place in other mass organisations such as the trade unions, and the women's and youth associations. Participation by women in leadership positions is almost entirely restricted to the women's associations, and to posts in the party structure concerned with women's affairs.

The second major institutional structure is the party, established under the guise of the Commission for Organising the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE) from late 1979 and formally launched as the Workers' Party of Ethiopia in September 1984. A vanguard party constructed on strictly Leninist lines, this is straightforwardly directed from the top. Ritual references to the 'broad masses' barely disguise a political structure which is run by and in the interests of classes dependent on state employment. Government figures attest the small proportion of party members, and still less of party leaders, who are either peasants or workers. But although emphatically a party of the state apparatus, it is not simply a party of the military. The Political Bureau includes several influential survivors of the group of civilian Marxist intellectuals who were prominent in the early years of the revolution, and as one moves down the party hierarchy, the proportion of military appointees steadily diminishes. Of the 30 regional party first secretaries announced late in 1988, for example, 18 are former soldiers, while the great majority of the hundred or so provincial first secretaries are civilians. Most of these are former petty functionaries of the kind who take local level leadership positions in political parties throughout the continent, including schoolteachers, other technical agents of state administration such as health and agricultural employees, and some officials who have crossed the dividing line from the ordinary bureaucracy. Most of them found their way into active politics (some at a very early age) during the upheavals of the mid-1970s.

Party officials take the lead at every level in local administration. Political power in rural Africa is nothing if not visible: Who has the biggest office? Who gives the orders? Who demonstrates deference to whom? In Ethiopia, all of these signs point to the supremacy of the party, even when the provincial first secretary is a former teacher, and the provincial administrator (his counterpart in the state administration) is an ex-army officer. And though the real commitment of party officials to Marxist-Leninist dogma is something that they may well keep to themselves, they certainly go through an extensive programme of ideological and organisational training, either in the USSR and Eastern Europe, or in the ideological schools in Ethiopia itself. The total membership of the party was about 30,000 late in 1985, rather less than 0.1% of the total national population, and given fairly stringent requirements for entry, it has probably grown only slowly since that time. Ordinary party members have been expected to take a leading role in implementing government policies such as agricultural resettlement (when groups of cadres were sent to set up special party units in resettlement zones), or villagisation and
the establishment of agricultural producers' cooperatives (or collective farms). Many of those whom I have seen, especially in outlying rural areas, perform these tasks with considerable dedication.

Within the military, party officials form a distinct cadre. The former military men (almost all of whom were officers) who hold high positions in the WPE leadership went into politics from 1974 onwards, and (except for the few who still hold military appointments) have long since dropped their military ranks and uniforms; most of these were members of the Derg, though some (including several personal associates of Mengistu Haile Mariam) have come in through other channels. Though they hold party positions, the survivors of the Derg are steadily declining in importance with each successive government reshuffle or organisational change, even when — like Melaku Teferra, the Derg's most brutal strongman and former party first secretary in Gonder — they are not dismissed altogether. Within the armed forces, distinct career patterns separate officers in command positions, from those in the party hierarchy which has developed from the former Military Political Administration of the Armed Forces. Though leading military commanders are members of the Central Committee of the WPE, this is no more than a titular recognition of their status and their commitment to any form of Marxism-Leninism is sometimes paper thin.

The third leg of the new institutional structure is the military and the civil bureaucracy, vastly expanded in the case of the military from some 45,000 before the revolution to probably about 300,000 from the late 1970s onwards. Despite the Somali war of 1977-78, these are, of course, overwhelmingly committed to the demands of internal control, at which in the late 1980s they have proved decreasingly effective. With the partial demobilisation of the peasant levies raised in the late 1970s, numbers have been kept up from the mid-1980s by a regular though selective process of conscription, which has proved increasingly difficult to enforce following successive disasters in the north.

The civilian bureaucracy has also expanded considerably. The only authoritative figures that I have been able to find show an increase from 109,322 to 167,860 between 1977-78 and 1982-83 in the number of civilian employees financed from the central government budget, an annual growth rate of some 9.5%. Even though civil service salaries have remained unchanged (despite a high rate of inflation) since the revolution, this rate of increase is likely to have been cut in the later 1980s, owing to pressure on tax revenues. It excludes the large growth of employment in kebelles and peasants' associations, other mass organisations, and state corporations. And along with the expansion of state regulatory power, 'breaches of regulations' (together with misappropriation of public property and 'crimes against the economy') have overtaken private offences such as assault and theft as the commonest category of crime.

The Economic Basis of State Power
This vast expansion in the institutional structure of the state was built on a productive base of (even for an African state) quite exceptional fragility. Ethiopia was, and remains, one of the poorest states in the world — on current World Bank figures, it is by some way the poorest. It has virtually no commercially exploitable minerals, and at the time of the revolution, when all foreign companies were nationalised without compensation, there were scarcely any companies of any
importance to nationalise; the major American enterprise, for which compensation was later agreed at a mere $5 million, was Kalamazoo Spice, a buying agency for peasant-grown herbs and spices. The level of incorporation into the global economy was one of the lowest in Africa, with some 60% of exports coming from a single crop, coffee, much of which was gathered wild. And that this relative economic autonomy did not hold any evident potential for indigenous economic growth was most starkly demonstrated by the predominance of a peasant mode of production barely able to assure its own subsistence, and vulnerable (as in Wollo and Tigray in 1973-74) to catastrophic famine.

Since the revolution, the whole of the economy (apart from some areas of petty trade) has been brought under state control. Industry is managed through state corporations, and small-scale and handicraft producers have been induced (though not formally compelled) to join together as cooperatives. Though compensation has been agreed for some of the foreign enterprises nationalised in 1974-75, the former management has not returned, and no new businesses have been established. Trade in the commodities most important to government, notably grain and coffee, is closely controlled, and the regime has pursued a policy of voluntary agricultural collectivisation, aided by tax and other inducements. Peasants' association chairmen, for example, can be encouraged to form collectives, and thus gain both official favour, and greater control over their own members. A formal structure of command planning was introduced in September 1984 (with the aid of a team of Soviet Gosplan advisors), though its implementation has been impeded both by the impracticability of the plan itself, and by the need to divert resources to meet crises such as famine.

Under the imperial regime, the revenue base of the state was derived largely from a small group of taxes on urban income and consumption. The subsistence sector was virtually untaxable, and even taxes on coffee exports accounted for no more than 6-7% of total government revenues. The revolutionary regime, however, both created and required a vastly greater capacity for surplus extraction, expressed in a rise in government tax revenues from 779.8 million birr in 1973-74 to 1996.6 million birr in 1982-83. Much of this increase came from the expropriation of the assets of the former economically dominant classes which after the revolution accrued to the state. By 1982-83, nearly 20% of total government revenues came from 'profits, interest and rent', or in other words from nationalised businesses and urban houses. Direct taxes on trade also rose sharply, and the percentage of coffee export values retained by the producer dropped from an average of 62.3% in 1960-74, to only 41.3% in 1978-84. By far the greater part of the increase in government revenues came immediately after the revolution, in the form of a once-and-for-all rise in extractive capacity; thereafter, the rate of increase tailed off sharply, along with the economy from which the revenues were drawn. Although central government income from the subsistence sector remained at much the same low level (about 5%) of total revenues after the revolution as before, actual exactions from the peasantry were increased by a variety of local demands and special levies, and also by the imposition of quotas for grain which peasants (especially in surplus producing areas) were required to sell at official prices to government buying agencies. The efficiency of the government's extractive apparatus was indicated by its ability to collect a high proportion of the taxes due even from badly famine-affected regions.
All that this amounted to, however, was the expropriation of an increasing proportion of a diminishing surplus. The underlying level of per capita grain production declined steadily during the late 1970s and the 1980s, independently of the considerable fluctuations due to weather conditions and other local factors. So did the level of coffee and other export crop production (with the possible exception of the narcotic chat, which was exported largely to the Arabian peninsula), and stringent controls on internal trade and local consumption were needed to extract enough coffee from the domestic economy to meet Ethiopia's export quota under the International Coffee Agreement. Internal customs posts (a feature of Ethiopia's political economy before 1935) have been reintroduced to control trade in coffee, grain and contraband imported goods, and in the process demonstrate the level of physical control which the government needs to police the economy. These revenues were used overwhelmingly for consumption purposes and especially to maintain the military, which by 1988 accounted (on Mengistu Haile-Mariam's admission) for about half of government expenditure and 15% of gross domestic product. Such funds as remained for investment were disproportionately channeled into a small number of highly capitalised enterprises, with low rates of return, including the state farms and a few showpiece industrial projects built with Eastern European assistance.

A further critical aspect of revolutionary surplus expropriation is its geographical distribution. The economy that matters is concentrated almost entirely in the centre, south and west of the country, in areas that have remained under firm government control. The major coffee producing regions, notably Kaffa and Sidamo, are in the southwest. By far the greater part of surplus grain is grown in the three central regions of Shoa, Arsi and Gojjam, together with adjacent areas of northern Bale and Welega. Chat (a mild stimulant) production is heavily concentrated in highland Hararge, while such industry as Ethiopia possesses is almost all in Addis Ababa, or strung out along the road and rail links south and east of the city. The areas of major insurgent activity, both in the north — Eritrea, Tigray, northern Gonder and Wollo — and in the Ogaden, produce virtually no marketable surplus, and are also the regions most chronically short of food. The most important exception is the farming complex around Humera on the Sudanese border in northwest Gonder, where sesame seed cultivation expanded dynamically in the years immediately before the revolution. In the 1980s, however, even before Humera was lost by the government early in 1989, the state farms in the area, together with those in western Eritrea, were maintained at a substantial loss for symbolic purposes. Despite the enormous drain of resources to fight the wars in the north, the amount of direct damage that they have done to the sections of the economy required for state maintenance has therefore been surprisingly slight.

The Structure of Representation
The major impetus for revolutionary transformation comes from a massive expansion of popular participation in political life. People become involved in politics to an extent, and in ways, that were previously inconceivable. This has

certainly occurred in Ethiopia, even though this participation is not free or
democratic in any Western liberal sense of the words. The elections to institutions
such as the National Shengo (or supreme soviet) established since 1987 under the
constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia are very little more
than rubber-stamping of central nominations. Even within local level institutions
such as kebelles and peasants' associations, the leadership (though drawn from
local residents) is effectively put in place by higher state or party officials. But
nonetheless, the 'broad masses' (as they are usually termed) have been brought
into politics through measures such as land reform and the abolition of private
rented housing, through frequent meetings of kebelles, peasants' associations and
other mass organisations, and through the expansion of education and literacy.

The central political problem for any revolutionary regime is to combine this
increased level of participation with the requirements of state consolidation. At
one level, this has been achieved in Ethiopia through the institutional structure
already outlined. The draft constitution of the PDRE, for example, was discussed
at meetings of mass organisations throughout the country (and indeed abroad),
and a number of amendments (none of which affected the basic provisions of the
document) were made as a result. The most significant was the abandonment of
a commitment to monogamy, in deference to Moslem wishes. At another level,
that of formal state ideology, there seems to me to have been very little attempt
to articulate any sophisticated application of Marxism to a society at Ethiopia's
level of development. The inculcation of Marxism in schools and mass
organisations is simplistic and mechanical, and constant invocation of the 'broad
masses' substitutes in official rhetoric for any serious class analysis.

But by far the most critical area is the representation of ethnic or regional interests,
commonly described as 'nationalities'. For the past century (precisely, since the
emperor Menilek's accession in 1889), the political and geographical centre of
Ethiopia has been in Shoa, a region of mixed Oromo, Amhara and other peoples,
most of whose population is of Oromo origin, even though much of it is assimilated
to Amhara language and culture. Many Shoans are ethnically unidentifiable. Given
its ethnic heterogeneity, its geographical centrality, its dominance of the state, and
its key position in the modern externally oriented economy, this Shoan core has
had an evident interest in articulating a composite Ethiopian nationalism — just
as, conversely, the regions to the north have developed their own peripheral
nationalisms, in response to their increasing economic marginalisation and their
distance from the new centres of political power. This Ethiopian nationalism has
likewise — and equally understandably, in keeping with their own interests and
mission — become deeply entrenched in central government institutions and
notably the armed forces.

The revolutionary leadership sought from the start, under the slogan Ityopya
tikdem or 'Ethiopia First', to mobilise this composite nationalism as a source of
popular unity, and to extend its appeal by removing elements of traditional political
identity, such as adherence to Orthodox Christianity, which prevented it from
serving as a fully national symbol. This leadership was itself drawn from a wide
variety of ethnic origins. The first chairman of the Provisional Military
Administrative Council, Aman Andom, was Eritrean; the second, Teferi Benti, was
a Shoan Oromo; Mengistu Haile-Mariam is generally regarded as of Wollamo origin,
from Sidamo in the south; the former second-ranking member of the Derg and
current Vice-President, Fisseha Desta, is from Tigray; the third ranking member
and current Prime Minister, Fikre-Selassie Wogderes, is a Shoan of indeterminate ethnicity from a largely Oromo area. Given this range of origins, as well as the regime's willingness to overthrow the previous structure of domination indicated by land reform, there is no reason to regard its commitment to an undifferentiated Ethiopian nationalism as merely the cover for 'Amhara domination' which it is frequently portrayed as by its opponents.

This nationalist commitment was allied to a Jacobin emphasis on centralisation. Apart from a brief period early in the revolution, when the Derg (under the influence of its then civilian ally, Meiseori) appointed governors of local origin to the major southern regions, its concern was almost exclusively with central control. Where, as in much of southern Ethiopia, the revolution brought evident benefits to the mass of the population by abolishing the previously exploitative structure of landholding, this centralisation was broadly acceptable, and enabled many areas of the country to be much more effectively incorporated into a national political structure than ever before.

Where, as in Gonder or Tigray, land reform had little to offer a peasantry which already largely controlled its own means of production, and traditions of local autonomy were well entrenched, centralisation was catastrophically counterproductive. Regional representatives of the Derg, reacting repressively to what they saw as 'narrow nationalism', regional chauvinism, peasant backwardness or outright counterrevolutionary activity, succeeded only in driving large areas of the country into the arms of the opposition.

It is worth emphasising the striking discrepancy between the charges of ethnic domination often brought against the Ethiopian central government and the actual distribution of effective regional opposition to the regime. The areas of effective opposition — highland Eritrea, Tigray, northern Wollo and Gonder — are for the most part Orthodox Christian regions, inhabited by Tigrinya and even Amharic speaking peoples, which have been closely associated with the Ethiopian state since the earliest times; their people have been readily recruited to central government institutions (though in appreciably smaller numbers than the Shoans), and they have suffered little evident economic exploitation. The recently conquered regions of the south and west, on the other hand, have been culturally far less closely attuned to the dominant group, have been subject to a vastly greater level of economic exploitation, and have been virtually excluded from central government office; yet attempts by Oromo and other opposition movements to mobilise ethnic identities against the central government have achieved nothing remotely approaching the success of the opposition movements in the north. It is economic marginalisation, not ethnic discrimination, that accounts for the 'national question' in modern Ethiopia.

Despite the high level of regional opposition, there is no reason to suppose that the regime has abandoned its centralist priorities. The constitution of the PDRE introduced in 1987, though it makes provision for 'autonomous regions' in addition to ordinary administrative regions, at the same time makes clear that Ethiopia is a unitary state, and both the powers and the boundaries of the regions can at any time be changed by the National Shengo in Addis Ababa. The WPE is likewise a unitary organisation, guided by the principles of democratic centralism, to which local party organs are subservient. I am not aware of any pronouncement by Mengistu Haile-Mariam, or anyone else in the top party leadership, indicating that local autonomy or the identities of individual nationalities are to be valued in
themselves, rather than forced on the leadership in response to conditions that it cannot control.

Nonetheless, the central government has been obliged to make at least some formal concessions to demands for regional autonomy. From early in the revolution, the regime started broadcasting in other languages than Amharic; and from 1979 the national literacy campaign was conducted in fifteen ‘nationality languages’, even though its main function was to make people literate in Amharic. With the introduction of the PDRE, a formal structure of local government was created, which entailed an almost complete redrawing of the regional boundaries which had existed (with minor modifications) since the early 1940s. These boundaries were drawn up by a think-tank manned largely by academics, the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities, which did its work with considerable sophistication. The areas inhabited by different peoples were carefully demarcated, and used (in conjunction with other criteria, such as transport networks) to create a set of thirty regions which corresponded as accurately as possible to the mosaic of Ethiopian nationalities.

They had an evident political rationale as well, in that by offering local peoples their own region, they could provide a counterweight to the demands of the various separatist movements. The Afar, a nomadic people scattered across the Red Sea plain, were offered an autonomous region drawn from Afar-inhabited areas of Eritrea, Tigray and Wollo, thus denying the claims of the EPLF to an Eritrean state which followed the old Italian colonial boundaries. The remainder of Eritrea, which was accorded the status of an autonomous region with special powers, was subdivided into three subordinate administrative regions, which broadly corresponded to the needs of ethnic representation, political allegiance, and strategic control; but the fact that these boundaries were redrawn late in 1988, in response to requests from a delegation claiming to represent the Moslem-dominated ELF, shows how the new regional structure could be altered at will from the centre. The Somali-inhabited areas were divided into different regions corresponding to the Issa clan (which has maintained a peaceful modus vivendi with the Ethiopian government), the Isaq clans (which generally support the anti-Siyad Barre Somali regime, Somali National Movement), and the Darod clans (which have most strongly supported the incorporation of the Somali-inhabited areas of Ethiopia into the Somali Republic). Peripheral peoples such as the Boran in the south, and the Anuak and Nuer in the Gambela salient on the Sudanese border, also gained regions of their own. The whole exercise indicated a political sensitivity such as the Ethiopian government has very rarely shown; and if Ethiopia under any regime is to have a structure of local government which roughly corresponds to its ethnic diversity, this demarcation has as good a chance of providing it as any.

The problems lie in its implementation. Before the long process of reorganising local government had even started, it was postponed following the military disaster at Afabet in Eritrea in March 1988, while the government concentrated all its resources on stabilising the position in Eritrea — an apt commentary on the subordination of long term planning to desperate crisis management, which echoed the coincidence of the announcement of the ten year plan and the famine crisis in September 1984. The names of the WPE first secretaries in the new regions were announced late in 1988, and indicated the contrasting priorities of representation and control. In some regions, such as the Afar autonomous region
SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA: THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, 1984

PMAC

CHAIRMAN
(Mengistu Hailé Mariam)

REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES

See Figure 3.2

CENTRAL PLANNING SUPREME COUNCIL

GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY (Ministries)

REGIONAL AWRAJA & WEREDA COUNCILS

REGIONAL AWRAJA & WEREDA ADM.

All Ethiopia Peasant Assoc.

Kebeles

All Ethiopia Trade Union

Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Assoc.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKERS’ PARTY OF ETHIOPIA, 1984

FORMAL AUTHORITATIVE BODIES

CONGRESS OF THE WPE

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES

CENTRAL CONTROL COMMISSION

POLITICAL BUREAU (Politburo)

SECRETARIAT

TERRITORIAL BODIES (T.B.)
(At regional, Awraja and Wereda level)

T.B. COMMITTEE AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROL COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

P.O. COMMITTEE AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROL COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OR SECRETARY

PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONS (P.O.)

PARTY BRANCHES AND GROUPS

Non-Party Organisations Include:
Youth Associations
Mass Organizations
Professional Associations
and Gambela, the new first secretaries were local men with previously very junior status in the party; neither was even an alternate member of the Central Committee. In regions such as Eritrea, Tigray and Ogaden, they were drawn from the senior political cadres of the armed forces, and had virtually no local standing at all. Elsewhere, there was a mixture; though several old Derg members remained, they were mostly assigned to regions with which they had some connection, while the number of civilians was increased.

Had the structure been introduced much earlier in the revolution, and at a time when there was general acquiescence with the basic goals of the regime, there would have been at least a chance that it might have provided an acceptable balance between the demands of national unity and the recognition of regional diversity. Coming so late in the day, from a regime with an intense commitment to central control, its prospects are much more uncertain, even outside areas such as Tigray and Eritrea where simple lack of government control prevents its implementation.

Conclusion

Though the revolutionary Ethiopian state is recognisably the successor to the imperial regime which it displaced, this in no way diminishes its revolutionary status: in Ethiopia, as in France, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China, revolution has served as a means of centralising state power on the foundation provided by a decaying monarchy. The Ethiopian revolution has failed to live up to the example of those three earlier revolutions, not because it has been too ruthlessly autocratic, but because (in a sense) it has proved unable to be autocratic enough. Despite an intense concern for political organisation, and a massive expansion in the apparatus of state power, it has been unable to surmount the limitations imposed, first by the extremely fragile and undeveloped economy on which the state is perched, and second by regional resistance movements which have become increasingly effective as the weaknesses of the central state have been exposed.

Much that the revolution has achieved has now been established beyond any serious possibility of reversal. Ethiopia has a highly effective structure of rural and urban government, and an equitable system of landholding. The educational system has been greatly expanded, and literacy vastly increased. Many of the reforms introduced by the central government have been adopted by the regional opposition movements in Eritrea and Tigray, which — trying to construct a similar political apparatus on a similar social base, and confronting much the same problems of military survival and decaying peasant agriculture — often resemble the regime which they oppose.

The regime's least basic failure, however, has been to see state power as the answer to all its problems. It has regarded the imposition of a centralised state and party structure as the solution to the problem of national unity, almost regardless of regional diversities which demand, at the very least, substantial opportunities for local autonomy. It has regarded a centrally directed economy as the only answer to the problem of development, almost regardless likewise of the demonstrable inefficiencies of state-directed economies, especially in agriculture. The demands of revolutionary state consolidation have in turn required the construction of a greatly expanded state apparatus on an economic base which is
increasingly obviously unable to support it. Over the last two or three years, the Ethiopian government has sought to come to terms with its own inadequacies, by agreeing to a World Bank sponsored reform of the agricultural marketing system and by introducing the new structure of regional government. But both of these are marginal retreats from state power, grudgingly introduced, which are likely to be effective only within a very different political context than the present Ethiopian leadership can provide.

'The real danger posed by state socialism in a society with fragile institutions is not a danger of making the government too strong but the risk of making it more conspicuously ineffectual' (Mazrui and Tidy). The institutions of revolutionary government in Ethiopia are not fragile, and the government is conspicuously strong, but much of Mazrui’s warning is still valid. In so starkly demonstrating its own limitations, it has delivered a severe and possibly terminal blow to the idea that the creation of a powerful state and party apparatus on broadly Leninist lines offers a plausible solution to the crisis of African development.

Bibliographic Note
Most of this article draws on my book, Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia (Cambridge 1988) and sources noted in the book are not footnoted here.

Funding the Ethiopian State: Who Pays

Roy Love

Two topics have dominated discussion of Ethiopia in recent years. One is the military position in the north and to a lesser extent the east of the country, and the other is the agricultural situation, frequently, but not solely, concerned with famine in Wollo and Tigre. Although these topics are undoubtedly important in any analysis of the current situation, their predominance in discussion has tended to create an imbalance in the overall picture. By 1985 agricultural production contributed only 44% of Gross Domestic Product and yet we hear little of the nature and significance of the remaining 56% consisting principally of industrial production (16%) and services (39%). Among more general economic indicators, occasionally price inflation or the balance of payments is mentioned, but rarely in a context of overall economic performance and usually in connection with the agricultural situation. Of key importance in all such discussions is the role of the state whose influence pervades every aspect of economic and political decision making. Yet it is evident that the Ethiopian state depends in large measure upon the economy as a whole for its support not only in funding the military but also in maintaining the state machinery and in subsidising a number of developmental projects. This article addresses itself to the problem of state financing drawing on these other partly neglected aspects of the economy.

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) has clearly had to finance major military expenditure in addition to the extra costs of land and administrative reform following the revolution of 1974. It will be shown below that this has been financed only in part from direct sources such as taxation or from overseas assistance in various forms and that one of the major changes since the pre-revolutionary period has been the increase in government debt associated with rising domestic credit and money supply growth. This phenomenon has rarely been remarked upon and yet it has had significant implications for the patterns of development in Ethiopia.

Evidence to support these arguments are not easy to come by but there are sources available internationally whose potential for offering insights into the Ethiopian economy is seldom fully exploited. These consist mainly of data collected by the UN and its agencies and by the World Bank and IMF. While such organisations
must operate through official channels it is usually in the interests of member states to offer data which does not deviate overmuch from what expert external observers would expect. In many instances there are clearly genuine problems of measurement and coverage which make it easy for biases to be deliberately inserted but, as argued further below, in the case of Ethiopia the preoccupations of the PMAC make it more likely that unpalatable findings from the Central Statistical Office or National Bank will not appear at all, than that they will be doctored in ways favourable to the government. Similarly, while the World Bank and IMF are undoubtedly biased in favour of market economics, this is unlikely to take a significant form in official statistics.

For instance, the negative annual growth rate of agricultural output of -3.4% for the years 1980-85 in the tables of the World Development Report 1987 would seem to be fairly realistic for Ethiopia as a whole. Nevertheless, a degree of caution is obviously necessary and it would seem to be worth examining where the available data take us before being unduly critical of them.

Returning then to the way in which state activities have impinged on the rest of the economy since 1974 the following figures illustrate the main changes. Between 1974 and 1986 the proportion of Gross Domestic Product consisting of consumption by the state rose from 10.6% to 19.5%, while the share of private consumption rose only from 76.4% to 79.3% having previously fallen to 74.7% in 1985. Total investment expenditure on capital goods had increased its share of GDP slightly to 11.6% by 1986 thus creating a total level of consumer plus investment demand which exceeded 100% of GDP. The implication of this is that imports had risen at a faster rate than exports and indeed the difference between exports and imports moved from a surplus of 173 million birr in 1974 to a deficit of 762 million birr in 1986. Parallel to this expansion of the foreign trade deficit has been a regular appearance of government budget deficits which have ranged from 3% to 6% of GDP as state expenditure has expanded at a faster rate than revenue.

It is important to ask how such a rapid growth in government expenditure has been financed and, in seeking an answer, to consider the class distribution of its impact. A related question is to ask how the Ethiopian state has managed to support its own considerable activities within the context of a low resource base while at the same time retaining a reputation in the West and with the IMF for fiscal conservatism. The answer to these questions appears to be found in a combination of increased indirect taxes in selected areas, of significant increases in government borrowing and of rigorous import controls. It is likely on balance that the impact of such measures has been regressive though not severely so, though this is not to say that the total burden on the entire population has not been excessive. Clearly some support has also been provided by the Eastern bloc of European countries though the extent and net impact is virtually impossible to determine. Let us examine the agricultural and industrial sectors in turn.

Agriculture
Considerable attention has been paid to the failure of Ethiopian agriculture since land reform in 1975 and especially during the drought years of the 1980s. Agricultural GDP increased in real terms between 1974 and 1981 at an annual rate of only 1.6% while the rate of population increase has been estimated to have been
around 2.6% to 2.8% p.a. While there may have been some increase in on-farm subsistence consumption in certain parts of the country, the overall picture has been bleak which is the unavoidable consequence of civil and military disruption, lack of agricultural investment and poor incentives, with the principal underlying reason being the preoccupation of the PMAC with the nationalist issue and its own survival. In addition the agricultural sector has also suffered from exploitation in the raising of funds for state purposes.

Yet the direct contribution of agriculture to public revenues is probably not in itself as crucial as is frequently believed. While tax revenue from agricultural income and land tax doubled as a proportion of government revenue between 1941 and 1981, as shown in Table 1, it is still only comprised 5.8% of total government revenue for the year.

Table 1: Selected Sources of State Revenue, 1974 and 1981 (m.birr)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Government Finance Statistics Yearbook 1987, IMF.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax on Agricultural Income and Land Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import Duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Profits and Public Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Tax and Domestic Excises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL REVENUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>484.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>619.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A more significant change in tax revenues since 1974 is found in the increased taxation of exports which consist almost entirely of agricultural products. In rising from 54.5 million birr in 1974 to 229.3 million birr in 1981 export duties constituted 12.8% of total central government revenue and as much as 20.9% in 1980 when prices were higher. It is likely that the bulk of this will have been borne by producers. There is also scope in the agricultural sector for surpluses to be transferred from the peasant sector to the state via the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC), but as the primary aim of this organisation seems to have been to raise the marketed output of food for urban areas in order to relieve urban food prices, this seems unlikely and little evidence of such effects have been found in recent studies. That is, the urban population, rather than the state directly, has been the intended beneficiary of AMC activities.

In 1980 and 1981, therefore, the agricultural sector contributed 27.1% and 18.6% of central government revenues respectively. In return the agricultural sector received as direct assistance over these two years a total of 267.1 million birr, most of which would have gone to state farms. This excludes that proportion of national expenditure on road construction, electricity and water supplies that is located in rural areas though this would be unlikely to bring the total up to the level of the amount withdrawn. The conclusion clearly is that the agricultural sector has been an important net contributor to government revenues. Where revenues from virtually all sources have also increased to some extent it is of course possible to select any combination to be seen to 'pay' for any specific increase in public services, but it is of interest to note that of the absolute increase of 688 million birr in 'General Public Service and Defence' between 1974 and 1981 some 38% can be accounted for by increased agricultural taxes and a further 31% by increased sales taxes and excise duties. Both sources are essentially regressive in their incidence in that they have a disproportionate effect on lower income.
groups and indicate that the state has expanded at the cost of increased exploitation of the poorest producers and consumers.

**Industry**

The industrial sector has been relatively neglected by external reviewers of Ethiopian affairs with most attention being focused on the agricultural-political interface. Yet between 1974 and 1981 the output of this sector rose at an annual rate of 3.2% compared with 1.6% p.a. for agriculture over a period when the contribution of agriculture to GDP was falling from 49.3% to 45.9%. Taking a longer view, between 1965-66 and 1981-82 the gross value of industrial output grew at a real rate of 7.1% p.a. In addition to industrial areas of importance such as the construction industry a number of services connected with transport and communications and wholesale and retail trade, also showed steady growth. Details of selected products are shown in Table 2 where it can also be seen that employment in manufacturing industry increased over the same period by nly 3.5% p.a. This is slower than the rate of growth of urbanisation, estimated at over 6% p.a., particularly when the migratory effects of famine and other pressures on land are taken into account.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Selected Indicators of Industrial Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blankets (units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement (tons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Sheets (tons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Units sold (million kwh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment in manufacturing (nos.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1979-80
** 1966-67


Despite this expansion it is not at all clear that the industrial or manufacturing sectors have been as major sources of funds for government. The share of government revenues from business profits and public enterprises certainly rose from 14% in 1974 to 28.5% in 1981 as shown in Table 1. Against this one has to consider the extent to which the manufacturing sector would have benefited from government expenditure, directly or indirectly. One obvious area is in gross fixed capital formation (total investment in buildings, plant and machinery) which in 1981 totalled 922 million birr for the country as a whole of which 332 million birr came from central government funds. Over the period 1974-81 state revenue from business profits and public enterprise amounted to 1614 million birr compared with a cumulative gross fixed capital formation of 5332 million birr for the nation as a whole and 1389 million birr by government. It is difficult to obtain a breakdown of the dispersion of these sums though the manufacturing sector will have benefited from official investment in infrastructure, such as roads, electricity and communications. Furthermore, when the domestic effects of recurrent state expenditure are also taken into account then it is at least possible that the manufacturing sector could have been a net beneficiary from state activities rather than a contributor. This view would be supported by the intention of the Ten Year Perspective Programme 1984-94 to devote 45.5% of new investment to industrial development. It is also consistent in more general terms with the emphasis
traditionally given in socialist economic programmes to the promotion of industrialisation.

Some of the investment in capital equipment, buildings and economic infrastructure will, of course, have been funded by foreign aid and through international borrowing and it is pertinent to ask how important these sources have been in the expansion of gross fixed capital formation. For the most recent years available, however, between 1980 and 1984, the inflow of long and short term capital funds (not all of which would necessarily go towards investment in capital projects) amounted in total to 2093.6 million birr compared with a cumulative capital formation figure (actual physical investment) over the same period of 6261 million birr, which left at least 60% of the total to be raised domestically.

In other areas of taxation there seems to have been little radical change since 1974 with the share of taxes on earned incomes falling between 1974 and 1981 from 9.9% to 7.2% of government revenue and the share of taxes on property remaining steady at just under 3%. The share of indirect domestic taxes did fall some eight percentage points to 22.4% of total government revenue but this is likely to have reflected the relatively slow growth of private consumer demand over the period. In the non-tax area, however, the share of receipts from public enterprises rose from 4.1% in 1974 to 15.5% in 1981.

Government Debt and Inflationary Financing

While the agricultural sector and the industrial sector have both contributed towards the growth of state revenues since 1974 it is clear that neither has been sufficient to watch the rise in total state expenditure over the period. The other major source of funding for the state is by credit expansion and it is perhaps indicative of the lack of development during the reign of Haile Selassie that the National Bank and the Ethiopian Government have inherited a conservative attitude towards such procedures. Nevertheless, the growth of government debt throughout the period since 1974 has exceeded that of virtually all other indicators, closely followed by growth of the money supply. Thus, between 1974 and 1986 the combined claims on government by the National Bank of Ethiopia and by the commercial banks rose from 178 million birr to 3510 million birr, a cumulative increase of 28.2% per annum while the money supply rose from 754 million birr to 3273 million birr, an annual increase of 13%. By the end of 1986 the level of total domestic credit was 5379 million birr of which the government was responsible for 65.3%.

Long-term external debt also increase, at an annual rate of 17.2% from a total of US$283.1 million in 1974 to one of US$1384.2 million in 1984, equivalent at official rates of exchange to a further 2865 million birr of credit expansion. Such trends reflect increasing difficulties in the balance of payments. These are not new, however: between 1962 and 1985 the balance of trade (difference between export earnings and import payments) was positive only in the three years 1972-74, largely as a result of high commodity export prices at that time. Since 1974 the trade balance has steadily worsened and in 1985 the value of imports exceeded that of exports by over US$500 million. This was the consequence of a steadily rising trend in imports combined with a pattern of export earnings which has tended to fluctuate in the range of US$300-400 million, depending upon harvests and world prices. Non-merchandise trade, involving earnings from such activities as tourism,
transport and communications, has also been in consistent deficit since 1960 without exception. Trading conditions of this nature clearly do not allow reserves of foreign exchange to accumulate and deficits can only be covered if appropriate inflows of capital funds from abroad are available in the form of grants or loans, though in practice variations in the trading account from year to year will allow reserves from this source to accumulate on a short-term basis. In the longer term, however, the underlying trend in imports can only be met by increased foreign borrowing.

In spite of this rise in foreign debt and of additional debt to the USSR, which has been estimated at around US$2000 million for armaments alone, the World Bank and other Western agencies have not regarded current levels of government debt in Ethiopia as warranting the same degree of concern as has that in Mexico or Brazil. The reason may not only lie with the country's favourable record over payments and with its conservative standing in the IMF, but also with the relative smallness of the sums involved and the absence of pressure from private international commercial lenders. Yet, historically, and in relation to the structure of the Ethiopian economy, these figures represent significant increases over previous practice, with the money supply, for instance, covering 24.8% of GDP in 1985 compared with 13.6% in 1974.

It seems evident that in a situation where GDP itself has grown by only 2.6% in real terms over the period 1974-83 the effects of such a rapid expansion of both money supply and government debt must have been highly inflationary, and indeed consumer prices rose on the official index at an annual rate of 11.1% between 1974 and 1985. Can it therefore be deduced that the government has relied upon inflationary financing where it has failed to raise revenue sufficiently by other means? The answer is not so clear as may seem at first sight since prices have been subject to a number of pressures throughout the period. First, the supply side effect of increased on-farm consumption of food is frequently quoted as a factor in the inflationary process of the 1970s. Second, the years 1974-85 cover the effects of the two major global oil price rises. Indeed, in many respects price movements in Ethiopia have had much in common with those of most other countries over the same period. The question to ask is perhaps not why inflation has been such a permanent feature of the Ethiopian economy as why the rate has been so low in view of the unusual conjunction of internal and external pressures.

In answer to this question a number of possibilities suggest themselves. The first is that the official index is unrepresentative, either in its composition or as a result of manipulation. The revision of the index in 1980 would have provided an opportunity for the government to introduce desired biases in the weights given to key goods. This and other forms of government manipulation to understate inflation are certainly possible and are virtually impossible to prove. It is the author's inclination to believe that while anecdotal reportage may periodically and genuinely point to higher rates of inflation for particular commodities, the general series of official price statistics is free from deliberate manipulation. Such a belief may be controversial in some quarters but without it there is little at all that we can say about the Ethiopian economy and its problems. It may also be justified on the grounds that this is the data that must be used by the National Bank of Ethiopia and the Planning Office whose credibility internally and externally, with agencies who must also rely upon this data, is important. One might also suggest that the PMAC has been preoccupied with issues of greater importance throughout
its period of power, and since these have in general lead to a strengthening of the position of the military in Ethiopian society, there has been little need to fear the output of the Central Statistical Office. The government would be more likely to keep unpopular results from being published than to attempt to 'massage' them. The possibility must, nevertheless be kept in mind, particularly since even the strongest dictatorships can be unduly sensitive about anything that may suggest criticism of its performance or record.

A second possibility is that official estimates of GDP are underestimates of the level of economic activity. This can be with the contrivance of government in order to qualify for an increased share of international aid and assistance, a policy which is as often in the interests of ruling party stability as it is in that of national development. Yet in an economy where few records are kept and where neither a comprehensive nor a representative system of reporting exists it is clear that a considerable degree of unplanned error is likely in estimating the components of GDP. It is not only the subsistence sector that presents a problem; the monetised sector is equally capable of being under-reported and the high rates of growth of the money supply and of domestic credit indicates that there may indeed have been some degree of undercounting in the national income estimates. Clearly, land taxes, export taxes and poll taxes provide the government with a means of tapping this 'black' economy to its own advantage. In a country like Ethiopia, however, the greater share of unrecorded incomes will be those of the poor and widening of the tax net in this way creates further exploitation of this class.

Finally, the inflationary impact of credit and monetary expansion is reduced if the velocity of circulation of money falls (that is, the effect on the demand for goods in an economy where an increase in the money supply will be lessened if, for some reason, each unit of money circulates at a slower rate than before). There is some evidence that this may indeed have been occurring in Ethiopia since 1974. The general sluggishness of the domestic economy, together with severe constraints on the import of consumer goods has meant simultaneously an increase in savings and a reduction in consumer expenditure. Thus, the total of demand and savings deposits in commercial banks, excluding government deposits rose at an annual rate of 14.1% between 1974 and 1985. With the rate of change of consumer prices at 11.1% p.a. the growth of private consumption of only 6.1% p.a. in money terms was thus negative in real terms. Furthermore, the growth of bank deposits seems not to have been due to any growth of consumer credit since commercial bank claims on the private sector were actually less in 1985 than they were in 1974, having fluctuated irregularly between 289 million birr and 732 million birr over the years.

In such circumstances it seems evident that a combination of consumer price controls and import restraints has diverted at least some of the potential inflationary pressures of government borrowing to be absorbed in a reduction of the velocity of circulation as consumer demand is stifled. The corresponding rise in bank savings is, of course, beneficial to the government in its search for borrowable funds. Needless to say, interest rates have also been controlled in this process. The regressive effects of inflationary financing, as indicated by Saithe, for instance, have in the present author's opinion thus been balanced by additional constraints on middle income spending. While the poorest clearly do suffer from the effects of inflation on fixed wage levels and from depressed farm gate prices, there would seem to be some evidence that part of the burden has also been borne
by higher income earners in the form of constraints on the availability of consumer goods and on interest ceilings on savings lower than the rate of inflation, thus eroding the value of savings. In the government's need to fund its military activities no group in the civilian community is likely to have escaped.

Conclusion
Taking the view that rates of inflation might have been expected to have been rather higher than seems to have been the case, it is possible and tempting to conclude with the observation that the financial agencies in Ethiopia have managed to maintain a surprising degree of control in the face not only of pressure by the state for an increased share of resources but also in the wider context of a severely dislocated and malfunctioning economy, affected by famine, war and inadequate incentives. That financial chaos has not quite ceded, as yet, to economic chaos is therefore to the credit of the nation's financial and economic managers.

Such a view is perhaps to miss the point and ignores the possibility that it is the very neglect of the famine and of the agricultural sector in general that has permitted the funding problems of the government to be confined to military and bureaucratic expenditure. In this way the nature of the control task faced by the National Bank of Ethiopia and the Ministry of Finance has been narrowly delineated and thus simplified. These financial institutions have thus been operating in a monetary enclave of the economy, to the neglect, and at the cost, of other aspects. Their task has been made easier by the weakness of those outside the enclave who have suffered, since those who have borne the costs of agricultural exploitation and neglect have done so not only in extremis but also in a fashion which has little impact on the rest of the community, because of their minimal purchasing power and because of their largely enforced isolation.

In the longer run, however, the inter-relationships and dependencies between different sections of Ethiopian polity will inevitably come under increasing strain. Irregularities in the availability and price of food in urban areas (which recent reforms may ease but not remove) combined with slow growth rates of consumer choice, of employment prospects and of urban welfare provision are unlikely to encourage civilian support for the regime from any quarter. The failure, moreover, of the government to resolve both the Eritrean conflict and the recurrent tendency to famine throughout many parts of the country is likely to test the patience of external sympathisers, including those whose primary interest is in broader regional considerations.

The PMAC did, of course, create channels for the expression of civilian grievances through the peasant associations and urban kebelles and, in 1987, by the inauguration of the National Congress, the Shengo, which, in theory, appoints the Council of State and elects the President. It must be presumed, however, that these exercises in political legitimisation will in the short term pose little threat either to the power of Mengistu Haile Mariam or to the military forces which currently support him. They may nevertheless serve as a focal point for expression of discontent with the pace of development for different civilian interest groups and may consequently have an important catalytic function in the eventual emergence of a new regime, albeit one that will be likely to remain military in character. It may be hoped perhaps that a future leadership will be more accommodating to the nationalities issue and have greater freedom to direct resources.
Bibliographic Note
Although the 'Provisional Military Administrative Council', also known as the 'Dergue' was formally dissolved on 10 September 1987, it is used in this article as all the data utilised refers to the period before 1987.


Capturing the Peasants Through Cooperatives — The Case of Ethiopia

Michael Stahl

Introduction
The image of Ethiopia in the west is one of ecological degradation, starvation and war. Population growth, in the absence of technology change, causes heavy pressure on the arable land by cultivation and grazing. Vegetation is relentlessly removed and erosion is rampant. Crop yields decline and peasant reserves dwindle. When drought strikes, the scene is set for disaster. Rehabilitation and emergency aid is made difficult due to the civil strife which haunts the northern highlands.

It is easily forgotten that there are high potential agricultural regions with good soils and receiving enough rainfall to guarantee that rainfed peasant agriculture produces good cereal crops. These regions include the highlands of Arsi, Shoa and Gojjam. In addition to feeding a peasant population of some eight million people these regions produce two-thirds of the officially marketed grain in the country. Peasant agriculture in these central regions forms the backbone of Ethiopia’s attempts to thwart the present trend towards dependence on food aid for survival.

What is being done to develop peasant agriculture in these high potential regions? Throughout the 1980s the Ethiopian authorities and western donors funding rural development programmes have been involved in a debate on development strategies. While the donors argue in favour of strengthening the private smallholder sector, the Ethiopian authorities promote a ‘transition to socialism’ focusing on collective solutions in production and trade.

In a recent article, Cohen and Isaksson survey the debate on alternative strategies for food production in Ethiopia and review the effects on production of collectivist agricultural policies. While providing a useful overview of the policy issues involved, the article argues at a general level and invites a more detailed discussion. The purpose of this article is to further explore the actual functioning of service and producers cooperatives, the two major agricultural institutions set up by the authorities in order to increase peasant production and transform it along socialist lines. The presentation centres around the motives for and character of state intervention in peasant agriculture using these two organisations.

The title of the article alludes to Goran Hyden’s well known analysis of African peasantries. He argues that the African states face problems managing the rural economy because the peasants live in their own world. They are ‘uncaptured’ by
the state. If agricultural policies do not favour them, the peasants have the option of withdrawing into subsistence production regulated by the informal ‘economy of affection’ where they are free from state control. Hyden draws on field material mainly from Kenya and Tanzania but he considers his argument to be relevant throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

This article can be read with Hyden’s argument in mind. It shows that the Ethiopian state has the organisational capacity of capturing the peasantry and extracting tributes from it. The impressive institution-building carried out after the revolution and involving service and producers cooperatives, parastatal procurement of grain, villoisation and resettlement, can be viewed as a gigantic and successful attempt to capture the peasants. While this can be demonstrated, the question is whether the attempt is successful in terms of the first priority of official agricultural policy — to produce enough food. This question is discussed in the conclusion.

The Ethiopian scholar, Abraham Demoz, said that Ethiopia is the despair of the compulsive classifier. The argument in this article is certainly not representative of peasant society and agricultural policy throughout the highlands. The empirical material is drawn primarily from Arsi, Shoa and Gojjam’ regions where people do not starve, infrastructure is comparatively developed, government is in firm control and the peasants have learned to comply with officialdom.

**Rural Organisations**

The organisations which will figure throughout the ensuing article are the Peasant Association, the Service Cooperative and the Producers Cooperative which were created after the revolution and are established institutions in the rural areas. Other mass organisations include the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women’s Association and the Revolutionary Ethiopian Youth Association. The village is a recent administrative innovation.

The legal underpinnings and general operations of the peasant association, service cooperatives and producers cooperatives have been described and analysed by a number of scholars. Hence, only a brief review will be undertaken here so as to provide the background for a more detailed discussion.

The **Peasant Association (PA)** is the basic rural institution in post-revolutionary Ethiopia. Initially created for the purposes of defeating the landlords and abolishing the feudal system, the PAs are now semi-official administrative units at the grass roots level. The PA is a territorial organisation encompassing 800 hectares or more. All peasant households living in the area should be members. In actual fact, many peasant households remain outside the PAs although the great majority are members. The average PA membership is 150-300 households. All arable areas in regions under state control are covered with a network of PAs. Their total number is some 20,000. The PA members constitute an assembly which gathers a few times a year. It elects a chairman and an executive committee which run the daily affairs of the association. In addition, the assembly elects a judicial tribunal which functions as a local court adjudicating minor legal matters. There

* The regional administration was reorganised in late 1987 in connection with the establishment of the People’s Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Since the material for the present analysis was collected in 1984-87, references will be made to the old administrative set-up including 14 regions, 102 districts (awraja) and close to 600 sub-districts (woreda).
are sub-committees attached to the executive committee to deal with matters such as defence/security, administrative affairs and development. Government, local administration and the Workers Party of Ethiopia get in touch with the peasant population through the PAs. Information on new directives and proclamations, development campaigns, public work are transmitted to the population and implemented by the PAs. They also mobilise labour for tree planting and soil conservation programmes. During drought they are vehicles for distribution of food aid.

A major function of PAs has been to allocate land to member households. In the first few years after the revolution, this included the ousting of landlords and the correction of gross inequalities in access to land. The principle adhered to is that land should be distributed equally, adjustments being made for household size. No household is entitled to have more than 10 ha according to the land reform proclamation. In actual practice, the size of holdings average 0.5-4 ha depending on the local situation. Redistribution is in theory a continuous process, the aim of which is to make sure that the increasing households have access to agricultural land. Actually, redistribution at the PA level takes place only when the political authorities through the Ministry of Agriculture consent to it. In Gondar and Gojjam the last general redistribution took place in 1980. The authorities have charged PAs with the function of collecting taxes. Individual peasant households pay a land tax (ETB 10) and an income tax (minimum ETB 20).

The PAs are organised vertically at all administrative levels (sub-district, district, region) and also form an apex organisation called the All Ethiopian Peasants Association (AEPA). Leaders at a lower level elect the representatives to the level above. The AEPA chairman is a member of the Central Committee of the Workers Party. However, the higher PA units do not function as interest groups for their grass root organisations. They appear rather to be supportive of the administration.

The Service Cooperative (SC) is composed of three to ten PAs. As the name implies, its function is to render services to member associations. Households have to pay an initial membership fee of ETB 5-15. The PA chairman represents his association at SC meetings. The SC has a chairman and an executive committee. Some SCs also employ staff of bookkeepers and shop attendants. Most SCs run a cooperative shop where basic consumer goods like salt, sugar, matches, soap, coffee, blankets etc. are retailed when available from the Ethiopian Domestic Distribution Corporation (EDDC).

Another function of the SC is the purchase of grain from peasants in the member PAs. The SC stores the grain and sells it to the state purchasing agent, the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC). Prices are set by the Ministry of Domestic Trade. The SC gets a margin of ETB 5 per quintal (100 kg) for its procurement service. The SC buys a quintal of wheat from a peasant at a price of ETB 35 and sells it to AMC at a price of ETB 40. The funds thus accumulated are utilised for various development projects or given as loans to member PAs in accordance with the rules. In recent years an increasing number of SCs have started to distribute agricultural inputs to peasants in their member PAs. This was previously a function of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). Under this arrangement, fertiliser and certified seed are procured by the Agricultural Inputs Supply Corporation (AISCO) and forwarded to SCs for distribution to members in accordance with a credit scheme. This arrangement has been tried in the surplus producing regions of Arsi, Shoa and Gojjam. The system is yet to be fully elaborated.
and it demands skilled manpower at SC level to cater for logistical and accounting tasks. There are some 4500 SCs in Ethiopia.

The original intention behind the SCs was to strengthen peasants' bargaining power with the private grain merchants. The situation has changed gradually. When the government started to push for a state monopoly position in the field of grain trade, the role of SCs have increasingly become that of subordinate counterparts to the state procurement agency.

The major purpose of Producers Cooperatives (PC) is to promote collective farming. The political authorities look upon PCs as spearheads for socialist transformation in the countryside. A PC can be created by a small group within a PA. In 1986 there were slightly fewer than 2000 PCs with a total membership of some 130,000 or around 2% of all peasant households.

The village is a newly added institution which is officially promoted. Traditionally the Ethiopian peasantry live in scattered homesteads in between fields and pastures. Small clusters of houses can be found occasionally. Since the late 1970s the official policy is to urge people to settle in villages of a more concentrated character. In 1985 comprehensive villagisation was announced in the Arsi region. Each PA was to choose a site for the settlement of its members. The existing houses were dismantled, moved to the village site and rebuilt there. Villagisation was scheduled for the dry season months of December to March. The Workers Party of Ethiopia, the regional administration and the Ministry of Agriculture assisted Peasant Associations to move. Villagisation was an order given by the highest political authority. It was efficiently implemented and some 70% of the peasant households in Arsi region did in fact move into villages in 1985-86. The following year villagisation proceeded in several other regions growing into a national campaign. Detailed regulations for the implementation were issued [in the Villagisation Guidelines]. Villagisation is the most far-reaching structural change implemented in Ethiopia so far. It signifies a complete break with the traditional peasant logic of living and producing. There are already reports of peasants quietly moving back to their old homesteads while retaining the house in the village which they occasionally visit.

The Political Context
The military government which replaced Haile Selassie, and its ideological wing, the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE), favour collective solutions in agricultural development. This bias stems from two sources — one political and the other economic/technical.

The imperial regime gave its staunch support to the class of landlords. The landlords were a 'feudal' class deriving their wealth from corvée labour, service obligations and rent in cash and kind from tenants and share-croppers living on their land. Starting in the 1960s a progressive element amongst the landlords emerged. These people moved into agricultural production themselves, evicting tenants in orer to create viable mechanised, commercial farms. The agricultural policy at that time favoured commercial production through credits and subsidies on tractors and fuel. A number of wealthy peasants as well as rich townspeople also managed to take advantage of the credits and invested in mechanised production.
During the revolution the feudal landlords, capitalist farmers and rich peasants were singled out as 'counter-revolutionaries'. The revolutionary government prohibited individual large-scale agriculture and the engagement of hired labour in peasant agriculture labour in peasant agriculture; it destroyed the emerging class of agrarian capitalists and harrassed its members. The revolutionaries had great plans for the poor peasants and the tenants. In the new socialist oriented society which was to emerge, these underprivileged groups would function as a proletarian, collectivist vanguard, or so it was thought.

The ideology has been cemented over time. It has gone so far that individual (family based) agriculture is suspect in the eyes of the political authorities. The ideologists think that individual peasants might evolve into capitalist farmers. Individually based agricultural production should therefore be officially discouraged. On the other hand, the Producers Cooperatives are seen as spearheads for the collectivisation of peasant agriculture. PCs should thus be given maximum official support. To criticise the actual performance of PCs is considered a counter-revolutionary act.

The political authorities have repeatedly lamented over the backwardness of Ethiopian peasants. This is done in political speeches and over the mass-media. A television zoom-in on a rugged peasant leaning against his old fashioned plough and shouting at his skinny oxen presents no progressive view. It is believed that the peasants are hopelessly backward and that nothing less than a profound break with traditions would open their minds to modernisation. Producers Cooperatives are considered to be the instrument through which peasant conservatism can be shaken up.

A technical argument in favour of PCs is the fragmented character of the agricultural landscape. The arable land is divided into minute plots and each household has several such plots often with long distances in between. The PAs have a thorough knowledge of where the good, mediocre and bad agricultural soils are situated within their area. For reasons of justice and equality, each household is entitled to portions of land of different fertility categories. Population increase also necessitates periodic subdivisions of holdings in order to accommodate new households. Every PA member has a legal right to a piece of arable land. Land cannot be private property but all PA members have rights to land use. As a result of these processes agricultural land is fragmented. The authorities argue that through the formation of Producers Cooperatives, pooling of land becomes possible and thereby the establishment of large, economically viable production units become suitable for mechanisation.

Emergence of Collective Farming
In the earliest official documents and guidelines on agriculture issued after the revolution, there were references to group farming. Among the task given to the newly established Peasant Associations promotion of collective farms is mentioned. During the 'Development through Cooperation Campaign' peasants were encouraged to set aside communal land for collective cultivation.

A great number of communal land plots thus emerged in the mid-1970s. Most of them encompassed only a few hectares. Their purpose was often to raise a cash crop in order to give the PA money to invest in various small projects, but uncertainty prevailed regarding the development of collective farming. Rules
regarding work input and distribution of harvests were never clarified. Most peasants concentrated their efforts on their family farms; collective farms, therefore, remained a residual, cultural practice with yields being below the standard family farm. The authorities, which were considering how to move fast in the socialist direction, realised that as long as peasants were involved both in family and group farming, the former production units would receive the bulk of work input. Consequently, group farms would show poor results and thus jeopardise socialist agitation.

**Cooperative Hierarchy**

In 1979 the authorities changed their approach. The new policy was to promote group farming as the sole form of production among nucleus peasant collectives which were to be established within the PAs. A 'Directive on the Establishment of Producers Cooperatives' was issued in 1979 providing guidelines for the systematic promotion of group farming. A new organisational form of agricultural production was thereby formally sanctioned. It was named the 'Agricultural Producers Cooperative' (PC).

The philosophy underlying the directive is that once a small group of peasants has formed a cooperative, it would receive extension advice and preferential access to inputs by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). Extension would focus on modernisation of agricultural production along collective lines. By virtue of the presumably superior yields emanating from group farms, more peasants would become attracted to the idea and join the PC. The final goal was that all members of the PA would join the cooperative. Eventually peasant agriculture would change completely from small scale, family based production to large scale, collective production.

According to the directive, a minimum of three PA members can decide to apply to MOA for assistance to form a PC. MOA visits the PA and assesses the potential of the presumptive cooperative. Applications are never turned down, only postponed when MOA lacks manpower to assist them. Once a PC has been formed inside a PA no other agricultural cooperative can be formed there. Peasants who become interested in collective production may join the existing PC. When membership has reached 30 the PC can apply for formal registration. It then becomes eligible for loans from official credit institutions.

In the first stage of collectivisation PC members only pool agricultural land, roughly 0.5 to 2 ha per member. Draught oxen, tools and other inputs remain private property, but the PC is entitled to rent tools and oxen from members. This stage is called malba. The purpose is that the PC should, as soon as possible, proceed to the second stage of collectivisation, welba. Here, oxen, ploughs and other implements are turned into collective property. Individual plots are allowed to a maximum size of 0.1 hectare.

The PC assumes a more organised form at the welba stage. Collective operations may be broadened to include animal husbandry as well as services such as grain milling. An elaborate work organisation is needed to cope with the different collective tasks. The Ministry of Agriculture has issued regulations related to the division of work and renumeration to PC members for tasks performed. The general principle is that work points are given to members on a time rate. Work is also classified according to its drudgery; eight hours work behind the plough
gives more work points than eight hours of bird scaring in the fields. However, it has been difficult to include quality of work within the remuneration system. Bookkeeping becomes a necessity due to the need to account for collective economic activities, plan for investments and the distribution of benefits to members.

The traditional settlement pattern in the Ethiopian countryside is scattered. With increasing cooperative membership in a Peasant Association, with more complex cooperative undertakings and with emerging cooperative economic and social services -grain milling, kindergarten and clinic — the need for a concentration of the residential pattern amongst PC members becomes evident. PCs in the welba stage established villages, with generous assistance from MOA, already in the early 1980s.

The third stage of collectivisation is called weland in the official terminology. A weland would be formed through merger of a few welbas. This stage presupposes advanced farming methods including mechanisation, comprehensive economic and social services and complete villagisation. This is the highest form of collectivisation and the description of it in propaganda posters leads one to think of the now defunct Chinese People’s Communes.

In late 1987 one-third of the PCs had reached the more advanced welba stage. To date no weland has been created. The members of a PC constitute an assembly which elects a chairman, a management committee and a supervisory committee. The function of the latter is to set criteria for the remuneration of work, to assign duties to work teams and to record their performance (give work points to each member).

The formation of PCs include, in the official Ethiopian development policy, much more than group farming. The planners and party ideologues envisage a new way of life evolving whereby peasants gradually adopt a socialist culture. The material basis of that culture would be the experiences of collective work and collective services which, theoretically, are supposed to enhance productivity and welfare. The PAs are considered to be temporary organisations. When all PA members have joined the PC, the collective would become the basic rural organisation at grass roots level.

Issues for Discussion: Social Recruitment, State Subsidies and Production Potential

Who joins PCs? The directive on Producers Cooperatives and the ensuing propaganda in favour of them was received with hesitation by the peasant population. Often it was interpreted as an attempt by the government to separate the households from their means of production and make them ‘work for the state’. Such an attitude was logical among the established households, i.e. those with relatively good land and access to draught oxen. The directive was welcomed by very poor households, i.e. those having agricultural fields on marginal land and lacking draught oxen and the semi-proletarianised households on the fringes of peasant associations. For such people, joining a PC could be an instrument to gain access to productive agricultural resources. The directive thus carried a seed of conflict into the peasant associations which were to grow when the authorities started to push for implementation.
The founding members of PCs were often 'lumpen-proletarians' or heads of households with very meagre resources. Many had tenant and share-cropper status before the revolution. Some were former tenants who had been evicted by landlords and forced to move away. After the revolution they turned back to their native areas only to find that the land was already reallocated by the PAs.

The first step in collectivisation is to pool members' land. If the founding members lived scattered throughout the PA territory, reshuffling of agricultural land was necessary in order to make room for a uniform collective field. In the densely populated highlands all agricultural land of good quality was already in use. Therefore the authorities had to create a rule allowing PC members to choose a piece of land anywhere in the PA territory which could accommodate their collective farming needs. Those peasants who happened to live and farm in the area chosen by the PC had to move. They were given the choice of taking over the fields which the PC members had abandoned or seeking virgin land, should there be any. It is evident that such reallocations were resisted by the peasantry at large. The PC members chose the best land in the association which contrasted sharply with their previous family plots which were often rocky and worn out. The early PC members utilised the new rules and directives on collective farming in order to expand their farming resources at the expense of better-off PA members. The authorities gave administrative and economic support to this process, thus openly siding with the poorest social strata in their struggle over resources within PAs.

The authorities handed out guns to PC members so that they could protect the emerging collective from the wrath of peasants being separated from their land as a result of the reshuffling of plots. The directive on PC formation stipulated that once a PC had been created the chairmanship of the whole Peasant Association had to be vested in a member of the PC. The defence squad which exists in every PA was also composed in such a manner that the PC controlled it.

The interference in favour of PCs tended to alienate the majority of peasants from the collective endeavour. The actual nature of the growth of PC membership deserves further study. An interesting notion is that the growth of membership in many places is due to creation of new PCs in more PAs, rather than to an increase in membership in existing PCs. One pattern is that a PC is established by a dozen individuals. Membership grows quickly to 40-50 households whereafter it remains fairly constant. This pattern of fast initial growth followed by stagnation opens up interesting hypotheses for research. In discussions with cooperative promotion officials one comes across the argument that such PCs consist of a core group which, once established, is reluctant to accept additional members on a large scale. The reason would be that they want to monopolise the privileges and support received from the authorities. Some of these privileges are exploitative in nature, as will be shown below. In such cases the PC emerges as a closely knit interest group, often based on primordial loyalties, benefiting from official support and their power to exploit non-members (this requires that strong personalities are in control of the PC). If all households in the Peasant Association joined the cooperative, its privileged position would be diluted.

Another pattern is that after some years of wait-and-see the great majority of peasants join and are welcomed by the founding members. Such a trend in Ticho in 1986 was observed and will be discussed below. Yet another pattern is when the strong and established households form a PC and leave the elderly and weak PA
members outside. 'Why should we let those people in', they argue, 'they are too weak to work and would only consume'.

The position of women in PCs is unclear. Only the head of a household can be a PC member. The peasant wife is therefore excluded. Still she is supposed to work on the collective field to help her husband. Whatever she gets out of such work depends on the relations within the household. In many parts of Ethiopia women inherit land and own livestock. When the head of a household joins a PC, land and livestock are collectivised. The wife thereby loses her private assets without gaining membership. Her position in society is devalued.

**State Subsidies to PCs:** The official status given to Producers Cooperatives means that they are supported in various ways by MOA and the local party and administration offices. The following list of privileges has been compiled during discussions with officials in various positions.

1. PCs pay lower tax. While individual peasants pay ETB 10 per year, PC members pay ETB 5 per year.
2. PCs get preferential treatment when fertiliser and certified seed are distributed on credit.
3. PCs enjoy concessionary prices, up to 12% cheaper than individual peasants, when buying agricultural inputs from the Agricultural Marketing Corporation.
4. MOA extension service gives priority to PCs regarding agronomic advice, preparation of farm plans, artificial insemination and general veterinary services, distribution of beehives, cross-bred cattle, etc.
5. PCs are entitled to utilise 25% of the annual net surplus generated by the Service Cooperative, where they are members, as a low-interest loan.
6. Once a PC is formed inside a PA, the chairmanship of the whole Peasant Association is transferred to a member of the PC.
7. PC members are sometimes armed with guns by the authorities and take over the security function for the whole Peasant Association.
8. Local authorities can persuade the Service Cooperative to use their capital to buy heavy machinery, i.e. a tractor or, in rare cases, a combine harvester, for rental to members. Since only the PC cultivates fields large enough for mechanised harvesting, the PCs inside the Service Cooperative area monopolise use of such machinery. The rent paid by the PC to the SC only includes costs for fuel, lubricants and driver's daily allowance. Thus amortisation of the bank loan taken by the SC to buy the combine is paid by all SC members although only a small minority has any use of it.
9. Local authorities can instruct all members of a Peasant Association to assist the PC to carry out farm operations during peak agricultural seasons - ploughing, weeding and harvesting.
10. Local authorities can instruct all Peasant Association members to provide daily labour to PC special projects, i.e. building an office or a clinic for the PC members.
11. The authorities systematically direct grants for rural development purposes - water supplies, irrigation schemes, social services - given by international donors so that they benefit PCs in the first place.
12. Sons of PC members will not be drafted into the national military service. The service lasts for two years. After six months of training the conscripts join the professional army fighting guerrilla and secessionist groups in different parts of the country. This regulation appears to be practised in some districts, while it is unknown in others.

While some of the privileges mentioned above imply subsidies by the state and donors, others imply an official sanction for the PC to exploit the labour of individual members (notably 5, 8, 9 and 10 above). This is done quite consciously by the government for two reasons. One is to boost the productive resources of the PCs and thereby help them 'take-off' economically. The other reason is to show that individual farming has less official support and that, in consequence, peasants who want to benefit from government policies must join PCs.
The Nature of Official Agitation: The voluntariness of cooperative formation is sometimes questioned by outside observers. One fact should be kept in mind. People must apply for membership and they must pay a fee in order to be admitted to a PC. In some cases the established PC members hesitate to admit new members. With the exception of the forced collectivisation in the Wabe district in Arsi in the late 1970s, there has not been any organised coercive official campaign to force peasants en masse into PCs. But it is well known that the highest political authority has set an ambitious target for PC expansion. According to the ten year development plan, 53% of the peasant households are supposed to have joined PCs by 1993.

The administration proceeds with subtle means to promote cooperative formation. At the local administrative level pressure is exercised on peasants to abandon their traditional way of life and join or form a PC. The government encourages local authorities to set up annual targets to increase cooperative membership within their area of administrative responsibility. The pressure is thus first felt on the administrators. Setting a very modest target would be considered reactionary and the responsible official might face accusations of being a counter-revolutionary. Local administrators are usually keen to set ambitious targets for cooperative formation. The targets are formally set in the form of quotas: X number of new PCs will be formed and Y number of new members to new and old PCs will be recruited. In the Arsi region, the local authorities have throughout the 1980s set the most ambitious target — a 10% increase in total membership per annum. In most years they have exceeded this target.

Party and administration officials as well as MOA staff transfer the pressure down to the peasants. The instruments at hand include positive and negative sanctions. Reference is made to the list of privileges mentioned earlier, in particular the appropriation of labour from neighbouring individual peasants. This is highly attractive since it can remove bottlenecks demanding much drudgery during the agricultural peak season. It is prohibited by law to employ farm labour in peasant agriculture. Claiming that the individual peasants just help the PC, while actually they are forced to work on PC farms, is a way of circumventing the law. It is also a clear message to the individual peasants that PCs have the backing of the state.

Agitation is part of the picture. Party officials and administrators tour the countryside giving lectures on the merits of socialism, indicating that the whole world is now turning towards this system. Also MOA field staff who are supposed to carry out agricultural extension work, are dragged into the ideological apparatus. Development agents often complain that they have too little time to carry out their professional tasks due to propaganda tasks imposed on them by the local administrator or party official.

It is tempting for the authorities to use MOA field staff for agitation purposes because MOA is, together with the Ministry of Education, the ministry which has the most elaborate staffing at the lowest administrative levels. It should be noted how the term ‘agitation’ is defined in Ethiopia today. It means that all positive aspects of a given phenomenon — collectivisation, villagisation, resettlement etc. — are explained and even exaggerated to the peasants while possible negative aspects are overlooked.

Agricultural Potential of PCs: Are collective farms more productive than individual peasant farms? Huruta Hetosa is a well known Producers Cooperative, frequently
visited by prominent people. It is officially registered and had some 250 member households of which 15% are headed by women. On the softly rolling high plateau in Arsi region the cooperative grows 400 ha collectively. Main crops are wheat, barley, teff and maize. Onions are grown on irrigated land. The members built a village long before the official villagisation campaign started. In the village there are services such as grain and oil milling, piped water supply, electricity and a kindergarten. The cooperative owns 200 draught oxen and two tractors. Together with a neighbouring PC, Huruta Hetosa owns a combine harvester. It received a seed cleaner from the UN Capital Development Fund. In addition to the collective efforts, members grow vegetables in small home gardens.

The general impression is one of prosperity. Member incomes are well above the national average. A considerable part of the incomes derives from the small but efficiently run irrigated onion fields. Onions are marketed in the nearby market town of Nazareth at a price of ETB 0.7 per kg. which is almost twice the official price for grain. The yield per hectare in the cereal fields is not that impressive, considering all available inputs. During 1981-86 it averaged 1.9 metric tons per hectare. Nearby individual peasants get 1.5 tons/ha under traditional management but using fertiliser and certified seeds.

Another spectacular PC is Rarre-Chilalo in Harrarghe region. This PC is situated in the vicinity of the Alemaya Agricultural University. It was established in 1979 by five members and a capital of ETB 900. In 1986 it had grown to 327 members and a capital of ETB 1.5 million. The annual income of members ranged between ETB 3700 and ETB 4500, a very high figure. Rarre-Chilalo owns three tractors and three trucks and has installed piped water supply and a medical clinic in the PC village. It benefits from scientific agricultural advice given by the staff from the agricultural university. The most profitable enterprise is irrigated production of horticultural crops, the bulk of which are exported by rail to Djibouti. This explains the high income of members.

There are several other highly successful PCs in Ethiopia. Most of them have engaged in some specialised economic activity such as the two mentioned above. They have access to urban markets and they have strong leaders who have been successful in securing gifts from the state. It is to cooperatives such as these that both politicians and civil servants, peasants from remote areas and international donors are guided to be shown the progress of Ethiopian socialism.

The great majority of the PCs in Ethiopia in 1986-87 were concentrating on subsistence production of cereals under rainfed conditions. Their performance shows a different pattern.

Available data point in the same direction: cereal yields per hectare on collective and individual farms do not differ much. In high potential areas yields approximate 2.0 tons/ha while in subsistence areas they linger around 1.0 tons/ha.

A review of PCs and individual farmers was conducted in Arsi and Bale regions in 1985 as part of the preparation for future Swedish support to agricultural development in those regions. In the review, crop budgets of eight PCs and eight individual household farms in the vicinity of the PCs were compared. The survey concluded the following: the individual household producers make more efficient use of the scarce agricultural resources available to them than do the PCs with the resources at their disposal. In addition to producing more efficiently and using their land more intensively, the household producers market a greater share of the...
crop produce, often more than 50%. In the review it was argued that the total surplus available to society from the household-based peasant sector is greater than the contribution of an equal number of PC members. The collective organisation of peasant production as it functioned in Arsi and Bale in 1985 realised no economies of scale. Neither did PC members receive higher incomes than household producers did from grain production. Case studies in Gojjam and Wollo have arrived at similar conclusions.

In 1986-87 a crop sampling survey was conducted in Arsi including 9000 samples. Preliminary results show that yields of wheat and barley averaged 18-20 quintals per hectare. There was no statistically significant difference between samples from individual and collective farms although three-fourths of the PC farms utilised improved seeds and fertiliser while only one-third of the individual farms did so. Records of animal husbandry show a similar picture. PC dairy farms which keep crossbred cattle, get an average milk yield of 1000 litres per cow per year in Arsi region while individual farmers keeping cross-bred cattle get on average 1600 litres per cow per year. The difference is due to management standards.

The data referred to above are far from comprehensive. The lack of evidence can partly be explained by the sensitive nature of investigations comparing yields between individual and collective peasant farms. Nevertheless, a tentative conclusion to be drawn is that PCs in their present stage do not represent a 'higher form of production' as compared to the traditional household-based Ethiopian peasant agriculture. Instead, the PCs are less efficient users of resources than traditional farmers, when one considers all the external support given to them and their exploitative power vis a vis neighbouring individual farmers. This is also the spontaneous conclusion given by MOA field staff who work daily with peasants. They often complain of having to work continuously with PCs which show few signs of dynamism, while individual peasant households who are asking for agricultural innovations are being neglected.

Should one, then, conclude that Ethiopia is yet another case where collective farming has failed? Such a conclusion would be premature. PCs may have untapped productive potential.

The official support given to PCs is more ideological and organisational than agronomic/technical. PC members are taught how to set up various committees for a multitude of purposes, how to calculate work points, how to keep records. The MOA field staff even prepares a cropping calendar for them. This is all right but not sufficient. What PCs need in order to become viable production units is advice on new technology and land use practices. The big PCs, those with a hundred and more members and equally many hectares of arable land, could benefit from selective mechanisation, labour specialisation, food processing, multiple land use etc.

MOA has not prepared technical support packages specifically designed for PCs. They get occasional tractors and other heavy machinery. Lacking maintenance support, they soon break down. The PC members themselves have not yet proven to be agricultural innovators. The cooperatives use the same methods as they did when their members were individual peasants. A common sight in PC areas during soil preparation time is scores of peasants criss-crossing a large field, everyone with his pair of oxen plodding in different directions without any conceivable coordination. Planting, weeding and harvesting operations also proceed in the
same manner as on individual farmers' fields. PC members thus work alongside each other, but they do not take advantage of the possible economies of scale. This fundamental fact should be a high priority for research and development, if the purpose is to make PCs productive rather than making them just receivers of government handouts and petty exploiters of individual farmers.

The case for rationalisation and mechanisation in a way adapted to Ethiopian realities — and not just an unimaginative copy of East German realities— is especially obvious on the flat highland plateaux. Rather than condemning collective peasant production with reference to the mediocre performance of PCs so far, it can be argued that if the ideological agitation and administrative pressure were de-emphasised in favour of imaginative agronomic, technical and economic experimentation, collective production might be rational on technical grounds.

It is quite another thing, though, whether peasants could be persuaded to think so. One technical argument in favour of collectivisation/mechanisation is the fragmentation of peasant plots which is considered a hindrance to rational land management. Recent research has shown that peasant associations have their own strategies for coping with future demands for land caused by population increase. In a survey of 17 PAs in Arsi region using aerial photographs and maps together with field visits, it was shown that land shortage was less pressing than the peasants had reported to MOA. All PAs had spare land which could be used to accommodate new families. Arsi may be a special case though. In regions such as Gojjam there is an absolute shortage of land.

Cooperative Take-off in Arsi? The high altitude plains of Arsi region hold great promise for cereal production. The authorities keep a close eye on Arsi which always has been in the forefront when it comes to implementation of the official development strategy. Officials sometimes jokingly say that 'Lenin Likes Arsi'. The regional MOA office is well equipped and staffed, mainly due to long term Swedish assistance to agricultural development in the region. The famous CADU-project was situated here and its premises have been converted into the regular MOA office. The peasants have a long experience of subjugation to state power, both feudal and revolutionary. They are thus predisposed to obey orders.

As mentioned earlier the officials have set themselves an annual target of a 10% increase in PC membership. This is by and large fulfilled. The expansion of PCs in Arsi therefore shows a contrasting picture compared with the rest of the country. In Arsi the proportion has steadily risen and was 16% (40,000) of the region's peasant household in 1987. More than four-fifths of the PCs in Arsi had reached the second cooperative stage while the corresponding proportion for the country at large was one-third.

This remarkable expansion is the result of push and pull factors. It can be assumed that a core of very successful PCs, such as Huruta-Hetosa, have given some substance to the agitation for PC formation in the minds of peasants. The well-organised MOA office is in a better position than elsewhere to assist newly formed PCs with organisation, advice and subsidies. There are implicit threats in the agitation too. Collectivisation is the official policy. A number of advantages are promised to those who comply. Those who stubbornly refuse can, by implication, be considered to harbour anti-revolutionary attitudes. They must be prepared to face sanctions. There are subtle mechanisms at work which would merit deeper analysis.
Whatever the motive, peasants in Arsi region have joined PCs in great numbers during the 1980, thus fulfilling the authorities' quota. The pattern was most noticeable in Ticho district where 22% of all PA members had joined PCs in 1987. In some sub-districts the percentage exceeded 50%. Responding to the question why this massive move occurred one development agent said that 'they ... the peasants ... know that joining PCs is the order of the day'.

A possible explanation could be the following. The peasants have for years been exposed to agitation in favour of the PCs. They know exactly in which ways the PCs are favoured by the authorities and how individual peasant households are discouraged. The situation for individual households is insecure. They have no security of land tenure. All land belongs to state and individuals can be dispossessed when the authorities so decide. Cases in point are the creation of new PCs and expansion of the nearby state farms in Arsi. Since the revolution some 80,000 ha of land has been expropriated from peasants (grazing and crop land) in order to create state farms on the plains in Arsi and the nearby region of Bale. Every now and then the state farms expand. Peasants are then evicted and moved to other areas. Peasants now joining PCs reason along the lines, 'if you can't beat them, join them'. They know that they cannot stand up against the state. If they comply with the official policy, they can at least try to reap the benefits promised by the authorities.

In Arsi the promises given to PCs are not empty. The social infrastructure that has been established in a number of PCs, however rudimentary it may appear to an outside observer, may act as an incentive to apply for membership or to start a new PC. The clinics that have been put up in a PC, even though they are ill-equipped and lack skilled staff, represent a promise of health care earlier unheard of among the rural population.

These arguments have their limits, though. Increase in PC membership slowed down in 1986-87 while reports from Arsi in early 1988 indicate that it came to a standstill in 1987-88. There are even rumours about PC members who have given up membership and gone back to household-based farming. It is still too early to draw any far reaching conclusions from such indicators.

**Concluding Remarks on Collective Agriculture**

The attraction of PCs is the promise of state subsidies rather than a conviction that the PC is an instrument for increased, sustainable productivity. But the prevailing approach to PC formation and development is counterproductive. Crop and animal husbandry standards among PCs are not superior to those prevailing among household producers. No innovative technology development programme has been designed for PC needs and preconditions. Official support emphasises ideology and organisation, while Government handouts to PCs and the power of PCs to exploit the neighbouring household cultivators create a false impression of economic viability. The official reasoning is that PCs need much initial support in order to take off economically. MOA field staff tell a different story. Their observation is that there is a tendency among PC members and leadership to develop a parasitic attitude. The more support they get, the more they demand. They are beginning to see their privileged position. An officer who challenges their demands can be accused of sabotaging socialist construction next time a party official visits the PC. Perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history, a group of
peasants have got the upper hand in their relations with the lower echelons in the bureaucracy.

A serious inquiry into the production problems and potential of PCs in terms of economic viability cannot take place until the political authorities face facts. The illusion of economic viability of PCs can work only as long as the PCs are a small minority and the state can afford to prop them up economically and organisationally. If peasants follow the example from Ticho district and join PCs en masse, then subsidisation of the collective form of agricultural production will no longer be possible drawing on Ethiopian government funds alone. Paradoxically, the day peasants decided to comply with official aspirations in great numbers, would be a moment of truth for the politicians. They would then have to come to grips with the real problems of productivity and sustainability in collective agriculture. MOA is ill prepared for such a task today because it has not given serious considerations to production systems for PCs. If viable extension programmes cannot be forwarded, then only those PCs which already have an economically sound footing will remain collective units. There is reason to believe that they would be a minority. The others would slowly revert back to household based agriculture.

Service Cooperatives as Agents in Grain Trade

During the imperial regime, grain for urban markets was secured through the land tenure system. In many parts of Ethiopia peasants had sharecropper status and delivered their obligations in kind to landlords who sold grain thus collected to traders. Freehold peasants sold directly to traders. Farmgate prices fluctuated tremendously. Peasants and small landlords lacked storage facilities and had to sell within a short time after harvest when prices were low. Later on the season prices increased and those traders and wholesalers who had storage facilities made substantial profits. The urban markets had a steady supply of food grain and prices were moderate.

The revolution destroyed this system. The peasantry were freed from all feudal obligations and landlords were chased away. In the first few post-revolutionary years peasants chose to consume the bulk of their produce while reserves were hidden away 'for bad days'. For a while the urban markets were starved of grain and acute shortages occurred in many towns particularly during 1976.

In order to gain control of grain marketing the government decided to develop the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) to an official grain purchasing agent with an increasingly expanding mandate. The AMC had been created with World Bank support and its intended function was to stabilise prices. However, it fitted well into the emerging socialist ideology to give AMC a quasi-monopoly position.

As part of the emerging strategy, Service Cooperatives were to play the role of AMC counterparts. After some years of preparation and gradual build-up, this policy is now being implemented and has built up momentum during the mid-1980s.

In a 'normal' year during the 1980s, some 6.2-6.5 million metric tons of agricultural products are estimated to have been produced in Ethiopia. Most are food crops and consumed by the producing households. Some 800,000 tons (15%) are estimated to enter markets. The bulk of the produce is marketed in small quantities, sometimes only a few kilograms) by the producing households at weekly rural
markets. Trade to secondary markets was carried out by licensed traders moving about with small trucks. Such traders are still operating but have increasingly been brought under AMC control. Altogether AMC appropriates 100,000 — 300,000 tons from peasants annually.

As part of the promotion of AMC as the dominant buyer of peasants grain, administrative difficulties have been created for its competitors, the private grain traders and the peasant traders. In 1981 private traders were prohibited from operating in the grain sector in Gojjam. In Arsi, private traders were at the same time obliged to deliver 100% of their purchases to AMC. Such a disincentive together with physical harassment of individual traders by the local police, made most traders close down business. The regulations in Gojjam and Arsi were hailed in mass media as yet another socialist victory. In other regions private traders were obliged to deliver 50% of their purchases to AMC at a fixed price. The remainder could be sold in urban open markets.

Peasants do some trading themselves. They transport grain bags on donkey and sell it in urban markets. However, peasants are only allowed to sell grain in their home district. Due to the overwhelmingly rural character of Ethiopia the urban population is negligible outside regional and national centres. Therefore, in surplus producing regions the prices are also low in the small urban markets. It would be attractive for peasants to take their grain to the nearest regional centre or to Addis Ababa. But this is prohibited and the regional and district boundaries are guarded. Sometimes local authorities make restrictions very tight. As a result, peasants can only sell for low prices in the small towns. Such low urban market prices favour the small urban population including the district public servants. This is a clear disincentive for surplus production in those regions which are not yet ravaged by environmental degradation. There are numerous reports about peasants sneaking through the bush at night with horses and donkeys loaded with grain, trying to reach major markets or having a rendezvous with a merchant. If they are caught, confiscation of the grain and imprisonment awaits them.

In the 1980s, Service Cooperatives have been actively encouraged by Government to expand their marketing function in order to become counterparts of AMC. The idea is that peasants should sell all their surpluses to their SC, which would act as middleman for AMC. MOA gives advice on bookkeeping, accounting and storage operations to SC leaders and employees. The margin of ETB 3-5 per quintal which SCs receive when operating as middlemen for AMC are not distributed to members individually but used for common services and investments.

This system would never work if peasants had the freedom to choose marketing channels on their own. Most years prices at urban open markets are higher than those offered by AMC. The authorities have therefore devised a quota system which applies to all peasant producers.

The Quota System: The quota system was introduced in 1979 as part of AMC grain procurement guidelines. It is in principle applicable throughout the cereal producing areas. In actual practice its application varies. The following description refers to the situation in high potential areas.

The quota system means essentially that each peasant household has to deliver a fixed amount of grain (specified in commodities) to AMC at a fixed price. The system has advantages for AMC customers — public institutions, urban dwellers associations and the army — which are guaranteed a sure supply. It also facilitates
AMC planning of purchases. To the peasant producers, the quota system means that they know they will be able to sell a certain amount of grain at a fixed price.

Quotas are set by a national committee composed of representatives of the Ministry of Domestic Trade, AMC and MOA. The basis for determination of the annual nationwide quota is as follows: an estimation of the total cultivated area is computed and multiplied by the estimated average yield per hectare. From this gross production the estimated consumption requirement of producing households, seed requirements and storage losses are deducted. The remainder is, in theory, to be delivered to AMC and to private merchants in regions where these are allowed to operate under license.

The nationwide quota so computed is then divided among regions. Surplus producing regions such as Arsi, Gojjam, Shoa and parts of Gondar are given proportionally high quotas whereas less endowed regions are given lower quotas. Commodity specifications are also given. For example, Gojjam which is a teff region, must deliver most of the quota in this cereal.

Break-down of the regional quota at district, sub-district and finally PA levels is made by committees at these levels including representatives of AMC, MOA, the local administrators and the PA leaders. Once a PA knows its quota, it is distributed among peasant households. Allocation between households is made by the executive committee. Members are classified as small peasants (1 ha) middle peasant (1-2 ha) and ‘better off’ peasants (2 ha). Quotas are then given to households in accordance with their status which is supposed to reflect production capacity.

There is pressure on peasants to fulfill their quota. Defaulters will be barred from buying necessities at the SC shop, they will not get fertiliser or certified seed etc. In addition, various kinds of informal harassment can be exercised. Threats of imprisonment in the PA jail is not uncommon. The PA leadership is under pressure from the sub-district administration. If the PA does not deliver its quota the whole PA may be barred from buying fertiliser next season. The formal and informal pressure put to bear on prospective defaulters varies from area to area and is a matter of local politics.

The quota system appears to be comparatively successful from an administrative point of view. According to senior AMC officials some 60-80% of the computed quota is actually collected annually, except in drought years. Numerous cases have been reported where households have had to sell a goat or sheep in order to buy grain on the local market and thus add up to their own deficient ‘surplus’ production.

The quotas differ greatly. ‘Better-off’ peasants in some parts of Gojjam deliver up to 1.2 tons and their colleagues in Arsi deliver 0.7 tons. In parts of Wollo region the quota may be set at 0.1 tons per household or even less.

Peasants have complaints about the AMC and the quotas. It is often heard that peasants consider AMC prices too low relative to prices prevailing in the open markets. During the drought of 1984-85 the enormous price differences were caused by the general shortage of grain which made open market prices skyrocket. In 1986-87 after a good crop, price differences were much lower, sometimes only a few ETB per quintal. Peasants usually compare the farm gate price for grain with prices of consumer goods to be bought at SC shops. Although SC shop prices are
generally lower than those of private shops in small towns, consumer prices have increased considerably since the revolution while AMC grain prices have been raised only marginally. Terms of trade for peasant household economics deteriorate.

AMC payments to peasants may be delayed. When peasants deliver their quota to the SC store they get a receipt. AMC pays the SC when they come to pick up the grain. Due to shortage of trucks AMC may come late in the season. The grain, which often is stored on the open ground, may be damaged and AMC will not pay for that part. AMC may sometimes not come at all to remote areas due to logistical problems. The SC is, however, not allowed to sell the collected grain to anyone else. A more general complaint is that those households which happen to have additional amounts of grain for sale after fulfilling their quota, have no attractive market outlets due to AMC quasi-monopoly position.

AMC has a nationwide grain collection and distribution network. There were in 1986 altogether 1768 grain collection points, more than 3000 employees and 170 trucks. The storage capacity of the corporation was 570,000 metric tons in 1986 of which three-quarters are concentrated to Arsi, Shoa and Gojjam as well as the terminal market of Addis Ababa. AMC’s own transport fleet can only move some 30% of the annual grain procured. AMC must therefore rely heavily on hired trucks as well as cooperation with private merchants, now acting as its agents under strict control.

To achieve total state control of grain marketing would be expensive. AMC’s truck fleet, storage facilities and total manpower would have to be vastly increased. There are not enough domestic funds to embark on such a scheme. Therefore, it is understood that the AMC monopoly should be built up gradually. In the meantime private merchants will have to be tolerated. In AMC’s plans for the future there will be one branch office in every one of the 577 sub-district. Grain collection points would be reduced to a manageable number and located close to major roads so as to facilitate transportation. Coordination with the Ethiopian Domestic Distribution Corporation (EDDC) would be effected.

Conclusion
Coming back to Goran Hyden’s hypothesis, this analysis of collective agriculture and grain marketing has shown how the peasantry is captured by the state. For historical reasons, the Ethiopian state has a higher administrative capacity than its southern neighbours. Ethiopian peasants were integrated in the feudal system prevailing before the revolution. In the early days of revolution and land reform, peasants took advantage of the chaos created by internal strife and external aggression. They tried to escape into a self-contained life with their own communities. A visible evidence of this was the reluctance of peasants to sell grain to urban markets mentioned earlier. The military government realised the danger to the urban and public sectors of an uncaptured peasantry hiding away their potential marketable surplus. Determined efforts to knit together the peasant economy with the public sector have been made. Using a socialist planning ideology, the government seized the peasantry with military resoluteness and administrative efficiency. Villages, cooperatives, marketing and pricing policy all aim at controlling the production and circulation of rural commodities. This is
summarised in the slogan ‘socialisation of the means of production and distribution’, which is flagged everywhere.

The administrative network is tightening around the peasantry in order to secure an assured supply of grain for the public sector. It is not necessarily a surplus that is being extracted. AMC demands quotas also from peasants eking out a meagre subsistence. The system functions moderately well for the purpose of appropriating a tribute from the peasantry to be consumed by the public sector including the armed forces. But it can be questioned whether the system is capable of achieving capital accumulation on a national scale.

The instruments used to capture the peasantry are of an administrative nature with built-in coercive mechanisms and they often have a demoralising effect on the producers. People are not stimulated to be innovative. Work output is not linked to individual benefits. Such thoughts are anathema to the official ideology. Over and over people are told by officials that it is their national obligation to work harder, that the fruits of their labour will be used to strengthen socialism. They know that in actual practice this means that they themselves will not get the benefits.

It appears that the political strategists at the highest level value tight control of a stagnant production more than the alternative — to loosen control and accept capitalist tendencies with the peasantry together with increased productivity among at least the emerging entrepreneurial peasants.

With an annual population growth of 2.9% and recurrent crop failures in the northern and eastern parts of the country, it is a necessity to get peasant agriculture moving in the high potential areas. Policy modifications which increase the role of individual incentives and allow for flexibility in production, pricing and marketing may thus have to be introduced. This insight is well established at the level of senior civil servants in the ministries. But it remains to convince the real powerholders; the inner circle of the politbureau in the Workers Party, whose attitude is doctrinaire. The leading politicians are far removed from the realities of peasant agriculture and no one dares tell them about the shortcomings of the socialist reforms. The political prestige invested in the socialist reforms is significant, wherefore they are likely to turn a deaf ear to criticism.

Whatever political advantage the leaders see in state interventionist agricultural policies, they may eventually have to face the fact that these policies are failures in terms of growth of productivity. Then it will be realised that more than a decade has been lost in the race between agricultural development and population increase.

Bibliographic Note


On collective farming see *Proclamation no.31/1975* (Public Ownership of Rural Lands) and *Proclamation no.71/1975* (Peasant Associations); a 'Directive' (not in English) is summarized in Fassil G. Kiros, 'Mobilizing the Peasantry for Rural Development: the Ethiopian Experiment in Progress' in S. Rubenson (Ed), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1984).


Debate


The Horn of Africa has been described as 'the land of refugees'. In this land of refugees, Ethiopia is known to be experiencing the worst refugee problem. According to figures published in the World Refugee Survey — 1987 in Review, Ethiopia has the third largest refugee population in the world falling behind only Afghanistan and Palestine. Although figures vary, sometimes significantly, there are well over one million Ethiopian refugees — a majority of them in the Sudan. Ravaged almost permanently by famine, war and other social conflicts, there are no indications that the refugee flow from Ethiopia is likely to abate in the near future.

Against this background, it becomes clear how timely and significant Bulcha's book is. At the same time, it offers us a basis for a consideration of some prevalent propositions and conclusions emanating from liberal refugee theory. Bulcha's work is based on groups of predominantly, though by no means exclusively, Oromo refugees of Ethiopian origin in the eastern and southeastern parts of the Sudan. Bulcha begins quite correctly, by outlining the historical background to the Ethiopian crisis. His analysis particularly brings out the 'internal colonial' tendencies of Abyssinia which has led in the last century to the subjugation of the formerly independent Oromo, Sidama and other adjacent peoples. Perhaps the most blatant example of this expansionism was the full annexation of Eritrea by Haile Selassie in 1962 when he unilaterally abolished the federation of Ethiopia and Eritrea thus bringing that beleaguered nation under complete Ethiopian rule (Greenfield, 1986:14). The contradictions of a feudal society, grafted upon those of Abyssinian expansionism, and set in the context of super power competition over the control of the strategic Horn of Africa, set the stage for the intractable crisis that Ethiopia has been going through for a decade and a half now. The rupture came in 1974 with the revolution and the spate of naked intrigues, killings and untrammelled struggle for state power among fractions of the Ethiopian power bloc which followed it; struggles which have left the mass of Ethiopian people confused, immiserised and traumatised.

From this historical backdrop, Bulcha, adopting an essentially descriptive framework traces the mass movement of Ethiopians into the Sudan and conditions
facing them in exile. He attributes the Ethiopian refugee problem to a myriad of factors: war, poverty, government policies especially in connection with the much criticised resettlement and 'villagisation', among others. He then categorises the resultant refugees using a five category taxonomy based on 'cause of displacement', 'form of displacement' (individuals or groups), 'position in the social structure of community of origin' and 'integration propensity' (p.81). The author then proceeds to test some of the common propositions concerning first, the 'dynamics' of refugee flight and second, their 'integration' into an asylum country. The first primarily addresses the conditions under which the refugee takes the decision to flee his habitual home, while the second usually correlates certain attributes of both the refugee and host populations on the one hand, and the ability of the refugees to 'integrate' into the host community on the other. On the whole then Bulcha's work addresses three main issues: the causes of flight, the 'dynamics of flight' and the question of integration.

**Causes of Flight**

Bulcha argues that the refugee problem has 'multiple causes' and he identified quite a number of them. This manner of looking at causality is very much in line with the view prevalent among many social scientists that social science theories of necessity show a high incidence of concatenation (of explanatory variables). So that explanation does not entail establishing causality in a law-like manner as such, as we find in the natural sciences. Rather what is possible in the social sciences is a broad correlation of a number of explanatory variables to the phenomenon under study. The problem with this manner of explanation is that it often ends up confusing causes and effects. Attempts are rarely made to explore the interconnections among the multiplicity of 'causes' which are specified, and the levels, conjunctures and moments at which each becomes pertinent in understanding the phenomenon being studied. As a result for instance, primary, secondary and tertiary social contradictions are usually confused and are given equal significance in explanation. What we often end up with is a long check list of 'causes' derived in an empiricist and subjectivist manner such as asking refugees why they fled their country. War, famine, poverty, persecution, forced labour, government policy, coups and so on, are mere effects of primary contradictions in the society. They are symptoms of fundamental causes of population displacement and secondary factors making for the relocation of people. It is this confusion of causes and effects, of primary, secondary and tertiary contradictions in society, and the inability to effectively integrate explanatory variables especially at the methodological level, that has led many observers in the past into believing that refugee movements are capricious, spontaneous and unpredictable. This is understandable because effects and the specific manner of their manifestation in a given case, always give a unique impression. This is where a materialist explanation is very useful. By locating the problem in the primary contradictions in society namely class contradictions and therefore the class struggle, it is able to show not only how other social contradictions are related to the primary ones but also how the entire conjuncture gives rise to the phenomenon of refugees.

**Dynamics of Flight**

One issue that has continuously faced analysts is that of distinguishing refugees
from other migrants. Many liberal writers make the distinction in terms of individual motivations and circumstances within which the decision to move is made. Kunz (1973, 1981) is well known in this regard. He put forward an explanation of refugee movement based on his so-called 'kinetic models'. For Kunz, political refugees unlike those dissatisfied economically, lack a positive motivation to settle elsewhere and so are reluctant to uproot. They lack an 'inner self propelling force' and their migration is 'acute' rather than 'anticipatory' because of the extreme pressures of the social forces which finally result in seeking exile (Kunz, 1981:50-51). Echoing Kunz, Bulcha writes:

the process of decision-making, the time and factors taken into account, vary between voluntary migration and refugee movements. Voluntary migrants make the decision to move after a long period of consideration and consultation and after the advantages and disadvantages of migration are objectively assessed (p.130).

A further suggestion based on this is that refugees unlike 'voluntary' migrants lack information about the conditions and 'different alternatives' in the country of immigration.

This kind of argument and the issues that are addressed have their roots in the old bourgeois problematic concerning voluntarism and structuralism. Refugees lack the free will to choose unlike the so-called voluntary migrants. This problematic is that of the subject. Its thrust is the centrality of the role of concrete individuals and creative persons who have reason, free will and capacity for choice. It is the '... problematic of social actors, of individuals as the origin of social action: sociological research thus leads finally, not to the objective co-ordinates that determine the distribution of agents into social classes and the contradictions between these classes, but to the search for finalist explanations founded on the motivations of conduct of the individual actors' (Poulantzas, 1972:242). For one thing, individual will and motivation cannot take precedence over nor can they be divorced from the objective conditions within which individuals operate: the fact of their distribution into classes, class fractions and social categories with contradictory interests and the conjuncture which their practices produce. There is no need to mask the fact that refugees come from different class situations and that the privileged segments of a threatened population anticipate the situation better and are likely to have an easier passage into exile. For another thing, it is wrong to assume that decisions are ever taken under conditions of full information in which all possible alternatives are considered in a rational-comprehensive manner. As such, neither refugees nor 'voluntary migrants' have full knowledge of 'conditions' and 'alternatives' in the country of immigration before migration. Also, to suggest that refugees lack positive motivation to relocate does not make as much sense as it appears. The fact is that there is always a threshold for any group beyond which continued stay in their habitual home becomes an unacceptable option. Whether it is an hour before an invading army arrives or five years in which a wage level has been incapable of sustaining a decent life and so in which the earner of that wage has been increasingly dehumanised, is clearly immaterial. In that light, the related distinction between push and pull forces as motivations for migration is also untenable. The refugee according to the argument, responds to 'push forces', that is, 'negative or threatening changes in their place of origin'; while 'voluntary migrants' respond to 'pull forces', that is, 'inherent positive aspects of the destination' (Hansen, 1981:190). This kind of analysis overlooks the dialectical relation between the so-called push and pull forces. A
push is often at one and the same time a pull. Negative and threatening changes in his place of origin are assessed in terms of expectations and belief that life will be better and more secure in the destination. Of course beliefs are not always true and expectations may turn out unfulfilled. But that has nothing to do with whether the migrant is a refugee or not.

The point is that a tenable conceptual distinction between refugees and other migrants cannot be made based on individual motivation. Such a distinction is only possible by exploring the objective conditions preceding the two forms of migration. The central question here is that of displacement. Refugees are displaced while other migrants are not. Displacement refers to the process involving a continuous reduction in the level of control which a social class, fraction, category or stratum (a social force), exercises over the bio-physical and inter-human environments in relation to others. It involves a continuous reduction in the capacity of given social forces to attain their objective interests within a given social formation, in their interaction with others. This condition may (often in its extreme) manifest in the physical movement of such groups of social agents either en masse or as individuals situated in the first place within such groups. Such relocated groups and individuals are refugees (cf. Ibeanu and Mathews, 1988). Other migrants or, for lack of better term, immigrants are not displaced within the social formations from which they come. However, they could be subsequently displaced within the social formation into which they move. Also, refugees may subsequently move out of the category of displaced in the country of asylum. One important point has to be made at this point in order to forestall any illusion about the position of refugees. The social position of refugees is not, as it is often portrayed, static. As soon as refugees arrive in the country of asylum, they are gradually integrated into the class structure and therefore the class struggle in the social formation. This process may be characterised by a redistribution of members of the refugee community into new class situations and positions different from that obtained in the social formation of origin. The tendency is often to view refugee groups as homogeneous thus masking their class situations both before and during exile. Like every social category, a refugee group is usually an amalgam of classes even though one class may be numerically superior. Yet like every social category it possesses a specific internal unity usually based on certain political and ideological interests which may not correspond to those of the numerically dominant class in the group. But this internal unity does not mean that their class origins disappear. However, when they act as a group, their class origins (class situations) recede into the background in relation to that which unifies them — their class position: that is to say, the fact that they belong precisely to a social category which possesses specific objective interests to be actualised (cf. Poulantzas, 1972).

The Issue of Integration

A major part of Bulcha's work deals with the issue of integrating Ethiopian refugees into the Sudanese society. In doing this, he breaks down integration into economic, social, cultural and psychological aspects and puts forward some indicators for measuring each. His conclusion is that the refugees are integrated in some aspects but not in others.

We need not rehash his findings or go into the question of their empirical validity. But there is need to question the utility of some of the common concepts found
in agency literature which Bulcha unfortunately, adopts; concepts like integration, self-sufficiency, assimilation, adaptation and so on. As such, this section of work raises serious conceptual and methodological questions: what is integration? How is it to be measured? And how much of a solution to the refugee problem is it? For the agencies as for most liberal scholars, economic integration is measured by the phantom category of self-sufficiency, while the other aspects are measured by various indices of value consensus between the refugee groups and their hosts, and generally by the level of acculturation the former undergo. The other aspects of integration are treated either as vehicles for attaining self-sufficiency (economic integration), or as its consequences. So that for them integration is assumed, without demonstration, to be fundamentally economic. In this unwarranted economic determinism, there is no analysis of the relationship between the so-called economic aspect of integration and the other aspects. In other words, an analysis of the dynamics via which the economic dominates or determines the process.

In talking about self-sufficiency, the refugee community is treated as if it is class homogenous. Differentiation is made based only on such considerations as age, sex, marital status, etc. Yet their class situations and positions more than any of these, are central issues in understanding both the conditions which led to their displacement as well as what happens to them in exile. On the other hand, there is an implicit assumption that all groups of social agents within the host community are self-sufficient on the basis of which the situation of the refugees is then compared. Otherwise, it will absurd to say that some members of the host community are not integrated economically. The problem here lies not only in the difficulty of operationalising self-sufficiency, but more importantly in the failure to understand that as soon as refugees arrive among their hosts, they become part and parcel of the class struggle. Exile simply means a change in location within the global and national class struggle. Integration on its part can only mean that the refugees become an integral part of the interaction among social forces within the host social formation. It means a process of their distribution and redistribution into classes, fractions, categories and strata in a new matrix of interaction. It means their movement into the labour process and into the economic, political and ideological class struggle within the host society, which is in turn an integral part of the global class struggle. Whether refugees find jobs, what type of jobs they find, whether their labour is used to depress wages and so on, are all part and parcel of class practices and the class struggle. On their part, such questions as culture, inter-marriage and psychological state of refugees are pertinent only in the context of the evolving positions of individual refugees situated within classes, in the new conjuncture.

Our position is that the prevalent conception of integration serves the interest of agencies which are often too willing to withdraw aid and create the impression that they are achieving results. Many agencies will be happy to see refugee communities disappear as soon as they show the world that they sent so many tons of relief. But refugees will not disappear whatever the pretention about integrating them into the host community or their 'voluntary repatriation'. The solution to the refugee problem lies in addressing its very roots which are to be found in the present moment of the national and global struggle among classes, class fractions and social categories. This present moment manifests particularly in the untrammelled assault on democracy worldwide. More concretely, this assault takes the forms of increasing inequities in the distribution of wealth both
within and among nations; the increasing centralisation, concentration and monopolisation of power within nations — in Africa by an undisciplined and uncreative power bloc; the denial of the genuine desires of nations for self-determination; and increasing political repression and militarisation of social life consequent upon these.

On the whole, the strength of Bulcha's work lies more in the empirical insight it provides into the lives of these hitherto unstudied group of refugees and the ease of his presentation, rather than in advancing our theoretical understanding of the refugee problem which, he agrees, is still rudimentary.

**Bibliographic Note**
Somalia: Conflicts within and against the Military Regime
Patrick Gilkes

On 23 May 1986, President Mohammed Siad Barré sustained serious body and head injuries in a car crash and had to be flown to Saudi Arabia for six weeks hospitalisation. It was months before he recovered fully, though he formally resumed the duties of the presidency again in August. The accident had major political repercussions, setting off political manoeuvres within the government and the President's own clan, the Marehan. For the first time in Siad's 17 years of rule, attention was focused on the succession to the more than 79-year old president. His illness revealed considerable weaknesses and divisions within the regime and a lack of consensus among the various factions and clans on who should succeed him.

In the immediate aftermath of the accident, General Mohamed Ali Samatar, First Vice-President and Minister of Defence, took over as acting President and declared a state of emergency. At the same time, the President's eldest son, Colonel (now Brigadier General) Maslah Mohamed Siad, promptly took command of the presidential guard units and the Marehan militia guarding the official residence, retaining control of these troops until the President's return. Subsequently, in April 1987, three months after presidential elections in which President Siad Barre, as the sole candidate, took 99.2% of the votes cast, General Samatar was made Prime Minister, but lost his position as Minister of Defence.

Samatar is a popular figure in the army. He is also seen by Somalia's western allies as a moderate and reasonable politician, despite his close links with the USSR in the past. In Somali political terms, however, he lacks clan backing, coming from a insignificant group. Somali politics since independence have revolved around the major clans; the Dolbahunta, Gadabursi, Hawiye, Issak, Majerteen, Marehan, Ogaden and Warsangeli. Of these, the Dolbahunta, Majerteen, Marehan and Ogaden are the main components of the Darod clan family. The Darod will often form a united front against the Hawiye and Issak clans, but will as frequently fall out among themselves.

In recent years the most important single clan has been the President's own Marehan group. While the Marehan have continued to build up their position in both the civilian and military spheres, they have apparently failed to agree on a successor to Siad Barré. In the presidential stakes the position of Minister of Defence has been of considerable importance, particularly since May 1988, when
the opposition Somali National Movement (SNM) launched major surprise attacks on several northern Somali towns, including Burao and the regional capital, Hargeisa.

The SNM, supported by the Issak clan in the north, is based in Ethiopia and received considerable support from Addis Ababa. This was Ethiopia's chance to offset Somalia's support for the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), the
movement fighting for self-determination of the Somali people in southeast Ethiopia, the region known as the Ogaden. It was the WSLF which precipitated the disastrous war of 1977-78 against Ethiopia, seriously affecting Somalia’s fledgling socialist revolution and leading to the break with the USSR. In January 1986, a few months before his accident, President Mohamed Siad Barré met President Mengistu of Ethiopia in Djibouti, and started a cautious dialogue. Both had internal reasons for lowering tension in the region, and the Italian government in particular was pressing both governments towards a deal. Discussions were held up by Mohamed Siad Barré’s car crash and by the difficulty of agreeing on an agenda for talks. As a result little progress was made until 1988. In March, the Ethiopian army suffered a major disaster at the hands of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) at the battle of Afabet. With a paralleled upsurge of military activity by the Tigrai People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) in the neighbouring region of Tigrai, the Ethiopian regime had an immediate need for fresh troops in northern Ethiopia. Within a matter of weeks, Ethiopia and Somalia agreed on almost all the secondary points of issue, leaving the border and nationality questions to be decided at some future date. Most of the Ethiopian troops stationed in the south and southeast of the country were promptly transferred to the north.

The effects of this for Somalia were not entirely foreseen. Predictably, the deal upset the Ogaden clan which remains committed to the self-determination struggle inside Ethiopia. Most of the Somali population of Ethiopia, at least in the southeast, are Ogaden. Ogaden relations with the Marehan were close for most of Siad Barré’s period of rule (Siad’s mother is from the Ogaden), but the Ogaden were angered by the meetings of 1986 between the two heads of state, and strongly criticised the 1988 agreements which, they believe, effectively abandons their claims.

The surprising outcome of the agreement was the SNM’s response. Threatened by a complete loss of all Ethiopian support, it opted for an immediate guerilla offensive on a large scale. Earlier it had tried to sabotage an Ethiopian/Somali rapprochement by launching a campaign of urban guerilla attacks in the north in late 1986 and seizing a number of border villages. Its operations against largely conscript troops had some successes. In May 1988 it launched major attacks on Burao and Hargeisa in the north. Burao was captured and held for some time and most of Hargeisa was also seized, though the SNM failed to capture the airport and the military headquarters where the army was entrenched. It took the army weeks to recover the initiative and force the guerillas out, and they had to use heavy artillery and air strikes, as well as infantry house to house assaults to clear Hargeisa. It is widely claimed that mercenary pilots, former Rhodesians, flew bombing missions for the government.

The towns were destroyed and their inhabitants dispersed. According to official statistics, 63% of government and public buildings, electrical and water installations, bridges and communications links, including seven hospitals, were destroyed in Hargeisa and Burao. These figures also include 14,000 buildings destroyed in Hargeisa and 12,000 heavily damaged. Estimates of civilians killed range up to 50,000 with over 400,000 having fled to Ethiopia, and possibly as many as another 1.5 million being displaced. It was not until October, four months after the fighting finished, that foreign diplomats and representatives of relief and donor agencies were able to go to the north. They returned convinced that much of the destruction had been caused by government operations, concerned by the army’s
control of food and water distribution and more prepared to accept Amnesty International’s very critical reports on human rights violations.

The SNM was decimated in the fighting (though it still has guerilla units operating, mostly against clan militias), but the army did not come well out of it either. It was heavily criticised for its slow response to the attacks, and then for excessive use of force, particularly against civilians. Amnesty International accused the government of allowing substantial abuses of human rights. The troops in the northern 26th sector also suffered heavy casualties in the fighting. In part because of this the government found it necessary to turn to clan militias to raise reinforcements. Several clans, however, notably the Dolbahunta, refused to join in a fight they saw as being against the Issak rather than the SNM. It was largely the traditional rivals of the Issak, the Ogaden (with a long history of disputes over water and grazing rights inside Ethiopia) who were prepared to join in. Some 8,000 Ogaden militia were sent to Hargeisa where they bore the brunt of clearing the town of SNM guerillas. The majority of the present population of Hargeisa are not the former Issak inhabitants but Ogaden from Ethiopia, previously living in refugee camps. A number of Oromos who fled from Ethiopia in the last few years have also moved into the town.

Of greatest concern to the army itself were the internal problems revealed by the fighting, and the apparent growth of clan rivalries even within the military. According to reports, the commander in the north at the time of the SNM assaults, Major General Mohamed Siyad ‘Morgan’, a son-in-law of the President and from the Majerteen, disagreed sharply with the Minister of Defence, Major General Adan Abdullahi ‘Gebiyu’, an Ogaden. In mid-1988 General Morgan lost his post amid allegations that he had favoured Majerteen units during the fighting; early in 1989, General Gebiyu was moved to the Ministry of Information and Tourism, with claims being made that Ogaden units were refusing anyone else’s orders. General Morgan became Deputy Minister of Defence.

Clan politics have also continued to bedevil the opposition. The SNM’s main problem has been its failure to turn itself into the national organisation it claims to be. Despite some contacts with southern clans, and even for a time the appointment of a vice-chairman from the Hawiye, the SNM has never managed to get rid of its image as a northern and specifically, an Issak, grouping. In early 1989 Hawiye critics of the government set up their own organisation in Rome, headed by the former SNM Vice-Chairman, Ali Mohamed Osoble. The failure to reach accommodation with the other Ethiopian based opposition, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) also underlined the SNM’s weakness. The SSDF’s support came largely from the Majerteen, traditional rivals of the Marehan within the Darod clan family. The frequently proposed unity between the two fronts would have gone far towards creating a national opposition. The various opposition groups have planned a conference for 1989 to try and improve co-ordination, but there is little expectation of any united front coming into being.

The SNM has also failed to solve internal divisions within the Issak itself. These have operated on the level of sub-clan divisions as well as over political and religious policies. The present chairman of the SNM, Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo, from the Habr Jello sub clan, has been consistently opposed by critics from the Habr Yunis, another major branch of the Issak. Disagreements have also surfaced over the degree of Islamic fundamentalism that the SNM should accept, and
whether or not it should openly push for separatism from southern Somalia, an issue that has not been publicised but which is becoming of growing importance.

The government unveiled plans for reconstruction in January at a central committee meeting of the ruling party. These included a statement of the need for a political solution and an extension of the existing amnesty. The government also said it planned to take responsibility for resettling displaced people, help them rebuild houses, rehabilitate hospitals, schools, water supplies and set up a high powered government agency to achieve all this. A considerable number of political prisoners have also been released, including many Issak professionals arrested immediately after the first SNM attacks last year. In interviews, the Prime Minister has emphasised that the releases will continue. He has also stressed the need to talk to the elders and people in the north (though not the SNM); and there have been hints that the government will allow more representation of the Issak in central government positions. None of this will come cheap, and it will be difficult to satisfy the north, unless some economic benefits are on offer as well. Given Somalia's economic problems this may be difficult.

In September 1987, the Somali government unilaterally broke its agreement with the IMF. This has still not been renewed and one effect has been that much needed meetings of donors to reschedule debts have not been held. The results have been predictable. Donors have become very cautious and major projects have been held up. The government's most important developmental project, the controversial Barhderé dam scheme, has been indefinitely postponed. Financial commitments were made by a number of countries and organisations, including the IDA and the EEC, but all have been held up by the failure to talk to the World Bank.

Bilateral relations have done better, though relations between Somalia and the US continued to deteriorate in 1988. Somalia has never been satisfied with the aid, military or economic, promised or given since 1977, nor with the terms for the US use of the Berbera facilities which included the harbour where the US has lengthened the quay, dredged out some areas to take larger ships and built a helicopter pad; there is also an airfield which has one of the longest runways in Africa. In 1987 military aid fell to $5 million and Congress blocked a $55 million aid package, citing human rights violations and the refusal to talk to the opposition. However, the government's use of policies of the type so often suggested by the IMF — cutting back the state sector, dropping subsidies and limiting numbers of civil servants — has meant that some economic aid from the US and Italy has continued to arrive.

As so often, the imposition of such policies has produced its own problems. Price control of foodstuffs early last year merely led to the disappearance of food from the market. By mid-year the government had quietly backed down, telling merchants to ignore the controls. Food returned to the shops, but at a higher price. Inflation has continued to rise, and the increases in civil servant salaries, in August, the pay rises for the army (a 50% rise in gross pay and 100% increase in monthly rations), and new rises budgeted for 1989, will increase the pressure. Continuing rises in fuel prices are another problem. Abu Dhabi is the current supplier under an agreement last year, replacing Saudi Arabia; but in either case Somalia still depends upon the US or Italy or the IMF to cover its annual balance of payments deficit. Oil supplies have often proved erratic, and have been partly responsible for frequent electricity blackouts at the end of 1988. Water supplies too have been causing concern. Shortages in both have caused considerable criticism. Much will
be expected of the high level presidential committee set up late last year to recommend ways of easing the shortages.

* * *

Research and Information Centre on Eritrea

The Research and Information Centre of Eritrea (RICE) is a semi-independent organisation with aims to promote the theory and the practice of research on Eritrea, to encourage and support broad-based participation in research for self-reliant development and to help draw up a national policy and strategy of research. RICE was established in 1979 and up to August 1988 operated from its base in Rome. However, with development activities in the liberated area of Eritrea growing fast, RICE became the obvious choice to be charged with the responsibility of coordinating the overall research programme both within and outside Eritrea. Accordingly, its headquarters is now in Eritrea and its external activities are operating from regional coordination offices for Europe and North America based in the UK and the US.

On 29 April 1989, the Research and Information Centre on Eritrea had a one-day conference in London. The programme included topics on Relief & Development Programmes, Eritrean Refugee Education, Research Priorities & Rural Development Policy Options, the Rehabilitation of Livestock after the Drought, Ecology and Rural Development Programmes & Water Resources for Rural Development in Eritrea. Paul Keleman gave the following, extremely relevant, opening address.

Today's workshop takes place in the context of and reflects a new stage in RICE's development. RICE has existed for ten years but it is only since July 1988 that its centre has been moved to Eritrea. This should enable the various branches abroad to relate more directly to the needs and developments in the field.

RICE's overall role is to help produce knowledge and information for the tasks faced by the Eritrean struggle. More specifically it can help in nation building in two ways:

- by providing help with research and information needed for developing the material infrastructure of an independent Eritrea
- by helping to generate and diffuse the information needed to mobilise political support for the Eritrean struggle.

The goals of RICE and, therefore, of RICE UK are clear. Less clear-cut is how, as RICE UK, we can play an effective part in realising these goals. I would like to put forward some ideas about how we can go about this. They are only my views and not necessarily of the Board of RICE UK. They are suggestions to encourage discussion about our future work.

Members of RICE UK are in many respects in a privileged position in relation to the production of knowledge. We have access to much of the research and science carried out in the industrialised countries. About 97% of research and development is produced in the 'advanced' countries. This is, of course, simply an aspect of imperialism, of the fact that wealth is accumulated in a few centres of the world and deprived from the rest. The very least we can do is to seek to funnel some of
be expected of the high level presidential committee set up late last year to recommend ways of easing the shortages.

* * *

Research and Information Centre on Eritrea

The Research and Information Centre of Eritrea (RICE) is a semi-independent organisation with aims to promote the theory and the practice of research on Eritrea, to encourage and support broad-based participation in research for self-reliant development and to help draw up a national policy and strategy of research. RICE was established in 1979 and up to August 1988 operated from its base in Rome. However, with development activities in the liberated area of Eritrea growing fast, RICE became the obvious choice to be charged with the responsibility of coordinating the overall research programme both within and outside Eritrea. Accordingly, its headquarters is now in Eritrea and its external activities are operating from regional coordination offices for Europe and North America based in the UK and the US.

On 29 April 1989, the Research and Information Centre on Eritrea had a one-day conference in London. The programme included topics on Relief & Development Programmes, Eritrean Refugee Education, Research Priorities & Rural Development Policy Options, the Rehabilitation of Livestock after the Drought, Ecology and Rural Development Programmes & Water Resources for Rural Development in Eritrea. Paul Keleman gave the following, extremely relevant, opening address.

Today's workshop takes place in the context of and reflects a new stage in RICE's development. RICE has existed for ten years but it is only since July 1988 that its centre has been moved to Eritrea. This should enable the various branches abroad to relate more directly to the needs and developments in the field.

RICE's overall role is to help produce knowledge and information for the tasks faced by the Eritrean struggle. More specifically it can help in nation building in two ways:

● by providing help with research and information needed for developing the material infrastructure of an independent Eritrea

● by helping to generate and diffuse the information needed to mobilise political support for the Eritrean struggle.

The goals of RICE and, therefore, of RICE UK are clear. Less clear-cut is how, as RICE UK, we can play an effective part in realising these goals. I would like to put forward some ideas about how we can go about this. They are only my views and not necessarily of the Board of RICE UK. They are suggestions to encourage discussion about our future work.

Members of RICE UK are in many respects in a privileged position in relation to the production of knowledge. We have access to much of the research and science carried out in the industrialised countries. About 97% of research and development is produced in the 'advanced' countries. This is, of course, simply an aspect of imperialism, of the fact that wealth is accumulated in a few centres of the world and deprived from the rest. The very least we can do is to seek to funnel some of
the knowledge and know-how accumulated here in the west to Eritrea. We can breach the monopoly control and make it accessible to Eritrea.

RICE UK can act in this way as a conduit for knowledge and information to the field but also from the field. But in case we get carried away in seeing ourselves in such a beneficent role, let us remind ourselves that as people who have been trained in western institutions of research and education, we ourselves may pose certain obstacles to transmitting knowledge. We have been turned into professional practitioners of knowledge in institutions which are imbued with and organised on the basis of elitism, careerism, competitiveness and individualism all of which are likely to hinder us from being instruments in the wider and more democratic diffusion and application of knowledge. We are an outpost but outside our limited skills, behind rather than ahead of developments in the field.

When visitors return from the field they generally stress the scientific and technical developments there: the production of medicine, the drilling of water wells, the production of light industrial goods, etc. These developments are impressive and important but the liberated areas should not be assessed primarily by technical developments already achieved in the west. More impressive and ultimately more significant is the fact that these scientific and technical advances are being harnessed not for maximising profit or for the benefit of privileged groups but to service the mass of the people in the liberated areas. The difference in goal for producing knowledge, from that prevalent in the 'advanced' countries, has also meant that intellectual work is carried out in a different way from what we are normally accustomed to here. Intellectual workers in the field live in identical conditions to the mass of the people. Knowledge does not buy material privileges or special honours.

If we have something to contribute to development in Eritrea - and we undoubtedly have — we also have a good deal to learn from them. Certainly RICE UK will be more effective in achieving its stated goals if it emulates more the practices current in the field and less those which dominate Western academia. With this in mind, RICE UK should not be confined to academically trained people and we should not just read research papers to each other, and on whatever topic outside agencies or own own ambitions dictate to us. If we become such a group we will fail to serve the Eritrean struggle. Instead we will reproduce a political practice that is elitist and arid and we will fail to provide much needed information and knowledge not least because many people will be excluded from RICE UK who have something to contribute.

We can avoid these mistakes. First, by making sure that RICE UK is open to everyone willing to assist its objectives. This means we have to encourage people to join whether or not they have had academic training. We should organise discussions and workshops which will draw on the knowledge and expertise of people with different work experiences and practical knowledge. Second, we should consciously pursue a policy of providing a forum and where necessary, training in the presentation of arguments for people who are often excluded from expressing their views. This is the case for women, workers and young people within the Eritrean refugee community and also among non-Eritrean supporters.

I am not suggesting that we should not encourage the discussion of academic subjects and research. As the Eritrean struggle reaches closer to victory the task of reconstruction and therefore of scientific work becomes more pressing. But
such discussion is less likely to become irrelevant and divorced from the most important needs if it is not confined to people from academic backgrounds. We should constantly seek to expand and diversify the membership of RICE UK. In saying this I do not wish to detract in any way from the achievement of the organisers of today's workshop. They have rendered an important service in putting together such a varied and interesting programme. It represents a sound starting point for helping in the tasks faced by the Eritrean people. Let us from such beginnings encourage discussion and research which in the coming years will be ready to respond to the needs of the Eritrean people.

For further information write to RICE, 96 White Lion Street, London N1, UK.

*  *  *

Ethiopian Military in Disarray
Berhane Woldemichael

1989 might well prove to be a decisive year in the struggle towards the end of the military regime in Ethiopia and the resolution of its conflict with Eritrea. Recently, the Ethiopian army has suffered spectacular successive defeats in both Eritrea and Tigray such that, barring massive foreign intervention on their behalf, the military rulers of Ethiopia may never be in a position to regain control of the territories they have been losing.

Ethiopia is believed to have lost 40,000 troops, including generals and many other high ranking officials, in battles against the forces of the EPLF and the TPLF since the beginning of this year. In January and early February, the TPLF won successive battles against the Ethiopian army and gained control of a number of important towns including Axum, Adwa, Adigrat and Humera. Whilst this was going on in Tigray, in mid-February the EPLF struck a heavy blow to the Ethiopian government by putting the strategic Assab to Addis Ababa road out of action. This was followed by a humiliating Ethiopian military defeat at Enda Selassie at the hands of joint EPLF and TPLF forces. Demoralised by the loss at Enda Selassie the Ethiopian army then started, quite unexpectedly, withdrawing from a number of other garrison towns in Tigray. The most spectacular was that of Mekelle, the provincial capital, which the Ethiopian Army left on 27 February. Consequently, the military rulers of Ethiopia have completely lost control of the whole of Tigray.

Things are changing fast on the Eritrean front too. On 20 March the Ethiopian Army was forced to evacuate from its strong-holds at Adi Quala, Areza and a number of other smaller garrisons. According to reports, the three biggest districts of Serai province in south Eritrea, which includes Mai-Tsa'i'da, have been liberated. These military gains have effectively cut the only remaining road link between Eritrea and Ethiopia. EPLF sources speak of the demoralised Ethiopian army being dispersed and fleeing in different directions. Many have perished as they were intercepted by the EPLF forces, and the remainder headed for the few remaining garrison towns still under Ethiopian control.

The countdown to these reversals actually began when Ethiopia suffered its biggest military defeat at Afabet, northern Eritrea in mid-March 1988 at the hands of the Eritrean People's Liberation Army (EPLF), the military wing of the EPLF. Afabet was Ethiopia's regional army headquarters and the base of its infamous Nadew,
such discussion is less likely to become irrelevant and divorced from the most important needs if it is not confined to people from academic backgrounds. We should constantly seek to expand and diversify the membership of RICE UK. In saying this I do not wish to detract in any way from the achievement of the organisers of today's workshop. They have rendered an important service in putting together such a varied and interesting programme. It represents a sound starting point for helping in the tasks faced by the Eritrean people. Let us from such beginnings encourage discussion and research which in the coming years will be ready to respond to the needs of the Eritrean people.

For further information write to RICE, 96 White Lion Street, London N1, UK.

*   *   *

Ethiopian Military in Disarray
Berhane Woldemichael

1989 might well prove to be a decisive year in the struggle towards the end of the military regime in Ethiopia and the resolution of its conflict with Eritrea. Recently, the Ethiopian army has suffered spectacular successive defeats in both Eritrea and Tigray such that, barring massive foreign intervention on their behalf, the military rulers of Ethiopia may never be in a position to regain control of the territories they have been losing.

Ethiopia is believed to have lost 40,000 troops, including generals and many other high ranking officials, in battles against the forces of the EPLF and the TPLF since the beginning of this year. In January and early February, the TPLF won successive battles against the Ethiopian army and gained control of a number of important towns including Axum, Adwa, Adigrat and Humera. Whilst this was going on in Tigray, in mid-February the EPLF struck a heavy blow to the Ethiopian government by putting the strategic Assab to Addis Ababa road out of action. This was followed by a humiliating Ethiopian military defeat at Enda Selassie at the hands of joint EPLF and TPLF forces. Demoralised by the loss at Enda Selassie the Ethiopian army then started, quite unexpectedly, withdrawing from a number of other garrison towns in Tigray. The most spectacular was that of Mekelle, the provincial capital, which the Ethiopian Army left on 27 February. Consequently, the military rulers of Ethiopia have completely lost control of the whole of Tigray.

Things are changing fast on the Eritrean front too. On 20 March the Ethiopian Army was forced to evacuate from its strong-holds at Adi Quala, Areza and a number of other smaller garrisons. According to reports, the three biggest districts of Serae province in south Eritrea, which includes Mai-Tsa'i'da, have been liberated. These military gains have effectively cut the only remaining road link between Eritrea and Ethiopia. EPLF sources speak of the demoralised Ethiopian army being dispersed and fleeing in different directions. Many have perished as they were intercepted by the EPLF forces, and the remainder headed for the few remaining garrison towns still under Ethiopian control.

The countdown to these reversals actually began when Ethiopia suffered its biggest military defeat at Afabet, northern Eritrea in mid-March 1988 at the hands of the Eritrean People's Liberation Army (EPLF), the military wing of the EPLF. Afabet was Ethiopia's regional army headquarters and the base of its infamous Nadew,
that is their 'destroy', crack troops — infamous because of their brutality to the civilian population. As a journalist who visited Afabet soon after the battle wrote:

Nadew was not the most happily chosen of names; in the battle for Afabet, the 'destroy' division was virtually wiped out.

The significance to the Ethiopian regime of the loss of Afabet cannot be overstated. In this single battle, Ethiopia lost whole divisions of its best trained and armed troops. Worse still, it left behind a weapons stockpile that it had amassed to carry out what it believed was to have been 'a decisive offensive' against the EPLF. That 'decisive offensive' was being planned by Soviet military advisors. As it was, the EPLF, clearly outsmarting the Soviets, turned around the 'planned offensive' to their advantage. The Soviet Union had always denied direct involvement in Eritrea but was caught red-handed by the EPLA at Afabet by the capture of three Soviet military personnel.

Ethiopia's military rulers were in a panicky situation after Afabet. For the first time in the history of the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict the Addis Ababa government was forced to admit the extent of its losses in the war against the EPLF forces in Eritrea. Suddenly, the 'disorganised bandits', as Ethiopian rulers used to call the EPLA fighters, had become a force to be reckoned with. In fact, so much so that Colonel Mengistu, swallowing his own words, publicly acknowledged the 'dangerous development' in Eritrea and that the 'bandits were threatening the sovereignty of the country'.

To avert the 'bandit threat', Mengistu had to take some drastic actions. One act of desperation was to initiate a truce with President Siad Barré of Somalia suggesting an end to the long-standing enmity of their countries. Accordingly, an agreement was signed in Mogadisho on 3 April 1988, barely two weeks after the Afabet defeat. The main aspect of the agreement was that each country must withdraw its armed forces from the disputed border areas and also that the two neighbours would refrain from meddling in each other's internal affairs. By hurriedly concluding this agreement, Mengistu thus managed to free the Ethiopian troops tied down on the Somalia front for redeployment to Eritrea. According to one report, seven divisions were immediately redeployed.

In addition, Mengistu had started a campaign of 'everything to the war front' warning the Ethiopian people of the 'rebel threat' and asking them to dig deep in their pockets and their grain sacks in support of their 'heroic forces' deployed to safeguard the 'motherland'. Village associations throughout the country were ordered to mobilise their resources to the war front. As a result, youngsters were rounded up and conscripted to the Army. Pleased with all the preparations that were going on, Mengistu was reported to have boasted that the 'bandits' were to be driven to the sea this time.

The military collaboration of the EPLF and TPLF forces has opened up a significant new chapter both in fighting a common enemy now and in building a foundation for the future relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Thus, it was whilst the Ethiopians were preparing themselves for yet another 'decisive offensive' that the joint counter-offensive was initiated by the EPLF and the TPLF. However, military analysts were left puzzled by the ease with which the EPLF and the TPLF forces have managed to annihilate what was believed to have been a strong Ethiopian
The army presence at Enda Selassie. Equally puzzling has been the Ethiopian's subsequent evacuation from Mekelle and other towns in Tigray.

The cooperation between the EPLF and the TPLF, the former fighting against Ethiopia's occupation of Eritrea and the latter fighting to establish a people's democratic government in the whole of Ethiopia, shows the high level of understanding that has developed, as it should, between the two neighbouring organisations. The EPLF has openly declared its support for the opposition movements 'struggling to establish an Ethiopia in which the equal rights of all nationalities are guaranteed'. 'The EPLF is fully convinced', an EPLF radio broadcast declared recently, 'that unless the rights and equality of nationalities are maintained, there cannot be democracy, peace and stability in Ethiopia'. These are clear enough statements that the EPLF would not wish to see the disintegration of Ethiopia.

These are encouraging developments for peace in the Horn of Africa. The TPLF is growing in stature. At the beginning of this year, the TPLF together with another opposition movement, the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), announced the formation of a new coalition organisation which they called the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The two organisations have pledged to implement and strengthen the EPRDF so that other organisations can participate in the struggle to secure the democratic rights of the people of Ethiopia. In so doing, the TPLF has thus transformed itself into a national organisation. To this effect a number of Ethiopian opposition movements are jointly carrying out operations against their common enemy.

A rather belated new development seems to have been brewing within the Ethiopian Army's rank and file since mid-March as well. A previously unknown organisation calling itself the Movement of Free Soldiers of Ethiopia is reported to have joined hands with the TPLF-led opposition movements seeking to remove the Dergue (the Junta) from power. The organisation is made up of regular Ethiopian Army personnel who are clandestinely organised in Ethiopia and abroad, according to EPLF sources.

Unfortunately, the only language the military dictators of Ethiopia seem to understand is military power. It has been proven that Mengistu cracks under pressure of military defeat. He signed the accord with Somalia after Afabet, having refused to respond to many political initiatives to resolve the dispute peacefully before that. Thus, with the crisis mounting around him it is possible that Mengistu will start promoting disguised peace initiatives. Such moves will not do because he will only use them as a mechanism for buying time to re-vitalise his army. Of course, if the military dictators were to have some sense of responsibility left in them, the honourable thing would have been for them to step down peacefully from power. Such a move would obviously save further misery for the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia. But this is a naive assumption. There seems not even a remote possibility that the military rulers in Ethiopia today will succumb peacefully to the popular demand engulfing the Horn of Africa in general for the establishment of democratic governments with safeguards for equal rights of all the peoples. Such a democratic power structure is anathema to all military dictators and Mengistu and his colleagues will no doubt hang on to the bitter end.

The only option seemingly is for both the Eritreans and the TPLF-led opposition movements in Ethiopia to continue advancing their military strength until the
Ethiopian military power is crushed or has to negotiate. Who will say this is an impossibility after Afabet and Enda Selassie?

* * *

Namibia's Independence: What has Happened to UN Resolution 435?
Peter Manning

On 1 April 1989 many thousands of Namibians gathered to celebrate the beginning of the decolonisation process through the implementation of UN Resolution 435. In the event South African military forces, which should have been confined to base from 4 a.m. from 1 April 1989, but were not, attacked SWAPO forces, thereby also breaking the ceasefire. All eye-witness accounts of the incident at Okahenge which sparked off the fighting speak of 'South African military forces' (whether the South African Defence Forces (SADF), the South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) or Koevoet counter-insurgency irregulars) attacking SWAPO forces who had enquired as to the whereabouts of the United Nations Technical Assistance Group (UNTAG), in an effort to hand themselves over to confinement to base.

Shortly after the fighting broke out, various UNTAG officials expressed surprise that SWAPO sought at the time to have its forces in Namibia at the time of the ceasefire confined within Namibia's borders. Their 'surprise' was hardly plausible. SWAPO has repeatedly raised this issue over the years and particularly in recent months, precisely because of attempts to ditch the original agreement and UN fudging of this issue (see below).

Clearly South Africa had violated the UN plan by not confining its forces to base, as it should have done and by breaking the cease-fire by firing the first shots at around 12 noon that day. Had South Africa not violated the UN plan the fighting would not have broken out. The South African version of events (that it was its 'police' force which attacked the SWAPO combatants at Okahenge) is not credible in the light of eye-witness accounts. The attackers wore military camouflage uniforms and used heavy military vehicles and weapons in the attack. The nature of the attack was military: it was a sudden attack, using indiscriminate, automatic heavy machine-gun fire with the clear aim of killing as many as quickly as possible without asking any questions. In no respect was it a police operation. UNTAG officials in Windhoek failed to report these two key violations to the UN Secretary General and through him to the UN Security Council.

The atrocities these South African forces have now committed include the systematic and cold-blooded murder of many Namibians after they had been captured. The UK Sunday Telegraph has now made this exposure in its editions of 9 and 30 April. Dr. Ian West, Head of Forensic Medicine at Guy's Hospital, London, after examining photographs taken for the Sunday Telegraph during the first week of April, confirmed that

the pattern we see here is familiar to those who have examined individuals shot by one or two rounds in the back of the head or neck, after they have been forced into a kneeling position (Sunday Telegraph, 30 April 1989).
Ethiopian military power is crushed or has to negotiate. Who will say this is an impossibility after Afabet and Enda Selassie?

* * *

**Namibia's Independence: What has Happened to UN Resolution 435?**
Peter Manning

On 1 April 1989 many thousands of Namibians gathered to celebrate the beginning of the decolonisation process through the implementation of UN Resolution 435. In the event South African military forces, which should have been confined to base from 4 a.m. from 1 April 1989, but were not, attacked SWAPO forces, thereby also breaking the ceasefire. All eye-witness accounts of the incident at Okahenge which sparked off the fighting speak of 'South African military forces' (whether the South African Defence Forces (SADF), the South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) or Koevoet counter-insurgency irregulars) attacking SWAPO forces who had enquired as to the whereabouts of the United Nations Technical Assistance Group (UNTAG), in an effort to hand themselves over to confinement to base.

Shortly after the fighting broke out, various UNTAG officials expressed surprise that SWAPO sought at the time to have its forces in Namibia at the time of the ceasefire confined within Namibia's borders. Their 'surprise' was hardly plausible. SWAPO has repeatedly raised this issue over the years and particularly in recent months, precisely because of attempts to ditch the original agreement and UN fudging of this issue (see below).

Clearly South Africa had violated the UN plan by not confining its forces to base, as it should have done and by breaking the ceasefire by firing the first shots at around 12 noon that day. Had South Africa not violated the UN plan the fighting would not have broken out. The South African version of events (that it was its 'police' force which attacked the SWAPO combatants at Okahenge) is not credible in the light of eye-witness accounts. The attackers wore military camouflage uniforms and used heavy military vehicles and weapons in the attack. The nature of the attack was military: it was a sudden attack, using indiscriminate, automatic heavy machine-gun fire with the clear aim of killing as many as quickly as possible without asking any questions. In no respect was it a police operation. UNTAG officials in Windhoek failed to report these two key violations to the UN Secretary General and through him to the UN Security Council.

The atrocities these South African forces have now committed include the systematic and cold-blooded murder of many Namibians after they had been captured. The UK *Sunday Telegraph* has now made this exposure in its editions of 9 and 30 April. Dr. Ian West, Head of Forensic Medicine at Guy's Hospital, London, after examining photographs taken for the *Sunday Telegraph* during the first week of April, confirmed that

the pattern we see here is familiar to those who have examined individuals shot by one or two rounds in the back of the head or neck, after they have been forced into a kneeling position (*Sunday Telegraph*, 30 April 1989).
South Africa's intentions for Namibia become increasingly clear. South Africa does not accept that there must be a transfer of effective power to the new government at Independence and they hope to prevent that from happening.

Pretoria intends to impose on the new Namibian Government at independence military and police forces of their own creation and which owe loyalty to them and not the new government. The South African military commanders have made it plain that SWATF will not be properly demobilised with its command structure dismantled as required by the UN plan; although its personnel have now been disbanded they are still being paid. The regime seems intent on reassembling it
and imposing it on the new government no matter what the elected Constituent Assembly may decide on the make-up of an independent Namibia's armed forces.

Likewise, the SA government seem intent on imposing on the new government its police force now enlarged by the incorporation of the notorious 'counter-insurgency unit' — Koevoet. With no sign yet of UNTAG challenging South Africa's defiance of the UN plan's requirement that Koevoet be demobilised, there seems little prospect of the SA government volunteering the move.

The South African government also intends to deny the new Namibian government control over the country's infrastructure. The South African administration in Namibia has been planning to sell off Namibia's public services including hospitals, water, post, telecommunications and transport services. This prompted the National Union of Namibian Workers, who have launched a mass campaign against these privatisation plans, to question in a recent statement the 'real possibilities of change and real independence in Namibia.'

Even if it does go through the motions of implementing Resolution 435, the South African regime clearly intends to prevent the fulfilment of the most fundamental objectives of the UN plan, namely that it be a genuine decolonisation process.

What is particularly disturbing is that senior UN officials are apparently ignoring the fundamental objective of United Nations involvement described in numerous UN resolutions, not least in Resolution 435. That objective 'is the withdrawal of South Africa's illegal administration of Namibia and the transfer of power to the people of Namibia' (para 2 of Res.435). The election, important though it is, is merely a means to that end, despite the utterances of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on arrival in Windhoek that the 'sole purpose is the holding of free and fair elections'.

If there is no genuine 'transfer of power' then UNTAG will not have discharged its mandate. The new government, which is unlikely to be interested in a cosmetic exercise, would have the right to insist on a genuine transfer of effective power before accepting independence.

**SWAPO's Right to Bases in Namibia: The Facts**

In the middle of February 1989 the question of SWAPO forces in Namibia at the time of the ceasefire was raised in New York with General Prem Chand, commander of UNTAG's military component, by SWAPO's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Theo-Ben Gurirab. In early March, in the presence of several diplomatic representatives of the Frontline States, SWAPO's Foreign Affairs Secretary again raised this issue with Mr.Marriack Golding, a UN Under-Secretary General. On 22 March 1989 the head of SWAPO's Observer Mission to the United Nations raised the issue with Mr.Martii Ahtisaari, the Special Representative and requested a meeting between UNTAG's military commander and SWAPO in order to discuss the confinement of SWAPO forces and their monitoring by UNTAG.

Despite SWAPO's efforts, there was never any satisfactory attempt on the part of UNTAG officials to address the problem of what would happen to SWAPO combatants inside Namibia at the time of the ceasefire if UNTAG persisted in standing by South Africa's rejection of the original agreement incorporated in Resolution 435.
Agreement Reached, Disagreement Fudged

SWAPO still emphatically asserts that it understands very clearly the provisions of the UN plan envisaged in Resolution 435. The UN plan is essentially a series of agreements between the two parties to the conflict in Namibia, namely SWAPO and South Africa. SWAPO knows what it has or has not agreed to and any changes to that agreement would require SWAPO's consent. It now appears that the plan has been fiddled to accommodate Pretoria's whims and agreements reached have been thrown out of the window.

The UN Secretary General emphasised to the Geneva 'Pre-Implementation Meeting' in January 1981 that there could be no going back on agreements already made. He dwelt on this issue precisely because the South Africa regime wanted to change the agreed plan.

Agreements reached in the three key documents approved of in operative paragraph 1 of Resolution 435, require the confinement of all SWAPO and South African forces to base at the time of the cease-fire. When Resolution 435 was adopted, the entire operation was envisaged as taking place within the borders of Namibia. Thus the confinement to base of these forces could only be within Namibia.

Had there been any intention to confine SWAPO forces to base in any other country, then the Secretary General's Special Representative would have visited the country or countries concerned as part of his survey mission in August 1978 in order to discuss with the governments of those countries the confinement of SWAPO forces. He did not do so (see the Secretary General's Report to the Security Council, 29 August 1978).

That agreement was reflected in paragraph 11 of the Secretary General's report to the Security Council of 26 February 1979:

any SWAPO armed forces in Namibia at the time of the ceasefire will likewise be restricted to base at designated locations inside Namibia to be specified by the Special Representative after necessary consultation.

This was not a 'proposal', as senior UNTAG officials were asserting after fighting broke out at the beginning of April. It reflected an agreement which has not been superseded by any later agreement.

Correspondence between P.W.Botha, then Prime Minister of South Africa, and the UN Secretary General bears out our assertion that South Africa had indeed agreed on the confinement of SWAPO forces to base in Namibia. Botha told the UN Secretary General in a letter dated 15 March 1979 that the January 1979 document he attached 'was drawn up to avoid any misunderstandings and differing interpretations of the practical implementation of the settlement proposal.'

This document, prepared jointly by South African and UNTAG military personnel, states clearly that references in the original western proposal to SWAPO's 'restriction to base...does not make sense unless “bases” also refers to bases inside Namibia.' Although not accepted by the UN Secretary General as an accurate reflection of the UN plan, it clearly demonstrates South Africa's initial agreement to SWAPO bases in Namibia and the UN Secretary General's response indicated his belief that this was the case.
The South African Government tried to wriggle out of the agreement on restriction to base of SWAPO forces inside Namibia by claiming that SWAPO had no bases inside Namibia. Consistent with this type of war, the bases were not detectable, identifiable bases. The Secretary General retorted in a letter to Botha that this arrangement was necessary and 'was designed (my emphasis) exclusively to solve the practical problem that might be created by the presence of such forces. I take it from the numerous reports I have received from your government of armed SWAPO activity within Namibia, that you agree that there may be some such forces present in Namibia at the time of the cease-fire'.

The historic fact is that the United Nations fudged this ensuing disagreement and is now ditching the agreed provisions in favour of bouncing SWAPO into new arrangements never envisaged in the UN plan.

Agreement was reached in 1982 on the monitoring by UNTAG of the confinement of SWAPO forces in Angola and Zambia to base in those countries. Attempts have been made to construe this somehow as meaning that there would be no SWAPO bases inside Namibia. This was not the case and no evidence exists in Security Council documentation to support such a claim.

The absence of any reference to SWAPO forces inside Namibia in Security Council documents in recent years does not constitute, as suggested by UNTAG officials, an agreement to alter the original deal. Had there been an agreement that SWAPO forces inside Namibia at the time of the ceasefire would be removed from their own country for confinement to base elsewhere, it would most certainly have been reported to the Security Council because of its significance.

SWAPO challenges anyone who makes this claim to point out such a reference. There has never been any agreement with SWAPO that superseded the original agreement that SWAPO forces inside Namibia at the time of the ceasefire would be confined to base inside Namibia.

The 16th Parallel Provisions of the Geneva Protocol
The Geneva Protocol is a tripartite agreement between the three sovereign governments of Angola, Cuba and South Africa. It covers issues aimed at restoring peace in Angola. The provisions of Resolution 435 apply to Namibia.

SWAPO was not a signatory to this agreement. The President of SWAPO 'in accordance with the spirit of the Geneva agreement ... committed itself to take the necessary steps to help make the peace process in the south west African region irreversible and successful'. The only detail that SWAPO explicitly committed itself to was the 'cessation of hostile acts' which took effect on 10 August 1988 in Angola. This was necessary because SWAPO had fought alongside the Angolans and Cubans against the South Africans in Angola.

Paragraph 5 of the protocol includes a reference to the deployment of SWAPO's forces north of the 16th parallel (which forms part of the Angola-Namibia border) and reads as follows:

Angola and Cuba shall use their good offices so that, once the total withdrawal of South African troops from Angola is completed, and within the context also of the cessation of hostilities in Namibia (my emphasis), SWAPO's forces will be deployed to the north of the 16th parallel.
The only 'cessation of hostilities in Namibia' which could possibly be referred to is the ceasefire between SWAPO and South Africa marking the beginning of implementation of Resolution 435. This came into effect in Namibia at 4 a.m. on 1 April 1989, although within hours it had been broken by South Africa when they attacked SWAPO forces.

It is true that SWAPO had earlier, as a gesture of good will, committed itself to a unilateral cessation of hostilities but this was not reciprocated by the Pretoria regime. Namibians continued to be killed, shot at, beaten up and tortured by the so-called 'security forces' right through the period during which SWAPO abided by a unilateral cease-fire. Pretoria had certainly not ceased hostilities against the Namibian people. Even if one argued that SWAPO was bound by the Geneva Protocols the provision could not apply as long as a 'cessation of hostilities' did not exist in Namibia.

Those forces in Namibia at the time of the ceasefire are entitled to be confined to base in terms of the UN plan envisaged in Resolution 435 and cannot, in terms of the UN plan, be removed from Namibia. The Geneva Protocols cannot and do not alter in any way the terms of Resolution 435 on the confinement to base of SWAPO forces inside Namibia at the time of the ceasefire.

A senior UNTAG official in Windhoek confirmed as much when he said on 4 April that UNTAG had 'no official knowledge' of the accord, yet it has been claimed to be something that fundamentally affects this UN plan.

Postscript July 1989
SWAPO launched its official election campaign in Katutura, Windhoek's still segregated black township, on Sunday 2 July with a mass rally of some 25,000 people (Windhoek's total population is about 110,000) and the publication of SWAPO's election manifesto.

SWAPO is working hard to establish in Namibia a new climate of reconciliation among Namibians so as to provide our country with the maximum chance of a smooth transition to independence and to maximise the opportunities for development in the future. SWAPO is going all out to reassure those Namibians who have been misled by South Africa's vicious anti-SWAPO propaganda, that they are not at risk, that SWAPO wishes to build a new democratic future for Namibia and is inviting every Namibian to join it in this task for the greater good of all.

SWAPO's campaign work is going well with huge crowds turning up at SWAPO's election meetings and enthusiastically welcoming SWAPO cadres returning from years in exile.

All this is happening despite South Africa's refusal to implement key elements of the UN plan, the most serious of which has recently been its failure to demobilise Koevoet, the notorious cutting edge of its military machine in Namibia which was infiltrated earlier this year into the 'South West Africa Police' (SWAPOL).

The UN Plan and the Demobilisation of Koevoet
The UN plan explicitly provides for the initial confinement of Koevoet to base at the time of the ceasefire and its demobilisation, including the dismantling of its
command structure, by the end of the sixth week (Settlement Proposal S/20412, para 42). The clear intention of the UN Security Council was that it should no longer exist as an organised force.

In addition, Koevoet members, part of a force dedicated during recent years to killing SWAPO cadres, could hardly be considered 'suitable for continued employment during the transition period' in the 'existing police force', another requirement of the plan (S/12636, para 9).

More than three months into the implementation of the UN plan Koevoet have still not been confined to base, let alone demobilised. It is now widely known that Koevoet are responsible for such widespread intimidation, particularly in northern Namibia, that the UN Special Representative was forced to express 'grave doubt in my mind as to whether “conditions are established which will allow free and fair elections and an impartial electoral process”, as required by paragraph 2 of the Settlement Proposal (S/12636 of 10 April 1978)'. SWAPO believes that the time for action on this issue by UNTAG, with the explicit backing of the Security Council, is long overdue.

There are areas of the north that UNTAG are still not patrolling such as the one hundred mile stretch of northern Namibia between Eenhana and Nkurenkuru in the Kavango area. A survey by SWAPO officials of this area in recent days revealed that there are many Koevoet and other armed elements in the area, in Casspirs mounted with heavy armaments. No members of UNTAG were seen in this area. Many of the SWAPO returnees who are unable to go back to their homes are from this area.

Intimidation and the Role of the UNTAG Civilian Police
The argument that UNTAG, and particularly the police component, cannot intervene in the process but are there merely to observe it, is neither acceptable nor an accurate reflection of the UN plan. UNTAG personnel are apparently under instruction not to act as they ought to in terms of Resolution 435. There have now been numerous instances where SWAPO members have approached UNTAG police to lodge a complaint and are told that they must report the matter to SWAPOL! Only then will the UNTAG police be able to monitor the investigation by SWAPOL, they are told. Protests from the SWAPO members that it is the 'police' themselves who are responsible for the intimidation and that there is no point complaining to SWAPOL have not helped to change this clearly ridiculous arrangement. Many instances of intimidation are thus going unreported.

The UNTAG police clearly have a role that should be more than standing helplessly on the side-lines. There should be greater readiness on the part of UNTAG police to intervene and actively pursue complaints of intimidation reported to them. The UN plan makes clear provision for this:

The duties of the civil police component will include taking measures against any intimidation or interference with the electoral process from whatever quarter . . . (S12827, para 3).

In addition, part of the role of the UNTAG military component is to make sure that the provisions of the agreed plan will be observed by all parties (S/12626, para 8E). It must also 'assist and support the civilian component of UNTAG in the
discharge of its tasks' (S/12827, para 22). While ‘the military component of UNTAG will not use force except in self-defence, self-defence will include resistance to attempts to prevent it from discharging its duties under the mandate of the Security Council’ (S/12787, para 20).

Clearly the UN plan not only makes provision for the UNTAG police ‘taking measures’ against intimidation, but also provides for the UNTAG military using force in support of the UNTAG police if there are ‘attempts to prevent it from discharging its duties’.

Size of the ‘Existing Police Force’
South Africa has so far been allowed to get away with another gross abuse of the UN plan. ‘The existing police force’ is charged in the UN plan with the maintainance of law and order during the transition period. The South African regime deliberately expanded the police force in order to by-pass the demobilisation provisions of the UN plan and keep Koevoet mobilised and armed.

From the account given by General Dolf Gouws, SWAPOL’s police chief, the real size of the ‘existing police force’ should be 3,300 and not the 6,300 which has actually been achieved — but only through the infiltration of Koevoet into its ranks (Times of Namibia, 8 February 1989). UNTAG must insist that SWAPOL be returned to the more realistic size of 3,300.

The Non-demobilisation of SWATF
The UN Security Council provided for the demobilisation of SWATF and the ‘dismantling of its command structure’. Clearly, by explicitly requiring the dismantling of the command structure, the Security Council intended that SWATF should not be reassembled again. This would be consistent with the prerogative of the elected constituent assembly (and not the Pretoria regime) to determine through the constitution the make-up of the armed forces of the newly independent state.

In the Windhoek Advertiser of 13 September 1982, the officer then commanding SWATF, Charles Lloyd (now in the influential post of Secretary of South Africa’s State Security Council) gave the South African version of what was meant by the demobilisation of SWATF:

the demilitarisation of the SWATF is therefore a temporary phase that should last only for the duration of the election campaign . . . all unit support weapons and ammunition will be handed in at unit headquarters where they will be kept in safe custody by the units concerned, under the surveillance of UNTAG monitors. Personal weapons will not be handed in and UNTAG will not take control of arms and ammunition handed in.

He explained that members of the full-time force units would go on leave with pay, returning to their headquarters once a month to draw pay. Lloyd explained the South African perception of SWATF’s future role:

the development of the SWATF is part of the SWA independence process. The SWATF should therefore form the basis of the Defence Force of the new state.

Recent reports from Namibia confirm that South Africa has not demobilised
SWATF and dismantled the command structure but has found a cynical formula for doing just as they had intended in 1982.

A recent report in *The Namibian* (29 June 1989) revealed that some officers of the 'force command' are still at the SWATF headquarters, supposedly performing 'administrative duties'. Other force command officers, according to SWATF itself, have been placed among the 1500 SADF personnel confined to base at Grootfontein and Oshivelvo. Members of SWATF have been told to report back for duty in November this year just after the election, and are currently collecting pay fortnightly instead of monthly so as to be 'briefed' on a more regular basis. Residents in the north report that SWATF members still have their G3 rifles and have not been disarmed in accordance with the plan.

It should be clear to UNTAG that the South African regime is mounting a serious challenge to the United Nations over the fulfilment of the fundamental objectives of Resolution 435, especially as set out in its Paragraph 2. They intend to impose on the incoming government an army and police force of their creation which owes loyalty to that regime and not to the new government. This would be a direct and serious challenge to the Security Council's objective of 'a transfer of power' to the Namibian people and raises the question as to how UNTAG intends to meet this challenge.

**Rigging the Registration of Voters?**

The registration process started on 3 July. But Nahas Angula, the SWAPO election directorate member responsible for the registration process, wrote a letter (dated 12 July 1989) to Hisham Omayad, UNTAG's official in charge of its electoral supervisory department, in which he complained of registration malpractices which are serious and apparently widespread.

People have been given fake registration cards to fill in so that they believe that they have registered to vote when they have not done so. A systematic pattern of cards being incorrectly filled in has also emerged. Details such as identity document/passport/repatriation certificate numbers or the date of birth are not being filled in correctly. The official stamp is frequently missing from the back of the card, raising the question whether such cards will be declared invalid on the day of the election. South Africa's puppet party, the DTA, are putting up signs at registration offices such as 'DTA members come and register here', apparently intended to deter non-DTA people from registering to vote.

It is quite evident that the level of UNTAG scrutiny of the registration process is inadequate and must be urgently addressed by the United Nations if the whole process is not to become a charade.

**Editors Note:** The author, Peter Manning, is SWAPO's Publicity Officer for Western Europe. This Briefing brings out the nature of the detailed agreements for the transfer of power contained in UN Resolution 435, to which SWAPO has been a party, and the extent to which South Africa is already breaking those provisions. In order that these past and all future infringements are recognised for what they are, it is important that informed observers know what the rules are. Peter Manning has now used SWAPO's documentation to put together a detailed and fully-documented catalogue of what the rule book contains: *The United Nations*
Plan for Elections in Namibia Envisaged in UN Security Council Resolution 435, available FREE to all subscribers of ROAPE.

ROAPE is, however, asking its readers to donate to SWAPO’s election fund, sending your cheque to the ROAPE office, Regency House, 75-77 St.Mary’s Road, Sheffield S2 4AN, UK, marked SWAPO ELECTION FUND.

*   *   *

The following document was sent to the ROAPE office by the Central Committee of the TPLF office in Khartoum, March 1989.

Proposal of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) for the Peaceful Solution of the Problem in Ethiopia.

In accordance with the resolutions and basic guidance of the third Congress of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) on peaceful resolution of the Ethiopian situation, the Central Committee of the TPLF has decided to undertake peace negotiations on the following terms:

1. Immediate cease-fire agreement among the warring forces and its effective implementation:
   A. To bring about peaceful solution, cease-fire has to be accepted as an inseparable part and parcel of the process.
   B. The cease-fire will be implemented when the whole peace package is agreed upon and will be enforced along with the other points of the peace proposal. Detailed measures to be taken to implement the cease-fire will be decided by further discussions.

2. Freedom of speech, press, the right to organise freely and the other basic democratic rights should be respected. All political organisations will be allowed to freely and democratically conduct political work among the people.
   A. All popular demands can be satisfactorily resolved only by the democratic participation of the people themselves. The basic democratic rights of the people will not be simply written on paper and disregarded as is being done at present, but will be acted upon. Thus, the concrete realisation of all democratic rights is an inseparable part of the peaceful solution.
   B. For the people to decide their own future, it is essential that they be given the right to understand, evaluate and choose from among different alternatives presented by different political forces. One basic reason for the present war is the fact that the people were denied such rights. Therefore, allowing all political forces to conduct political work freely and legally will be an essential element of the peaceful solution.

3. All political prisoners must be released. People who were forced to leave their country for political reasons and those who want to return home must be allowed to return and conduct political activities freely and democratically.

4. In order to solve all problems peacefully and democratically the repressive security institutions of the Dergue must be banned.
Plan for Elections in Namibia Envisaged in UN Security Council Resolution 435, available FREE to all subscribers of ROAPE.

ROAPE is, however, asking its readers to donate to SWAPO's election fund, sending your cheque to the ROAPE office, Regency House, 75-77 St.Mary's Road, Sheffield S2 4AN, UK, marked SWAPO ELECTION FUND.

* * *

The following document was sent to the ROAPE office by the Central Committee of the TPLF office in Khartoum, March 1989.

Proposal of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) for the Peaceful Solution of the Problem in Ethiopia.

In accordance with the resolutions and basic guidance of the third Congress of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) on peaceful resolution of the Ethiopian situation, the Central Committee of the TPLF has decided to undertake peace negotiations on the following terms:

1. Immediate cease-fire agreement among the warring forces and its effective implementation:

   A. To bring about peaceful solution, cease-fire has to be accepted as an inseparable part and parcel of the process.

   B. The cease-fire will be implemented when the whole peace package is agreed upon and will be enforced along with the other points of the peace proposal. Detailed measures to be taken to implement the cease-fire will be decided by further discussions.

2. Freedom of speech, press, the right to organise freely and the other basic democratic rights should be respected. All political organisations will be allowed to freely and democratically conduct political work among the people.

   A. All popular demands can be satisfactorily resolved only by the democratic participation of the people themselves. The basic democratic rights of the people will not be simply written on paper and disregarded as is being done at present, but will be acted upon. Thus, the concrete realisation of all democratic rights is an inseparable part of the peaceful solution.

   B. For the people to decide their own future, it is essential that they be given the right to understand, evaluate and choose from among different alternatives presented by different political forces. One basic reason for the present war is the fact that the people were denied such rights. Therefore, allowing all political forces to conduct political work freely and legally will be an essential element of the peaceful solution.

3. All political prisoners must be released. People who were forced to leave their country for political reasons and those who want to return home must be allowed to return and conduct political activities freely and democratically.

4. In order to solve all problems peacefully and democratically the repressive security institutions of the Dergue must be banned.
5. The internal problems of the people of Ethiopia must be solved by Ethiopians themselves and since foreign military intervention is an obstacle to the realisation of peace, all foreign military establishments must be closed down and foreign military forces and expertise immediately expelled.

6. The establishment of a provisional government constituted from all political organisations:

   A. The provisional government ensures the democratic rights of the people and allows all political organisations to operate freely. After a transitional period, a constitution will be approved by the people’s free and democratic choice. This will be the main task of the provisional government. It will also be the supreme administrative body throughout the transitional period.

   B. Once the constitution has been approved by the people in a democratic forum and once a democratic government has been formed through elections, the transitional government will cease to exist.

7. Allow the people of Eritrea to freely and democratically decide their own fate by themselves and their decision must be respected by all parties.

8. The elected government will democratically solve all the demands of the people on the basis of their own desire and decisions. This will be the final step in the process of the peaceful solution.

The Central Committee of the TPLF is ready and willing to discuss the above mentioned points of 'Peaceful Solution' with the concerned parties in open and declared forums at any time and place. But it is opposed to any secretive meetings and manoeuvres in the name of peace and peaceful solutions.

* * *

EPLF Statement Concerning the 'New' Declaration of the Dergue June 1989

Throughout the years, the Dergue has spared no effort to crush the Eritrean cause by military force while periodically making, usually during moments of military weakness, peaceful overtures that would allow it to buy time.

These transparent tactics are well illustrated by its actions over the past ten years. The Mengistu regime has throughout been:

1. rejecting the presence of a third party of observer
2. insisting that all contacts remain unofficial and secret
3. stipulating that negotiations be conducted and the Eritrean question be resolved only within the framework of the 'Ethiopian revolution'.

The characteristic posture of the Dergue has been to dismiss the Eritrean struggle as a nuisance it has crushed, 'with the exception of a few bandits'. Since mid-1987, the regime has also been advancing the argument that the 'Eritrean problem has found resolution in the Constitution of the Ethiopian Republic'.

In the meantime, it has continued to pursue and escalate a bloody war to impose a solution through superior military force. The enormous loss of human life and
5. The internal problems of the people of Ethiopia must be solved by Ethiopians themselves and since foreign military intervention is an obstacle to the realisation of peace, all foreign military establishments must be closed down and foreign military forces and expertise immediately expelled.

6. The establishment of a provisional government constituted from all political organisations:

   A. The provisional government ensures the democratic rights of the people and allows all political organisations to operate freely. After a transitional period, a constitution will be approved by the people's free and democratic choice. This will be the main task of the provisional government. It will also be the supreme administrative body throughout the transitional period.

   B. Once the constitution has been approved by the people in a democratic forum and once a democratic government has been formed through elections, the transitional government will cease to exist.

7. Allow the people of Eritrea to freely and democratically decide their own fate by themselves and their decision must be respected by all parties.

8. The elected government will democratically solve all the demands of the people on the basis of their own desire and decisions. This will be the final step in the process of the peaceful solution.

The Central Committee of the TPLF is ready and willing to discuss the above mentioned points of 'Peaceful Solution' with the concerned parties in open and declared forums at any time and place. But it is opposed to any secretive meetings and manoeuvres in the name of peace and peaceful solutions.

*   *   *

EPLF Statement Concerning the 'New' Declaration of the Dergue June 1989

Throughout the years, the Dergue has spared no effort to crush the Eritrean cause by military force while periodically making, usually during moments of military weakness, peaceful overtures that would allow it to buy time.

These transparent tactics are well illustrated by its actions over the past ten years. The Mengistu regime has throughout been:

1. rejecting the presence of a third party of observer
2. insisting that all contacts remain unofficial and secret
3. stipulating that negotiations be conducted and the Eritrean question be resolved only within the framework of the 'Ethiopian revolution'.

The characteristic posture of the Dergue has been to dismiss the Eritrean struggle as a nuisance it has crushed, 'with the exception of a few bandits'. Since mid-1987, the regime has also been advancing the argument that the 'Eritrean problem has found resolution in the Constitution of the Ethiopian Republic'.

In the meantime, it has continued to pursue and escalate a bloody war to impose a solution through superior military force. The enormous loss of human life and
property that it has incurred in the process is without parallel in the history of the region.

Under these circumstances, the Ethiopian people and the Derg's army have stepped up their struggle to overthrow this regime in order to bring about peace. The recent coup attempt by the army, the first to bear the brunt of the war on the Ethiopian side which became convinced that the path of peace was arrogantly blocked by the regime, is indeed a clear illustration of the wishes of the Ethiopian people for peace.

Now, against the background of its persistent policies to hamper peaceful efforts, the Derg's regime has suddenly switched gears and issued a 'new', 'peaceful' proposal calling 'for talks without conditions'. This declaration has been issued in the name of the 'Shengo' in order to give it more credibility.

The timing and particular circumstances under which the declaration has been made clearly illustrate that its main purpose is to curb growing pressure from the Ethiopian people and army and, the international community so as to buy time for its militaristic policy.

Other indicators also reveal that these considerations are the real motives behind the current declaration. This time, too, the Derg's regime is repeating its practice of issuing contradictory statements which nullify each other. In the press conference he gave after the Shengo declaration, Colonel Mengistu stated that 'Ethiopia's unity will not be subject to negotiations'. By 'Ethiopia's unity', he means, 'the unity of Ethiopia and Eritrea'. A 'unity' imposed by coercion and deceit and against which a struggle has been waged in Eritrea for almost half a century now — 28 years of which through armed confrontation. As such, if negotiations are to take place, one of the fundamental issues that must be addressed is the illegal 'unity' imposed through compulsion and deceit. In any talks that may take place, to contend that this matter is beyond discussion is not only tantamount to setting preconditions but also betrays the lack of a genuine desire for negotiation and peaceful solution.

The contradictory explanations of the Dergue stem from other motives too. In the recent months, many concerned parties have been conducting active endeavours to create a conducive environment for negotiations. When seen against the perspective of these positive efforts, the 'new' contradictory declaration is no doubt a pre-emptive tactic to forestall serious negotiations.

Finally, while presenting this statement in response to and as a clarification of the situation so as to expose the obstacles, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front again re-affirms its readiness to start open negotiations without preconditions in the presence of a mutually agreed upon appropriate third party.

**EPLF Foreign Relations Europe Office**

* * *

**Eritrea — Ethiopia Conflict: Chronology of Events 1988-89**

**19 March 1988:** The EPLF launches its greatest military offensive since its strategic withdrawal in 1979, gaining substantial ground. A third of Ethiopia's strongest and most experienced army is wiped out; the fixed frontlines of Nacfa
property that it has incurred in the process is without parallel in the history of the region.

Under these circumstances, the Ethiopian people and the Dergue’s army have stepped up their struggle to overthrow this regime in order to bring about peace. The recent coup attempt by the army, the first to bear the brunt of the war on the Ethiopian side which became convinced that the path of peace was arrogantly blocked by the regime, is indeed a clear illustration of the wishes of the Ethiopian people for peace.

Now, against the background of its persistent policies to hamper peaceful efforts, the Dergue’s regime has suddenly switched gears and issued a ‘new’, ‘peaceful’ proposal calling ‘for talks without conditions’. This declaration has been issued in the name of the ‘Shengo’ in order to give it more credibility.

The timing and particular circumstances under which the declaration has been made clearly illustrate that its main purpose is to curb growing pressure from the Ethiopian people and army and, the international community so as to buy time for its militaristic policy.

Other indicators also reveal that these considerations are the real motives behind the current declaration. This time, too, the Dergue’s regime is repeating its practice of issuing contradictory statements which nullify each other. In the press conference he gave after the Shengo declaration, Colonel Mengistu stated that ‘Ethiopia’s unity will not be subject to negotiations’. By ‘Ethiopia’s unity’, he means, ‘the unity of Ethiopia and Eritrea’. A ‘unity’ imposed by coercion and deceit and against which a struggle has been waged in Eritrea for almost half a century now — 28 years of which through armed confrontation. As such, if negotiations are to take place, one of the fundamental issues that must be addressed is the illegal ‘unity’ imposed through compulsion and deceit. In any talks that may take place, to contend that this matter is beyond discussion is not only tantamount to setting preconditions but also betray the lack of a genuine desire for negotiation and peaceful solution.

The contradictory explanations of the Dergue stem from other motives too. In the recent months, many concerned parties have been conducting active endeavours to create a conducive environment for negotiations. When seen against the perspective of these positive efforts, the ‘new’ contradictory declaration is no doubt a pre-emptive tactic to forestall serious negotiations.

Finally, while presenting this statement in response to and as a clarification of the situation so as to expose the obstacles, the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front again re-affirms its readiness to start open negotiations without preconditions in the presence of a mutually agreed upon appropriate third party.

EPLF Foreign Relations Europe Office

* * *

Eritrea — Ethiopia Conflict: Chronology of Events 1988-89

19 March 1988: The EPLF launches its greatest military offensive since its strategic withdrawal in 1979, gaining substantial ground. A third of Ethiopia’s strongest and most experienced army is wiped out; the fixed frontlines of Nacfa
and Halhal are crushed; Afabet, the Nadew Command’s headquarters is captured; subsequently the defeated Ethiopian army withdraws from the towns of Agordat, Barentu, Tesenei and Alighider — the western lowlands is liberated. Keren, the second largest city, is under siege. This military initiative significantly shifts the military balance in favour of the EPLF.

April 1988: The Addis Ababa regime rushes to sign a ‘peace accord’ with Somalia primarily to release its divisions from Ogaden to Eritrea.

11 May 1988: Ethiopia decrees a State of Emergency in Eritrea. This decrees (which reinforces the existing Marshall Law of 1970) allows the Ethiopian occupying army to evict and relocate people at will, designate prohibited zones and confiscate property without compensation. The entire Eritrean coastal strip north of Massawa and the frontier along the Sudan extending 10kms inland was designated an ‘exclusion zone’.

14 May 1988: The massacre in She’eb. Ethiopian troops massacred 400 Eritrean civilians (including children and women) — 80 of whom were cruelly run over by tanks. The new wave of atrocities results in the displacement of 200,000 people.

13 — 23 May 1989: A multi-pronged Ethiopian counter-offensive is repulsed. Ethiopia’s aggregate losses in the eleven-day battle exceeded 9000 soldiers; 33 tanks and 28 military vehicles were destroyed. In this devasting battle the Ethiopians deployed 10 divisions.

16 May 1989: A coup attempt against Mengistu fails. More than 30 Generals and Colonels — including the Defence Minister, Chief of Staff, Commander of the Air Force, were killed and more than 250 senior officers are arrested. This coup came against the background of the army’s official but secret demand to Mengistu to end the war in Eritrea by peaceful means which appeared as one of the demands by the coup leaders in their radio broadcast.

5 June 1989: The National Shengo (Assembly) of Ethiopia announces a ‘New Peace Initiative’ to ‘solve’ the Eritrean problem. The terms include: to begin the talks without any precondition; to conduct the talks in the presence of observer and make it public.

6 June 1989: Colonel Mengistu effectively contradicts the Shengo’s declaration of ‘New Peace Initiative’ by imposing a precondition. He rules out independence for Eritrea from any negotiations.

8 June 1989: The Eritrean People’s Liberation Front responds to Ethiopia’s ‘New Peace Initiative’ reaffirming ‘its readiness to start open negotiations without preconditions in the presence of a mutually agreed upon appropriate third party’.

SUDAN: Coup in Khartoum: Will it abort the Peace Process?

Sidgi A. Kaballo

On 30 June 1989 a military coup was reported from Khartoum. The leader of the coup was identified as Brigadier Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir who promoted
and Hallal are crushed; Afabet, the Nadew Command's headquarters is captured; subsequently the defeated Ethiopian army withdraws from the towns of Agordat, Barentu, Tesenei and Alighider — the western lowlands is liberated. Keren, the second largest city, is under siege. This military initiative significantly shifts the military balance in favour of the EPLF.

April 1988: The Addis Ababa regime rushes to sign a 'peace accord' with Somalia primarily to release its divisions from Ogaden to Eritrea.

11 May 1988: Ethiopia decrees a State of Emergency in Eritrea. This decrees (which reinforces the existing Marshall Law of 1970) allows the Ethiopian occupying army to evict and relocate people at will, designate prohibited zones and confiscate property without compensation. The entire Eritrean coastal strip north of Massawa and the frontier along the Sudan extending 10kms inland was designated an 'exclusion zone'.

14 May 1988: The massacre in She'eb. Ethiopian troops massacred 400 Eritrean civilians (including children and women) — 80 of whom were cruelly run over by tanks. The new wave of atrocities results in the displacement of 200,000 people.

13 — 23 May 1989: A multi-pronged Ethiopian counter-offensive is repulsed. Ethiopia's aggregate losses in the eleven-day battle exceeded 9000 soldiers; 33 tanks and 28 military vehicles were destroyed. In this devastating battle the Ethiopians deployed 10 divisions.

16 May 1989: A coup attempt against Mengistu fails. More than 30 Generals and Colonels — including the Defence Minister, Chief of Staff, Commander of the Air Force, were killed and more than 250 senior officers are arrested. This coup came against the background of the army's official but secret demand to Mengistu to end the war in Eritrea by peaceful means which appeared as one of the demands by the coup leaders in their radio broadcast.

5 June 1989: The National Shengo (Assembly) of Ethiopia announces a 'New Peace Initiative' to 'solve' the Eritrean problem. The terms include: to begin the talks without any precondition; to conduct the talks in the presence of observer and make it public.

6 June 1989: Colonel Mengistu effectively contradicts the Shengo's declaration of 'New Peace Initiative' by imposing a precondition. He rules out independence for Eritrea from any negotiations.

8 June 1989: The Eritrean People's Liberation Front responds to Ethiopia's 'New Peace Initiative' reaffirming 'its readiness to start open negotiations without preconditions in the presence of a mutually agreed upon appropriate third party'.

EPLF Foreign Relations Office

* * *

SUDAN: Coup in Khartoum: Will it abort the Peace Process?
Sidgi A. Kaballo

On 30 June 1989 a military coup was reported from Khartoum. The leader of the coup was identified as Brigadier Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir who promoted
himself a day later to Lieutenant General. Brigadier Al Bashir announced immediately:

1. the suspension of the 1985 Constitution;
2. the dissolution of the Constitutional Assembly, the Head of State Council and the Council of Ministers;
3. the dissolution of all political parties and the confiscation of their properties;
4. the dissolution of all trade unions and non-religious societies;
5. the imposition of a state of emergency and a ban on all demonstrations or public meetings;
6. suspension of all newspapers and magazines until new legislation re-organising the press and publications is issued;
7. the formation of a Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation (RCCNS).

The RCCNS would:
1. assume supreme constitutional, legislative and executive authority;
2. assume the power of issuing constitutional orders and their amendment and of issuing laws;
3. assume responsibility for all military and security affairs;
4. appoint the council of ministers and issue directives to it.

A Council of Ministers would be accountable to RCCNS. The Chairman of RCCNS is the Prime Minister and the Supreme Leader of the armed forces and Defence Minister.

The RCCNS chairman also issued an order threatening 10 years imprisonment for any anti-RCCNS activity even if they are peaceful, and the death sentence for any use of force or coercion against the RCCNS and the 'National Salvation Revolution' (NSR) as the coup named itself. Lt. Gen. Al Bashir defined his movement as 'a genuine Sudanese revolution, the revolution of a people who rose up against tyranny, corruption, partisanship and sectarianism'. He added that his movement is nationalist, 'neither leftist, nor rightist, not partisan, not Mayist [meaning follower of ex-President Nimeiri], not racist' (The Independent, 1 July 1989, p.1). Yet some Sudanese and foreign observers see the regime as pro-Islamic Fundamentalist and identifiable with the National Islamic Front (NIF). The only organisations in the Sudan who in fact welcomed the coup are those Students Unions lead by NIF followers.

In further press announcements the leaders of the coup declared their priorities as the solution of the southern problem, the economic crisis and fighting corruption. No concrete programme or plans have been announced to deal with these or other problems. In answering questions about the abolition of Islamic Sharia Laws, Lt.Gen. Al Bashir promised to put the issue to the Sudanese people in a referendum. In another press conference in Cairo on 12 July he offered to separate the South if 'all Southerners accepted', a declaration which was negated by the official spokesman of RCCNS. The SPLA/SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement, based in the South) didn't announce any positions on the coup, though they declined to meet a RCCNS delegation which visited Ethiopia early in July.

Some observers have expressed fears that the coup is an 'abortion' of the peace process which was progressing, though slowly, in the Sudan. Both the Umma Party
of the overthrown Prime Minister, Sadiq El Mahdi, and the Sudan Communist Party announced their early opposition in two pamphlets distributed in Khartoum on 1 July. The other major party which had been in coalition with the Umma, Democratic Unionist Party, kept silent.

All political leaders, including El Mahdi, were arrested. The number of political detainees is said to be above thirty. El Mirgahni, an influential religious leader and the leader of the DUP is said to have been transferred to Kober prison after a short period of house arrest.

Egypt was the first country to declare its recognition of the new regime and the other Arab countries soon followed. A US State Department spokeswoman told the press on 30 June that the USA's 'reaction ... is ... [to] regret the military's taking action to overthrow Sudan's democratically elected government and we urge an early return to democracy'. She added that 'it is critical that whoever is in control takes immediate steps to find a peaceful solution to the war and to improve the provision of humanitarian relief' (Voice of America, 30 June 1989). The USSR, on the other hand, announced that what happened is an internal Sudanese affair and hoped that Sudan would improve its relations with its neighbours and all other countries including the USSR (Radio Moscow English service, 7 July 1989).

The RCCNS sent more than 50 officers into compulsory retirement. It appointed military governors for the regions and the capital, Khartoum. Military courts have been formed and military investigation committees are said to be investigating corruption. A Council of Ministers has been appointed with four military men as members, one of them is the Prime Minister and Defence Minister; another the Deputy Prime Minister; a third a Minister of Presidential Affairs and the fourth, a Minister of Interior.

Many civilian ministers with the notable exception of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a career diplomat and who is also a clergyman and a southerner, are considered by some observers to have some link with the NIF and Islamic Fundamentalists. The Minister of Information and Culture, an ex-Muslim Brother, was a Minister during Nimeiri's regime. In spite of all these links, the RCCNS's members denied in press interviews any relations with the NIF.

What makes observers further sceptical about this claim, over and above the composition of the new regime, is the timing. The coup came just at the moment where long and tedious negotiations between political parties and trades unions had lead to Prime Minister El Mahdi, after much equivocation on his part, announcing a new government of a 'united national front'. It involved all parties (excepting the NIF) who had earlier signed a joint programme calling for a freezing of the Islamic Sharia laws, and for a constitutional conference. The new government also adopted the Peace Accord with the SPLA/SPLM which the latter had concluded with the DUP in November 1988. In response to this move John Garang, the SPLA leader had proclaimed a cease-fire from 1 May. Meetings between the two sides occurred on 10 June.

The Constitutional Assembly had earlier decided on 4 April to freeze the discussion of a draft of a new Islamic Law presented by the ex-Attorney General and Leader of the NIF. The response of NIF was to call for demonstrations which were poorly attended.
News from Khartoum reported the burning of a Christian health centre in a southern refugee camp north of Omdurman. Islamic Fundamentalists were accused of this action, seemingly in response to the legislative proposals, and a counter demonstration of southerners attempted to burn an Islamic mosque.

A legal advisory committee had also been formed in Khartoum to advise the Ministerial Peace Committee (MPC) on issues related to the ‘September’ Islamic Law and the Bilateral Defence Agreement with Egypt. Sudanese newspapers reported that the advisory committee’s report advised amendments to the Islamic Laws by inserting some articles of the 1974 Criminal Act instead of Islamic Hudud and they proposed legislative steps to abolish the Bilateral Defence Agreement with Egypt. Soon it was announced in Khartoum and Cairo that the Defence Agreement was abrogated by mutual agreement of the two countries in order to give the peace process in Sudan a genuine push.

As another part of this on-going process, at the end of May 1989 Colonel Dr. Garang began a tour in Europe and the US. He was invited by the Human Rights Committee of the German Parliament and attended a seminar on peace where representatives of the Sudanese Government and political parties were present. He announced in Bonn an extension for another fifteen days of the cease-fire declared from the first of May. On his return from the US, he visited London and attended a rally in the Africa Centre and a press conference where he extended the cease-fire declaration for another 15 days to 30 June. By then the Addis Ababa meeting on 10 June between SPLA/SPLM had been concluded by an agreement to hold a constitutional conference on 18 September and to continue negotiations on 4 July on other concrete steps.

Given these movements under way, it is perhaps instructive to ask what interests had most to gain from a coup at this particular time? Circumstantial evidence would suggest those not interested in immediate moves towards a peaceful solution of the conflict — perhaps a hard-line, militarist faction of the military and the NIF?

**Sudanese Cabinet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lt. Gen. Omer Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir</td>
<td>Prime Minister/Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigadier Zubeir</td>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt. Col. El Tayeb Ibrahim Mahmoud</td>
<td>Presidential Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali Sahlool</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigadier Faisal Ali Abu Salih</td>
<td>Interior Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassan Ismail El Beeli</td>
<td>Attorney General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sayed Ali Zaki</td>
<td>Finance, Planning &amp; Econ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali Mohamed Shumo</td>
<td>Culture and Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali Ahmed Ibrahim</td>
<td>Transport &amp; Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father George Kinga</td>
<td>Employment &amp; Social Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farouk El Bushra</td>
<td>Commerce &amp; Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakir El Saraj</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reviews

Recent Publications on the Horn of African from the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala.

The recent output of tidy monographs issued by the SIAS at Uppsala includes a number of studies reflecting Swedish interest in the Horn. Integrated rural development in Ethiopia has been one such interest, whose story is detailed in John M. Cohen, *Integrated Rural Development* (1987). It concerns the well known Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU), set up in 1967 in Arssi province. The idea, novel at the time, was to provide an 'integrated package' of inputs under a single authority designed to increase smallholder production. Administered by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), CADU became one of the most studied and best known projects of its kind in the Third World.

The combined effect of inputs, ranging from road building to high yielding seed, on production was impressive. So was the reaction of the landlords who owned most of the land in the region and had been content until now with a share of the crop produced by their tenants. They began evicting tenants from the land that could be exploited more profitably, raised the rent and demanded cash payment. In short, they were raking in a large share of increased production. The news got out, and SIDA came in for sharp criticism at home. Its representatives in Ethiopia protested to the government of Haile Selassie and demanded land reform. That came in 1974, after the Emperor had left the scene, but it proved more than the Swedes had bargained for. Land was nationalised and redistributed equitably in minute holdings, trade networks were deliberately disrupted to clear the way for compulsory state purchasing at fixed prices, inputs became very scarce and the future was clouded by the new regime's penchant for collectivisation. The Swedes soldiered on and were persuaded even to extend the programme in a diluted form to the whole of Arssi province. Cohen details the story in an up-beat fashion. His main point is that CADU succeeded in raising production. Indeed Arssi is now producing a surplus. This, he concludes, proves integrated rural development works. However, the Swedes had second thoughts about it. Recently, they notified Addis Ababa they are withdrawing completely from the project.

A similar theme is examined in the volume edited by Mohammed A. Salih, *Agrarian Change in the Central Rainlands Sudan* (1987). In the 1970s, Sudan's vast central region was touted as the future breadbasket of East Africa and the Middle East. The Nimeiry regime threw it open to commercial exploitation by capitalist
entrepreneurs seeking quick profit. Sudanese and Arab capital joined with western international companies to claim vast areas for grain and livestock production. Smaller operators, dubbed 'suitcase farmers' for their transient nature, 'strip farmed' the land by taking out as much as they could quickly and left without putting anything back. The contributors to this volume explain many of the reasons why large scale mechanised cultivation threatens to turn the 'bread basket' into a dustbowl, and measure the effect of this form of agrarian change on the inhabitants of the central region.

An interest in refugee problems goes back to 1966 when the first conference on this subject was held at SIAS. Another conference in 1977 resulted in a slim volume on African Refugees and the Law (1978) edited by Goran Melander and Peter Nobel. A multi-disciplinary research project on 'Refugees and Development' was launched by the Institute in 1981 and the proceedings of a seminar held in 1985 under its auspices appear in Refugees and Development in Africa (1987) edited by Peter Nobel. Mekuria Bulcha, Flight and Integration: Causes of Mass Exodus from Ethiopia and Problems of Integration in the Sudan (1988) is a comprehensive study of the largest group of refugees in Africa. More than half of it is devoted to a straight-forward description of the multiple causes that gave rise to successive waves of refugees from Ethiopia in recent times and is a useful compendium of relevant information. A chapter on 'Flight Dynamics' falls prey to the inane theorising that is gradually enveloping this dismal topic. Sample: (a quotation cited by Mekuria) ‘Their (refugees) progress more often than not resembles the movement of the billiard ball: devoid of inner direction their path is governed by the kinetic factors of inertia, friction and vectors of outside forces applied to them.’ The rest of the book deals with what the author terms ‘integration’, a misnomer, since it deals with the struggle for survival in refugee camps and urban slums. It contains a good deal of demographic and social data of the Ethiopian refugee population in eastern Sudan.

Camel raising pastoralism is a new interest and, given the total neglect of what is the dominant mode of production in some regions of the Horn, a most welcome one. It is part of a broader interest in 'human life in arid lands', developed by the Director of SIAS, Anders Hjort af Ornäs. A Somali camel research project is run jointly by the Institute and the Somali Academy of Science and Arts. It has produced several reports by Somali and Swedish researchers under the series title Camel Forum. The Swedes have not only engaged Somali counterparts in this project, they even involved humble pastoralists in a process of consultation. In addition to these reports, The Camelid (1984) presents the proceedings of a workshop held in Khartoum in 1979, and Camels in Development (1988), edited by Anders Hjort af Ornäs, contains the contributions to a seminar held in 1987. Specialists from all over the world contributed and in these volumes the reader can find anything he may have wanted to know about camels. In case he wants more, The Camel in Somali Oral Tradition (1987) by Axmed Cali Abokor will tell him, in prose and poetry, what the camel means to the Somali: 'A she-camel is a mother to him who owns her'.

* * *

John Markakis

The enduring conflict in Eritrea has stirred some interest in the region's colonial background which is regarded as having set the stage for its turbulent history subsequently. Most of what has appeared in English, however, is in summary form and is designed to support or refute claims made by the parties to the present conflict. More sound work has been done by Italian historians who have delved into their country's labyrinthine colonial archives; the latest contribution being Irma Taddia's Eritrea — Colonia, 1890-1952 (Milano, 1986). Constrained by the nature of their sources, their work does not intrude deeply into the world of the colonised, the Eritreans, save as objects of colonial designs. The work reviewed here, a published doctoral dissertation, falls in the same category. The author, who is of Eritrean origin, relies on archival sources 'to assess the political impact of colonialism on Eritrean society through an analysis of colonial economic, educational and native policies as well as praxis'.

In the six decades of colonial rule, their policies shifted as the image of Eritrea, from an Italian perspective, changed. Initially, it was seen as a place of resettlement for peasants from the impoverished south of Italy, an image that led to a vast land expropriation in Eritrea, and gave rise to an interpretation of Italian colonialism as an escape valve for internal pressure. In fact, little resettlement took place and this policy was soon abandoned because, in the author's view, it was more of a myth than a serious motive for colonial expansion. A policy of raw material exploitation that replaced it was not much more successful, given the paucity of such resources in the colony and the lack of surplus capital in Italy. This leads Tekeste to dismiss the Marxist analysis of imperialism. Much more successful was the policy of turning Eritrea into a source of mercenary soldiers who were sent to fight in Somalia, Ethiopia and Libya. This led to an easing of economic and other impositions on the population and to a long period of relative tranquility and well being which ended with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. No less than 60,000 Eritreans served in the invading force.

Having dismissed the staple interpretations of colonial motives, the author is obliged to propose alternatives. Indeed his second task is 'to sketch a partial theory of colonialism'. What he does is to exhume Joseph Schumpeter's musings on atavism, apparently unaware that Schumpeter's forceful objections to the Marxist thesis do not comprise an antithesis; they merely leave a gap. By way of confirmation, Tekeste adds a resounding truism by Roberto Michels: to wit, imperialism is allowed to those nations that have sufficient power to carry it out. From this analytical vantage point, Italian colonialism appears a series of fumbles which have little rational, let alone material, explanation.

The ideology of Italian colonialism also shifted from old fashioned racism, through paternalism, to a fascist form of apartheid with accompanying changes of native policy. By contrast, education policy remained constant to the goal of preventing the formation of a native intelligentsia with troublesome political ambitions. Native education was limited to three elementary years and very few Eritreans achieved even that. The non-emergence of the intelligentsia precludes the development of a national consciousness, a conclusion supported by the author with a hasty assessment of the colonial impact on native society. Although an Eritrean identity had begun to evolve, he thinks, it did not survive the collapse of Italian rule in
1941 when Eritrean society dissolved into its pre-capitalist ethnic components. This leaves him with the problem of explaining the rise of militant nationalism a few years later, something he proposes to tackle in a follow-up study. In view of that prospect, it is useful to draw his attention to some flaws in the present work.

Since it is the bone of contention in the on-going conflict, once it is raised, the subject of nationalism deserves more serious treatment than it receives in the few pages devoted to it in this book. These contain a rehash of well-known data indicating the lack of political consensus among Eritreans in the 1940s, when the future of the former colony hung in the balance. Tekeste finds the explanation for this confusion, not only in the absence of an intelligentsia, but also in the shallow impact of colonialism on Eritrean society generally, something which is assessed on the basis of a few demographic and economic indicators. By drawing categorical conclusions from these, he leaves himself open to criticism on various levels.

To begin with, his assessment of the colonial impact, which he argues is less in Eritrea than elsewhere in Africa, is questionable. Is the doubling of population within three decades, an urbanisation rate of twenty per cent (including Italians), the highest in Africa, the absorption of up to fifteen per cent of the active labour force into the modern sector of the economy (including the army), and a booming import-export trade insignificant? Likewise, the assertion that traditional political structures survived intact, is contradicted by his own evidence of the decimation of the Abyssinian chiefs at the outset of colonial rule, ignores the fact that aristocratic rule among the pastoralist tribes must have been undermined during this period in order to collapse abruptly in the 1940s and is challenged by the inconspicuousness of traditional leadership in the political battles of the 1940s.

The author is right in thinking the intelligentsia plays a crucial role in the rise of nationalism but is wrong in asserting there was no sign of it in Eritrea and, consequently, no hint of national awareness. The case of Somalia, another former Italian colony, one that was deprived in every respect in comparison with Eritrea, but where nationalism flourished, should have warned him to avoid such broad assertions. Small and not highly educated, an incipient Eritrean intelligentsia was at the centre of the political disputes that followed the collapse of Italian rule. Interpreters, clerks, telegraphers and other former employees of the colonial state were in the leadership of all the contending factions in the 1940s along with merchants and clerics. One has only to go through the list of leading politicians of the day to ascertain this.

A basic problem with the analysis is the author's conventional perception of nationalism as a purely ideological phenomenon, rooted in the emerging identity of what Benedict Anderson calls 'imagined communities', and displayed only by the western educated elite. The history of decolonisation in Africa shows that nationalism in the first instance is a struggle for state power, in which various groups participate and stake their positions according to the self-perception of their own interests. In that struggle, the colonised often fought one another across ethnic, regional, cultural and other lines and, in not a few cases, Africans allied themselves with the colonial power to gain advantage over the opposition. In some cases, they even sought to postpone independence for that purpose.

The political disputes in Eritrea during the 1940s were such a struggle for control of the state created by colonialism. Traditional communities were mobilised, but their leaders were mostly new men. They sought allies and support abroad,
including Ethiopia and Italy. Ethiopia's allies, known as Unionists, won the day in 1952, when Eritrea was linked to it in a federal scheme. Tekeste sees this as the triumph of Ethiopian nationalism on both sides of the border. This is too simple an interpretation, as subsequent events show. It is more likely that the Unionists saw in the Ethiopian connection a guarantee of their own political supremacy in Eritrea. When Addis Ababa blasted this hope by imposing direct rule, most Unionists were quickly converted to Eritrean nationalists.

John Markakis

* * *


John Iliffe has produced another well intentioned, highly detailed study which, like his earlier work about African capitalism, seriously informs and, unfortunately, ultimately misleads. John Iliffe followed his insightful political histories of Tanganyika by muddying the waters in his mercifully brief essay, _The Emergence of African Capitalism_ (University of Minnesota Press, 1983) with its demonstrably absurd conclusion that Nigeria, Kenya and a dozen other African states may move either towards capitalism or away from it: 'The issue is still wholly open' (p.87).

In this new work, Iliffe has solemnly collected telling anecdotes, details about wealth and poverty from a great variety of written and oral sources. We are in his debt for these labours. Separate chapters deal with the poor in 'Christian Ethiopia', under Islam, among pastoralists, in Yoruba and Igbo societies and in South Africa. He distinguishes between rural and urban poverty and the conditions and treatment of the poor under colonialism and after independence. He speeds across the continent and through the centuries faster than a Concord. In a single paragraph he can take us from the client groups of pre-colonial Kikuyu society to plantation workers in southern Cameroon to poor peasants in northern Katsina to accident and sickness in Sierra Leone (pp. 237-238). More disconcertingly, he flies as quickly through diverse causes and conflicting interpretations.

This book tells us both more and less than we want to know: more, because of the sometimes overbearing detail; less, because he offers no satisfactory analytical framework. Iliffe has worked hard, guided by the best of intentions. I wish in no way to disparage his accomplishments or his motivations. I do, however, question some of his judgements and disagree with the thrust of his analysis.

In _The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age_ (New York: Random House, 1983), Gertrude Himmelfarb writes with a heavy political purpose 'to recall a past that was as complicated and varied as we know the present to be, when the best of intentions sometimes had the worse effects...[and] solutions to the problem of poverty were inadequate to the problem itself...’ (p.534). However, she, at least, clarifies the ways in which the history of the idea of poverty involved processes of redefinition and reformulation of 'the social problem'. Joan N.Nelson (Access to Power: Politics and the Urban Poor in Developing Nations, Princeton University Press, 1979) distinguishes various patterns of non-revolutionary political participation linking the urban poor to 'inherently conservative' and 'within the system' patrons and welcomes the 'surprisingly optimistic' non-revolutionary
politics of the poor. The pioneering work of Richard Sandbrook and Jack Arn, *The Laboring Poor and Urban Class Formation: The Case of Greater Accra* (Montreal: Occasional Monograph Series, Center for Developing Area Studies, McGill University, 1977) probed the conditions under which the African labouring poor became politicized. With each of these studies we knew where we stood, we could readily identify and appreciate within its own terms the thesis and the intellectual and political perspective of the author. This is not the case with Iliffe.

When it comes to understanding the basic causes of poverty in Africa, he is less than helpful. He argues that "...in normal circumstances the forms of poverty had little to do with technology, landownership, intensive agriculture, or even (in a direct sense) the pattern of social stratification, although these did affect the behaviour of the poor" (p.4). What poverty did have to do with is not clear. Drawing upon the work of European historians of poverty, he goes on to introduce the main themes of his history: 'the dichotomy of structural poverty which is the long term poverty of individuals due to their personal or social circumstances, and conjunctural poverty, which is the temporary poverty with which ordinarily self-sufficient people may be thrown by crisis' (p.4).

In his discussion of structural poverty, Iliffe distinguishes between societies 'with relatively ample resources', especially land, and those where resources are scarce:

In land-rich societies the very poor are characteristically those who lack access to the labor needed to exploit land — both their own labor (perhaps because they are incapacitated, elderly, or young) and the labor of others (because they are bereft of family or other support). In land-scarce societies the very poor continue to include such people but also include those among the able-bodied who lack access to land (or other resources) and are unable to sell their labor power at a price sufficient to meet their minimum needs (p.4).

Iliffe accepts the idea that in Western Europe and increasingly in Africa, there was a movement from one type of poverty to the other, from land-rich to land-scarce poverty. The 'structural poor' of pre-colonial Africa, he argues, were those who lacked access to labour. Because poverty took this form, he finds 'little relevance' to efforts to relate it to 'landholding systems, agricultural technology or world religions'(p.5). The poor are, therefore, 'weak individuals — the old, the handicapped and the very young'. He tells us: 'There is no poor class but men in a situation of poverty' (p.7).

Structural poverty resulting from land scarcity only occurred in an extensive scale in South Africa during the eighteenth century and in 'certain areas of ruthless alienation or unusual population density'. In colonial Africa, the landless could still work for reasonable wages. Only gradually during the present century did numerous persons appear who were able-bodied yet had no resources of land or work 'sufficient to maintain physical efficiency'. By the present decade he finds that in southern Africa the very poor from the 'resource crisis' had been added to the 'older category of incapacitated and unprotected' in a 'cumulative phenomenon' of 'structural poverty.' 'Conjunctural poverty' over the centuries, he claims, changed more drastically. In pre-colonial Africa, the chief causes were 'climatic and political insecurity' which culminated periodically in mass famine. Exclusion from resources that had become scarce 'by political or other means became the chief determinant of poverty'.

Iliffe argues that Africa has experienced conjunctural changes similar to those of Western Europe 'although unevenly and incompletely: it was not that food
shortages ceased, but that they ceased to kill great numbers'. Instead of epidemic starvation, only the very poor suffered 'endemic undernutrition' because of 'broad increases in wealth, diversified sources of income, more effective government, better transport, wider markets and improved hygiene and medicine' (p.6). He stresses two ways that the poor survived: either through the family (with the caveat that much nonsense has been written about African families as universal providers of limitless generosity) or, more usually, through their own industry, 'by begging or stealing, by endurance or industry or guile, by the resourcefulness of the blind or by the courage of the cripple' (p.8).

In his chapter on 'Christian Ethiopia', he again emphasises that the 'very poor, as in early medieval Europe' were mainly the incapacitated, cripples, victims of polio, childless elderly women. However, he also includes 'stigmatised, endogamous groups more common in Asia', craftsmen and outcast groups. Yet even some slaves held high positions of trust, so that all slaves cannot be counted as the very poor. Indeed Iliffe declares: 'that slaves should have included a destitute stratum among freemen supports the hypothesis that incapacitation was the chief reason for severe structured poverty in this society' (p.12).

He goes on to say that 'visitors to Ethiopia could not escape the structural poor. They might also be so unfortunate as to witness one of the natural catastrophes which temporarily reduced ordinary Ethiopians to conjunctural poverty' (p.12). He provides a description of terrible famine by Menelik II's secretary who admitted '...but we must add that at the court, as before, nothing was lacking'. Iliffe poses the problem of why were the poor 'so numerous and visible in Ethiopia' and 'so central to its culture?' He rejects suggestions based upon wide differences of landownership, a culturally distinct ruling class, the plough, or a large agricultural surplus, on the grounds that the 'very poor were impoverished less by lack of access to land than by lack of access to labor: they were chiefly those incapacitated and bereft of care' (p.14).

Yet in the same paragraph he goes on to discuss how Ethiopian noblemen were 'tribute-consumers' who probably 'took a larger proportion of the crop than was normally extracted from African cultivators' (at least 30 per cent), that this was done arbitrarily, capriciously and violently 'the random exactions of the powerful' (p.14). We are left to wonder if this wasn't a basic enough cause of poverty. 'As everywhere in Africa', Illife tells us, 'and perhaps also in early medieval Europe, insecurity is more important than land pressure as a cause of poverty. The insecurity could take the form of great natural disasters or it could be the recurrent physical insecurity of a turbulent and violent society' (p.14). But he leaves begging the question of the cause of this insecurity and violence.

'Armies' he tells us, 'were the curse of the Ethiopian peasantry', for they impoverished the countries through which they marched (p.14). But armies do not march by themselves, neither are they a force of nature. They are a product of political and social organisation. Iliffe does not seem at all aware of how these findings undercut his original contention about structural and conjunctural poverty.

'Insecurity', he tells us, 'helps to explain why the very poor were numerous in Ethiopia' — almost as if this 'insecurity' was their own fault. Why couldn't they feel more secure? — 'but it does not explain why they were more visible than in other
African societies which also suffered insecurity’. This ‘visibility’ he attributes to the family structure of the Amhara which gave little support to kinsmen and to the fact that the Ethiopian poor ‘clustered together where they could be noticed ... in towns, at shrines, at festivals, or wherever the emperor might be’ (p.16) even though their poverty might have originated in the countryside.

In summarizing his analysis, his tone somewhat changes: ‘... the centrality of the poor in Ethiopian culture [sic] was due not only (and perhaps not primarily) to the social distribution of resources, but also to insecurity (both climatic and political), family structure, social scale and the existence of institutions and charitable practices’ (p.16). Later in the chapter he informs us that ‘peasants were certainly conscious of their exploitation and revolt was common’ (p.28). However, the lesson that Iliffe draws from this story is: ‘Yet the fact that Isaac claimed to be the rightful emperor shows that inequality as such was not an issue’ (p.28).

Iliffe does not follow through on the idea that ‘exploitation’ was a cause of poverty. This would force him to confront the possibility of class conflict as a major variable, and he consistently eschews any serious discussions based upon class. Rather he would have us believe that ‘...the poor were individuals; categorisation remained imprecise and unimportant’ (p.29). In the same paragraph he can say that the poor were the incapacitated whose poverty ‘was rarely a result of land shortage’ and that ‘land was available but the poor were almost by definition those prevented from exploiting it’ (p.29).

Nobody would deny the misery and the poverty of the incapacitated. But diverse African societies responded differently to problems of sickness and old age. Surely some of the same forces which excluded the able-bodied poor from the land were also responsible for their condition. Surely for those excluded from the effective use of the land, the absolute abundance of resources did not matter. For them land was as scarce as for any poor Asian peasant.

In his chapter, ‘The Islamic Tradition’, he provides details, buried once more in the middle of the chapter, of how Muslim traditional rulers used charity to display power and win popularity (pp.43-47). He immediately, however, comes back to his key theme: ‘The very poor were similar in origin [to Ethiopia]; they were the handicapped and unfortunate individuals who lacked family care, supplemented periodicals by victims of political or climatic insecurity. In both regions the wider societies aided the poor chiefly by personal generosity’ (p.47). Again he completely undercuts the significance of power and class despite the telling evidence that he has himself painstakingly collected.

European accounts, he informs us, ranging from those of traders, missionaries, travelers and anthropologists as well as oral traditions depict the African poor as ‘those excluded from resources rather than as victims of incapacitation or insecurity’, as ‘social categories rather than as individuals’. While not denying that ‘this picture contains truth’ (‘pre-colonial Africa was large and diverse enough to embrace many kinds of poor’), Iliffe declares that the European accounts ‘may contain misunderstandings, may be colored by preconceptions drawn from European poverty’. Both European accounts and African oral traditions ‘offer stereotypes of African poverty which can be misleading’. African oral traditions are ‘colored either by ethnic or social stereotypes’ (p.48).

Iliffe insists that these African and European ‘stereotypes’ also obscure the distinction between the ordinary poor and the very poor and that in fact the very
poor were closer to those found in Christian and Muslim Africa: ‘individual victims of misfortune and insecurity’ (p.49). But then with barely a transition he goes on to cite Ray A. Keas’ excellent *Settlements, Trade and Politics in the Seventeenth Century Gold Coast* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1982) which shows how ‘in clothing, demeanor and sometimes food, noblemen distinguished themselves sharply from commoners, whose poverty was emphasised by most observers’ (p.49). Iliffe also quotes an 18th century traveler who wrote of the impoverished of Issiyi in today’s Ivory Coast: ‘Most of the time they die of hunger, which obliges them to work every day, and often to engage themselves as perpetual slaves to the nobles in order to have the means of life’ (p.49).

Iliffe reports and absorbs Keas’ depiction of the ‘free commoners’, rural cultivators continuously threatened by the taxes of between one-quarter and one-half of their produce that they had to pay to the ‘ruling class’ who controlled access to land through their military forces (p.49). Iliffe, without flinching, without even placing quotation marks around ‘ruling class’ simply adds Keas’ account to all of his other sources.

Keas suggests that the poor were victims of political exclusion from the means of production. After several pages of summary, Iliffe questions Keas’ sources as based upon European stereotypes of poverty, but finally admits that ‘the poor of the West African Coast in the 16th and 17th centuries appear to have been unusually numerous and more commonly the victims of political exploitation than was normal in Africa’ (p.52). He does not seem to appreciate how fundamental a challenge Keas’ findings are to his own approach. If exclusion from the means of production is the key variable, then the causes of poverty are not merely individual, nor the results of personal incapacities such as sickness or old age, and should equally apply in ‘Christian’ [sic] Ethiopia and the Islamic savanna as well as in the 17th century Gold Coast. Iliffe’s further thesis about the fundamental difference between ‘resource rich’ and ‘resource scarce’ societies also flounders. Obviously, the issue is not merely the existence of land, but the political and economic controls over access to that land. Iliffe lamely concludes his chapter ‘Poverty and Power’ by admitting that: ‘Generally, the poor were probably rendered so by the use of political power’ that in some few cases ‘may have acted by limiting access to land but the sources may exaggerate this point’ (p.64). He again reminds us, however, that ‘the extent and nature of that poverty remain uncertain because of the scarcity of sources and the difficulty of interpreting those that exist’, and he retrieves his main thesis by declaring that: ‘The very poor...seem mostly to have suffered personal misfortune or to have lacked access not to land but to the labor of themselves (through incapacitation) or others (through solitude or neglect)’ (p.64).

Iliffe advises us in a paragraph on page 150 that ‘the greater integration of African economies with the world market bred new categories of poor’, e.g. migrant workers on African cash crop farms like the Mossi on Ivory Coast plantations: ‘Excluded from minimum wage regulations and forbidden to form trade unions, they were an exploited under-class’. ‘Railways’, he also tells us, ‘ruined the Tuareg’. But track and engine did no such thing. Surely we can more precisely identify the relevant interests who were responsible.

Most of the poor in colonial times, Iliffe reports, were unskilled labourers who became very poor in one of four circumstances: ‘when they were unemployed; when they worked in especially ill-paid occupations; when they had unusually large
families; or when general wages were especially low. To understand severe urban poverty therefore requires a discussion of wages and conditions of work' (p.169).

Again, he reifies forces or circumstances that have identifiable causes. 'Appalling environments' don't just happen. When Iliffe tells us that 'increasing stabilization of labor was creating new forms of family poverty' in Nyasaland after World War II, we must ask how he reconciles this with the report of the government investigator who found that 'it is the presence of the wife and children which creates the poverty' (p.171). Discussing the growth of poverty in modern independent Africa he reports:

The incapacitated, the aged, unsupported women and the young were still the bulk of the structural poor. They were supplemented by the new poor of the twentieth century: inhabitants of neglected regions, the unemployed and especially the ill-paid, and by members who, although able-bodied, were barred from resources by the competition of a growing population or by a more ruthless use of power and wealth (p.230).

The reasons for this growing 'structural poverty lay on two planes'. Demographic expansion was the cause 'at the deeper level', but he does admit 'a second level of causation in human action'. The actors were not only Africans but included 'world market prices' (p.272).

When he finally, on page 233, focuses on political forces, he lets us know that: 'Insecure regimes and parvenu rulers tried to preserve their countries and themselves by concentrating wealth and economic power into their hands. Westernised politicians reconstructed peasant agriculture on “socialist lines”' (p.233). If only Africa's politicians had not been 'westernised' and were more 'secure!' He goes on to note that 'The rural poor supported inflated bureaucracies' (p.233) (why would they do that?) and that the 'steady drainage of cash from the countryside was the continent's most pervasive cause of poverty' (p.233). Tilt the countryside and all the money runs out; a new form of geographic imperialism.

By 1986 Iliffe tells us, African poverty was recognised as a critical problem. 'Yet it was rarely understood. Men of the left commonly misconceived it as a recent phenomenon due to colonial and capitalist exploitation. Men of the right misconceived it as a recent phenomenon due to the weather or population growth or the incompetence of African governments. Few realized how much of structural poverty had not changed at all' (p.259).

Surely this is disingenuous; surely radical social scientists, as well as African poets and novelists, have long recognised not simply the isolated misery of the old and decrepit, but the exploitation of deprived classes rooted in the changing forces of production. Is it really too simple-minded to speak, at least in part, of oppressors and the oppressed? How much more valuable to focus on class and the causes of poverty rather than on inequality and the conditions of the poor. Iliffe's study informs, but it also greatly disappoints.

Irving Leonard Markovitz
Queens College and The City University of N.Y.
All ROAPE subscribers will receive free with this issue a document produced by SouthScan entitled 'The United Nations Plan for Elections in Namibia' by Peter Manning (June 1989). SouthScan has given us 1000 copies for our subscribers and we are sending these out with this issue in the hope that many of you will send a donation for the elections in Namibia. Please send cheques, money orders, cash, giro to the office of ROAPE, marked 'election fund' (see Namibia 'Briefing' in this issue). Elections are now scheduled for 6 November so this matter is extremely urgent!

For those of you who haven't booked and would like to come, please do get in touch with the Africa Social Research Unit, Department of Sociology, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK. We will also be holding a ROAPE readers meeting and AGM to discuss issues already in the pipeline the Military (no.45), Debt (no.46) but also issues for 1990/1991. Suggestions so far have been Women, Education, Religion and Refugees. We'd like to have your views even if you don't come to the conference.

There have been two publications sent to our Documentation Centre from South Africa that have been most welcome and extremely timely. Agenda, a Journal about Women and Gender states that they 'aim to provide a forum for comment, discussion and debate on all aspects of women's lives. Our specific concern is to attempt to understand the position of women within South African society. We believe that women in South Africa experience exploitation and oppression on the basis of their class, race and gender. In order to eradicate women's oppression we need to struggle on all of these fronts. Women also have to take up issues of their specific oppression as part of broader workplace, community and political struggles. This however requires an understanding of the ways in which class, race and gender shape women's lives — and also of women's struggles: past and present'. Agenda is published by an editorial collective, Box 37432, Overport, 4067 Durban, South Africa.

Issue number 23 of SPEAK, 'Health is our Right: Union Women are Organising to Fight Cervical Cancer' is a very nice 24-page publication with articles, diagrams and photos. This is also published by a collective, 3rd floor, MGM House, 127A Anderson Street, Johannesburg 2001, South Africa.

If you've got a publication and you'd like us to mention it here, send it to the ROAPE office (address on inside back cover).
New Books from ROAPE

Survival Crisis in Southern Africa: Food Security in the Shadow of Apartheid (see advert in this issue) is extremely timely, particularly as the situation in Mozambique and other parts of southern Africa worsens. This book is a must, especially for NGOs working in the region but also for other parts of Africa facing a similar crisis. This is available, for a limited time only at £3.50/$6 to our subscribers before it goes into the bookshops in September at £5.95 (dollar price to be set then). In Harare it will be available from 'Grassroots Books' and in Tanzania from our editor there, Amadina Lihamba, University of DSM.


The Long Struggle of Eritrea for Independence and Constructive Peace, edited by Basil Davidson and Lionel Cliffe and documents Africa's longest war of national liberation — 28 years of struggle for the Eritrean people. This is published by Spokesman and available from ROAPE at £5.95/$9.95.

Please add 20% postage & packing on all book orders.

STOP PRESS — FURTHER SUDAN DETENTIONS

As well as the politicians mentioned in the Briefing (P.75), several academics were also detained at the end of July in Khartoum and then released. Among them were Dr. Taisier Mohamed Ahmed Ali, a political scientist trained in Toronto and one of the main initiators in 1986 of a dialogue for peace. But Ushari Mahmoud also involved in the peace initiative and author of a (banned though officially commissioned) report on the 1987 massacre of Dinkas in the South at Ed Da'ein — a document ROAPE had been seeking to publish, and Khalid el Kid, another academic, are still detained.

Readers are urged to write, protesting the detention of these and other scholars and the other figures, to: Lt.-Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmed al Bashir, State House, Khartoum, Sudan and/or c/o The Embassy of Sudan at 3 Cleveland Row, London SW1 or in other capitals.
3. WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: Comparative Perspectives edited by Jane Parpart, published by University Press of America and Dalhousie University, 1989.
15. CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN UGANDA edited by Kumar Rupesinghe published by Prio (Oslo), James Currey (London), Ohio Univ. Press, £9.95.
16. PRIVATIZATION AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES edited by Said El-Naggar, IMF.
THE SURVIVAL CRISIS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

FOOD SECURITY IN THE SHADOW OF APARTHEID

Lionel Cliffe, Ray Bush, Donna Pankhurst and Gary Littlejohn

Introduction:
Famine Returns to Southern Africa
The Need to Uncover the Roots of Famine

The Background to Famine:
The Southern African Region: The Historical Legacy
A New Era of Systematic Breakdown

Famine Strikes:
Drought and Food Production in Southern Africa
'Sub-subsistence' Peasant Production
Population Pressure and Land Deterioration
Rural Inequality and Impoverishment
Reduced Employment Opportunities
Family and Community Disintegration and the Deteriorating Position of Women

Policies for Recovery

£3.50/$6 available from ROAPE Publications