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9. ABSTRACT

This monograph relates the revolutionary change Ethiopia currently is undergoing to the dynamics (or stagnation) of the rural sector, with emphasis on the constraints and problems which must be overcome for progressive agrarian development to occur. Part I is an analysis of the causes of the military coup d'etat and the gradual transformation of a series of mutinies and civil disturbances into a social revolution dedicated to the termination of the landed aristocracy, establishment of socialism and generation of mass rural mobilization. Part II presents a legal analysis of the land reform proclamation and describes its effects on the major agrarian regions of the country. Part III analyzes the objectives of the land reform and future agrarian problems which the leaders of the new government, or any succeeding civilian or military regime, will have to solve. Finally, Part IV concludes with some comparative observations on land tenure in other countries, observations which clarify the probable results of the government's present rural development policies.

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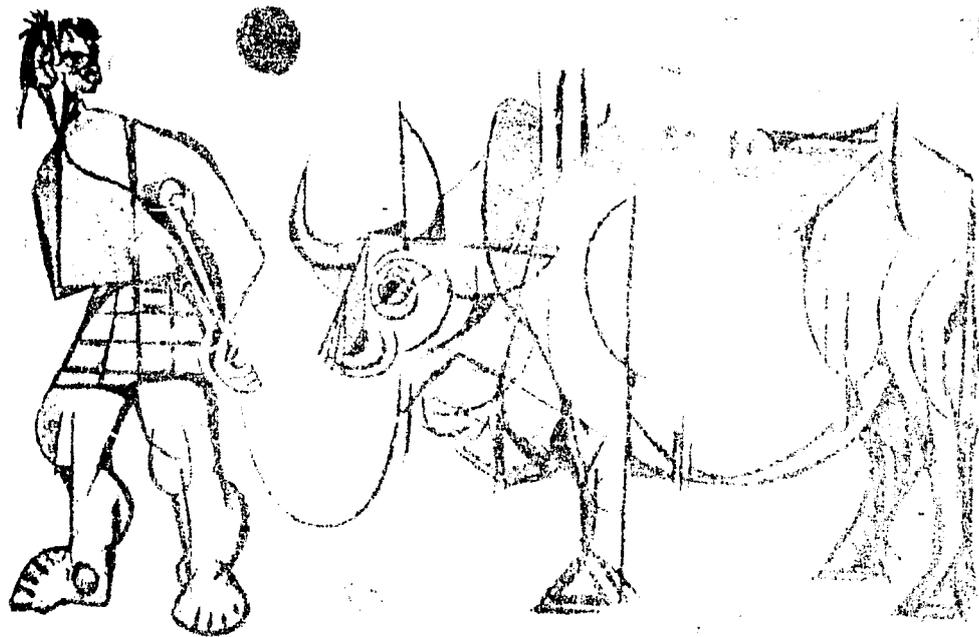
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John M. Cohen, Arthur A. Goldsmith and John W. Mellor

REVOLUTION AND LAND REFORM IN ETHIOPIA:
PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

JOHN M. COHEN
*Department of Rural Sociology
Cornell University*

ARTHUR A. GOLDSMITH
*Department of Government
Cornell University*

JOHN W. MELLOR
*Department of Agricultural Economics
Cornell University*

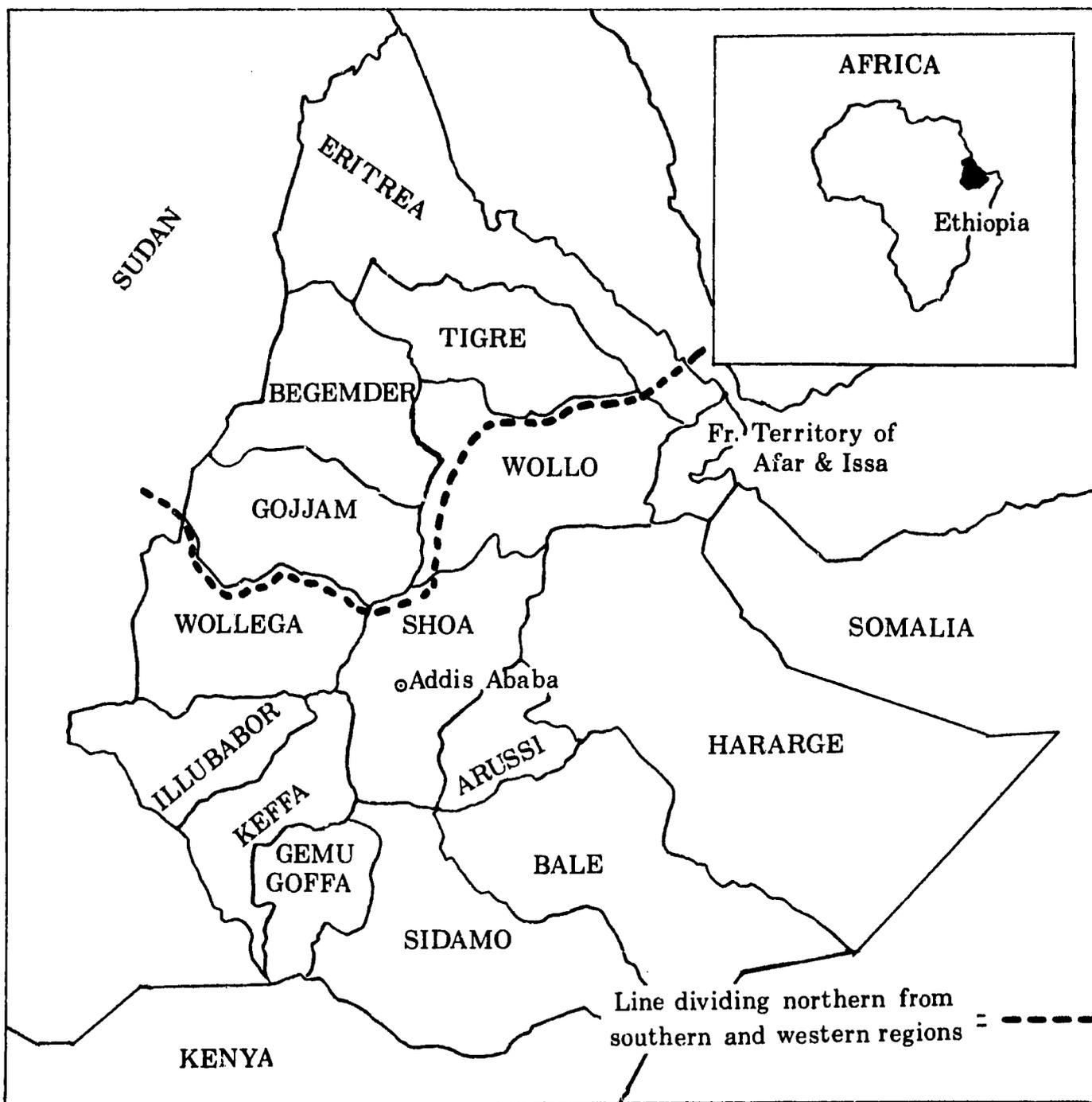
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Map of Ethiopia Showing National Boundaries, Provinces and Approximate Line Dividing Northern Tenure Areas from Southern and Western Tenure Areas

INTRODUCTION

The central purpose of this monograph is to examine how the sweep-changes that have marked Ethiopia since 1974 relates to the basic developmental problems that characterize the country. These present the following paradox:

Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries in the world, yet it has a natural endowment of adequate land mass, generally fertile soils, sufficient rainfall, and a considerable variety of climates and elevations. This natural resource base and the existence of a large, hardworking peasantry indicate that Ethiopia has enormous agrarian potential, but unfortunately a potential far from realization.¹

Past slow growth in Ethiopian agriculture² has had serious implications for Ethiopia's development hopes because the national economy is dominated by its agricultural sector. With the exception of limited commercial farming carried out in the lowlands on large-scale irrigated lands or in a few highland areas, this sector is composed of traditional peasant holdings and characterized by small-scale farms, minimal capital investment, and low agricultural yields.³ Approximately 23.5 million

¹ John M. Cohen, "Effects of Green Revolution Strategies on Tenants and Small-Scale Landowners in the Chilalo Region of Ethiopia," The Journal of Developing Areas, IX, 3 (1975), pp. 335-358.

² For background surveys of the agrarian sector see: H. Huffnagel, Agriculture in Ethiopia (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1961). The overall infrastructure, demographic characteristics, climate, vegetation, and agricultural production patterns of the country are well illustrated in: Mesfin Wolde Mariam, An Atlas of Ethiopia (Asmara: Il Poligrafico, Priv. Ltd. Co., 1970).

³ No census of population, agriculture or livestock has been undertaken and efforts to collect agricultural data are little more than a decade old. Statistics are rarely reliable. The information on agriculture which follows is drawn from a number of sources, to which the interested reader is referred: Assefa Bequele and Eshetu Chole, A Profile of the Ethiopian Economy (Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press, 1969). Economic Commission for Africa, Summaries of Economic Data: Ethiopia (Addis Ababa: Economic Commission for Africa, 1971). Ethiopia, Central Statistical Office, Statistical Abstract 1970 (Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Office, 1971), and subsequent years. "Ethiopia, Special Economic Survey," African Development, VIII, 5 (1974), pp. 19-58. In this special issue

Ethiopians live in rural areas, with the urban sector containing only 2.5 million people. Perhaps 500,000 of the rural inhabitants are in animal husbandry and 500,000 in handicraft, commercial, and public service activities. Hence, it can be estimated that 85 percent of the Ethiopian people derive their livelihood directly from agriculture. The modal pattern, where land is not a constraint, is to cultivate two hectares and use three for pasture, since five hectares is generally thought to be the optimum holding for a household using traditional tools in dry-farming regions.

Agrarian production as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product is one of the highest in the world, ranging between 55 and 60 percent. Moreover, the non-monetized sector probably accounts for 75 percent of total agricultural production. Of the 25 percent of agricultural output which is marketed, coffee, sugar and cotton account for about 35 percent; cereals, pulses and oilseeds make up another 30 percent; and livestock account for approximately 20 percent. Livestock production in particular is far below its potential, for Ethiopia probably has the largest herd of livestock in Africa, uses a great deal of cultivable land to support it, yet gains at best modest economic benefit from it, because there is so little upgrading and systematic off take of the herd. Finally, more than 90 percent of Ethiopia's foreign exports come from the agricultural sector, with coffee accounting for 60 percent of this figure.

Despite this large farming base and the country's hardworking peasantry, generally fertile soils and good climate, the annual growth rate in agricultural production has barely averaged 2 percent per year, a rate probably below the overall population increase. Statistics are not agreed on in all studies, but it is probably correct to estimate that during the late 1960s Ethiopia's non-monetary GDP, monetary GDP, and total GDP increased respectively by 1.8 percent, 7.2 percent and 4.5 percent, while population increased 2.5 percent annually and per capita GDP grew at only 2.0 percent annually.⁴ The economic growth rate, offset by increasing population, has done little to raise significantly Ethiopia's per capita income level, one of the lowest in the world.⁵

different figures are given than in the text of this Introduction: population is 27.8 million; the agricultural sector earns 99 percent of national exports, employs 88 percent of population and contributes 65 percent to the gross domestic product, p. E7.

⁴ John M. Cohen and Dov Weintraub, Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia: The Social Background to a Revolution (Assen: Van Gorcum & Co., 1975), p. 5.

⁵ The implications of this for Ethiopia's poverty is obvious. Harbeson sums up well the situation: "Ethiopia's annual per capita income is only about \$80 per year. The literacy rate is only about 10 percent for the country as a whole. One doctor or health officer serves an

The literature on Ethiopia points to a number of historical, environmental, and social system variables which help account for the developmental paradox. Until the late 1960s the conclusion of much of the analysis was that the weight of tradition, particularly the cultural patterns surrounding the peasantry, its illiteracy and fatalism, held back economic development.⁶ It was argued that the lack of innovative orientation resulting from these patterns was reinforced by the effects of charismatic, absolute kingship, conservative change-resistant religious institutions, and the isolation caused by Ethiopia's rugged topography.⁷ More recent studies sharpened this analysis by focusing on the political nature of Ethiopia's particular brand of feudalism. These studies concentrated on the effects of autocracy and patron-client relationships, the rise of the centralized bureaucracy, the gradual elimination of powerful regional lords, and the emergence of central and

average of 75,000 people. Perhaps 80 percent of the people live more than one day's walk from an all-weather road. Diseases such as cholera and smallpox . . . are endemic in Ethiopia. The 90% of the people who struggle for a subsistence income in the rural areas employ an agricultural technology reminiscent of medieval Europe. Only a very small percentage of the school age population is actually enrolled. Daily laborers on agricultural estates and in the cities live on a daily wage of between \$1.50 and \$2.00. Housing in rural areas and for most rural citizens consist of one or two small rooms per family in dwellings constructed out of dung, scraps of wood, and perhaps some kind of corrugated roof. Sanitary facilities for most Ethiopians scarcely exist, and nutritional levels, even before the recent drought, were estimated to be only just above the danger level. Nobody denies that such abysmal depths of poverty are indefensible in a world of modernity in which even Ethiopia's relative poor third world neighbors have participated to a far greater degree." John W. Harbeson, "Politics and Reform in Revolutionary Ethiopia" (Paper presented at the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, San Francisco, 1975), p. 1.

⁶Such themes are to be found in: E. W. Luther, Ethiopia Today (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958). Edward Ulendorff, The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People (London: Oxford University Press, 1960). George A. Lipsky, et al., Ethiopia: Its People, Its Society, and Its Culture (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1962). A far more sophisticated analysis of these factors is set forth in: Donald N. Levine, Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

⁷This is the general thrust of such studies as: Margery Perham, The Government of Ethiopia, 2nd ed. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969). Richard D. Greenfield, Ethiopia, A New Political History (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965). Robert L. Hess, Ethiopia: The Modernization of Autocracy (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970).

provincial elites supportive of Haile Selassie's imperial government.⁸ Finally, with the increased availability of land tenure data, with a shift in development theory from strategies stressing change in social values and modernization-cum-industrialization to ones based on agricultural development,⁹ and with the growing realization that the "myth of the peasant" was just that,¹⁰ the explanation of Ethiopian underdevelopment came to focus on an analysis of the relationship of peasant agriculture to the economy, the historical attitude of the imperial

⁸These dimensions of the development paradox are explored in such studies as: Christopher Clapham, Haile-Selassie's Government (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969). Peter Schwab, Decision-Making in Ethiopia: A Study of the Political Process (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972). Berhané Gebray, L'Organisation de l'Administration Locale en Ethiopie (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University, Faculty of Law, 1969). John M. Cohen and Peter H. Koehn, "Local Government in Ethiopia: Prospects for Reform in the 1970s" (paper presented to the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, Chicago, 1974), and their "Local Government in Ethiopia: Independence and Variability in a Deconcentrated System," Quarterly Journal of Administration, IX, 4 (1975), pp. 369-386. Nega Ayele, "Centralization Versus Regionalism in Ethiopia: the Case of Gojjam, 1932-1969" (unpublished B.A. thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1970). Allan Hoben, "Social Stratification in Traditional Amhara Society," in Arthur Tuden and Leonard Plotnicov, eds., Social Stratification in Africa (New York: Free Press, 1970), pp. 187-224. Wolfgang Weissleder, "The Political Ecology of Amhara Domination" (unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1965); Donald N. Levine, "Class Consciousness and Class Solidarity in the New Ethiopian Elites," in Peter Lloyd, ed., Elites of Tropical Africa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 312-327; John M. Cohen, "Ethiopian Provincial Elites and the Process of Change," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, XI, 2 (1973), pp. 93-111.

⁹For literature criticizing the theory of development through industrialization and promoting the argument for agriculture as a force for economic growth see: Bruce F. Johnston and John W. Mellor, "The Role of Agriculture in Economic Development," American Economic Review, LI (1961), pp. 566-593. Carl Eicher and Lawrence Witt, eds., Agriculture in Economic Development (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); Gunnar Myrdal, "Paths of Development," New Left Review, XXXVI (March-April 1966), pp. 65-74. John W. Mellor, The Economics of Agricultural Development (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966); Guy Hunter, The Best of Both Worlds (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

¹⁰A recent study building on the realization that peasants are economic men is: William Foote Whyte, Organizing for Agricultural Development (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1975). A critique of the myth of the peasant in Ethiopia is found in: Gedamu Abraha, "Review of Wax and Gold by Donald N. Levine," Ethiopia Observer, XI, 3 (1968), pp. 226-243.

government toward agrarian production, the general patterns of land holding, the failure of the land reform movement, and the constraint which such patterns impose on attempts to stimulate agricultural output.¹¹

This is not to argue that land reform alone would solve Ethiopia's agrarian stagnation. The focus on land tenure patterns and the accumulation of studies that have been described pinpointed a number of additional constraints that were closely interrelated with land and the basic structures of Ethiopian society. Among the most important of these were seen to be: (1) the rapid increase in the rate of population growth; (2) the historical isolation of Ethiopia and its rural sector from international markets, finance capital and technology; (3) the lack of an adequate road system and the resulting high cost of transporting agrarian output to markets; (4) the failure of the central government to commit itself to creating conditions that promote economic growth and rural development; (5) the specific failure to build a research and extension system that reached a large percentage of the Ethiopian peasantry; (6) the inability of local government institutions to generate change because of the power of provincial elites, supported by elites at the national center, to maintain the status quo; and (7) the negative effect of all these factors on those development oriented ministries and field agents attempting to bring about rural change.

The focus on land tenure was in part stimulated by the rise of commercial agriculture. As long as primitive technology and a fragmented market infrastructure constrained production there was little pressure to alter the system. However, the introduction of new crops and farming techniques and the development of urban and foreign markets provided new profit-making opportunities. These could be more fully exploited if land tenure were simplified and rationalized, with land itself reduced essentially to a commodity to be bought, sold or used as was most profit-

¹¹The most notable of these are: John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), and his "Social Formation and Political Adoption in Ethiopia," The Journal of Modern African Studies, XI, 3 (1973), pp. 361-381. Allan Hoben, "Social Anthropology and Development Planning in Ethiopia," The Journal of Modern African Studies, X, 4 (1972), pp. 561-582. Siegfried Pausewang, "The History of Land Tenure and Social Personality Development in Ethiopia," Rural Africana, XI (1970), pp. 82-89, and his "Peasant Society and Development in Ethiopia," Sociologia Ruralis, XIII, 2 (1973), pp. 172-193. John M. Cohen, "Ethiopia After Haile Selassie: The Government Land Factor," African Affairs, LXXII, 289 (1973), pp. 365-382. Lars Bondestun, "People and Capitalism in the North-Eastern Lowlands of Ethiopia," The Journal of Modern African Studies, XII (1974), pp. 423-439. Michael Ståhl, Contradictions in Agricultural Development: A Study of Three Minimum Package Programs in Southern Ethiopia (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Report No. 14, 1973).

able.¹² This is not to say that commercialization of agriculture has progressed very far in Ethiopia, for the vast majority of the rural population continued to farm on a subsistence basis. This "modernization" took place only in certain areas and on a limited scale. However, even this limited change was sufficient to begin to alert government policy makers to Ethiopia's agrarian potential and to cause them to begin considering ways to transform the land tenure system.¹³

By 1973 most development specialists had concluded that agriculture was the key to Ethiopia's development.¹⁴ Even the imperial govern-

¹²In a sense land has always been a commodity in the southern and western provinces, but not in the kinship and village tenure areas of the north. For the debates surrounding the constraints traditional land tenure patterns placed on commercial agriculture see articles in footnote 16 infra, and Cohen and Weintraub, Land and Peasants, passim.

¹³Major commercial farming areas were the sugar and cotton plantations of the Awash Valley, the sesame, sorghum and cotton farms of the Setit Humera region, the coffee areas of the southern and western provinces and some food grain farms located in highland areas suitable to mechanization. In all these areas, aside from large, foreign controlled plantations, most commercial farms operated at inefficient levels.

¹⁴A persuasive example of this opinion is illustrated in the strategy for Ethiopia developed by experts in the World Bank. They developed a strategy based on two assumptions: that an adequate resource base and favorable product market outlook exist; and that given the rapidly growing population and heavy dependence on agriculture as a source of exports and employment, the sector must receive far more emphasis than in the past. The strategy then specifically pinpoints the need to remove the following major constraints: insufficient government finance, lack of trained technical and administrative manpower, inaccessibility of much of the subsistence farming areas, shortage of technical and economic data, and lack of proven agricultural techniques. Because of these constraints the Bank argues for concentration of efforts on areas of high potential, to avoid spreading limited resources too thin and to spread into adjacent areas as the project succeeded in the areas of focus. A suggested variation on these strategies deals with the reality of land tenure and government commitment has been presented in Gene Ellis, "Agricultural Development Strategy in Ethiopia on Reaching the Peasant Sector," Proceedings of the First United States Conference on Ethiopian Studies, 1973, edited by Harold G. Marcus (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University, 1975), pp. 385-398. This realization and strategy was closely related to the ongoing maximum package programs and their successors, the minimum package programs. See Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit, CADU Annual Reports: 1971/72 & 1973/73, 2 vols. (Asella: Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit, 1973). Ministry of Agriculture, Annual Report for 1972/73 Financial Year (Addis Ababa: Extension and Project Implementation Department, Publication No. 15, 1973).

ment of Haile Selassie claimed to have recognized that agriculture was central to Ethiopian progress and had declared its commitment to rural change, a policy quite different from its approach during the preceding 30 years.¹⁵ But it was now obvious that significant progress in this crucial sector would not occur until major land tenure reforms were coupled with the provision of improved inputs, credit, research, extension, markets and roads to the vast number of small-scale landowners and tenants who dominate the countryside.¹⁶ However, the political and economic elites who ruled Ethiopia would not commit the nation to such policies if they were extensive and effective enough to induce significant socio-economic change.

These elites and the system they dominated were produced largely by Haile Selassie, an autocrat who ruled Ethiopia for 58 years.¹⁷ During the first half of his reign he instituted numerous reforms, such as reduction in the power of the nobility, centralization of the government, modernization of the bureaucracy and army, establishment of a modern system of education, and recruitment of capable Ethiopians into administrative posts. Despite these reforms Ethiopia remained an underdeveloped,

¹⁵ Their position was summed up in three widely circulated papers: Imperial Ethiopian Government, A Statement of Development Strategy and Policies Presented to the First Meeting of the Consultative Group for Ethiopia (Addis Ababa: April 1971); Imperial Ethiopian Government, A General Frame-work for the Fourth Five Year Development Plan (1974/75-1978/79) (Addis Ababa: prepared for the Second Meeting of the Consultative Group for Ethiopia, June 1973); James T. Goering, "Some Thoughts on Future Strategies for Agricultural Development" (paper presented to Seminar on Development Administration, Institute of Public Administration, Addis Ababa, 1971). The argument is strongly made by Duri Mohammed in "Industry, Agriculture Out of Step--and the Strains Start to Tell," African Development, VIII, 5 (1974), pp. E9-11.

¹⁶ The principal studies on Ethiopian land tenure patterns and constraints are: H. C. Dunning, "Land Reform in Ethiopia: A Case Study in Non-Development," U.C.L.A. Law Review, XVIII, 2 (1970), pp. 271-307; J. C. D. Lawrence and H. S. Mann, "FAO Land Policy Project (Ethiopia)," Ethiopia Observer, XI (1966), pp. 286-336; Doreen Warriner, "A Report on Land Reform in Ethiopia" (paper presented for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, 1970); Gebré-Weld-Ingida Worq, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation," Ethiopia Observer, V, 4 (1962), pp. 302-339; Mahtama S. W. Maskal, "Land Tenure and Taxation from Ancient to Modern Times," Ethiopia Observer, I, 9 (1957), pp. 283-301. For historical background see: Richard K. Pankhurst, State and Land in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press, 1966).

¹⁷ Aside from Perham, Greenfield, Hess, Clapham and Markakis studies cited in footnotes 5, 6, and 10, see: Leonard Mosley, Haile Selassie: The Conquering Lion (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965).

blocked society. In part this was because the emperor was constrained by a complex social order formed by the interaction of tradition, expansion, and modernization. More importantly, it was because the power of autocracy created by Haile Selassie was based on the continuation of an economic system of ownership and production which promoted subsistence agriculture through the absorption of peasant output by means of tribute, taxation, and rent.¹⁸ To be sure land was beginning to lose its critical importance to the economy. This was seen in the rise of new social classes and capitalist initiatives in the narrow industrial and agribusiness sectors. However the transformation toward capitalism was not yet significant enough to alter the constraints imposed by semi-feudal social structures historically rooted in Ethiopia's agrarian society.

Haile Selassie was unable to commit his government to rural development and land tenure reform because his autocratic rule was predicated on support and resources from a strong alliance between a land-based church and a wide range of provincial elites (landowners, merchants, local government officials, lawyers, judges and others) whose wealth, power and status were mainly facilitated by the existing land tenure patterns and the social system-wide structures they generated. The imperial government and the central and provincial elites that supported it understood this relationship and realized that progressive agrarian reforms would greatly affect if not end the present system. Moreover, the government had to maintain new social classes at the center through the allocation of scarce resources in support of their interests, leaving few resources for rural development programs. These dilemmas made it unlikely that the emperor or any of his probable successors would commit power or resources to the passage and implementation of meaningful land tenure and agrarian reforms. And, without the support of the military, progressive elements of the labor unions, managerial groups and central bureaucracy were not strong enough to press such reforms successfully.

In 1974, the simultaneous occurrence of military stalemate in the Eritrean civil war, drought, famine, world-wide inflation, urban unrest, and military pay mutinies led to conditions which eventually bred a military coup d'état. Contrary to most expectations, those who seized power appear to have placed reform and economic nationalism above their own vested interests, thereby creating the possibility that this developmental dilemma might be resolved. Indeed, they began to act in the interests of the new social classes that had been quietly emerging since the early 1950s. The new leaders of Ethiopia have stated their intention to modernize the country while bringing social, economic and political equity to the peasantry. Through their leadership Ethiopia has begun to undergo a revolutionary transformation. Specifically, an official ideology of Ethiopian style socialism has been proclaimed, the

¹⁸The full argument underlying this dilemma is set forth in: Cohen and Weintraub, Land and Peasants, passim.

former landed aristocracy has been isolated, imprisoned or executed, many senior central government and provincial administrative personnel have been removed, the constitution has been suspended, far-reaching urban and rural land reforms have been decreed, most major commercial and industrial enterprises have been nationalized, and a wide range of rural programs have been implemented which aim at mobilizing the peasant, the foremost of which are the formation of peasant associations and the use of more than 40,000 university and high school students to help organize the peasantry and bring about improvements in the living standards of rural people.

With the possible exception of Tanzania, the land reform program is one of the most radical ever attempted in an African country. Its purpose is to terminate Ethiopia's extractive patterns of land holdings by expropriation and redistribution. Whether the new government will be able to survive this and other reforms remains to be seen, but it is now clear that in western and southern regions of the country the former agrarian patterns have been permanently altered, giving hope that Ethiopia may now begin to fulfill her rich agrarian potential.

The purpose of this monograph is to relate the revolutionary change Ethiopia is presently undergoing to the dynamics (or stagnation) of the rural sector, giving particular attention to the constraints and problems which must be overcome for progressive agrarian development to occur. In Part I we will analyze the causes of the military coup d'état and the gradual transformation of a series of mutinies and civil disturbances into a social revolution dedicated to the termination of the landed aristocracy, establishment of socialism and generation of mass rural mobilization. Part II will present a legal analysis of the land reform proclamation and describe its effects on the major agrarian regions of the country. These sections will concentrate on the effects of reform on Ethiopia's development paradox, concluding that revolutionary change is in the making in many parts of the country. In Part III, we will analyze the objectives of the land reform and future agrarian problems which the leaders of the new government, or any succeeding civilian or military regime, will have to solve. Under the assumption that land reform only creates the environment within which rural development can proceed, this section will focus on such important issues as production and marketing, price policies, research, technical services, extension, credit, linkage and multiplier effects, and foreign aid or technical and capital assistance. Finally, Part IV will conclude with some comparative observations on land tenure in other countries. The purpose of this section will be to see somewhat more clearly some of the probable results of the government's present rural development policies.

PART I

RADICAL MILITARY COUP d' ETAT

Unrest and Rebellion

On September 12, 1974 Emperor Haile Selassie was placed under arrest and a provisional military government formed to replace his rule. Then late in the evening of November 23rd the military government executed some 60 aristocrats, high government officials and military officers, including 18 generals, two former prime ministers, and a number of former cabinet ministers and provincial governors. Finally, in March 1975, the new rulers of Ethiopia officially terminated the monarchy and promulgated a revolutionary land reform program.¹

The removal of the emperor, execution of central figures in the power elite, and declaration of far reaching land reforms represent only the most salient features of a series of events which since early 1974 have altered the course of Ethiopian history and the pattern of rural change. This process of military intervention, now called the "creeping coup," stretched over seven months.²

¹These events are summarized in: Peter Koehn, "Ethiopian Politics: Military Intervention and Prospects for Further Change," Africa Today, XX, 2 (1975), pp. 7-21. W. A. E. Skurnik, "Revolution and Change in Ethiopia," Current History, LXVIII, 405 (1975), pp. 206-210, 230-231, 240. Patrick Gilkes, The Dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia (London: Julian Friedman Publishers Ltd., 1975). John W. Harbeson, "Politics and Reform in Revolutionary Ethiopia" (paper presented at the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, San Francisco, 1975). Addis Hiwet, Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution (London: Merlin Press for Review of African Political Economy, Occasional Publication No. 1, 1975), pp. 102-115. Peter Schwab, "Haile Selassie: Leadership in Ethiopia," Plural Societies, VI, 2 (1975), pp. 19-30. Sidney R. Waldron, "Factors of Change in Ethiopia," Third World Review, I (1975), pp. 112-129. Brian Thompson, Ethiopia. The Country That Cut Off its Head. A Diary of the Revolution (London: Robson Books, 1975).

²Available information on the military is limited. See generally: Ernest W. Lefever, Spear and Sceptor: Army, Police, and Politics in Tropical Africa (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institutc, 1970). Donald N. Levine, "The Military in Ethiopian Politics: Capabilities and Constraints," in The Military Intervenes; Case Studies in Political Development, ed. by Henry Bienen (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1968). Patrick Gilkes, "The Coming Struggle for Ethiopia," Africa Report, XIX, 3 (1975), pp. 33-35, 43. In early 1974 the armed forces were thought to

The first overtly rebellious act was the January 14, 1974 mutiny in an army unit at Negele south of Addis Ababa,³ but the coup's more general origins rested in growing pressures for reform which had been generated by the abortive coup attempt of 1960⁴ and carried forward by some intellectuals, trade unionists and high school and university students since the mid 1960s.⁵ The Negele mutiny and one in mid-February at the air force unit in Debre Zeit centered on more than pay and employment conditions. Criticism of the government's handling of drought relief in the Wollo famine entered into the issues presented to the government by these dissatisfied military units. These revolts coincided with growing urban dissatisfaction over the rising prices of consumer goods and with teacher dissatisfaction over low salaries and a new educational policy which would limit growth of secondary and university enrollments, reduce teacher's salaries, and implement non-formal educational policies in rural areas.⁶

number 45,000 with 1,500 in the navy and 2,000 in the air force. The territorial army may have numbered 10,000. The army was divided into 4 divisions.

³Harbeson describes this event as follows: "These troops mutinied, complaining of inadequate compensation for service under hardship conditions and lack of adequate food and water. The NCO's well was broken and was not being repaired but the men were not permitted to draw water from the officer's tap. Sent to mediate the situation, the commander of the ground forces was imprisoned by the mutineers and obliged to live under their circumstances." "Politics and Reform," p. 3. This mutiny may have begun on January 12.

⁴These events are described in: Christopher Clapham, "The Ethiopian Coup d' état of December 1960," Journal of Modern African Studies, VI, 4 (1968), pp. 495-507. Richard D. Greenfield, Ethiopia: A New Political History (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965), pp. 337-452.

⁵The origins of the student movement are best described in: Peter Koehn and Louis D. Hayes, "Revolution and Protest: A Comparative Analysis of Student Anti System Basis in Ethiopia and Nepal" (paper presented at the 1973 Western Political Science Association Conference, San Diego, April 1973). Girma Teshome, "Role of Student Movements as Pressure Groups" (unpublished B.A. thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1971).

⁶This proposal was motivated by more than an interest in rural development, in which sector it had hoped to bring useful education and functional literacy to the rural population. The government civil service had lost its capacity to absorb high school and university graduates and could no longer afford to produce angry, unemployed school leavers. Urban parents saw the reform as a threat to their children's futures, teachers in secondary schools had no desire to go to rural areas, and students saw school as a path to elite status threatened. The policies of this proposal are presented in: Ministry of Education, Education:

The famine had been going on in the northern provinces of Tigre and Wollo for 3 years. When its disastrous effects were made public by university students and some courageous Ethiopian professors, generating headlines in the international press in 1973, it became clear that governmental pride, ineptitude and callous response to an impoverished peasantry had greatly contributed to conditions which affected some two million people and may have resulted in as many as 200,000 deaths. The provincial and central bureaucracies suppressed news of the famine and its effects. Official admission of the famine came in mid-1973 in a report which did not acknowledge the corruption, inefficiency and suffering that accompanied the famine. However, by late 1973 enough information had leaked to generate widespread rumors and public discussion. These centered on government requests for international aid while it was exporting food grains, bureaucratic profiteering from donated food and medical supplies, exploitation of famine victims by land owners and traders, brutal repression of secondary school students who demonstrated on behalf of famine victims, provincial government cover-ups of the famine, and the failure of the central government to mount a massive relief operation.⁷ Future research may produce an interesting link between the famine and the emerging political activity of enlisted men, for many were from the peasantry and areas affected by the famine.

This open discussion of the famine occurred in a period in which food prices had risen 20 percent in 1973 and promised to rise at a far

Challenge the the Nation--Report of the Education Sector Review (Addis Ababa: Ministry of Education, 1972). See: Christopher Davis, "Focal Point of Ferment," African Development, VIII, 5 (1974), pp. E35-36. Henry Valtos, "Days of Violence Clear Way for an Educational Revolution," London Times, November 6, 1974. Charles Mohr, "Dissident Ethiopia Troops Seize Asmara," The New York Times, February 27, 1974. Thomas R. Knipp, "The Future of Higher Education in Ethiopia: Building on a Broken Foundation" (paper presented to the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Chicago, November 1974), pp. 9-10, 12.

⁷ Many of the charges surrounding these rumors are discussed in: Lionel Cliffe, "Capitalism or Feudalism" The Famine in Ethiopia, Review of African Political Economy, I, 1 (1974), pp. 34-40. Martin Meredith, "A Famine That Left the Rich Richer and the Poor Dead," The Sunday Times, November 25, 1973, p. 8. Charles Mohr, "Rift in Ethiopian Society May be Deepened by Famine," The New York Times, February 24, 1974, p. 9. Anthony Shaw, "Drought May End Feudal System," African Development, VIII, 5 (1974), pp. E27-29. Kathleen Teltsch, "Neglect in Ethiopian Famine Cited," The New York Times, January 11, 1976, p. 3. For an indictment of the regime in a larger context see: Laurie S. Wiseberg, "An International Perspective on the African Famines," Canadian Journal of African Studies, IX, 2 (1975), pp. 293-313.

greater rate in 1974.⁸ The same world market conditions that generated rising food prices also, through the oil crisis, caused a dramatic rise in fuel costs. Together with the famine rumors, the discussion of inflation led to considerably more than a rising set of wage demands by a privileged minority of armed service personnel, urban workers, teachers and bureaucrats. Rather, they generated pressure for more pervasive political and social reforms.

These conditions and the Negele and Debre Zeit mutinies sparked student protests against consumer prices and government irresponsibility. Their protests were joined by a teacher's strike in mid-February which closed schools throughout the empire. Demanding pay increases and attacking the new government policies of non-formal education, the teachers and students spread the protests to other groups, including taxi and bus drivers, bank employees and airline personnel.

What was unusual about these protests and the demands that accompanied them was that the particularistic demands of military personnel teachers and workers were linked to larger social issues. It is this fact that distinguishes the events from a mere consumer revolt seeking material gain and the resolution of personal grievances. Specifically, pressure groups began to speak for the survivors of the famine, exploited peasants, evicted tenants and the urban poor.⁹ Over the next few months, these obvious concerns gave way to other issues such as free education, land reform, progressive labor legislation, higher wages, the end of Shoan Amhara domination, termination of discrimination against Muslims, political parties, constitutional reform, freedoms of speech and press, price controls and removal of corrupt national and local government officials. The general underlying theme of these larger demands was the end of imperial autocracy, the establishment of participatory democracy, and the vigorous pursuit of economic development. This new style of interest articulation brought into the open issues which had long been suppressed, particularly those centering on religious freedom, Amhara domination and Ethiopia's own brand of feudalism. The process of making the various claims made the emerging radical leadership of the military more bold.

⁸ Gilkes argues that the rise in food prices was the result of the famine, the commodity price boom of 1972 and 1973 that encouraged farmers to turn from subsistence food crops to export cash crops such as haricot beans, and the increased cost of food imports due to worldwide inflation. He found the annual rate increase in the first quarter of 1974 to be approximately 80%. Patrick Gilkes, "Ethiopia--a Real Revolution?," World Today, XXXI, 1 (1975), p. 16. Figures in other studies using the consumer price index show inflation in 1973 to have been 20%, and 5% in the first two months of 1975. The problems of inflation and additional statistics are presented in Alan Rake, "Winds of Change," African Development, VIII, 5 (1974), pp. E5-E7.

⁹ For example the striking teachers' association asked the emperor to implement land reform when he met with them to discuss their demands in early February.

In facing these demonstrations, the government first tried to separate the immediate causes of dissatisfaction from the underlying forces which were leading the nation toward revolutionary change. John W. Harbeson notes that the emperor and his advisors attempted to give the impression that the strikers were merely trying to advance their own vested interests, thereby detaching the issue of inflation from other causes, the most visible of which was the famine and the most pervasive of which was the stagnant economy and the non-responsive polity.¹⁰ This strategy failed, and by the time the emperor convinced the army to accept pay increases and restore order, the crumbling foundations of the traditional system had become clearly visible to partially organized groups of civilians and military personnel.

During this period the army maintained its loyalty to the emperor when asked to step into the urban areas and restore order. But while the military made arrests, and the government in turn granted pay raises to members of the armed forces and to civilian demonstrators or set price ceilings on basic consumer commodities,¹¹ the military dissatisfactions spread through the lower ranks. On February 25, the second army division headquartered in Asmara seized control of that town. Their example was quickly followed by the navy units at Massawa, the air force at Debre Zeit, the third army in Harar and the fourth army in Addis Ababa.¹² These actions and the policy statements that accompanied them made it clear that many members of the armed forces were concerned with more than pay and service conditions. In particular,

¹⁰Harbeson, "Politics and Reform," pp. 3-5.

¹¹The starting pay for privates at this time was approximately \$US 35 per month, which was already more than twice the wage earned by urban workers and perhaps four times the per capita income. Increased wages benefited union members but led to reductions in hired labor, broadened gap between union and nonunion workers and between urban and rural workers. Skurnik notes that total pay increase amounted to about \$US 75 million (\$US 50 million for labor, \$US 25 million for armed forces, \$US 2.5 million for teachers) and that little was said about how these increases would be financed given inflation, rising export costs, and the country's low tax base. Skurnik, "Revolution and Change in Ethiopia," pp. 206-207. In addition, the government subsidized gasoline which aided taxi drivers and the urban middle class.

¹²It may be that the rapid spread of open rebellion was the result of the emperor's response to the Negele and Debre Zeit mutinies. In previous years he had moved to quickly crush such actions. But in early 1974 he tried investigation and negotiation, thereby giving a clear indication of apparent weakness. The news of this response was quickly communicated to most armed force units through their own signal corps.

their policy statements stressed the broader social and political issues described earlier. These criticisms were presented to the government and publicized among the general population. When coupled with all the other events of this initial period, they helped bring down the government of Prime Minister Akilu Habte Wold and led to the emperor replacing it with a new government headed by Endalkatchew Makonen.¹³

The members of the new cabinet appeared to share such basic characteristics as loyalty to the emperor, advanced educational background and aristocratic or noble family ties,¹⁴ though at the same time most appeared committed to some degree of reform.¹⁵ This was exhibited in a white paper which outlined, within limits, the new government's official recognition of the problems facing Ethiopia. This paper, which did not emerge until April, dedicated the new government to tasks such as drought control, national unity, increased popular participation, extension of freedoms of speech, press and assembly, promotion of better government administration and tax reforms, control of bureaucratic corruption, improvement of the court system, provision of educational opportunity, promulgation of development policies promoting economic equity and closing income disparities, and implementation of land reforms, including tenancy rent controls, restrictions on government land grants and redistribution of excess land holdings.¹⁶ Coupled with these proclaimed austerity measures and priorities for reform were the successful military pressures on the emperor to call a constitutional conference aimed at bringing about substantial devolution of imperial powers through the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, in which the prime

¹³The emperor accepted the resignation of the Akilu cabinet on or about February 27. The date is still unclear. The Endalkatchew government was formed on the 28th of February. Charles Mohr, "Ethiopian Premier Confident of Support," The New York Times, March 2, 1974, p. 3.

¹⁴For profiles of major figures in government see: "People," African Development, VIII, 5 (1974), pp. E16-E18.

¹⁵Several appointments to the new cabinet were well known to be committed to reform. Dejazmatch Zewde Gebre Selassie and Lij Michael Imru were too such men. Both had been ministers following the 1960 coup attempt and both had resigned a few months later when they realized the central government was not committed to reform.

¹⁶In regard to the rural land issue the position paper stated commitment to distribution of land to tenants through more equitable use of government land grants, establishment of maximum land holding limits, promoting tenant security, preventing high sharecropping rents, and correcting inequitable tax burdens. "Policy Statement of the New Council of Ministers" (White Paper distributed by the Office of the Educational Attache, Embassy of Ethiopia, Washington, D.C., 1974).

minister and cabinet would be responsible to a broadly representative parliament.¹⁷

Many proponents of reform did not trust this new government and argued it could not go far enough because of the vested interests of its membership, its ties to the upper aristocracy and land holdings, and because its head, the prime minister, was leader of a powerful aristocratic family, a rich noble and a minister in the preceding Akilu Habte Wold government. Moreover, for many of the most organized insurgents, change at the top was not enough, what was needed was drastic reform of the entire social system. For these reasons the Endalkatchew government never gained widespread legitimacy and rumors and leaflets¹⁸ spread the charge that the new prime minister was as corrupt and uninterested in reform as the other ministers in the Akilu Habte Wold government he survived.

While the government sought to preserve the monarchial system through mild economic and social reform, the bureaucracy became increasingly moribund, the military began to evolve an internal organization based on consolidation of its dissident factions, and the general civil unrest spread into transportation, communication, export, health and other sectors. For example, in March 1974 some 90,000 of the more than 150,000 members of the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU), representing public transport, textile, petroleum and other industries, mobilized a successful general strike that led to agreement on their list of demands, including the right to demonstrate, the establishment of minimum wages, withdrawal of the non-formal education proposal, and the fulfillment of associated labor demands for higher wages. And the armed forces, through their evolving internal political organization, argued for land reforms, political parties, release of political prisoners, investigation into government inefficiency

¹⁷ Charles Mohr, "Selassie Asserts Power Can Shift," The New York Times, March 12, 1974, p. 13. The Constitutional Reform Commission was established in the first week of March by the emperor. More than 30 experts were appointed to it, many of whom were known to oppose the imperial government. The commission was not to present a draft to parliament until August, by which time changed circumstances precluded its application even though it was approved by parliament.

¹⁸ The first pamphlets appeared in late February and quickly became an important medium of political communication. Their criticisms of government officials, feudalism and other subjects were strong and influential. By mid-March the Ministry of Interior, worried about the effect of the pamphlets, warned that stern action would be taken against distributors. The contents of the pamphlets show the many debates taking place between Marxist and radical nationalist factions in the military, student groups and unions. They constituted a de facto public debate and the first open discussion of the country's problems. Interestingly, many of these pamphlets were dropped on urban areas from helicopters.

and corruption, and punishment for bureaucrats who mishandled the famine disaster. In addition the local press gained new freedoms and used them to generate public criticism of the old government, parliament became rebellious, appearing to reach for the institutionalization of a British-style system, and the educational sector failed to return to quiescence as students and teachers kept up pressure on the government. Students and workers, with the apparent approval of the armed forces, mounted demonstrations in urban areas throughout the country. Finally, some 30,000 Moslems peacefully demonstrated in Addis Ababa against the religious policies of the Haile Selassie government.¹⁹

In this situation the armed forces became increasingly politicized. With the realization of their potential power and the recognition of the weakness of the traditional polity, progressive military men moved toward unity and formulation of a strong power center.²⁰ This goal was realized in the establishment of the Armed Forces Coordinating Committee, called the Derg, an Amharic word for committee.²¹ Broadly representing

¹⁹The confusion during this period is illustrated by: David B. Ottaway, "Ethiopia's Future a Puzzle as Emperor's Rule Challenged," The Washington Post, March 10, 1974, p. 1. David B. Ottaway, "Ethiopia Crossroads: Reform or Violence?," The Washington Post, March 24, 1974, p. A 1. Paul Hoffman, "The Ethiopian Question: Who's Really in Charge Here?," The New York Times, August 22, 1974, p. 2. Some place the participation in the Moslem demonstrations ran as high as 100,000.

²⁰Koehn argues that by mid-1974 a number of shattered shibboleths allowed the military to perceive its power to implement change. Among these he lists: no major political changes could occur until the emperor died; the emperor had such sacred authority and charismatic appeal that he could not be removed without widespread violence; the emperor performed the irreplaceable role as symbolic head of a diverse, incompletely centralized state and could be removed only at great risk; and the church hierarchy, territorial army, nobility and high ranking military officers were firmly behind the monarchy and would coalesce in strong opposition to any movement to undermine the emperor or their own vested interests. Koehn, "Ethiopian Politics," p. 8. The dilemma these shibboleths presented to the military are illustrated by Gilkes, "Ethiopia-- A Real Revolution?," p. 21.

²¹The men who directed the creeping coup maintained a deliberate policy of keeping their identity secret. First organized in April as the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, the Police and the Territorial Army, the group became generally known as the Derg after June. It grew out of the mutinies and was probably not part of an earlier conceived strategy. The goal was to maintain the unity among the armed forces that the mutinies had generated. It was based on democratic principles based on enlisted men, NCOs and junior officers participating in roughly equal numbers. Each of the 40 units of armed forces and police sent 3 delegates

all units of the armed forces, based on support of both officer and enlisted men, and dominated by junior officers, the Derg slowly came to supplant imperial power.

By now it was clear that the Endalkatchew government either failed to realize the scope of resistance against the policies of the traditional polity or, given strong ties with the emperor's modernizing autocracy and land based system, was unable to move forward with the demanded reforms. As the Derg's policies were implemented, overcoming the government's reluctance to prosecute former ministers and civil servants or to push basic reforms, the committee rapidly gained de facto power. From the end of June, the anonymous 120 members of the Derg began to arrest powerful people in the prior government, major aristocrats and high ranking military officers.²² By the end of August more than 300 such people had been arrested.²³ In addition they began a carefully orchestrated campaign to discredit the emperor, isolate him from his power base and eliminate his coalition of supporters.²⁴

to the organization. Representatives were often replaced by those they represented. Secrecy was maintained to avoid the personal rivalries the emperor had previously exploited to keep the military in check.

²²The peaceful process by which the traditional order was removed presents a fascinating picture of the role of legitimacy and political belief. ". . . the military committee went about its tasks in strikingly gentlemanly fashion, 'inviting' long lists of present and former civilian and military leaders to turn themselves in or face arrest. The lists included relatives of the Emperor, like Kassa Wolde Mariam [related by marriage] and Eskinder Desta, great landlords and prime imperial councilors like Ras Mesfin Sileshi, and members of the cabinet itself: General Abiye Abebe, Minasse Haile, and eventually the prime minister . . . With one notable exception the Enqu Selassie family, the old order submitted to the military voluntarily and without commotion. The surrealism of this dignified, gentlemanly, and peaceful dismantling of the old order can only be explained by postulating that those surrendering believed that the old order still existed even as it quite evidently had passed from the scene. Power belonged to the military but the imperial order still remained valid in their eyes, and their status, protections, and obligations within it had likewise not vanished. Ironically, the very decision by these individuals to surrender peacefully contributed to the perpetration of the imperial illusion." Harbeson, "Politics and Reform," p. 7.

²³These arrests took place before the findings of a Commission of Inquiry were completed. The commission was formed by imperial proclamation in June 1974 and charged with investigating the men who dominated Haile Selassie's government. Initial arrests of former cabinet members of the Akilu government had begun in April. Total arrests may have reached 500 by November 1974.

²⁴African Research Bulletin, XI (April 15, May 15, August 15, September 15,

They were aided in this movement by popular dissatisfaction with the civilian government.²⁵ In a very real sense these actions represented in effect a coup d' état except that the Derg had not yet decided whether to actually establish a military government. Still, during this period the Derg strengthened its role as the proponent of reform policies, frequently spoke for the government in dealings with other nations, and issued directives which confused civil servants, paralyzing the bureaucracy further.²⁶ These policies and the arrest of the prime minister and other cabinet ministers led to the demise of the Endalkatchew government. One week prior to the resignation of the prime minister, on July 22, 1974, the Derg issued a statement of intent. This document noted that while the military saw their assumption of power as temporary, they had no intention of returning to the barracks until the fundamental reforms they had begun were firmly established. This statement confirmed what was widely realized--the military had assumed de facto governmental power. Still, the PMAC buttressed its promise of returning power to the people by urging a constitutional commission established in March to complete its work and forward its recommendations to parliament.²⁷

Endalkatchew Makonen's government was followed by the short term of the Michael Imru government.²⁸ The ministers under Michael Imru were

1974), p. 3165, 3203, 3302, 3303, 3329, 3331. David B. Ottaway, "A Monarchy Nears Death in Ethiopia," The Washington Post, September 8, 1974, p. A1.

²⁵Henry Tanner, "Ethiopians Stop Student Protest," The New York Times, September 17, 1974, p. 9. Henry Tanner, "Civilians Turn Hostile to Ethiopian Regime," The New York Times, September 20, 1974, p. 5. "Ethiopian Unions Call General Strike," London Times, September 24, 1974, p. 5.

²⁶For example in early July they demanded that the emperor release political prisoners of his regime, grant amnesty to exiled Ethiopians, pressure the constitutional commission and parliament to draft and pass constitutional reforms, and place various military men in parallel positions in the civilian bureaucracy so as to improve national unity. The emperor agreed to all these demands.

²⁷The commission was divided over whether the parliament or the emperor would select the prime minister and the cabinet. Other issues centered on whether to establish a one party system or a multi-party democracy. A draft was produced and approved by parliament in early August. It is said to have proposed a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament, the lower house elected by universal franchise and the upper house chosen by local government officials. The parliament was to elect the prime minister. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was disestablished but Christianity was retained as the national religion. This draft reform was not implemented.

²⁸Michael Imru is said to have the principal link between the Endalkatchew cabinet and the military. Michael Imru was appointed on July 22

largely under control of the Derg and a number of "people's committees" which were operating at lower bureaucratic levels. The latter were busy settling old scores with senior officials, debating larger issues, and in general contributing to the paralysis of their respective ministries. Hence, the government was prevented from taking any effective action in the crisis period. The Derg tended to announce policy decisions prior to communicating them to the prime minister or his cabinet.

During this period the Derg allowed the press and pamphleteers to humiliate and even vilify the emperor. Numerous reports alleging his corruption and insensitivity to poverty were circulated. Moreover, by late August the Derg had nationalized the former properties and lands of the emperor, arrested the last of his close confidants, and made him a virtual prisoner in his palace. By now it seemed clear that public opinion would tolerate his removal. The culmination of these turbulent seven months came with the peaceful arrest of Haile Selassie on September 12 and the assumption of full governmental powers by the Derg under the new title of Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC).²⁹

Even after the removal of the emperor the PMAC stated its belief in constitutional monarchy as the basis of the Ethiopian polity.³⁰ It promised a return to civilian rule at an unnamed date, appointed the crown prince to replace the emperor, and began the difficult transition

and fell on September 12. Endalkatchew Makonen was arrested in early August. With the establishment of the PMAC under General Aman Andom, Michael Imru became Minister of Information. The other progressive in his government, Dejazmatch Zewdie Gebre Selassie, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, went into exile and condemned the executions of November 23 and 24. See footnote 15 on both men. See Hoffman, "The Ethiopian Question," p. 2C.

²⁹"Haile Selassie is Deposed by Ethiopian Military After Ruling for 58 Years," The New York Times, September 13, 1974, p. 1. Gilkes notes: ". . . had Haile Selassie made realistic gestures of supporting the call for reform, he might well have survived and been able to preserve something of his own personal position. He was unable and unwilling to do so and he went, and with him has gone the Ethiopian monarchy." Gilkes, "Ethiopia--a Real Revolution?," p. 15.

³⁰That the monarchy's future was bleak was made clear in announcements in late September that the name "King of Kings" was reduced to "King," the title "elect of God" abolished, "lion of the tribe of Judah" reduced to "lion of Ethiopia." The abolition of the monarchy came on March 21, 1975. "Ethiopian Military Regime Abolishes the Crown," The New York Times, March 22, 1975, p. 3.

from opposition to governing.³¹ Toward this end it promulgated a number of reforms which were to have a dramatic impact on social dynamics in many rural areas.

Revolution and Resistance

With the arrest of Haile Selassie and assumption of power by the PMAC Lieutenant-General Aman Mikael Andom was named chairman of the Council. Interestingly, given the recent history of rural change in Ethiopia, one of the first acts of the military was to issue a decree making tenant eviction illegal until formal reforms could be promulgated. These were promised within six months as part of a larger, far reaching set of land tenure changes.

The Derg came to power with the support of a coalition of urban forces ranging from students and intellectuals to unions. These and other supporters were enthusiastic about the declared reforms. But at the same time they began to fear the rise of a military dictatorship. The PMAC continued to respond that it was a provisional government. During this period it built on its initial slogan of "Ethiopia Tikdem," or "Ethiopia First," which is interpreted as an attempt to end particularistic concerns of family, religion, ethnic group and vested interests and embrace national goals of reform and development.³² Consistent with this slogan, the military continued its emphases on exposing and punishing corruption, and planning for future nationalization of industry and agrarian reform.

³¹These and other changes were announced in Proclamation No. 1 of the PMAC. Specifically it deposed the emperor, declared Crown Prince Merid Azmatch Asfa Wossen King of Ethiopia, stated that coronation would occur on his return, denied any future political role of the king in the country's political and administrative affairs, closed parliament until truly democratic elections could be held, suspended the 1955 revised constitution, ordered all law courts to continue their normal functioning, prohibited strikes or unauthorized demonstrations or public meetings, established a special military tribunal to try those who threaten the revolution or were charged with corruption or abuse of authority in previous governments and asked for additional changes in the draft constitution that was being prepared.

³²Koehn, "Ethiopian Politics," pp. 16-17. This motto was first proclaimed in July 1974. Aside from its more general connotations it may well have had a double meaning. On the surface it implied loyalty to the primacy of emperor in the polity while arguing for reforms. Alternatively it implies that the emperor placed himself above the nation and was a cause, thereby, of its extreme underdevelopment. The more accurate meaning was clearly the second indicating that "Ethiopia First" was a subtle attack on the imperial system. In this sense it was a clear harbinger of the end of imperial rule. By late 1975 it had come to stand for "Ethiopian Socialism."

Civilian distrust of military intentions was manifested in a second general strike, led and organized by CELU, a few days after the PMAC removed the emperor. Participants demanded a rapid transition to popularly elected government. This strike should have been more effective than the first one, which had not only achieved its demands but had increased CELU membership by 40 percent, promoted solidarity and raised consciousness among workers. However, the PMAC responded by arresting CELU leaders and launching a campaign to discredit them as allies of the old regime who had served the emperor by creating a façade of a labor movement. The government also arrested a number of student leaders and a few university professors. Harbeson attributes this course of action to the PMAC's inability to make a complete break with established political perceptions, developing a policy which would establish the legitimacy necessary to support its reform proposals.³³

In part this was because the PMAC was still split between the Marxist Left and the radical nationalists, the moderates being less influential than in the early stages. Both factions wanted far-reaching economic and social reforms. The major differences were over civilian rule and Eritean nationalism; the Marxists advocated civilian government and favored negotiation, perhaps federation, with Eritrea, while the radical nationalists insisted on preserving national unity by military means if necessary. They favored a strong military rule until all possibilities of counter-revolution were removed and the proposed reforms solidly implemented. This struggle was temporarily reduced in October when the PMAC began ordering the arrests of prominent Marxists in the intelligentsia and armed forces. However, despite this short-term advantage, the debate and struggle is still far from resolved.

The fear of counter-revolution was a real one. It undoubtedly led to the decisions to remove the emperor, continue arrests of Marxists and reactionaries, and ultimately execute many important members of the old establishment. Together with other factors it kept the PMAC from moving rapidly toward land reform and other actions which might generate conditions conducive to counter-revolution.

As students reacted to the PMAC's failure to consider reforms promoting political freedom and its repressive actions against those seeking such reforms, they escalated their demands for a republic, civilian rule, political parties, release of detained Marxists and more reform. The military responded by assigning them to the task of carrying educational and literacy programs to rural people.³⁴ The

³³ Harbeson, "Politics and Reform," pp. 8-10.

³⁴ As students gathered for the opening of the new school year, the government decided that the volatile, more politically active 11th and 12th grade secondary school students and university students needed to be politically neutralized. To prevent student-led demonstrations and

program became known as the zemecha, an Amharic word for "progress through cooperation, knowledge and work." Many students viewed the order as an attempt by the PMAC to isolate them from the center through banishment to the periphery. Aside from diminishing student pressure by disbursing students from urban centers the military realized they could use student zeal to attack provincial elites and undermine traditional oriented local politics, a goal the military alone could not achieve. Since in the past student demands had called for just such action, refusal to serve in the rural areas posed an ideological and moral dilemma. Still, there was resistance to the formulation of the program, for it reinforced the growing opinion that the PMAC would become a dictatorship. The government's threat that those who did not go would be denied further education or future government employment was undoubtedly a decisive factor insuring compliance with the order. In the end they went, without a clear set of instructions, without an explicit ideology, and with initial disagreement among themselves as to the ultimate goals of the project and the strategies to be used in achieving them.

All these specific problems were overshadowed by increased fighting in Eritrea³⁵ and the gradual emergence of royalist or separatist guerilla uprisings in various parts of the country.³⁶ Debate over

disorders in Addis Ababa and other major urban centers, it was decided that a National Work Campaign be organized. Classes for these students were shut down and while students sat around for several months the PMAC worked out a program aimed at sending up to 60,000 of them into the countryside to engage in adult education, agricultural extension, public health and mobilization of peasants. David B. Ottaway, "Ethiopia Tells Students to Aid Peasants," The Washington Post, December 22, 1974, p. 18. Students did not begin to go to rural areas until early 1975, with perhaps 30,000 being engaged in the campaign by March. See additional comments, footnote 2, Part II, footnote 21, Part III.

³⁵The northern province of Eritrea, formerly an Italian colony, was federated with Ethiopia from 1952 to 1962. When it was incorporated as a province in 1962, the Eritrean Liberation Force (ELF) began a Moslem-based separatist movement. The ELF broadened support and escalated fighting over the next decade. By 1974 they controlled parts of the province and held down a large number of imperial troops. In late 1974 the resistance was strong enough to create a military stalemate. See generally: G. K. N. Trevaskis, Eritrea, A Colony in Transition, 1941-1952 (London: Oxford University Press, 1960). John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 361-368.

³⁶Throughout its history Ethiopia has been plagued with regionalism. These forces were mobilized by the events of 1974. Small-scale guerilla uprisings have occurred in Tigre, Bejemandir, Gojjam, Shoa, Wollo, and in the Afar area of eastern Ethiopia. These royalist, ethnic and religious related rebellions have been largely isolated and localized, but as of

the appropriate responses to the Eritrean issue, civilian rule, and agrarian reforms revealed the existence of deep divisions within the PMAC leadership.³⁷ These surfaced when General Aman, an Eritrean, tried to bring about negotiation with the separatist movement. When he refused to order additional troops into Eritrea Province on the grounds that progress was being made toward settlement, the nationalist faction within the PMAC council ordered his arrest. The general resisted and was killed in an ensuing gun battle around his Addis Ababa home during the evening of November 23, 1974. Later that night and into the next morning the PMAC summarily executed approximately 60 persons, most of whom were influential figures in the Haile Selassie government. Among those executed were two former prime ministers, Akilu Habte Wolde and Endalkatchew Makonen, and a number of provincial governors, former ministers, military generals and landed aristocrats.³⁸

It is still unclear whether the executions were calculated ahead of time or the result of panic or revenge flowing from the resistance of General Aman to his arrest and fears that a counter-coup might be mobilized. Some observers argue that the executions were ordered to compensate for the unexpected death of the popular Aman. Others believe that a debate had long taken place within the Derg as to whether the imprisoned ministers and aristocrats were to be summarily executed or given a legal trial. Aman is known to have argued for following the legal process and is said to have resisted signing the execution list and accepting a hastily revised penal code legitimizing the earlier arrests. This position and his actions to bring stronger leadership to

late 1975 they have proven difficult to stamp out. David B. Ottaway, "Ethiopia: Perilous Transition Seen," The Washington Post, January 12, 1975, p. A16. See footnote 54, infra.

³⁷ Aside from divisions among the 120 man council over civilian rule, trials of detained officials, retention of the monarchy and future economic and social policies, the military was marked by additional cleavages over ethnic frictions, religious sensitivities, officer-soldier distinctions, unit and regional loyalties, ownership of land, generational differences, personality conflicts, educational levels, and competition for leadership. On divisions and gradual emergence of a radical block see: Skurnik, "Revolution and Change in Ethiopia," pp. 208-209. Gilkes, "The Coming Struggle for Ethiopia," pp. 33-35, 43. Charles Mohr, "Ethiopia's Army Units Warn of 'Action' against Selassie," The New York Times, March 5, 1974, p. 2.

³⁸ "Ethiopia Shoots 60 Former Chiefs," The New York Times, November 25, 1974, p. 1. The list included 29 civilians who held power in the Haile Selassie regime and were charged with corruption and abuse of power; 23 former senior military men were executed; 6 officers and men of lower ranks were killed for plotting against the Derg and the popular movement; and the rest were members of the Derg who were charged with divisiveness.

the cumbersome Derg were probably as much a cause of his dismissal as his position on Eritrea. If these facts are valid, then the act was calculated and would have been expected had it not been for the fact that the PMAC had so successfully camouflaged its political intentions.

Following these events the leadership of the PMAC was restructured. The new front man for the military and chairman of the council, was Brigadier-General Teferi Banti.³⁹ He was not a member of the Derg and it soon became clear that the real power in the council was held by two men, Major Mengistu Haile Mariam and Colonel Atnafu Abate, who had reputations of being radical nationalists.⁴⁰ Mengistu is the more powerful of the two, being vice chairman of the PMAC and Chairman of the Derg. It is important to note that neither of these men are thought to be Marxists. Indeed, most observers believe that removal of Aman indicated that both the Marxists and the moderates had now been removed from positions of influence inside the Derg. It appears that majors Atnafu and Mengistu are committed to socialism, citizenship and patriotism. These two seem to be less concerned with political parties and class struggle than they are with sacrifice, unity, equity and hard work in the services of the nation's development and progress. However, should pressure from workers, students and intellectuals increase, and should the PMAC feel threatened by such pressure, these leaders could well move toward a more openly Marxist position. Such a move would not require a radical shift in ideological perspective; indeed, the process of political education currently going on might facilitate the shift. Observers in early 1976 noted Chinese influence was to be found in PMAC policy groups and reported that a lively discussion was taking place about the formation of a civilian politboro which might rule jointly with the military and lead a "national democratic front" against threats to the revolution from "feudalism, imperialism and state capitalism."

After this coup, the military sent 5,000 troops to Eritrea, an

³⁹Teferi Banti is an up-from-the-ranks officer who was once military attache to the United States. While commander of the second division in Asmara he was known for his hard line position on the Eritrean question.

⁴⁰Koehn argues that the coup consolidated the PMAC around more radical policies. "Ethiopian Politics," pp. 13-14. Gilkes questions this: "The list of victims displays certain oddities; not all those indicted were executed (for maladministration and corruption); and although it included many who had potential or actual traditional power . . . Amongst those shot were several military figures who had connections with . . . the co-ordinating committee, including . . . an important officer in Army Aviation; another five were from Army Engineers. These two units together with the air force, are prominent among the more radical wing of the military." "Ethiopia--A Real Revolution," p. 23. For this and other reasons, Gilkes concludes that as of early 1975 "The revolution is yet to come" *ibid*. "Junta on Ethiopia in Ethiopia Elects New Chief," The New York Times, November 11, 1974, p. 11.

action which made it even more difficult for the conflict to be resolved by negotiation, and further complicated the new government's task of building a new power base, cementing unity within the armed forces, and trying to build a nationalistic spirit among its diverse population. On the other hand, the executions served to deplete further the upper nobility, while badly frightening lesser known, middle-level bureaucrats and supporters of moderate reform. This served to reduce the threat of effective countermobilization by conservative or traditional elites. The military was now on record that it could and would deal harshly with anyone or any group that resisted its policies.

From late November on, it became more obvious that the military was determined to rule for an extended period of time.⁴¹ The leaders of the PMAC continued to centralize political control, use the presently compliant but still largely unreformed civilian bureaucracy to administer their policies, and negate public participation in the political process. The repression of civilian freedoms of speech, press and assembly which had begun in February increased and the PMAC continued to keep students out of the capital city. More frequently than before November, those who disagreed with the regime were arrested, with some even executed.

During this process many observers concluded that the regime was consolidating itself and would not risk its rule to bring about the sweeping changes Ethiopian progress demanded. This surface image was very misleading, for within its policy organs the PMAC was considering a wide range of options relative to agrarian and social reforms. The first set of policies to emerge came with the "Declaration of Socialism" message of December 20, 1974.⁴²

It is important to note that since the mid-1960s, it was the student movement that consistently opposed the government. The intellectual basis of the opposition was Marxism, and its principles were well diffused among high school and university students throughout the country. In the end it was probably the student movement which promoted socialism as the major policy option for the PMAC. Certainly, this ideological framework did not come from most of the intellectual bureaucrats or university professors, for their perspectives were largely bourgeois.

The Declaration of Socialism noted the oppression and exploitation

⁴¹Michael Knipe, "Army Set to Govern for Several Years," London Times, November 16, 1974, special section, p. 1.

⁴²The full text of the declaration was published in a widely distributed booklet, the English version being: Ethiopia, Declaration on Economic Policy of Socialist Ethiopia (Addis Ababa: n.p., 1974). "Ethiopian Rulers Pledge to Build Socialist State," The New York Times, December 21, 1974, p. 1.

of the Ethiopian people by parasitic landlords, wealthy local and foreign businessmen, and corrupt high-level civil servants. It announced that all resources that are crucial for economic development would ultimately be brought under government control or ownership. Moreover it held that all other economic activities would be monitored to protect the public interest. The new policy confirmed recent nationalizations and was followed shortly thereafter by nationalization of all banks, financial intermediaries and insurance companies. Specific sections covered such economic sectors as mining, industry, utilities, tourism, construction, foreign trade, wholesale and retail trade, transport and communications, education, and health and medical services. Land reform, perhaps the most volatile and necessary reform, was not directly mentioned; however the declaration clearly intimated that an announcement of this was soon to come, a prospect which quickly spread throughout much of the countryside.⁴³

Indeed, since late February 1974 pressure for land reform had been steadily building. This was particularly the case in the sharecropping areas of the southern and western plateau regions and in those areas which in recent years had been marked by extensive agricultural mechanization and tenant eviction. Little pressure appears to have come from peasants in the north or from those in isolated regions of the south where labor rather than land was the major production constraint. The pattern of this pressure will be examined in Part II; for now it need only be noted that it generally took the form of scattered violence against landowners' property, seizure of land or refusal to pay rent.

⁴³ News reports and rumors conveyed this. Among the indicators were: "The new policy on agriculture calls for Government land to be cultivated by collective farms. Private farmers . . . will be given Government directives." "Ethiopia Rulers Pledge to Build Socialist State," The New York Times, December 21, 1974, p. 6. "The Provisional Military Council is . . . on the verge of announcing radical land reform under which all land would be made state property and on the size of land holdings given to peasants. . . ." Ottaway, "Ethiopia: Perilous Transition Seen," p. A16. "In the statement calling for socialism the junta said: 'Land exclusively under public ownership and management will be designated periodically; government will give guidelines for land which is owned communally. Similarly, private holdings which fall under cooperative associations will also operate under guidelines provided by the government. Individuals and communities which have a legal right to operate communal, cooperative farms will be accountable to the Government for the good care and management of their holdings.' The forthcoming law on land reform will in particular cover this point. This was the English version. Ethiopians maintain that the declaration in Amharic said that cooperative or communal farms would be established and that all land would technically be held under Government ownership." Charles Mohr, "Junta is Putting 'Ethiopia First,' But it Says Little and Does Less," The New York Times, January 29, 1975, p. 3.

The PMAC recognized the potential threat to food production which such activities posed and realized the political pressure which food shortages could generate among its urban supporters. At this time it began to build carefully on initial reform proposals of the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. In the end, the policy that emerged was far more revolutionary than the initial MLRA proposal, which had argued against land nationalization and for ownership with land ceilings of 40 hectares per person.⁴⁴

The declaration of socialism was popular with urban factions because of the new social and political principles to be established: self-reliance at the local level, national unity in the development process, nondiscrimination on the basis of religion, ethnicity or sex, systematic attack on poverty and inequality. But beyond these principles the declaration gave no indication of what the new polity would be like, what the PMAC's role would be and who could participate in national leadership and policy making. This silence, together with the military's apparent ambivalence about bureaucratic reform, indicated that for the present the established government system would be retained and the existing civil service used to implement the reforms. To be sure there were purges of high officials and some reorganization, but in essence the PMAC has relied upon middle and lower-level civil servants socialized under imperial rule and organized to serve a monarchy.

Throughout the course of these events both the military and the church, avoided confrontation with each other.⁴⁵ This however in effect

⁴⁴The history of the land reform movement from 1960 to 1974 is described in: John M. Cohen and Dov Weintraub, Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia: The Social Background to a Revolution (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum & Co., 1975), pp. 83-87. Building on earlier efforts the Minister of Land Reform and Administration produced a new draft reform in September 1974. It is said to have been drafted by a former minister of the MLRA who had been dismissed and was now reinstated. It would have limited ownership by any person to 40 hectares and have authorized the government to purchase excess land, provided the holder had been paying land related taxes on the excess in the past. The implementation was premised on the prior steps of demarcation and registration which, given the lack of a cadastral survey, would have taken a considerable length of time to complete, and for which the MLRA lacked technical and administrative capacity. The draft was not acceptable to the PMAC, and it turned to younger radical personnel of the MLRA for a new draft.

⁴⁵The church has preferred informal politics during this period. Its major public attack came in August 1974 when the ranking prelate, Abuna Tewoflos and the members of the Synod, the governing ecclesiastical body, charged that the Derg was attempting to disestablish it under a new draft constitution about to be considered by parliament. The New York Times, August 19, 1974, p. 6. But when Derg pressure increased on the

neutralized the church which stands to lose more than land. From mid-1974 until March 1975 the military made vague promises to continue with a powerless constitutional monarchy and not to affect church land ownership. But during this time it gradually separated the church from the state, thereby reducing church influence in national politics. The military, to be sure, proceeded cautiously for the church retains enormous influence in the countryside. The church believes this influence will help preserve its land interests but fears the Islamic pressures which the military could easily unleash.⁴⁶

Hence, with the neutralization of reactionary forces at the national center and in the church, the major task remaining for the consolidation of military power was the elimination of the provincial nobility and the royalist resistance movements which were beginning to appear in the north. In the south and west this occurred fairly rapidly, first through the political mobilization generated by the students sent to the provinces and then by the declaration of land reform.

That declaration came in early March when the PMAC proclaimed a revolutionary program abolishing tenant rents to landlords, promising land redistribution, establishing peasant associations, and nationalizing all rural land.⁴⁷ Given the military's earlier problems, it was generally concluded that with this reform the regime had now clearly overextended itself.⁴⁸ Surprisingly, the government was able to move forward with the reforms without extensive chaos or bloodshed. In part this was because reforms were confined to the southern and western areas where absentee ownership and tenancy were extensive. But more importantly it was due to the success of the creeping coup, the loss of powerful aristocratic

emperor, the bishop did not bless him in a New Year's Day message. Rather he asked God to bless the revolutionary movement and stated the ship of state must take a new course. The New York Times, September 12, 1975, p. 1.

⁴⁶For example, "The bishops of Gojam and Bagemder are said to have decided to excommunicate any of their congregation collaborating with the military authorities, and the land reform is being deliberately made out as a 'Muslim plot.'" Jean-Claude Guillebaud, "Ethiopia-Threat to the Revolution," The Guardian, June 21, 1975, p. 13.

⁴⁷Thomas A. Johnson, "Ethiopian Military Prepare Way for Bold Program of Land Reform," The New York Times, March 4, 1975, p. 6. "Ethiopia's Military Orders Take-Over of All Rural Land," The New York Times, March 5, 1975. David B. Ottaway, "Ethiopia Nationalizes Rural Lands," The Washington Post, March 3, 1975, p. A1.

⁴⁸The scope of these problems is well illustrated in: David B. Ottaway, "Ethiopia's Rush from Feudalism," The Washington Post, June 8, 1975, p. C1.

cratic support at the national center,⁴⁹ and the fear that the arrests and executions had instilled in provincial elites. Furthermore, with the rise of early capitalism and in the wake of the unsuccessful 1960 coup attempt, many landowners who might have led the resistance to reform had already transferred assets to property and security investments in urban areas. The vulnerability of urban capital was not fully recognized during the initial stage of land reform, even though the PMAC had begun to nationalize industry and share companies owned in part by the aristocracy.⁵⁰ Only later was urban land nationalized, but by that time large rural land holdings in the western and southern provinces had been abandoned.

The process of land reform will be discussed in detail in Part II and need not be considered at this point. However a few words on the urban land reform are necessary, not just because it pushed the military's socialist policy further but because together with the nationalization of major industries and commercial enterprises it helped weaken the economic base of the central elites and the aristocracy. That proclamation issued in mid-1975, placed the ownership of all urban land in the government.⁵¹ Former owners, whether individuals or organizations, were given usufructory right over up to 500 square meters of residential land, with additional formula for larger holdings required by business or service activities. No individual can own more than one house, and provisions in the proclamation prevent members of a given family from owning separate land plots or houses. No compensation is to be paid by the government for what it expropriates above these size and dwelling limitations. In response to the aura of corruption that surrounded private urban villas, shops and buildings, those structures built with public funds were to be taken over by the government at special prices or subject to additional fees from the holder. Finally, the proclamation abolished tenant obligations to landlords, and rents previously

⁴⁹Ottaway asserts that some 200 to 300 of the Shoan Amhara nobility, the ruling elite of Haile Selassie's modernizing autocracy had been executed or imprisoned. The Coptic church had lost most of its political influence. Ibid.

⁵⁰"Ethiopia's Rulers Nationalize Insurance Firms," The New York Times, January 2, 1975, p. 2. "Ethiopia Announces Its Nationalization of 101 Companies," The Wall Street Journal, February 24, 1975. These firms have either been taken over by the government or have the government as the major shareholders. In most firms new managers, some of whom are military men, have been appointed, and there have been rumors that worker committees may be organized to participate in management. While the policy of compensation is not clear, it seems obvious that wealthy shareholders will not be compensated for their investments.

⁵¹Government Ownership of Urban Lands and Extra Houses Proclamation, Proclamation No. 47 of 1975, Negarit Gazeta, 34th yr., no. 41, July 26, 1975, pp. 200-214.

due landlords are to be reduced according to a schedule in the proclamation. Under this provision, rents are to be paid either to the government or to cooperative societies of urban dwellers, depending on the amount of rent.

The proclamation implementing these rural and urban land reforms greatly increased the pressures on the regime. In implementing the reform the successors to imperial power moved forward with the politics of development.⁵² Whether the reform will prove to be an unwise policy choice remains to be seen, but it is clear that as of late 1975 the PMAC was under a wide range of pressures, for the Eritrean situation remained a costly stalemate,⁵³ the royalist and separatist uprisings were strengthened by the land reform decree and increasingly burdened PMAC resources,⁵⁴ the drought was severe in eastern and southeastern provinces

⁵²Not all members of the Derg supported the scope of the land reform policy. Guillebaud notes: "The Ethiopian authorities had been divided on the subject of two land reform projects which had been prepared simultaneously and debated at length at a seminar in early March. One group of 'moderates' called for a simple redistribution of the big expropriated estates, and gradual measures to be taken to usher in agrarian socialism through cooperatives. The other group wanted all Ethiopian land (including the big agrobusinesses) to be nationalized at once and every peasant given the right to use (though not to bequeath) a parcel of land smaller than a quarter of a 'gasha,' or about 10 hectares. Frightened by the predictable consequences of so radical a reform, the civilian ministers and a good many officers threw their weight behind the 'moderate' plan." Guillebaud, "Ethiopia--Threat to the Revolution," p. 13. The second group, supported by perhaps 90 NCOs and ordinary soldiers who were the left wing of the Derg won out and gradualism was abandoned, ibid.

⁵³As of late 1975, death tolls in the fighting are above 10,000 and atrocities on both sides make settlement very difficult. David B. Ottaway, "Full Scale Warfare Is Raging in Eritrea," The Washington Post, February 7, 1975, p. A1. Charles Mohr, "Successionist Movement Gnaws at Ethiopia's Existence," The New York Times, February 15, 1975, p. 3. David B. Ottaway, "Ethiopia Fights for Survival," The Washington Post, February 16, 1975, p. A1. Thomas A. Johnson, "Civil War in Ethiopia Is at a Stalemate," The New York Times, March 31, 1975, p. 3. "Eritrean Conflict Drains Ethiopia," The New York Times, September 24, 1975, p. 6. Henry Kamm, "Energy of Ethiopian Military Regime Severely Drained by Eritrean Rebellion," The New York Times, October 27, 1975, p. 3.

⁵⁴The history of these uprisings are summarized in: Guillebaud, "Ethiopia--Threat to the Revolution," p. 13. Dial Torgerson, "Afars Add New Dimension to Ethiopian Junta's Woes," Los Angeles Times, June 22, 1975, p. 4. Colin Legum, "Ethiopia's Legacy is Poverty and Instability," The New York Times, August 31, 1975, p. 3. Ottaway, "Ethiopia Fights for Survival," p. A1. "A Sultan's Struggle," The Washington Post, June 8, 1975, p. C1. Thomas A. Johnson, "Ethiopian Dissidents Hold a City

and relief plagued with administrative problems,⁵⁵ the resistance and dissent of students and workers was escalating in a rising spiral of violence and repression,⁵⁶ political and civil rights had been terminated,⁵⁷ and potential countercoups were being dealt with at regular intervals.⁵⁸

Briefly," The New York Times, March 18, 1975, p. 8. Thomas A. Johnson, "Ethiopian National Survival Seems at Stake in Eritrea," The New York Times, February 13, 1975, p. 10.

⁵⁵Susan Allan, "South Joins Cry for Drought Help," African Development, VIII, 5 (1975), pp. E23-E25.

⁵⁶By October, the unions were abolished, hundreds of civilians arrested, the university closed down and more than 1,000 students arrested, military troops patrol the streets of Addis Ababa and hundreds of civilians have been arrested. Colin Legum, "Fighting on Three Fronts in Ethiopia," The Observer, October 12, 1975, p. 8. David B. Ottaway, "Protesting Students Detained in Ethiopia," The Washington Post, August 23, 1975, p. A7. Henry Kamm, "Ethiopia: Fear and Chaos Reign," The New York Times, October 21, 1975, p. 1. Jean-Claude Guillebaud, "Ethiopia--A Question of Priorities," The Guardian, June 28, 1975, p. 12.

⁵⁷Indeed, a state of emergency was in effect in Addis Ababa after September 10th. "Seven union activists were killed on September 25, when security forces fired into a group of Ethiopian Airline employees . . . gathered to protest against the arrest and public mistreatment of a union leader who had distributed copies of the confederation's indictment of the Government . . . [calling on the PMAC for not] . . . admitting civilian members, failing to improve the lot of labor and farmers, turning against the most militant leftist youths, preventing the formation of a working class party and allowing a great number of social injustices of the old imperial Government to survive. More than 500 employees of the airline spent a night and a day under detention in military barracks The [emergency] proclamation involved suspension of most civil rights . . . Detention for unlimited periods and without warrant of any 'suspect' . . . [authorizes] searches of any home, office, or other building . . . A wave of arrests followed this move . . . Strikers have reportedly been arrested in front of co-workers, and sometimes beaten. There is an unconfirmed report of a summary execution at a textile factory." Henry Kamm, "Ethiopia Facing Widespread Rebellion," The New York Times, October 12, 1975, p. 1.

⁵⁸"The Dergue's most immediate danger comes from the split inside the army itself. These disagreements last April culminated in two army divisions sending an ultimatum to the Dergue with demands for its dissolution. The ultimatum resulted in the arrest and execution of 20 to 30 army officers and other ranks. But the opposition inside the army still persists and two coups were attempted in recent months by groups of NCOs. Early in July, the Dergue attacked the army engineers headquarters in Addis

The military would be more able to control these forces if they did not have to deal with student, teacher and labor pressures. The remarkable fact about these is that they came from factions which have long supported many of the reforms the PMAC has introduced, if not the more radical ones which some may perceive as a threat to their privileged position in Ethiopian society. The reasons for this paradox will become the basis of considerable study, but for the moment a more persuasive observation is that made by Harbeson. He argues that the crisis in the revolution is the failure of the PMAC to establish its own political legitimacy, to indicate the relationship between the reforms and the new polity that liberal or radical civilians expect to emerge, or to delineate the rights and duties of citizens and the powers and limitations of rulers.⁵⁹ The result of this failure to fill the political vacuum with the outlines of a new order is a "paradoxical contradiction between a military administration dedicated to socialist reconstruction and a people that permits the standard of civilian government to be raised as a unifying symbol on its behalf by individuals whose credentials as democrats are suspect."⁶⁰ As noted earlier, a highly probable solution to this contradiction would be the formulation of a Maoist type of "national democratic front" guided by a civilian politburo and ruling jointly with the military. Given the urban pressures presented, it is likely that the politburo would be based on a party system, provided the parties were openly hostile to "feudalistic, imperialistic" and, perhaps, "capitalistic" threats to the Ethiopian revolution.

Despite these problems, it appears that the most serious threat facing the PMAC and its policies in late 1975 was food shortages in urban areas. As discussed in detail in Part III, land reforms tend to have negative short term consequences for market share of production. Many observers also expected a significant production decline as a result of the reform. However, 1975 was marked by abundant rain and good weather. Moreover most farm land appears to have been planted and initial surveys indicate a bumper crop to be on the horizon. This being the case, it is still likely that urban food shortages will occur because the marketing system is in disarray, peasants freed from share-cropping rents are consuming food grains formerly marketed by landlords,⁶¹

Ababa, a source of continuing opposition. In July, too, 16 army officers were executed for their alleged role in planning a military coup." Legum, "Ethiopia's Legacy Is Poverty and Instability," p. 3. On attempted counter-coups see generally: David B. Ottaway, "Coup Attempt Suspected in Ethiopia," The Washington Post, April 27, 1975, p. A1. Patrick Kentley, "A Dirge for the Derg," The Guardian, September 26, 1975, p. 11.

⁵⁹Harbeson, "Politics and Reform," pp. 12, 14.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 14.

⁶¹In March 1975 it was estimated that deficits could reach 40% of the normally marketed quantity of food grains. Marketing has been disrupted

and higher farm prices and market speculations could double the pre-1974 price of food grains in urban areas. Hence, the PMAC has requested 200,000 tons of relief grain⁶² and is attempting to organize official grain buying boards.

Whether the PMAC will survive these problems remains to be seen. But it is clear that these events have dramatically affected Ethiopian history and have begun the difficult process of redistributing wealth, power and status. No event more clearly represents the extensive change that occurred than the failure of the Ethiopian people to openly mourn the death of former Emperor Haile Selassie on September 27, 1975.⁶³

by the disappearance of numerous local middlemen and constraints in the infrastructure and transport systems. By late 1975 this prediction appeared to be valid, for food grains were very scarce in the market place and the PMAC was pursuing a crash grain purchasing program.

⁶²Dial Torgerson, "Rebels, Marketing Problems Threaten Ethiopia's Bumper Crop," Los Angeles Times, October 28, 1975, p. 22.

⁶³It is unclear whether he died in the evening of the 26th or the morning of the 27th. David B. Ottaway writes: "He died forgotten and discredited in his own land, victim of a long campaign by the military that overthrew him." "Haile Selassie dies a Prisoner at 83," The Washington Post, September 28, 1975, p. A1. "Officially, Haile Selassie had become a nonperson in his own country, and even most Ethiopians took the news of his death and hasty burial in stride with practically no outward display of emotion or concern." David B. Ottaway, "Emperor Buried Secretly," The Washington Post, September 29, 1975, p. A26.

PART II

IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL REFORM PROGRAMS

Announcement of the Expected Reforms

In early March, just before the planting season was to begin, the military government announced over the radio that "All rural land shall be the collective property of the Ethiopian people. No person or business organization or any other organization shall hereafter hold land in private ownership." The announcement then informed listeners that a limit of 10 hectares would be placed on private landholdings, that tenancy was abolished by a provision banning hired labor, that state farms and village cooperatives would be formed, that tenant debts and obligations to landlords were now cancelled, and that until the decree could be put into effect tenants and landlords would have an equal right to share land now under cultivation.¹ In the southern and western provinces this equal right did not last long, as seen below.

With the publication of the proclamation and additional PMAC announcements, it became clear that the reform was to be implemented through peasant associations mobilized by zemecha students already on rural service and by extension agents of the Ministry of Agriculture, with both groups guided by Ministry of Land Reform officers assigned to each wereda. The PMAC had originally intended to implement the reform through MLRA land reform officers. It was only later that students became involved. In the end the students dominated. Their task was to organize peasant associations on the basis of 800 hectare areas and guide them through the difficult task of expropriating excessive landholdings and redistributing these to tenants and other landless people.

To help enforce the decree, the PMAC announced the assistance of

¹"Ethiopia's Military Orders Take-Over of All Rural Lands," The New York Times, March 5, 1975, p. 7. David B. Ottaway, "Ethiopia Nationalizes Rural Lands," The Washington Post, March 3, 1975, p. A1. The proclamation was not published until April 29th in the Negarit Gazeta, and hence was not de jure law until that time. Many moderates hoped the legal text would water down some of the initial statements of March, but it did not. The time lag was probably the result of continued uncertainty among the military as to the scope of reform and perhaps represented an attempt by the radical faction to present the moderates with a fait accompli. There may also have been some interest in awaiting the completion of spring planting before publishing the law, in hope that this would minimize the disruption of production. The provisions of the published proclamation were made retroactive to March 4, 1975.

a 300,000-man national liberation army, in addition to guaranteeing the dispatch of its own troops when necessary and the help of the local police. It is unclear whether the liberation army was actually to be composed from the territorial army, or a new force created out of peasants and retired military men. Realistic observers were correct in considering that the government was incapable of organizing a liberation army at the time and was spread too thin by the Eritrean conflict, the Somali border protection, and royalist uprisings to lend much military support to the potentially volatile task of expropriation and distribution. It was also clear that police were generally allied to the provincial elites and could not be relied upon to enforce redistribution of land rights. Thus, in the end the reform would be promulgated by some 40,000 students² and 1,300 quickly and poorly trained land reform officers with limited knowledge in the complexities of land administration.³

As noted earlier, the reform also signaled the fact that younger, socialist oriented officers were in control of the PMAC, and that they were willing to place reform above their own present or future landed interests. Only older officers with land holdings, and enlisted men or ex-service men who held land as partial payment or pensions, opposed the restriction of land holdings and the abolition of tenancy.⁴

²The students were trained in their respective schools by their own teachers through instruction materials provided by the National Work Campaign Headquarters. Such training was generally brief and superficial. They were generally unprepared for the areas they were assigned to. Perhaps 30% of the students were female, perhaps 40% from Addis Ababa schools. Teachers were included. Available information indicates these students are organized from the National Work Campaign Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The country is divided into 6 regions through some 50 centers and 450 stations. An estimated 100 students are at each station. They are said to be under control of a team of civilian and military authorities.

³In February 1975 the military hosted a three-week seminar at the National University on problems and issues of land reform administration. More than 900 civilians and 400 military personnel participated. Papers were presented and discussed. An observer who must remain confidential noted that the atmosphere was ideologically radical and discussions naive. It was stated that the 1,300 participants would be posted to key positions in land reform administration when the final policies were decreed.

⁴Though the government land grant policy of Haile Selassie, a considerable amount of land had been allocated to members of the armed services to reduce opposition and secure loyalty to the political system. On these grants, the extent of military landholdings and vested interests as they seemed likely to affect reform see: John M. Cohen, "Ethiopia After Haile Selassie: The Government Land Factor," African Affairs,

While foreign observers expected the law to present Ethiopia with a far more explosive problem than any other it was then facing, progressive groups heralded the announcement. Demonstrators added the slogan "break the bones of the landlord" to older chants such as "land to the tiller." Since December 1974 it had been clear that reform would be coming and most of the rumors in the rural areas were not far from the final content of the decree. In fact, these rumors were so widely accepted that rising tenant demands were already threatening order in some southern and western areas like Arba Minch, Chialo and Lekempt. The military apparently felt it was strong enough to impose the decree nationwide and had concluded that quick and complete action was necessary to legitimate tenant actions, satisfy progressive urban factions, and deal with conservative landowners before they began to coalesce into a strong counterforce.

Given the fact that the decree made it clear that compensation would not be forthcoming, and constituted a major transformation of land rights, it is remarkable that widespread violence did not follow the seizure of land by tenants and newly formed, youth led peasant associations. An analysis of the events, scope and process of this revolutionary movement remains to be accurately studied. Yet, on the basis of currently available information, it appears that while landowners and provincial elites were at times beaten or occasionally killed by peasants or students, the general level of turmoil and bloodshed fell far below what even the most optimistic observers of rural Ethiopia had anticipated. What information is available on this process will be presented in a subsequent section.

Nearly all landowners and some military officers and urban middle class people objected to the new decree, but fear of the military's reprisals kept any effective or organized opposition to it from emerging in areas not yet touched by incipient royalist or separatist movements. True, this situation has in part resulted from the fact that as of late 1975 land reform was confined to southern provinces, and was particularly successful in areas characterized by high tenancy rates and large numbers

LXXII, 289 (1973), pp. 365-382. Interestingly, Guillebaud notes: "Since Emperor Menelik's time, the Ethiopian soldier's principal 'perk' has been the piece of land he receives at the end of his career. But now the land reform and the nationalization of holdings have by that very fact eliminated this. This probably explains the discontent noted in April among the soldiers of the Third Division. 'Make sure you point out,' an officer told me, 'that for years soldiers have been living in the most frightful conditions on the borders of the Ogaden region. Up to now what they looked forward to most was obtaining that "gasha" (about 40 hectares) or "gashas" at the end of their careers.' The issue smacks of contradiction: can an army, politically dependent only on itself, expropriate with impunity its own soldiers' property?" Jean-Claude Guillebaud, "Ethiopia--A Question of Priorities," The Guardian, June 28, 1975, p. 12.

of absentee landowners.⁵ Still, the landed society of the southern and western provinces, and its power at the national center and over the rural periphery, appear to have quickly evaporated. Why and how this occurred will constitute one of the most intriguing questions for future theoretical and academic studies of rural Ethiopia. No doubt a good deal of enlightened academic hindsight will be the hallmark of such analyses.

1975 Land Reform Proclamation

1. Effect on Land Tenure System

Proclamation No. 31 of 1975,⁶ entitled "Public Ownership of Rural Lands Proclamation," abolishes without further compensation all private ownership, from the largest to the smallest holdings.⁷ Specifically Article 3 makes all land used for agricultural or grazing purposes the collective property of the Ethiopian people. In addition the law states that no compensation will be paid for rural land or for any forests or tree-crops on such land.⁸ Though compensation is promised for movable properties or permanent works on the land few actually expect payment to be forthcoming.

The proclamation is unclear as to whether control is really in the collective control of the Ethiopian people or the government. This question is stimulated by Article 3(1) of the subsequent urban land reform proclamation which explicitly states that all "urban land shall be the property of the government." Since the two proclamations are intended to have parallel effects, it may be that this ambiguity was intentional, the PMAC being caught between radical urban pressure groups demanding public ownership and a peasantry distrustful of governmental intentions. This ambiguity could cause substantial problems as the reform proceeds.

⁵See Tables 1-3 in Part II.

⁶Public Ownership of Rural Lands Proclamation, Proclamation No. 31 of 1975, Negarit Gazeta, 34th yr., no. 26, 29 April 1975, pp. 93-101.

⁷The only extensive analysis of this law to date is: John W. Bruce, "Ethiopia: Nationalization of Rural Lands Proclamation," Land Tenure Center Newsletter (January-March 1975), pp. 1-15.

⁸This in effect nationalized coffee estates, a widely held asset of wealthy elites, as well as eucalyptus, enset, hops and fruit trees. It also extended nationalization over forest and mineral lands not already held by the government under the state domain provisions of the 1955 Revised Constitution, Article 130(d).

The provisions of the proclamation have some effect on kinship and village tenures in the northern parts of the country, but a full reading of the law clearly indicates that it is primarily intended to terminate the onerous tenancy patterns, absentee landowner practices and large estates of the southern provinces. The 33 article proclamation, which begins with the PMAC slogan, "Ethiopia Tikdem" spells out this thrust in its preamble:

WHEREAS, it is essential to fundamentally alter the existing agrarian relations so that the Ethiopian peasant masses which have paid so much in sweat as in blood to maintain an extravagant feudal class may be liberated from age-old feudal oppression, injustice, poverty, and disease, and in order to lay the basis upon which all Ethiopians may henceforth live in equality, freedom and fraternity; . . .

WHEREAS, in order to increase agricultural production and to make the tiller the owner of the fruits of his labour, it is necessary to release the productive forces of the rural economy by liquidating the feudal system under which the nobility, aristocracy and a small number of other persons with adequate means of livelihood have prospered by the toil and sweat of the masses;

WHEREAS, it is necessary to distribute land, increase rural income, and thereby lay the basis for the expansion of industry and the growth of the economy by providing for the participation of the peasantry in the national market;⁹

While the law made clear its intentions for altering the structures of private land ownership, it avoided three crucial questions in that it excluded from its terms all land within a municipality or town,¹⁰ made no specific mention of the extensive holdings and tenures of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and treated separately the more volatile kinship and village tenures of the northern provinces. The deletion of urban land may have been a calculated move by the PMAC to avoid alienation of its progressive urban supporters, many of whom owned homes and small shops. In addition it gave those landowners who had invested in urban real estate a temporary refuge, in that the law did not take all their property. Since many absentee landowners held urban property and had been actively moving toward diversification of their assets since 1960, they may have

⁹Proclamation to Provide for the Public Ownership of Rural Lands, "Proclamation No. 31 of 1975," pp. 93-94.

¹⁰This was, as noted in Part I, taken care of by a subsequent urban land reform decree. See footnote 51, Part I.

been more willing to abandon their rural holdings. It can be speculated that this would not have been the situation had urban land been nationalized at the same time. In any case the issues were treated separately, and later in the year the PMAC nationalized urban holdings as well. Initial reports indicate this move to have come more quickly than expected, thereby supporting the above analysis.¹¹

The proclamation makes no direct statement about the holdings of the land-rich Ethiopian Coptic Church, which is estimated to own 20 percent of all arable land and 5 percent of all Ethiopian land,¹² from which it derives most of its income and supports its extensive clergy. By implication the church is affected by the legislation, but the failure to deal specifically with it and the complex tenures under which it subinfeudates its holdings is bound to create confusion. It should, however, be noted that other categories of landowning groups are also not mentioned by the law. Nevertheless the lack of specific reference is probably due to the PMAC's decision to avoid direct confrontation with the church. Still, church lands are undoubtedly affected, for Article 3(2) abolishes land ownership by persons or "by any other organization" and the church is a legal person under the civil code. If so, part of the loss might be off-set under the provisions of Article 10(f) which authorize peasant associations to distribute land to "organizations receiving land for upkeep." The problem here is that organizations are given the lowest priority among types of claimants to land within the association's jurisdiction. The church is most likely to lose land in the southern provinces where its holdings are larger and less likely to be farmed by priests. In rural areas where Muslims are in the minority, the application of the reform to church holdings will undoubtedly be treated differently from private land holdings and be affected by such

¹¹"The Dergue's latest measure has been to confiscate, without compensation, all urban land, leaving each family with the possession of only its own home. This radical measure had predictably produced a sharp reaction from the country's middle-class, which has become alienated from the radical leadership." Colin Legum, "Ethiopia's Legacy is Poverty and Instability," The New York Times, August 31, 1975, p. 3. On the other hand, the PMAC appears to have conducted a survey of urban land prior to issuance of the law. If so, it should have made urban landowning elites aware of the potential for such a reform.

¹²Church holdings and the complexities of tenures are summarized in: John M. Cohen and Dov Weintraub, Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia: The Social Background to a Revolution (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1975), pp. 40-43, 87-88. An example of such effects is given by Bruce: ". . . Article 21 . . . annuls 'all feudal dues' paid by the peasantry to a variety of traditional authorities and local administrators--including, presumably, religious institutions such as the great monasteries. At their most obnoxious, as where a monastery holds a region as gult, these dues can run as high as a fifth of the crops harvested." "Ethiopia," pp. 10-11. Until further information is available, it can be assumed that the church land is nationalized.

variables as the religious nature of the area, the stature of the local church, the past practices of priests, and need of local administrators to avoid alienating a powerful force of opinion mobilization.

The government's intention that kinship and village tenures be treated differently from freehold is affirmed by a separate section of the proclamation.¹³ The most important example of such differential treatment is found in Article 23 which charges peasant associations in these tenure areas to perform all functions established in Article 10 except the first, the distribution of land in the area as equally as possible. Whether the blockage of land redistribution, as in the individual tenure areas of the south and west, is a short or long-term policy decision is unclear. In part this is justified by the fact that maldistribution of land, tenancy and absentee ownership is nowhere near as onerous in the north as it is in the freehold areas of the south and west. Probably more important is the fact that northern peasants have traditionally resisted attempts to alter their existing land tenure system.

Like all land in the country, northern land is nationalized. But under Article 19 the peasantry in kinship and village tenure areas are guaranteed that they will have possessory rights over the land they presently till. Tenancy is also treated differently in the north. Here only tenants without possessory rights on other land are granted rights over the land they are now farming as tenants. This variation on the proclamation, established by Article 22, recognizes that in the north to follow the southern pattern would cause inequities, for as Bruce notes, "tenants [in the north] are almost invariably landowners themselves and often the more prosperous of the parties . . . [they] own plow oxen and farm as tenants the land of poorer households which lack this capital asset."¹⁴

The present land distribution pattern is made permanent by Article 20 which precludes the recognition of new claims as are continually arising in such areas. (These areas have long been criticized for allowing litigation to hamper production.) In kinship areas, for example,

¹³A consolidation of the literature on these tenures and their relationship to production, as well as reform issues, is set forth in: Cohen and Weintraub, Land and Peasants, pp. 30-34, 40-43, 47-59.

¹⁴Bruce, "Ethiopia," p. 9. Of nonindentured, free born Amhara and Tigrean peasants living in the north, fewer than five percent spent their lives as tenant farmers. That is, many tenants in the north are wealthy and own other land. They farm as tenants because their wealth provides them with oxen and they can thus farm the land of poorer neighbors. See: Dan F. Bauer, "For Want of an Ox . . ." Land, Capital, and Social Stratification in Tigre, Proceedings of the First United States Conference on Ethiopian Studies, 1973, edited by Harold G. Marcus (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1975), pp. 235-248.

land is divided into a multiplicity of geographical units originally held by a founding father. Those who can establish kinship with the founding father through either parent have a claim to receive a share of land in the unit from elders controlling the allocation of land held by the descent corporation. In theory this land cannot be owned or alienated and the peculiar social patterns of the area preclude an offspring from automatically inheriting the holdings of a parent or relative. A person's claims to such land always exceed what he actually holds, and individuals frequently have potential claims to land in other descent group units. In practice most persons can obtain some land, but the holdings of a kinsman generally rise and fall on the basis of his political skill, social status and ability to influence elders and local judges who allocate land according to the validity of the claim and the importance of the claimant.¹⁵

The problem with this article of law is that it freezes a transitory pattern of land holdings and it threatens the complex set of traditional institutions which have been formed around this system of land holding and upward mobility through the successful prosecution of land holdings. It is primarily these issues which have held back the progress of the land reform movement in the north and allowed traditional elites to mobilize peasant support behind their resistance to PMAC legitimacy and policies.

Traditional elite resistance is also generated by Article 21 which abolishes all obligations and dues owed informal officials such as chika shums and gultegnas. This article affects churches and monasteries as well as economic and political elites. In many cases these elites constitute the grass roots level of political administration and this provision will no doubt alienate them from the new regime and generate additional resistance to the land tenure reform.¹⁶ Still, if implemented, this article will dramatically improve the economic position of those paying such dues.¹⁷

Finally, nomadic lands are treated separately under the proclamation. In the past there were substantial questions as to whether the state or the nomadic clans owned grazing lands. Haile Selassie's govern-

¹⁵ For details see: Allan Hoben, Land Tenure Among the Amhara of Ethiopia: The Dynamics of Cognatic Descent (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), and his "Social Anthropology and Development Planning in Ethiopia," The Journal of Modern African Studies, X, 4 (1972), pp. 561-582.

¹⁶ For a study of these elites and the local polity see: Hoben, Land Tenure Among the Amhara of Ethiopia, pp. 32-36, 67, 73-79, 205-230.

¹⁷ For example Bruce notes that ". . . where a monastery holds a region as gult, these dues can run as high as a fifth of the crops harvested. They can bear down on the small holders under the communal systems almost as heavily as do rents on tenants in the freehold area." Ethiopia," p. 11.

ment and Article 130(d) of his revised constitution had held that they belonged to the state, a position the nomadic people had never accepted.¹⁸ Article 24 in effect confirms the possessory rights of nomads over land they customarily use for grazing or other purposes related to agriculture. But as noted earlier, the proclamation is unclear as to whether the government is the ultimate holder of land rights. Another ambiguity surrounds the state farms and plantations that were established in nomadic areas in the past few years. Unfortunately the proclamation says nothing about the rights of nomads to a share of these large commercial enterprises built on their former grazing land. Article 25 terminates all payments which nomadic peoples had customarily made to local balabats and powerful local officials such as the Sultan of Asiata. The government is given responsibility under Article 27 to improve grazing areas, dig wells and settle nomadic peoples for farming purposes, and Article 26 requires nomads to form associations. These are aimed at inducing nomads to cooperate in the use of grazing land or water rights and for functions outlined for peasant associations in Article 10. The issues which remain unresolved are whether or not the government is committed to improving the nomads' economic potential as ranchers, whether it will require them to resettle as farmers or will seize their land in the end for agrarian purposes.¹⁹

Articles 3 through 7 of the proclamation dramatically alter the pattern of land ownership in southern provinces. In essence Article 3 turns the historical fiction that the crown owns all the empire's land into a fact, only the state is now the residuary rather than the monarchy.²⁰ As noted, compensation is allowed only for movable properties and permanent works constructed on the land. The possessory rights of those who till the land are covered in Articles 4 through 6. Under Article 4 any person who personally cultivates the land shall be allotted up to 10 hectares of land to maintain himself and his family.²¹ Tenancy

¹⁸That government claimed nomadic land as part of eminent domain. See: John Bruce, "Legal Consideration--Nomadic Lands" (unpublished MLRA memorandum, May 20, 1970, archives, Haile Sellassie I Law Library). Cohen, "Ethiopia After Haile Selassie," pp. 373-374.

¹⁹For example see: Lars Bondestam, "People and Capitalism in the North-Eastern Lowlands of Ethiopia," The Journal of Modern African Studies, XII (1974), pp. 423-439.

²⁰On this fiction see, for example, a 14th century emperor's statement that God gave him all the land: Tadesse Tamrat, Church and State in Ethiopia: 1270-1527 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 98.

²¹Landholders will not automatically receive 10 hectares. The law envisions equal allocations where possible but grants the Ministry of Land Reform the power to set regulations on size. Guidelines are to be set on the basis of local conditions, fertility and the amount of land needed to maintain a farming family. Most peasants probably cultivate two

is in effect abolished by Section 5 of this article which prohibits the use of hired labor except in situations where a woman without other adequate means of livelihood holds the land or where the holder dies or is too sick to farm and his children are minors. Article 5 prohibits the sale, exchange, mortgage, antichresis or lease of a landholding, though on the death of the holder succession is allowed to inheriting family members provided they continue to use the land personally.

The difficult issues of ensuring continuity of cultivation are addressed by the provisions of Article 6. Until the distribution of land under Article 4 is completed, tenants and hired laborers are given possessory rights over the land they presently till. However, if a local landlord has rented out all his land he is entitled to share equally his land with the tenants on it. Again, this provision does not apply to female landlords with no other means of livelihood or those too ill or old to cultivate the holding personally. More importantly, tenants are freed from rent payments to the landowner, existing debts or obligations to landowners are abolished, and the tenants are given the right to keep agricultural tools and oxen which the landlord may have provided under the lease arrangement. The tenant must compensate the landlord for these within three years and a landlord lacking such inputs may take them back so long as he uses them personally.

Up until December 1975 no clear policy of taxation had emerged since the PMAC abolished rents and temporarily ceased collecting agrarian based taxes. This is because the government realized that if the process of instituting taxes was not carefully made known to the peasants numerous problems would emerge, for farmers are likely to resist becoming "tenants of the military," a view that may easily arise.

As noted in Part III, in December 1975 the PMAC passed a proclamation which charged the peasant associations with additional duties within the local government system. This proclamation concentrates on administrative, judicial, cooperative, and security duties. In addition, in January 1976, Proclamation No. 77 was issued. It placed tax collection functions in the peasant associations as well. It states that peasants are to pay a rural land use fee and a tax on income from agricultural activities. Farmers and government agricultural organizations with agricultural income above approximately E\$ 1,000 will pay the fee and the tax to the Inland Revenue Agency of the Ministry of Finance, usually through the wereda income tax office. Farmers below this income level are to pay the fee and tax to a "tax collector," a role the proclamation envisions as being played by the peasant association. The tax collector turns the revenues over to the Ministry of Finance, receiving in return two percent of the amount collected. In addition the tax collector prepares lists of farmers and the size of their holdings,

hectares and use three hectares for grazing. Five hectares is generally thought to be the optimum holding for a household using traditional methods in dry-farming regions.

collects declarations of income from farmers, and keeps track of income and distribution of shares on collective farms. Unfortunately data on rates or information on the response to the tax were not available at the time this analysis was written. It is known that the advantage of lower taxes was given to those farming collectively. Obviously, major questions arise concerning the level of the taxes and the amount of services and benefits returned to the area by the central government. If the government takes a high proportion of the income, largely cancelling the effect of enduring rent payments, widespread hostility may be engendered against the government. On the other hand, if the rates are low--a possibility given the PMAC attempt to build support in the countryside--then the government's cash flow problem will not be relieved.

Taxes had to be levied and collected. The PMAC had little room to maneuver on this matter, for heavy financial pressures have been created by the military campaigns in Eritrea and other areas. Indeed, the massive requirements necessary for carrying out the commitment to economic development may create even heavier financial demands than the costs of supporting the military campaigns.

Article 7 in particular was to restructure radically the commercial sector of Ethiopian agriculture. It nationalized the country's foreign managed agribusiness together with large-scale farms in general. These large commercial farms had accounted for a considerable portion of the country's agricultural exports as well as a large share of locally marketed food stuffs.²² The article stated that the enterprises would be owned and run by the state or broken up and distributed to farm laborers and other landless peasants. The proclamation denied compensation for real property while urging present managers to continue to operate the farms until the government works out policies for each one. To induce managers to stay on the legislation promised fair compensation for movable property and permanent works on such farms. Unfortunately, the government had made known its intentions to follow this approach only late in 1974 and large-scale enterprises had already generally abandoned their farms prior to the decree in accurate antici-

²²In the drafting stage, the nationalization of commercial farms was resisted and its inclusion in part led to the resignation of the Minister of Agriculture, Dagnetchew Irgu, who "feared Ethiopian agriculture would be dislocated; he argued that overnight nationalization of the 118 industrial farms and agricultural estates (which between them accounted for 44 percent of farm revenue) might mean adding the burden of a shortfall of 300,000 to 400,000 tons of cereal to the foodstuff shortages of a country already threatened by a new famine . . . [When he was ignored on this and other reform points] . . . Irgu resigned in protest against such 'adventurism' and fled to Sudan." Jean-Claude Guillebaud, "Ethiopia --Threat to the Revolution," The Guardian, June 21, 1975, p. 13.

pation that they would never profit from any plantings they might now undertake.

The proclamation is cast in very general terms and no doubt there will be disputes over the meaning of many provisions.²³ However, as the reform is implemented it is unlikely that such legal niceties will prevail, despite the litigious predilections of Ethiopians. No doubt many disputes will be resolved on the spot by government officials or peasant associations. In any case, the provisions generating these problems are probably intended largely to insure that the land would be planted, a strategy dictated by the fact that the proclamation was issued just prior to the planting season. Other articles indicate that the ultimate goal is general redistribution, and as noted, care has been taken to insure that farmers gain only usufructory rights and cannot reconsolidate larger holdings once the impetus behind the movement dissipates and tenure is more normalized. Still, should the PMAC falter prior to the redistribution phase, these ambiguities might operate to the advantage of former landlords.

ii. Peasant Associations

Wishing to maintain some degree of institutional order in implementing the decree, and faced with the Ministry of Land Reform's lack of field staff, the government used the proclamation to establish peasant associations. These are envisioned as the basic instruments through which the land reform provisions will be implemented. The apparent thrust of the proclamation is to place control of the reform movement at the grass roots level. To a large degree the PMAC had no choice. Had it attempted to implement the reform from the center it would at most have had the limited Ministry of Land Reform staff to use in breaking up the larger estates on the basis of a maximum size of holdings rules.²⁴ Such an approach would have taken a long time to

²³ Bruce notes several problem areas: "A resident landowner who has leased out all his land is given the right to 'equally share the land with his tenants' [Art. 6(1)]. This is not terribly clear: share with each and every one of his possibly widely scattered tenants or with which of them? A landlord may 'take back' his implements and oxen from a tenant if he has no others [Art. 6(4)]. Again, clarification would be helpful: from which of his tenants? And possessory rights are not confined on a tenant where he has rented his land from 'a woman with no other means of livelihood or from a person who, by reason of his minority or old age or illness, cannot cultivate his holding' [Art. 6(2)]. The result is again unclear: does the tenant continue to farm the land as a tenant, paying rent, even though tenancy relationships have been annulled; if not, who will farm the land in this period, and what is the point of the apparently compassionate exemption?" "Ethiopia," p. 5.

²⁴ Bruce notes that in early 1975 the MLRA had a field staff capacity of two to three hundred men with 8 to 12 years education. They had been recruited to demarcate and register state domain lands. At least one

implement, generated uncertainty of tenure and perhaps lower production, required a cadastral survey, and allowed provincial landowners to consolidate a countervailing force against the reform as it gradually drew near. Hence, the government risked controlled change for immediate locally administered reform. The peasant associations were to be formed with the assistance of ministry field staff and mobilized by student groups under the old rule that the more a reforming center has groups in the periphery that share its image of the future, the greater the possibility that its program for the periphery will be effective. However, as will be shown, the PMAC later reversed this strategy and returned to the approach of imposing reform from the top.

Article 8 of the proclamation requires peasant associations to be formed on the basis of 800 or more hectares, an area frequently coinciding with the size of the chika shum area. The method of their establishment is governed by Article 12 which charges the MLRA with assigning one staff officer to each wereda and cooperating with the Ministry of Interior to promote the success of the program. The task of the land reform officer is to call assemblies of peasants, explain to them the proclamation, and proceed to assist the peasants to form their associations.²⁵ Since there are over 500 weredas in the country, averaging perhaps 80,000 hectares each, it is obvious that the MLRA staff will have only minimal contact with each association. Even though students are available to aid this mobilization process, it seems clear that different patterns of association will emerge, leading to the differential application of the proclamation throughout the country. The different patterns of association will depend on the prior degree of hardship the previous tenure system brought the area, the lingering influence of provincial elites, the personal factions and disputes that characterize the area's past history, and a host of additional factors.

After expropriation and redistribution of the land in a peasant association area is completed any farmer can be a member, but Article 9 limits initial membership to landless tenants, agricultural laborers, and landowners with less than 10 hectares of land.²⁶ The inclusion of small-scale landowners constitutes a risk in that they will probably dominate the associations and tend to be allied with larger-scale landowners. On the other hand, their membership broadens the support base of the association and serves to prevent the cumulative cleavage of

MLRA officer was in each province and some 20 staff members were assigned to respective awrajas. The entire staff was characterized as office workers rather than field staff. "Ethiopia," p. 6.

²⁵The article mentions chika shum as the basis, but the jurisdictional area of this informal level local government official varies widely throughout the country.

²⁶A later directive of the PMAC, issued in May, required that farmers include former servants whether paid in cash or kind.

"land--no land" from dividing the countryside.

The proclamation does not contain provisions on the selection of leaders, the functions of leaders, terms of office, rights of members or how the associations are to be governed, though it does establish a judicial tribunal to resolve internal disputes. In practice the general meeting is the basic unit of the association. It appoints the executive committee, which generally includes four persons: a chairman, secretary, treasurer and liaison officer. In theory the committee executes the binding directives of the general meeting. The members of this committee represent the association at the wereda level. The general meeting also elects judges and establishes the association's judicial tribunal officer but it is unclear if he is to control or merely assist the elected judges. The size of these committees and tribunals, as well as their internal rules, will vary from association to association. This vagueness on the part of the proclamation's draftsmen allows needed flexibility and avoids the rigidity which tends to cripple cooperative formation governed by detailed legal regulations.

Under Article 11, a hierarchy of peasant associations is to be established. Each association will send delegates to a wereda peasant association which will send delegates to an awraja level association. The wereda associations can alter the geographic boundaries of associations to assure equal holdings within the wereda, request an association to distribute land to particular landless persons, probably out of government or state domain land, and establish a wereda judicial tribunal to hear and decide appeals on land cases.

The executive committee of the local peasant association represent it at the wereda level in a general meeting body which appoints delegates to the awraja level. The PMAC currently intends the awraja level to follow the same structural and functional patterns as are found at lower levels. But it is to take on the additional responsibility of providing liaison with the government's development agencies. Representation at this level is to be based on the proportion of associations in each wereda and not on a set number for each wereda. Finally, the executive committee of the awraja general meeting is to prepare an annual report covering the activities and projects undertaken at all three levels in conjunction with government agencies.

All legal disputes which arise in the process of expropriation and redistribution of land are excluded by Article 28 from entering the Ministry of Justice's court system. This provision constitutes an end run around the still to be reformed local court system, and places decisions in the hands of judicial tribunals established by the peasant associations.²⁷ The wereda judicial tribunal not only hears appeals from

²⁷ Some confusion has existed on this point. Observers note that some people's courts were established by students but it is not clear if these merged into peasant association courts. Frequently, students

the associations but is a court of first instance in land disputes between two associations. The appellate decisions are final but decisions on association disputes can be applied to an awraja judicial tribunal. This higher court is established by the awraja peasant association which is composed of delegates from the wereda level and has the principal function of coordinating the activities of the wereda associations. The MLRA's land reform officer is to act as chairman of the judicial tribunal at the wereda and awraja levels. This position could be one of considerable power, for rather than merely advise, the officer could use his position to help insure local compliance with policy directives of his ministry. Finally, the article establishing this function, Article 14, precludes such persons who heard a case at the wereda level from hearing it again at the awraja level. The MLRA officer is to establish an office to serve the judicial function and keep records pertinent to all litigation.

Initially the failure to establish provincial level associations and the decision to stop land litigation at the awraja level was seen as a reflection of the PMAC decision to downgrade provincial administration and implement some form of the long proposed awraja self-government scheme.²⁸ As of late 1975 some observers were of the opinion that the PMAC appears committed to continued deconcentrated government and that even these decentralized aspects of association activity were being reevaluated. This question of local decentralization has critical implications for the rural development process and will be discussed in detail in the section on "Institution Building at the Local Level" in Part III.

Aside from the initial and primary function of expropriating and distributing land, Article 10 indicates a long-run role for the peasant associations by assigning them the following tasks: (1) to follow land use directives issued by the government; (2) to administer and conserve any public property within the area especially the soil, water and forest; (3) to establish judicial tribunals to hear land disputes arising within the area; (4) to establish marketing and credit cooperatives and other associations which would help farmers cooperate on manual and public works; (5) to build with the cooperation of the government schools, clinics and similar institutions necessary for the area; (6) to cultivate

acted as judges and extended to family matters such as divorce or political issues such as corruption and maladministration. In actuality, the only court established by the PMAC is that of the association and its jurisdiction is confined to the implementation of the land reform proclamation.

²⁸The history of the awraja self-government scheme since its inception in the early 1960s is set forth in: John M. Cohen and Peter H. Koehn, "Local Government in Ethiopia: Prospects for Reform in the 1970s" (paper presented to the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, Chicago, 1974), pp. 18-19.

the holdings of persons who, by reason of old age, youth or illness, or in the case of a woman, by reason of her husband's death, cannot cultivate their holdings; (7) to undertake villagization programs; and (8) to exclude from distribution mining and forest lands and places of historical and antiquarian significance. This broad grant again supports the view that the PMAC envisions these associations as part of a decentralized network of locally controlled communes that establishes up to the awraja level a local government system built on the empowerment of rural people.

Article 10, Section 1, sets the general rules for distribution. It charges each association with distributing as equally as possible the land, a problem in those areas where the land to man ratio is less than 10 hectares. In the distribution process the following priority list is to be followed: (1) to former tenants and landowners residing within the area; (2) to evicted tenants; (3) to persons who reside within the area but do not have work or sufficient means of livelihood; (4) to farmers coming from outside the area; (5) to pensioned persons who are willing to undertake personal cultivation; and (6) to organizations needing land for their upkeep. The general nature of the latter priorities may cause distribution disputes. These priorities can and probably will cover churches, monasteries and priests as well as members of the armed forces who frequently retire at an early age and return to rural areas. The possibility of such inclusion helps minimize opposition to the proclamation from such sources.

Several interesting questions are generated by this article. First, the proclamation does not clarify the right of peasants to their holdings when such rights are in conflict with allocation decisions of the peasant associations, though the outcome is probably implicit in the tribunal system described earlier. Secondly, potential inequities in allocation are important, particularly given the socialist philosophy underlying the law. For example landlords are given priority over tenants they might have evicted and landless workers, of whom there are many, come after tenants, landlords and evicted tenants.

The rights and duties of the government under the proclamation are further delineated in Articles 15 through 18. Under Article 15 the Minister of Land Reform must establish registers reflecting the new distribution patterns and assign surveyors to associations as they undertake demarcation efforts. Article 16 gives the minister power to determine which large-scale farms will be maintained in the name of the state as cooperative farms and which may be divided up and distributed to tillers. He is also given the authority to determine what compensation will be paid for permanent works and movable property on such farms at the time of expropriation. Eminent domain rights are granted the government by Article 17, which provides for compensated expropriations of land held by peasant associations for public purposes such as schools, hospitals, roads, military bases and agricultural projects. In this regard it is necessary to note the proclamation does not define the legal right which the association has over land within

its jurisdiction. While nationalization keeps an association from owning such land, provisions such as Article 17 indicate the association probably has some sort of administrative right over the land. The government also assumes under Article 18 the obligation to resettle elsewhere peasants who end up with insufficient land after the distribution process. Should this not prove possible, the government is to establish cottage industries to employ such people. Problems of this nature are likely to be confined to areas of high land pressure.

Finally, Article 31 sets serious criminal punishments for any person who obstructs the operation of the proclamation or destroys movable property or fixed works on expropriated land, such as trees, farm houses, mechanical equipment, crops, irrigation works, dams or livestock. In addition any public servant who misuses his authority in implementing the proclamation is also subject to criminal prosecution. The law closes with a grant of power to any person performing functions in connection with the proclamation to enter any land holding and gives the proclamation precedence over any prior laws, rules or legal cases with which it may be inconsistent.

Effects of Land Reform

As of late 1975 no systematic research on the implementation of the proclamation was available.²⁹ However, enough is known to conclude that substantial progress has been made in southern and western provinces.³⁰ Reform went most easily in remote areas which were characterized by absentee ownership and tax farming. It also went fairly smoothly in most areas marked by high tenancy rates and extensive mechanization. Progress was initially more difficult in areas typified by the balabat systems medium-scale holdings, rich peasants and patron-client relationships. The effects in the northern provinces are less clear, although available reports indicate that the law has had little effect. There

²⁹ Recent field work on the effects of the land reform has been done by Allan Hoben, Department of Anthropology, Boston University; Gene Ellis Department of Economics, Mt. St. Vincent College, Halifax, N.S.; John W. Harbeson, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin--Parkside; and Harrison Dunning, Law School, University of California at Davis. Interested readers may wish to contact them for the results of their field work.

³⁰ Among the most interesting of these reports are: David B. Ottaway, "Land Reform is Smooth in Ethiopia," The Washington Post, March 11, 1975, p. A1 and his "Ethiopia's Rush from Feudalism," The Washington Post, June 8, 1975, p. C1. Thomas A. Johnson, "Poor Administration is Snarling Huge Ethiopian Land Reform," The New York Times, April 3, 1975, p. 2. Martin Walker, "The Day the Bribe Went Sour," The Guardian, April 27, 1974, p. 6. Guillebaud, "Ethiopia--Threat to the Revolution," p. 13. See also the numerous articles cited throughout this monograph.

peasant response to its terms often was negative.³¹

In areas where extensive change has occurred, reports indicate that commercial farms, plantations, crown lands and large holdings by aristocrat or provincial elites have been seized. Where tenants were not in place, the land was either held by the new government for future allocation, used for the settlement of landless peasants or, in some cases, converted to communal enterprises. Cautious observers note that many rich peasants, those holding 10 to 30 hectares, have yet to lose their excess land. Perhaps this is why the implementation of the proclamation outside the north has resulted in much less violence than had been expected. While examples of student excesses in mobilizing the peasantry have been reported, it seems clear that in these areas they have been largely successful in forming peasant associations and eroding the former feudal system.³² Hence, aside from the northern tenure areas, there is no reason to conclude that the PMAC will not be ultimately successful in implementing its land reforms and rural development programs.

Reform Process in Southern and Western Provinces

Enough information is available to provide insights into the basic process of reform in the southern and western provinces and the effects of the reform on the rural society. In making such an analysis it is still necessary to generalize. This creates problems because these provinces are internally varied according to the degree of market penetration, the type of crops produced, the patterns of land tenure, tenancy and ownership concentration, and a number of additional factors such as ecology, ethnicity and history. Wherever possible, this study tries to be sensitive to such differences, but it cannot treat them

³¹To date there does not appear to have been any major redistribution of land or oxen in the north. No reports have emerged noting the establishment of collectives, though students are known to have pushed collectivization as they did elsewhere in the country. Fewer peasant associations than the population could support appear to have been established. Here land reform is viewed as an attempt by Shoans and an outside government to interfere with local affairs. Indeed, counter mobilization against the reform appears to have been the basic response, as indicated in Part I's discussion of royalist movements in these areas. Based on newspaper reports and conclusions of Allan Hoben, "Perspectives on Land Reform in Ethiopia" (oral presentation at Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, San Francisco, October 30, 1975), notes.

³²Students have been particularly successful in areas that had been conquered after 1860 and where clan lands had been seized by the victors, in areas where powerless ethnic groups were in the majority, where there was high land concentration in a few hands, and where commercial agriculture had been established to the disadvantage of evicted tenants.

systematically because of the present lack of extensive data on the reform movement.

In studying the land reform movement it is essential to understand the different historical background and land tenure patterns that separate the north from the southern and western parts of the country. The north is composed of the present day provinces of Tigre, Begemder, Gojjam, and parts of Shoa and Wollo. This is the ancient heartland known as Abyssinia. The remaining southern and western provinces of Wollega, Hararge, Gemu Goffa, Bale, Arussi, Illubabor, Keffa, and Sidamo, as well as parts of Shoa and Wollo were all added to the empire through the conquest of Menelik II.³³ The Amhara and Tigre who participated with Menelik in the conquest of these southern and western areas came to govern a number of different peoples, the most important and extensive of which are the Galla. What happened in the process of territorial expansion is that they became at the same time a minority group in the empire and holders of suzerainty over a vast collection of peoples who did not share their historical tradition and who were not Christians but pagans.³⁴

The conquering Abyssinians were often insecure among these hostile tribes, and needed to develop a more direct and uncomplicated pattern for governing, attracting colonizers, rewarding soldiers, and otherwise guaranteeing order and collecting taxes in the newly acquired territories. Because of these concerns and needs they imposed a form of semi-feudal rule which increasingly differed from that found in the north. In particular, that altered pattern of rule led to an altered land tenure system. It is for this reason that northern tenures are more onerous and extractive than those of the south. More importantly, this regional distinction has facilitated the process of reform in the southern and western provinces.

The distinctions between the tenures in these areas are described in a growing number of studies,³⁵ and are beyond the scope of this

³³On the conquest see: H. G. Marcus, "Imperialism and Expansion in Ethiopia from 1865-1900," in Colonialism in Africa: 1870-1960, edited by L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969) and his "Motives, Methods and Some Results of Territorial Expansion in Ethiopia During the Reign of Menelik II," in Proceedings of the Third International Conference in Ethiopian Studies (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1969).

³⁴The implications of conquest and ethnicity are discussed in: M. Abir, "Education and National Unity in Ethiopia," African Affairs, LXIX, 274 (1970), pp. 44-59. Donald N. Levine, "The Roots of Ethiopian Nationhood," Africa Report, XVI, 5 (1971), pp. 12-15, and his Greater Ethiopia (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

³⁵Many of these studies are summarized in the text and footnotes of: Cohen and Weintraub, Land and Peasants, *passim*. See additional materials cited in footnote 16 of the Introduction to this monograph.

monograph. In brief, the north was characterized by kinship and village tenures which have many similarities to communal patterns, and the southern and western areas are typified by private holdings and frequently high percentages of tenancy, absentee landownership and concentrated land holdings. These differences are indicated in the following tables. Their particular constellation in any given area provided a major factor affecting the context of reform and the direction it ultimately took.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL CULTIVATED AREA BETWEEN
OWNERS AND TENANTS IN PRIVATE TENURE AREAS

Province	Owned		Rented		Partially Owned/Rented	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Arussi	84,789	38	114,178	51	25,542	11
Gemu Goffa	29,246	48	28,592	46	3,855	6
Hararge	117,312	39	136,690	46	45,647	15
Illubabor	26,055	34	47,718	62	3,433	4
Keffa	58,278	29	135,246	67	8,225	4
Shoa	314,826	28	618,409	55	191,144	17
Sidamo	125,728	64	68,453	35	2,302	1
Wollega	102,905	46	110,291	49	10,792	5
Wollo	239,654	61	56,438	14	96,267	25
Total	1,098,793	39	1,316,015	47	387,207	14

Source: Ethiopia, Central Statistical Office, National Survey Sample of Aurssi, Gemu Gofa, Hararge, Illubabor, Kefa, Shewa, Sidamo, Wellega and Welo (Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Office, 1963-1967).

Note: The province of Bale was not included in the National Survey Sample.

TABLE 2
EXTENT OF ABSENTEE OWNERSHIP IN PRIVATE TENURE AREAS

Province	Absentee Owners as Percentage of Total Owners %	Percentage of Total Owned Area Held by Absentee Owners %	
		Measured Land	Unmeasured Land
Arussi	28	27	-
Bale	15	12	-
Gemu Gofa	10	42	8
Hararge	23	48	-
Illubabor	42	42	-
Keffa	18	34	16
Shoa	35	45	22
Sidamo	25	42	5
Wollega	29	28	-
Wollo	26	13	27

Source: Ethiopia, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, Reports on Land Tenure Survey of Arussi, Bale, Gemu Gofa, Hararge, Illubabor, Kefa, Shewa, Sidamo, Wellega and Welo (Addis Ababa: Department of Land Tenure, 1967-1970).

TABLE 3
TENANT POPULATION AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
POPULATION IN PRIVATE TENURE AREAS

Province	Population	Tenant Population					
		With Wholly Rented Land		Partly Owned Land		Partly Rented Land	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Arussi	690,600	307,764	45	50,724	7	358,488	52
Gemu Goffa	583,300	249,412	43	21,633	4	271,045	47
Hararge	1,435,570	703,429	49	71,778	5	775,207	54
Illubabor	515,375	376,224	73	10,307	2	386,531	75
Keffa	969,100	571,769	59	29,073	3	600,842	62
Shoa	3,585,000	1,828,350	51	573,600	16	2,401,950	67
Sidamo	1,987,590	735,408	37	39,751	2	775,159	39
Wollega	1,064,100	574,738	54	49,715	5	624,453	59
Wollo	2,061,800	341,586	16	330,396	16	671,982	32
	12,892,435	5,688,680	46	1,176,977	9	6,865,657	55

Source: Central Statistical Office, National Survey Sample of Arussi, Gemu Gofa, Hararge, Illubabor, Kefa, Shewa, Sidamo, Wellega and Welo (Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Office, 1963-1967).

Note: The province of Bale was not included in the National Survey Sample. Low population figures indicate problems in survey.

Another major factor affecting the application of the reform is the degree of market penetration that existed at the time the land reform decree was issued.³⁶ In the more remote areas of the south and west, peasants tended to be burdened by absentee landlords and tax farming practices. On the basis of available information, it appears that the reforms were quickly implemented in these areas without extensive mobilization by students, for absentee landlords could not return to their land and peasants merely stopped paying fees to the now powerless agents of the landlords. Other areas had long been penetrated by markets and linked to Addis Ababa by roads. In those penetrated areas characterized by commercial farming, mechanization and prior practices of tenant eviction, the reform was also implemented with relative ease. However in penetrated areas characterized by an established balabat system,³⁷ some rich peasants and tenants, as well as large-scale landowners, the reform was more difficult to implement.

The type of crop and the size of landholding needed to produce it has also affected the response to reform. This is particularly true in coffee growing areas and on the small holder lands of the ensete cultivators. At present, however, nearly all the available information concentrates on highland grain producing areas, so it is not presently possible to comment on the process of reform in coffee and ensete areas.

A number of other factors which have affected the process and results of the land reform in various regions include: the degree to which students were committed to radicalize the peasantry and emphasize class based exploitation; the extent to which particular student units in attacking residues of feudalism also tried to undermine or remove cultural values, traditional authorities and spiritual leaders; whether a given area had been affected by agricultural development projects or progressive governors, such as Girmame Neway and Wolde Symat in Wollamo awraja; the extent to which landless workers, servants and artisans were incorporated into peasant associations and whether there was land pressure in the area; whether the people lived near their land or lived outside the peasant association area because of different ecological adaptations; the degree to which collectivization was pushed by students; the extent to which non-Amhara peasants were exploited by their balabats; and, probably most importantly, whether the area was previously characterized by prosperous rich peasants and middle-sized landholdings.

The process of reform has moved from the peasant disturbances that occurred after the army mutinies and prior to the land reform proclamation to the general patterns by which the land reform provisions were implemented, land expropriated and peasant associations formed. Con-

³⁶The distinctions which follow are drawn from notes on: Hoben, "Perspectives on Land Reform in Ethiopia," passim.

³⁷On the balabat system see: John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Policy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 104-140, passim.

straints to reform have been posed by shortages of seeds, implements and oxen; and the government has sought to regain control of the reform movements from student led local peasant associations.

i. General Patterns

The rapidity with which the peasantry in these provinces were mobilized by the land reform proclamation is particularly striking because of the fact that prior to 1974 there were few cases of an aroused peasantry actively resisting the burdens of high tenant rents and oppressive absentee landownership patterns. No doubt as further oral history projects are undertaken evidence of such resistance will emerge, but at present the major known case of resistance was confined to Bale Province, where Amhara soldiers and officials had confiscated land of the Bale Galla people.³⁸ It may be that such resistance was a latent force behind other more passive events or disturbances,³⁹ but it is clear that nothing like the peasant wars which occurred in other agrarian societies marked Ethiopia.⁴⁰ This is remarkable given the heavy burden imposed by agrarian and rural structures in most rural areas. Indeed, available evidence indicates that this lack of resistance was coupled with a lack of awareness of the land reform movement⁴¹ which had been

³⁸These conflicts lasted four years during the last half of the 1960s. In the end the government suppressed the resistance and kept the land although it granted immunity to Gallas who fought against it. This resistance is described in: Markakis, Ethiopia, pp. 370-372. Another rebellion in the northern province of Gojjam appears to have been a tax revolt related to resistance to measurement rather than a reaction to the land tenure system. Peter Schwab, "Rebellion in Gojjam Province, Ethiopia," The Canadian Journal of African Studies, IV, 2 (1970), pp. 249-256. The powerlessness of the peasants is seen in another northern province. Even when more than 100,000 peasants died of famine in Wollo in 1974 there were no attacks on the full grain bins of the landowners. See: Martin Meredith, "A Famine That Left the Rich Richer and the Poor Dead," The Sunday Times, November 25, 1973, p. 8.

³⁹This position is seen in: Patrick Gilkes, The Dying Lion (London: Julian Friedman, 1975), pp. 214-219.

⁴⁰For example see the case studies in: E. R. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970).

⁴¹In a study of 109 farmers who had been in contact with a progressive development project financed by the Swedish government only four responded positively when asked: "Have you heard anything of a new tenancy law?" (CADU, Planning and Evaluation Section, "Cooperative Activities Before Measurement" (draft of proposed CADU publication, Asella, May 1971), p. 12. On the other hand, Siegfried Pausewang notes a number of examples of consciousness in Methods and Concepts of Social Research in a Rural Developing Society: A Critical Appraisal Based on Experience in Ethiopia (Munich: Weltforum Verlag, 1973).

building up since the early 1960s.⁴² If there was an incipient movement among peasants for land reform, it was primarily confined to areas where mechanization and extension had led to higher rent share demands or evictions by landowners.

However, as the creeping coup d' état progressed, a number of isolated acts of peasant rebellion occurred. In the southern and western provinces these took two general forms. The first involved overt hostilities, such as the seizure of land, the beating of some landlords and the occasional burning of tractors and homesteads. Such spontaneous initial responses were most common in areas characterized by large estates and extensive tenancy. It was particularly strong where mechanization had led to tenant evictions or where absentee owners were Shoan Amhara and the tenants were Galla or members of other powerless ethnic groups. The second form of peasant resistant involved the withholding of rents. This at least initially evoked a repressive response from those benefiting from the existing system. Such protest was most common in areas which had been touched by agricultural development projects, for there peasants had some sense of a better future and local elites a more sophisticated understanding of the threat land reform posed to their wealth, power and status.

Examples of the first pattern are found in a number of areas in the southern and western provinces.⁴³ While these spontaneous revolts by peasants were not widespread, they represented change from the peasant's normally compliant behavior. This ranged from the expulsion of Amhara landlords, such as near Dilla in Sidamo Province, to the burning of harvest stores and homesteads of landlords, as occurred in Meki, south of Addis Ababa. The settlement of old scores in Meki ended with the arrival of police who killed approximately one dozen peasants and arrested hundreds more. Such violence also occurred in the Shashamane area of southern Shoa Province where angry tenants burned crops and physically assaulted and occasionally killed landlords. The most widely reported incidents took place near Arba Minch in Gemu Goffa Province. There travelers reported the sight of farms burning and numerous deaths from clashes between peasants, landlords, students and local police.

An example of the response in more developed areas is seen in an incident which occurred in the Chilalo region of Arussi Province, an area which had undergone extensive agricultural development since 1968.⁴⁴

⁴²The land reform movement is described in detail in: Cohen and Weintraub, Land and Peasants, pp. 83-87.

⁴³See: The New York Times, March 29, 1974. Henry S. Hayward, "Army Takes Over Ethiopian City," Christian Science Monitor, April 3, 1974, p. 5. Walker, "The Day the Bribe Went Sour," p. 6.

⁴⁴The region and its development is described in: John M. Cohen, "Rural Change in Ethiopia: The Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit," Economic Development and Cultural Change, XXII, 4 (1974), pp. 580-614.

It seems likely that the response in Chilalo to the promise of reform was due to the presence there of the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU) assisted by the Swedish government. Its six years of project activity had had marked effects on tenants and small-scale landowners, and had resulted in hostility from provincial, land based elites toward CADU staff, which they perceived as a hostile and dogmatic threat to their vested interests.⁴⁵ In the early months of the military takeover, an event occurred which appears typical of initial resistance to the established system. On May 17, 1974, some tenants in the Dera area refused to give part of their harvest to the landowner in payment of rent. The landowner returned with two policemen and a violent argument ensued, resulting in the death of one policeman and two farmers. Two other farmers were taken to jail only to be seized by other policemen and shot for their part in the earlier fight. At the insistence of the provincial elites, the police force went to the governor and demanded that he take strong and immediate action to stem the unruly behavior of peasants before it spread throughout the region. He refused to grant such permission. For several days the provincial elites and police formulated their strategy and then forced him to leave the province. Shortly thereafter CADU staff members went on strike in protest of the unlawful events. Provincial elites responded to this through the local police. CADU employees were threatened and two received non-fatal gunshot wounds. The national center quickly responded to these events and sent a special police force to Arussi to disarm the police and deal with the leaders of the conservative rebellion. This response was successful and the governor returned. But as a result of these events, the landholding elites were more aware than ever of the resistance they might face if land reform was to come.

The land reform proclamation was expected to touch off violent fighting between landowners and peasants. In analyzing the outcome of these expectations it is essential to distinguish between large-scale absentee landowners, locally resident large-scale landowners, balabats with moderate holdings and rich peasants. Unfortunately little systematic data are available which can facilitate such analysis. However, enough is known to support the following generalizations.

In most areas there was little conflict between peasants and large-

⁴⁵ These dimensions of the development process are set forth in: John M. Cohen, "Effects of Green Revolution Strategies on Tenants and Small-scale Landowners in the Chilalo Region of Ethiopia," The Journal of Developing Areas, IX, 3 (1975), pp. 335-358. The role of CADU in trying to raise the consciousness of the peasantry is seen in the activity of its information unit, which has engaged in an almost propaganda-like effort to inform people about CADU's objectives (e.g. promote social questions, to prevent officials and landowners from using their positions for private purposes, to inform peasants about existing laws and proposed legislation relating to land tenure reform) through the use of portable units to cover market places, church gatherings and public meetings.

scale landowners, absent or resident. In part this was because many absentee landowners never returned to their land to protect it, perhaps because over the last decade many large landowners had transferred assets elsewhere in anticipation of such reform. Indeed, some had already been executed and others were in prison as a result of drives against supporters of the emperor. Or it may be that southern Ethiopia was never as fully feudal as anthropological or historical studies had indicated, lacking the kinds of binding ties which would have allowed landowners to mobilize the peasantry. If this were the case, it is no doubt more true of the extreme south where absentee tax farming patterns prevailed. Still, there are reports noting isolated cases of armed resistance by some landowners to those attempting to seize their land⁴⁶ or formation of guerrilla movements in the mountains and forests.⁴⁷ This pattern notwithstanding, one of the more striking facts since the promulgation of reforms has been the rapidity with which the power of landed, provincial elites has declined and their lack of any general, much less coordinated, effort to resist the decline.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Typical of press reports is the following: "Landlords and tenants are in violent conflict in many parts of the country . . . About 100 rural leaders have been executed for opposing the land reform." Colin Legum, "Ethiopia's Legacy Is Poverty and Instability," The New York Times, August 31, 1975, p. 3. Often violence takes different forms, for example, when three police officers called on the widow of an executed official to inform her that under the new law they were confiscating her land she ". . . signalled her (attendants) to leave the room. Then she took out a revolver, and shot the three policemen before blowing out her brains." Guillebaud, "Ethiopia--Threat to the Revolution," p. 13.

⁴⁷Examples in the north are more publicized. "Ethiopia's Dissidents Hold a City Briefly," The New York Times, March 8, 1975, p. 8. In the south and west these movements appear to be of short duration. For example, on the killing of two Shoa guerrillas at the Meshat River near Mount Afkara, Legum notes: "The two brothers were sons of a famous old warrior, Ras Biru Shisan; Mesfin, a professor of economics, was 37; and Meria, a successful farmer was 32. Both were nephews of the Ethiopian Crown Prince . . . They had successfully maintained their resistance in the Menz district of Shoa Province for 10 months. . . ." Colin Legum, "Fighting on Three Fronts in Ethiopia," The Observer, October 12, 1975, p. 8. "In the Arussi region, directly south of here, the Government reported that its troops killed a former provincial administrator and 16 'accomplices' who had taken up arms in opposition to land reform." Henry Kamm, "Ethiopia Facing Widespread Rebellion," The New York Times, October 12, 1975, p. 1.

⁴⁸Reporting on an area near Sodo, Ottaway notes: "The biggest landlord in the district, Fitawrari (Commander) Desta had left his 5,000-acre estate and taken his entire family to Addis Ababa just two days before the proclamation. His servants and tenants said he had handed over the land and house to them, saying: 'It is better you should have it than

Some violence did occur during the process of breaking the power of the balabats. These officials were generally of the same ethnic background as the tenants and tended to live in the rural areas. Many balabats moved to the small towns while others struggled to maintain their holdings. In some cases they joined forces with other resident landowners and fought and lost gun battles with student led police. Reports are unclear, but it appears that some were killed. Many others were imprisoned and ultimately released to live in towns or return quickly to their now reduced holdings. It appears that the efforts to undermine balabats were most successful in areas characterized by high rent or extens've absentee or Amhara landownership. Not all of the balabats' efforts were based on force. Many attempted to become leaders of the peasant associations, which they saw as the key to future resource allocation. The students sought to prevent this since the proclamation excluded persons with holdings such as balabats from participating. This exclusion at times led to conflict as well.

What additional violence occurred centered on disputes between rich peasants,⁴⁹ students, local merchants and rural policemen. These disputes were augmented by additional factors, such as ethnic or religious hostilities. The underlying patterns common to these clashes will be described in the pages which follow. However, it should be noted that these disputes were neither extensive nor violent enough to compromise the general conclusion that the initial stages of land reform went more smoothly and less violently than originally expected in southern and western provinces. In part this is because the PMAC showed a consistent pattern of trying to prevent conflict aimed at local merchants, low level governmental officials and field agents or rural police.

It presently appears that faults in organization, administration and infrastructure posed greater problems than disruptions caused by reform generated conflict. Specifically, the shortage of administrative personnel in Ethiopia and the poorly developed communication and transport infrastructure hampered the implementation of a massive reform program. As shown earlier, a devolved approach was adopted in which peasant associations were given the major responsibility for carrying out

any outsider.' His parting words, they said, were, 'Better that I go live among the other noblemen in Addis Ababa than be ordered around by my own servants and tenants.'" In a 600 mile trip a week after the land reform announcement, he noted no resistance from local nobility, found peasants taking over land, crops and livestock owned by landlords, and noted students moving forward in organizing the peasantry. Ottaway, "Land Reform Is Smooth in Ethiopia," p. A1.

⁴⁹For the purpose of this section a poor peasant farms less than 3 ha.; middle peasant 3 to 10 ha.; rich peasant 10-30 ha.; and a landhold holds 30 ha. or more.

the land directive. This was, in fact, the only feasible approach for initiating rapid change on a nationwide basis. The PMAC could, of course, have chosen a gradualist agrarian strategy or have postponed its decision. However, as one government official was quoted: "Delayed land reform is no land reform--we must go through with it now."⁵⁰

The devolved approach to implementing the program had other practical advantages. Few cadastral surveys have been made in Ethiopia, making it nearly impossible to reallocate land through the centralized administration.⁵¹ Decisions had to be made on an ad hoc basis, using the local information available. The persons best qualified to make such decisions were, of course, the peasants themselves, who because of their long experience in the local community were in a position to assess the fertility of different fields, the value of different farmers' holdings, the equitability of the local distribution of land, and so forth.

The PMAC attempted to aid this process by sending new government officials, land reform officers and zemecha students to the rural areas. In the anticorruption and feudalism drives that followed the rise of military power, most provincial enderassies⁵² were removed and numerous lower level governors replaced.⁵³ This downgrading of traditional and

⁵⁰Johnson, "Poor Administration is Snarling Huge Ethiopian Land Reform," p. 2. On the difference between "devolved" and "centralized" approaches to land reform, see: John D. Montgomery, "The Allocation of Authority in Land Reform Programs: A Comparative Study of Administrative Processes and Outputs," in Norman T. Uphoff and Warren F. Illchman, eds., The Political Economy of Development (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 449-462.

⁵¹Problems of cadastral survey and registration of land are described in Cohen and Weintraub, Land and Peasants, pp. 76-79.

⁵²Local government administration is deconcentrated, with local units divided into provinces, teklay gizats; sub-provinces, awrajas; and districts, weredas as the major units. An enderassie is the top administrative officer of the province. See Part III for a discussion of the local government system. Such deconcentration does not involve any local participation or accountability as with devolution.

⁵³For example, as more and more powerful supporters of the former prime minister, Akilu Habte Wold, were arrested, it came as no surprise that his client, Dejazmatch Sahlu Diffayei, the Arussi enderassie, was removed by the Derg during the Endalkatchew period and replaced by the moderate, very efficient former Vice Minister of Agriculture, Tesfa Bushen. Changes against the corruption of the enderassie's regime began to emerge immediately after the establishment of the Endalkatchew Makonen government. In mid-February, the Chamber of Deputies heard accusations against Sahlu Diffayei brought by other officials of Arussi on behalf of

conservative forces was continued up to the time the land reform was implemented, for the PMAC strengthened the top levels of provincial government by replacing more than 70 awraja governors and 300 wereda governors. The new officials had higher educational levels than most of the men they replaced and were more progressive than their predecessors.⁵⁴ Most of them inherited the conservative, poorly trained Ministry of Interior staffs, and more importantly, police forces generally tied into the corruption and authority patterns of the prior regime. Below the governors, as indicated earlier, most of the informal officials, such as the balabats or chika shums, had either left the countryside or were isolated by the politics of reform.

In many southern and western awrajas and weredas the zemecha students, new governors and recently assigned land reform officers knew little about their area. The students in particular were inexperienced, brought few skills to their job and were often urban children of privilege, and hence ignorant of rural life. Still, their presence could counterbalance the resistance of provincial elites, long term Interior staff members and local police, but they had problems reaching the peasantry. Hence, these progressive forces were frequently forced to rely on the remaining traditional leaders in their efforts to mobilize the peasantry. Such a strategy was necessary because quite apart from the question of administration, merely spreading information about the land reform law posed significant difficulties.

In the initial reform period the shortage of land reform officers and the lack of a clear PMAC policy of implementation led to conditions in which the zemecha students were given a relatively free hand. The lack of government control, however, allowed student groups to define their own tactics and strategies. The official charge to the zemecha campaign was to implement programs in political education, agricultural and cooperative extension, public health, public works, adult literacy education, and cultural preservation. While in the process of fulfilling their land reform duties, many students, perhaps through the coordination

the residents of the province. These men charged the enderassie with illegally collecting money from the people and using it for his own benefit. In addition he was charged with corrupting the judicial process and disloyalty to the people. When Interior failed to investigate, the Chamber voted to send their own investigators. This action in late April centered around the additional charges that Sahlu Diffayei squandered public funds during his oppressive nine-year reign, and imprisoned several people who had collected drought relief funds without his permission. The full investigation of these allegations was never completed because of the subsequent dissolution of parliament, the arrest of the enderassie and his execution in late November.

⁵⁴Their qualifications are set forth in Part III, footnote 16, infra. Ottawa notes that 77 awraja governors were removed. "Land Reform Is Smooth in Ethiopia," p. A6.

of an established network of student movement leaders,⁵⁵ pushed for changes more radical than that laid out in the land reform proclamation. These additional reforms included demands that collective farming be established, that plow oxen be redistributed, that landless peasants and disadvantaged minorities be elected to leadership positions in peasant associations, that merchants, local police, rich peasants and former landlords be termed enemies of the peasants, and that peasants be armed so they could implement the reform and control their "class enemies."

The tactics, if not their results, of the students appear to have been fairly uniform throughout the country. This suggests that some coordination among students existed. It was probably facilitated by the national student movement which had emerged since the early 1960s.⁵⁶ It may well be that radical student leaders coordinated the zemecha campaign as a whole in order to use the land reform proclamation as the basis of a peasant led revolution that could help remove the military government that they viewed as illegitimate.

The establishment of the peasant associations followed a fairly uniform pattern. Students and officials would survey an established area, usually based on local government, church or market boundaries. Local people would be elected from each area and together with the outsiders helped decide how to divide the area into 800 hectare units and how to group these units together. Then lists of inhabitants were drawn up, the students exercising care that all big men, landowners of more than 10 hectares and other "exploiters," were not included on the lists. If local resistance developed, the students were generally able to have the dissenters jailed. In some areas the students were driven out, sometimes they were even killed.

The initial efforts of the students were directed against landlords and local gentry and here the students were remarkably successful.⁵⁷

⁵⁵The coordination among students was probably facilitated by the development of the radical student movement which had emerged since the early 1960s. It may well be that student leaders coordinated the zemecha company as a whole and tried to use the reform as the basis for a peasant led revolution.

⁵⁶For detailed descriptions of the student movement see: footnote 5, Part I and Markakis, Ethiopia, pp. 187-189, 358-361.

⁵⁷Some images of the process are reflected in newspaper accounts. "In the southern provinces, peasants break into song as they plough the land they have been allotted. Foreign observers in Gemu Goffa's southern district are stunned by the extraordinary sight of sharecroppers, for centuries ground down by powerful landlords and junior clergy, drawing up petitions listing their grievances, denouncing pell-mell the high-handedness of governors, the slowness of imperial justice, the wretchedness of Ethiopia's 'third estate' and famine. Their initiative is catching. At

They were aided by a frequent tactic of exploiting ethnic antagonisms, particularly the widespread resentment felt toward the landholding Amhara.⁵⁸ Specifically, it appears from available reports that the major conflict that emerged in many areas was between reformers and rich peasants. Such peasants owned or rented approximately 10 to 30 hectares, yet were not large-scale landlords or provincial elites. Some rented land and many supplied oxen as part of the arrangement. As noted, the land reform proclamation expropriates holdings larger than 10 hectares, eliminates rent payments, and gives tenants the right to keep oxen when provided under the lease arrangement. Many rich peasants were affected by these provisions. Most were armed and unwilling to give up land or oxen easily. More importantly, they could not flee to the towns or turn to other, non-land assets. Hence, when the process of reform began some violence occurred. It may be that much of the localized armed conflict reported in the press has been between these rich peasants and the student led reform forces and not between the latter and large-scale landowners, who tended to fight battles of political intrigue from the safety of the towns. The possibilities for armed conflict were enhanced by the large number of weapons available in rural

Awassa, farm workers are driving the old landlords away with pitch forks and refusing to share with them (as provided for under the reforms) the nationalized farms' draft teams and agricultural implements." Guillebaud, "Ethiopia--Threat to the Revolution," p. 13. At Sabata, 35 kilometers southwest of Addis: "In the early stages of land reform, the students recalled, they played a leading role in dispossessing the landowners and distributing their holdings. Asked what they did to the landlords, one replied: 'We brainwashed them about exploiting the peasants.' When the landlord did not admit to his faults, the student said: 'We used force.' How? he was asked. 'Just clubbing and kicking,' he replied mater-of-factly." Henry Kamm, "Ethiopian Students and Farmers Share Reorganization of Nationalized Land," The New York Times, October 13, 1975, p. 3.

⁵⁸ One hundred kilometers south of Addis Ababa, David Ottaway was told by a policeman about ". . . half a dozen petitions calling for the immediate abolition of the nobles, who in addition to being the village headmen are often big landowners. 'They are chasing away all the Amharas,' he said." "Land Reform is Smooth in Ethiopia," p. A6. In another study, Marina Ottaway notes: "Resentment against the landlords went deep and with it more and more openly went resentment against the Amharas in general. In the words of a harried Amhara policeman in a small town in Shoa last March, 'these people are going after all Amharas, not just the landlords.'" "Land Reform and Peasant Associations in Ethiopia: A Preliminary Analysis (paper presented at Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, San Francisco, October 1975), p. 5. Ethiopian students argue the struggle is class based and large landholders frequently just happen to be Amhara. This is probably a romantic notion. For Galla peasants the ethnicity issues probably are as important as the class issues. The debate on ethnicity and class is raised in numerous publications of the student movement, but has yet to be given careful economic treatment. See footnote 81, infra.

Ethiopia.⁵⁹ Many students argued that in addition peasants should be officially armed, but this strategy was not acceptable to the PMAC and was resisted.

Many provincial policemen held some land which they owned. This interest was reinforced by their historical alliance with the landed elites. For these and other reasons they generally did not actively aid the enforcement of the proclamation's provisions, and they tended to side with landowners on issues of expropriation.⁶⁰ This action angered students, who often treated policemen with open hostility, in some cases stimulating peasant attacks on policemen or their headquarters. Some additional violence was stimulated by landlords who returned to their dispossessed land at night to warn peasants that order would be re-established and that they should continue to meet their rent obligations. Reports of the burning of huts and killings during these visits have been made. The scope of such harassment of peasants is not known.

These problems were complicated by the fact that in many areas the peasantry were pushed toward immediate collectivization, though this is not a clearly outlined short range goal of the legislation. Disturbed by the potential for escalated violence in rural areas, and perhaps more importantly by the danger that it would lose even minimal control over the land reform program, the government took steps in late spring 1975 to bring the students more closely into line. Subsequently the military has displayed a willingness to intervene forcefully in areas where students are generating violent conflict or pushing too hard for radical change such as collectivization.

The decision to rein in the zemecha students may be an inclination that the Derg plans to move somewhat cautiously to implement its land reform program, particularly with regard to the later stages involving redistribution of land and possible collectivization. These two points will be returned to shortly.

The process of organizing peasant associations and dispossessing the large-scale landowners or absentee landlords went more quickly and with less violence in areas touched by rural development projects. For example, in the Chilalo region the students and land reform officers had

⁵⁹ No accurate information exists on arms. One of the authors working in Chilalo awraja found 4,734 arms were registered with the local governor in 1970/71. Probably a good many more were unregistered. The distribution of these between elites and peasants is not known, but assumed to be biased toward elites.

⁶⁰ Marina Ottaway cites flour mills as a case in point. When landlords sought to remove them and student led peasants resisted the police sided with landlords on grounds that the proclamation did not nationalize flour mills. M. Ottaway, "Land Reform and Peasant Associations," p. 8.

available the complex communications grid that CADU had woven into the area.⁶¹ Moreover, CADU's progressive staff responded to the proclamation by allowing students and land reform officers to use the development organization's extension network, marketing centers and incipient awraja development committees to mobilize change quickly. Students acting in close cooperation with CADU staff played a leading role in the rapid dispossession of large-scale landowners and the de facto distribution of their holdings. Indeed, CADU staff openly distributed leaflets to peasants in an effort to raise their awareness of reform. Some pamphlets went so far as to urge peasants to take up arms against the large landlords, drive them from the area and take what was rightfully theirs.

Throughout the southern and western provinces the pragmatic policy of the PMAC worked. The first steps in the program, the abolition of tenancy and the transfer of possessory rights to peasants, were introduced without placing much pressure on the regime's limited resources. These initial moves, while involving major changes in the social structure, did not entail much reorganization of the production system and as such were fairly easy to implement, particularly in view of the loss of political power at the center by the rural elites.⁶² The removal of an essentially non-productive class and the granting of usufruct rights were widely popular in the southern and western provinces, and this aided the process. Violence was also minimized by the fact that those seizing the land were generally the occupants of it.

Interestingly, the threat to the land reform's success came not from violent counter-mobilization led by traditional elites but from a shortage of seed, fertilizer, implements, oxen and credit.⁶³ These were provided to tenants under a variety of arrangements and were in short supply with collapse of the landlord system.⁶⁴ The problem was so acute

⁶¹On CADU see: Cohen, "Rural Change in Ethiopia," pp. 580-614.

⁶²To summarize points made at various junctures in this study, the fact that traditional landowners and local nobility were ineffective in defending their interests suggests that their domination of wealth, status and power was built on decayed foundations, that feudalism was not nearly as pervasive or meaningful as its European model, that they had transferred their interests elsewhere, particularly into urban investments, that the execution and arrests of powerful central elites had broken their self confidence, that they feared the commitment of the military and abandoned their land on the assumption they were vastly outnumbered, or that they knew the center would no longer back them and recognized how crucial it was to any organized resistance. Probably all of these reasons are involved in the collapse of large-scale landed interests.

⁶³A case study of these problems is provided by: Johnson, "Poor Administration Is Snarling Huge Ethiopian Land Reform," p. 2.

⁶⁴Rent arrangement under the old tenure system depended on whether the

in high tenancy areas that the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension and Project Implementation Division (EPID)⁶⁵ used much of its manpower to distribute seed, provide credit and supply 30,000 oxen before the planting season was over. This continued to be a major problem in late 1975 when EPID was faced with the even larger task of increasing seed, credit and oxen supplies. Indeed, it was supposed to provide 50,000 oxen to small-scale farmers against an anticipated need of 150,000.

In the Chilalo region, the implementation of the reform at the start of the planting season, stretched CADU's resources as it struggled to provide seed, credit and oxen to many peasants who had not participated in earlier years. No final statistics on these inputs are currently available, but it is believed that the number of farmers seeking fertilizer and credit from CADU increased from 13,000 to 25,000 between 1972/73 and 1973/74. But while CADU was able to respond to provide seeds and credit to peasants it lacked the oxen to ensure planting. Fortunately, the landowners had left their agricultural machinery behind, in part because they were largely unpaid for, being financed under lax government development loans. CADU quickly came to control some 300 expropriated tractors and while struggling to keep them repaired managed to plow, till and plant many of the abandoned farms and help many additional small-scale peasants caught in the shortage of oxen bind. The shortages of green revolution inputs, credit and oxen will continue to threaten the success of the reform. The dimensions of this problem are explored in detail in Part III of this monograph.

Another factor which complicated the reform was the spread of numerous rumors that were propagated by landowners and provincial elites who had retreated to some of the larger towns. Typical of these rumors were that the proclamation ordered peasants not to plant until further notice, that the government would take 75 percent of the crop at harvest time, and that the military officers were merely making themselves the new landlords of Ethiopia. Such rumors were far less effective in areas in contact with development projects.⁶⁶ In areas without such a progressive developmental link, or in isolated regions, these rumors caused substantial confusion, frequently delaying planting. With the arrival of zemecha students, and stepped up government radio broadcasts in languages other than Amharic, the impact of these rumors was ultimately minimized.

sharecropper received seed, oxen and implements from the landowner. Variations in rent depended on the combination of these inputs. See: Cohen and Weintraub, Land and Peasants, pp. 50-55.

⁶⁵The EPID project is described in footnote 41, Part III of this study.

⁶⁶This was the case in areas covered by CADU, WADU and many of EPID's minimum package projects. For example, CADU staff were particularly effective in calling clarification meetings and spreading accurate information about the reform proclamation.

ii. Collectivization

The proclaimed goal of the PMAC's Ethiopian Socialism in the area of agrarian reform is the establishment of a rural society in which there are no class differences based on unequal shares of land. Despite the success of the reform to date, unequal shares still exist. As of late 1975 it does not appear that the PMAC will push for the redistribution or collectivization that would end remaining inequalities. This policy is based more on pragmatic than ideological grounds, a decision unlikely to change unless pro-Chinese factions in the PMAC regain power. This policy appears to be based on the recognition that redistribution or collectivization would inevitably create conflict which, given pressures elsewhere, the PMAC cannot view with equanimity.

Collectivized farming, as evidence from around the world indicates, tends to be resisted by peasant smallholders.⁶⁷ Indeed, the pattern may have been strengthened in Ethiopia by the new security of tenure and apparent "ownership" the new reforms have brought the southern peasant. With no evidence to the contrary, it can be assumed that most southern and western peasants want to hold their piece of land and do not favor collectivization.⁶⁸ This is particularly true in areas of smallholders where absentee landlordism was low and local indigenous people held the bulk of the land, such as Gurage ensete areas and regions of Wollega where the Amhara conquest was not severe and Galla people retained control of their historical clan lands. If a predisposition to collectivization exists anywhere, it is probably strongest in Galla areas of the south marked by high tenancy rates and Amhara domination. However, to the extent that the collectivization which has been introduced since 1975 is seen as successful, this may induce a greater openness to that pattern on the part of southern and western peasants. It is this process that will now be described.

The pressure to collectivize seems to have been a characteristic of zemecha activities in all parts of the country, including the north. In many areas, the students achieved little success.⁶⁹ Resistance to

⁶⁷For example, the experience with ujamaa villages in: Uma Lele, The Design of Rural Development: Lessons from Africa (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 35-36.

⁶⁸Students and many central government officials hold romantic beliefs that the peasants will collectivize. They often cite the existence of long established cooperative labor arrangements, such as dabo or wenfel as support of this view. See: Arne Lexander, The Changing Rural Society in Arussiland: Some Findings from a Field Study (Addis Ababa: Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit, Publication No. 50, 1970), p. 73. Donald N. Levine, Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 247.

⁶⁹One report on initial success in what appears to be an area not for-

collectives was particularly strong in areas dominated by fairly successful small-scale farmers. In other areas, the general response, if any, was to establish a one to five hectare collective area as a symbolic effort. This was usually done as a compromise with student leaders and some reports indicate that produce from these plots will be set aside to serve a social welfare function. The success of such efforts seems to have been largely confined to areas of the south characterized by large-scale mechanized farms, particularly in areas where progressive agricultural development schemes had been operating, such as in Chilalo, Wollamo and Ada awrajas.

The land reform proclamation established no clear policy for these large farms. They were to be turned into state managed farms, organized as collective farms, or divided up among landless peasants, depending on the local conditions and later government policies. Given this lack of a clear government policy,⁷⁰ the ambiguity of the land reform proclamation, and the ideology of student leaders, zemecha students attempted to move peasants living near these farms into collective production arrangements. These efforts appear to have been generally supported by progressive land reform officers and extension agents, particularly in maximum package areas. Such approaches were allowed by the PMAC because these farms were located in very fertile areas and could not be allowed to lie fallow, for the government realized that reduced production would threaten its support base.

The typical pattern on those farms where collectivization moved forward on a large-scale appears to have been that entry into collective production is done on the general understanding that the arrangement is temporary.⁷¹ The willingness to form collectives was stimulated by a

merly a large-scale commercial farm is described by M. Ottaway. In Mojo, an area in Shoa Province 70 kilometers south of Addis Ababa: ". . . students attempted to push all peasants into collectives. It was proudly explained to the author that the students had measured out the land in 800 hectare areas, without regard for traditional village boundaries, and that all peasants in each area formed a collective. The students took attendance every day--how, it was not clear--and they would eventually distribute the crop according to each peasant's contribution to the common work. Not all collective farms lasted very long, but the offer of free tractor plowing convinced some peasants to accept collective arrangements. "Land Reform and Peasant Associations," p. 9.

⁷⁰The land reform proclamation established no clear policy for these large farms. They were turned into state managed farms, organized as collectives.

⁷¹A description of this process in Munessa wereda is given by David Ottaway. "It is a Thursday market day in Egu and about 150 men from 11 'peasant associations' have gathered at the CADU extension office for a special training session for members of the association's executive councils and 'peasant tribunals.' Leading the session is a zemecha

wide range of inducements. In many areas the government, through such organizations as EPID, CADU and WADU, plowed the land, planted it with improved seeds and aided the settlers with housing and food supplies, leaving only weeding and harvesting to the peasants. Inducements did not always work. Even though CADU offered to provide plowing and other services to associations which farmed collectively, only 10 percent of the associations are said to have taken up the offer, and these were ones in areas where landless laborers without implements or oxen had been settled on former commercial farms. Perhaps in the future the government, when it decides on its new land tax policy, will provide an additional inducement of lower taxes on collectively farmed land. Obviously the government could not support the provision of such incentives on a large scale throughout the country. Still, should these peasants decide to continue the collective pattern into future planting seasons and not demand the subdivision of these large farms into private holdings, the strategy used will become attractive to the government, assuming it decides to move toward collectives.

Such a strategy would be facilitated through the formation of marketing and purchasing cooperatives, the extension of inputs and credit to peasant associations collectively and the provision of mechanization and improved seed and fertilizer inputs to established cooperatives. For these reasons, the success of the established collectives

student with a copy of Mao's Little Red Book in his breast pocket. After chastizing the group for the failure of some council members to show up, the student calls in an authoritative voice for reports of the association's activities for the past week. Instead, he hears about the councils' problems from a dozen peasants, all trying to speak at once, all asking what to do. It seems many of the very small and landless peasants want the associations to begin redistributing the land now instead of waiting until the fall harvest is in, as official policy dictates. The student tells them, no, they must wait. He proposes instead that they work on a 1,000-acre farm confiscated from a local landlord. The student wants to turn the big farm into a collective. But there is an evident lack of enthusiasm among the peasants for communal farming. 'We are not slaves any more,' says one. The peasants also ask the student what they should do about recalcitrant landowners who are refusing to hand over their oxen to former tenants, as the land reform decree specifies. It appears that many of the 'peasant tribunals,' deciding under the decree in favor of the tenants, are having trouble getting their decisions enforced. The tenants then take their troubles to the local police, but they in turn side with the landlords. The student insists the peasants must not go to the police but should try instead to resolve these disputes among themselves through the 'peasant associations.' But the troublesome landlords--indeed, everyone owning more than 25 acres--are excluded from the associations by the decree and apparently have no intention of taking orders from them." Ottaway, "Ethiopia's Rush From Feudalism," p. C1.

will be closely watched by the government. If any policy is to emerge it will likely be one of flexibility, for peasants are not strongly attracted to collectives and the government lacks the financial and manpower resources to help organize and manage them. In addition to requiring material inducements, successful reorganization of production would require extensive re-education and indoctrination, particularly in the northern areas, quite possibly backed up by the use of force. Even then it could not be done on a crash basis but would require years of careful implementation. For the present the regime's resource base is too limited, especially in view of the continual fighting with separatist or royalist groups, to enable it to embark on a successful program of collectivization. That the PMAC realizes it must avoid rural unrest is exhibited in its emerging policy toward radical activity and violence in the land reform process.

iii. Emerging Trends

One of the most widely reported conflicts to occur during the expropriation phase of the land reform program took place in the southwestern province of Keffa. There, in April of 1975, a number of deaths resulted from clashes between zemecha students, peasants, provincial elites and local police forces.⁷² The importance of this disorder extended far beyond the town of Jimma where it occurred and is thought to have altered the attitude of the PMAC toward grass roots implementation of land reform and popular mobilization. Despite the fact that the expropriation of land had been far less bloody than expected, the sporadic violence such as at Jimma was probably seen by the PMAC as an indicator

⁷²In Kaffa, ". . . students have set up 'People's Tribunals,' stolen guns from policemen and thrown a few landlords and police into prison. Three peasants, part of a mob incited by the students, have been killed recently by a local landlord trying to defend his farm house. In a small nearby village the students have hanged a police chauffeur--upside down . . . Students charge that together the police and the big coffee growers--both mainly Amharas--are blocking the swift application of land reform. 'The entire police force must be eradicated,' says one Maoist student . . . [unrest spreads to the provincial capital of Jimma with demonstrations attacking and defending the government] . . . Two days later there is hand-to-hand combat in the streets between zemecha and local high school students on the one hand and police and landlords on the other . . . [A PMAC delegation arrives and tries to negotiate] . . . The Delegation is apparently in a quandry. It wants land reform applied but it also wants law and order maintained . . . [negotiation] fails . . . The order goes out to crack down and at least 24 zemecha students are killed, dozens imprisoned and many others flee back to the capital. Ibid., subsection entitled "Police vs. Students." Marina Ottaway describes this event as a turning point in PMAC policy toward reform, leading to greater control of students, more moderate attitudes toward provincial elites and assertion of central direction over peasant associations and the land reform process. "Land Reform and Peasant Associations," p. 8.

that it might lose control of the associations, that they might be forged into a rural force opposing its continued policies and rule. The anti-government character of some of the violence supported this view.

Some time in mid-1975 a policy emerged that was to begin to limit the scope of locally generated reform.⁷³ Specifically, it became clear that the PMAC was attempting to assert control over the reform movement and not allow it to burn its own course through the countryside. An effort began gradually to take the initiative away from the peasant associations and to contain the excesses of student leadership. Whether this policy will be successful or will continue is uncertain, particularly as it is extremely difficult to supervise the activities of students or associations.

This policy developed after the Jimma demonstrations, when the government held a development seminar at the headquarters of the National Work Campaign. Here it was decided that students should not force peasants into collective farms, as had been done in a number of places, and were to avoid stimulating unnecessary demonstrations and violence. From then on, when students violated these general rules, the PMAC stepped in, usually on the side of moderation and conciliation. There are strong policy reasons for this action. Given the government's embattled position elsewhere in the empire, it seemed necessary to no longer allow students to interpret the revolution's goals in ways that threatened local order and compounded the present conditions of lawlessness in the country. Not only was student led conflict tying up the time and energy of PMAC leaders, undermining the authority of provincial police and requiring the availability of military forces needed in other areas. But such conflict also was diminishing the central government's authority over rural areas, for insufficiently guided local administrators were being pilloried at the same time that reactionary provincial elites with landed interests were uprooted. Hence, the politics of order was reasserted.

A number of students and other demonstrators were imprisoned after political disorders involving clashes with landowners and other provincial elites. Executions followed particularly violent outbursts in which deaths were involved. More frequently, radical students were removed from rural areas.⁷⁴ The fact that the PMAC was forced to assert this

⁷³The emergence of this policy is clearly reflected in newspaper accounts. The most succinct statement on this policy change is made by Marina Ottaway, "Land Reform and Peasant Associations," passim.

⁷⁴M. Ottaway cites disorders in Meki and Zwai involving the attempt of students and peasants to arrest some landowners. There the government intervened and removed the students. An incident in Soddo involved students and peasants who attacked members of the provincial elite, beating to death a hotel owner. Some of the participants in this event were executed. "Land Reform and Peasant Associations," p. 8.

new policy indicates that in many areas the students had effectively mobilized the peasants and directly involved them in the process of change. The seeds of rural empowerment had now been sown.

The scope of peasant involvement is not fully known. In September 1975, on the basis of very uncertain data, the Ministry of Land Reform announced that over 18,000 peasant associations had been formed, with a membership of some 4.5 million peasants.⁷⁵ This is thought to be less than half the planned number of associations, but it is already ten times the number of schools in rural Ethiopia, which prior to 1974 were the most numerous development contact points in the country.

It is difficult to know the actual characteristics of peasant association members. A large number of persons joined because of rumors that each would ultimately receive up to 10 hectares of land. No doubt student efforts, described earlier, to recruit landless workers, migrant laborers, artisans and other disadvantaged people added to the peasant numbers. In addition, the inclusion of young men with older, inheriting brothers and wives of Moslems in Islamic areas increased the number of claimants and thereby the pressure on land being redistributed.

The proclamation confines membership to former tenants and small-scale landowners and other landless people until expropriation is completed, but little is known about the leadership which emerged. Some reports indicate that the leaders tend to be literate, local nobles who were good to their tenants, know many people and are hardworking. On the other hand, it may be that active, radical peasant leadership emerged in some areas and complemented the student effort to mobilize the

⁷⁵The official membership figures are: Arussi 213,000, Shoa 1,013,000, Wollega 273,000, Keffa 372,000, Wollo 371,000, Gemu Cofa 83,000, Bale 90,000, Gojjam 62,000, Tigre 311,000, Hararge 340,000, Begemder 145,000, Sidamo 1,113,000, Illubabor 159,000. Ottaway, "Land Reform and Peasant Associations," pp. 10, 13. An official report of the MLRA claims as of September 1975, 15,989 peasant associations involving 4,550,918 peasants in all provinces except Eriteria. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, "Brief Press Release of the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration" (mimeograph, September 11, 1975), p. 15. The validity of these reports is questionable, as illustrated by the following example: In Chilalo awraja of Arussi province there are 60,000 farming households, yet the MLRA claims a membership of 113,638, ibid. Some 24 million people live in rural areas, some of whom are small townsmen or herdsman. Depending on estimates as to average household size, the rural population is thought to be composed of some 5 million households. Whether these figures are based on heads of household or all members is uncertain. The proclamation does not limit membership to the head of household. Still, it is possible that many associations and members exist on paper only. In areas where zemecha students have been infrequent visitors it is probably the case that names were taken from tax roles or names of those attending the initial meetings were collected.

peasantry. No doubt students were able to influence the selection process toward this end in many areas. Still, it is probable that many elected leaders were successful small-scale farmers prior to the reform. The tendency to choose such persons was undoubtedly facilitated by the need to have leaders with some functional literacy and numeracy skills, since they are needed to work with the government and fulfill some of the duties imposed on the associations. Some reports indicate internal struggles within associations between formerly successful small-scale farmers and disadvantaged persons, described above, who were mobilized to join by student activism and backed by progressive land reform officers and extension agents. Finally, future studies will probably indicate that the characteristics of association members and leaders will have varied according to the landlord-tenant pattern and degree of mechanization, ethnic conflict and contact with agricultural projects prior to the revolution.

The strength and staying power of the peasant associations is problematical. Even if 18,000 have been formed, registered and active, it seems doubtful that they can continue to function without outside guidance. The MLRA is too understaffed to provide such leadership, and despite the extension of the zemacha movement for another year, the new government policy toward students may restrict their leadership interest or effectiveness.⁷⁶ Should students be withdrawn or lose commitment to the associations, many of the associations will cease to be viable. This uncertainty will continue until the PMAC develops its final policy on local government administration and the role the peasant associations will play in it. Finally, the cohesiveness of these associations and their strength may well become a central issue by 1976 when the distribution of land is undertaken and confirmed.

In any case, the associations have served their initial purpose well. A sweeping land reform has been implemented in areas most needing it, the idea of participation implanted in the peasantry, developmental expectations raised, and land placed under crops. Whether the distribution phase will go as smoothly as the expropriation phase remains to be seen. Whether the associations will give way to collective farming depends on government policies and peasant responses to such a pattern of farm production: Chilalo will be a bell-weather for such an approach because of the existing collective farms established on former commercial farms. Of critical importance for the future of the reform process, whether the associations will thrive and the reform continue without there being grain shortfalls in the cities and towns depends on the technical support which the central government is able to provide. Of course it also depends on the weather, for failure of the rains in this or subsequent years would increase the shortfall and could greatly

⁷⁶"Ethiopian Students Help Official Rural Program," The New York Times, January 11, 1976, p. 3.

threaten the reform process.⁷⁷ It must be noted that many displaced commercial farmers and businessmen are presently alienated from the regime and see no further role for themselves in the development process. This is a loss of skilled manpower that Ethiopia can ill afford. Many of these people had invested considerable capital in their holdings which under the present policies appears to have been wasted.

Despite these problems there has been a fundamental transformation of many characteristics of Ethiopia's peculiar brand of semi-feudalism which has ordered rural life, a system which had previously been weakened somewhat by the forces of urbanization, commercialized agriculture, and administrative modernization. It appears very unlikely that the old elites of the southern and western provinces, particularly the nobility and the largest landowners, will be able to effect a counter-revolution and reorder the social structure along pre-existing lines. The new structure which is emerging appears to be tending toward individual proprietorship rather than a collectivist model. A new elite, composed of surplus producing peasants and small-scale landowners, as well as some traditional leaders, may be able to dominate this emerging structure. There are indications, for instance, that these elements are assuming a leadership role in the peasant associations, a phenomenon that is not uncommon in similar peasant organizations elsewhere in Africa.⁷⁸ This emergent elite has a potential to monopolize resources allocated to the rural sector and further strengthen its position. At the same time, however, student organizers have served as a counterweight, spreading doctrines of democracy and socialism and trying to direct the peasant associations toward more radical change.⁷⁹ Successful alignment with the peasant masses to build egalitarian and cooperative rural institutions would, of course, have a leveling effect on the emergence of class distinctions.

In any event, the progress of the land reform movement in the

⁷⁷ Reports indicate that rain was abundant and the first post reform harvest a bumper crop. "Agricultural experts say that because of . . . the rains, one of the best harvest years in recent history is approaching . . . But there will be problems getting it to market: partly because of the lawless state of the countryside and perhaps more importantly, because of the lack of the usual marketing machinery [landlords and marketing middlemen]." Dial Torgerson, "Rebels, Marketing Problems Threaten Ethiopia's Bumper Crop," Los Angeles Times, October 28, 1975, p. 22.

⁷⁸ Ottaway, "Land Reform and Peasant Associations," passim. Lele, Design of Rural Development: Africa, p. 111.

⁷⁹ For example, there was conflict in the Chilalo region between cooperatives established by CADU prior to 1974 and students leading the new peasant issues. The issue was whether the older cooperatives should be allowed to function because the student led peasants charged they represented rich peasants and were hence objectionable.

southern and western provinces means that rural populations in those areas will be an increasingly important factor in Ethiopian politics. The urbanized groups which led the movement for political change found the authority of the imperial system deeply eroded. With the regime's final collapse the nation was rapidly plunged into civil unrest, even internecine war in some areas, for there was no immediate substitute for old feudal ties. The agrarian population, which had in large measure been politically inert and acquiescent under the previous system, offered the strongest basis for legitimizing a new political system. The elites competing at the national level have all attempted to mobilize the rural population: the PMAC through its land reform program, the students through the zemecha organizations, and traditional elites through alliances with regional, ethnic or religious movements. The peasantry, however, is not merely a pawn of the competing elites but is acquiring status as an independent political force. Partially this is because the disarray of authority has made effective control of the rural population difficult. Also it is the result of the fact that competition for rural support has undoubtedly awakened many peasants to new ideologies and the possibility of change, while the abolition of exploitative tenures has granted them the potential of increased economic power. Finally, the creation of peasant associations provides a potential channel through which the periphery can increase its demands on the center. These considerations of peasant empowerment and local level institution building will now be considered.

Before turning to these issues a final note on the role of ethnicity is in order. This is not the place to discuss whether ethnicity is a cause or the result of the economic organizations of land and character of Ethiopian political evolutions.⁸⁰ The point to be made here is that ethnicity in Ethiopia cannot be viewed as simple tribalism. Rather, it is made complex by its close relationship to patterns of land tenure and the distribution of wealth, status and power under the formerly Amhara dominated government. Specifically, there existed a cumulative cleavage along the lines of ethnicity and economic position.⁸¹ This social pattern has heightened awareness of ethnicity at the same time as Haile Selassie's government penetrated the periphery and converted Ethiopia to a bureaucratic state. It is possible that Galla, Garage, Harari, Afar and other peoples will ultimately view the reforms and the PMAC as only a change in the national government and the new policies as merely new forms of central economic imperialism. The military and students are trying to prevent this from happening. Their policy appears to be one of encouraging class consciousness and identity in hopes that a peasant led nationalism will emerge. However, it is not likely that Galla, Afar or other ethnicity affiliations will be easily

⁸⁰ See footnote 58, supra.

⁸¹ Markakis, Ethiopia, pp. 135-138 provides interesting insights into this. See also: Abir, "Education and National Unity in Ethiopia," pp. 44-59.

removed. This being the case there is a danger that ethnicity will be viewed as counter-revolutionary. It is hoped the PMAC will view ethnicity as a result of the system they are attempting to reform, and treat it carefully and with sympathy. Should the reaction be one of repression, the ethnicity issue may well be inflamed to the detriment of socialist mobilization.

PART III

POST LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Policy Issues Rather than Prediction

By late 1975 the PMAC was more embattled than in March, the harvest was progressing, and the redistribution of expropriated land was about to begin. At that time the general consensus was that the military had alienated many of its former supporters but was able to stay in power because there appeared to be no other force, other than factions internal to the armed forces, which had an institutional base from which to challenge it. Neither the urban coalition of unions, teachers and students nor the emerging underground movement known as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) could do little more than weaken the authority of the PMAC. They cannot replace military rule by force. Underlying the military's problem was the paradoxical fact that its socialistic reforms had failed to generate strong political support from those factions of the population which had long demanded them. It may be, as John W. Harbeson notes, that the explanation of this problem is to be found in the revolution's lack of political and institutional direction, a cure for which could be found in government reorganization and the creation of a single mass revolutionary party.¹ While seeing the possibility of a unitary party, Peter Koehn, on the other hand, thinks it very doubtful that the military will turn over power to civilians because it sees no group whose members possess backgrounds and values similar to those of the military leaders and because, "Military regimes tend to pursue centralized political control and eschew the mobilization of public opinion."² However, the PMAC's fostering of peasant associations and consideration of new local government reforms we will shortly describe, indicates that it may be amenable to decentralized administrative structures. In December it issued a new proclamation which attempts to recognize peasant associations as units of local

¹John W. Harbeson, "Politics and Reform in Revolutionary Ethiopia" (paper presented at the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, San Francisco, 1975).

²Koehn thinks that the PMAC might initiate a mobilizing one party system based on new parliamentary structures and local self-government "if it cannot end the Eritrean conflict, students withhold support, urban agitation spreads, and the technical and/or political problems of land tenure reform and land redistribution prove to be insurmountable." Peter Koehn, "Ethiopian Politics: Military Intervention and Prospects for Further Change," Africa Today, XX, 2 (1976), pp. 19-21.

administration but little information is yet available on it and its actual workability in the short-run is doubtful. In addition it is known that some factions within the PMAC favor mass mobilization through the establishment of a single party system. In any case, the questions of decentralization, mass mobilization through political parties and civilian rule are bound to be the central issues debated in 1976 by military and civilian leaders.

While such speculation on "What will happen next?" is interesting, it is not very productive. Those who read studies of Ethiopia written before 1974 will note that many of the basic predictions of yesteryear are now shattered shibboleths. Given the dismal record of both conflict and consensual theorists to foresee accurately the events which marked 1974 and 1975,³ it would be unwise to attempt to outline the direction Ethiopia will take during the next decade. The only forecast that can be made with certainty is that Ethiopia will not return to its pre-1974 system and that an environment has been created which is conducive to sustained rural development. In this regard, it seems desirable to consider some of the more pressing post reform issues which Ethiopia will have to face if it is to mobilize its rural sector successfully and substantially increase its agrarian production.

The Chinese, Russian and Eastern European experiences serve to remind the PMAC that land reform takes a long period of time to be effectively implemented. The military leadership proposes to move from a stage of late feudalism or early capitalism to a socialist system. It seems inevitable that the implementation process will be difficult and involve unexpected problems and policy changes. More directly, the PMAC could move in any number of possible policy directions, depending on which internal faction controls it. Alternatively, counter coups could successfully displace the present regime, thereby altering existing policies in unforeseen ways.⁴ Indeed, the nature and governing policies of any future government may well be determined by such external

³If the basic theoretical division in social theory is between consensual analysis (system-oriented structural-functionalism) and conflict analysis (class, dialectical based material analysis) then it is remarkable that three excellent books representing these perspectives and written by careful scholars failed to anticipate the possibility of the dramatic changes Ethiopia was undergoing. Christopher Clapham, Haile Selassie's Government (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969). John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Policy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974). The conflict functionalism of Donald N. Levine is now being severely tested. Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

⁴The transitional nature of the 1974 economic setting, particularly in southern provinces, is well described in: John Markakis, "Social Formation and Political Adaptation in Ethiopia," The Journal of Modern African Studies, XI, 3 (1973), pp. 361-381.

variables as drought, crop failure, border disputes and the ultimate constellation of factors that emerge out of the range of problems currently facing the government. For these reasons, it is not possible to speak with any degree of certainty about the next decade in rural Ethiopia. On the other hand, it is possible to delineate the major political questions a progressive government will have to decide and the more specific economic conditions any future government will face.

Political questions and economic conditions of the next several years are inextricably bound together. In the analysis which follows it will be assumed that the government clearly recognizes that agriculture is the key to Ethiopian development, that local government reform is crucial to sustained rural progress and that it will not be possible for any government to reestablish the large tenant-worked estates of the past. Further, it will be implicit that an emphasis on agriculture can build a base of rural political support that presents an alternative to an urban, middle class power base.

Institution Building at the Local Level

1. Policy Issues

To implement its nationalist and socialist ideology of "Ethiopia Tikedem" ("Ethiopia First"), the PMAC must overcome its lack of political legitimacy and charismatic appeal according to traditional or established norms. Harbeson, a careful observer of recent Ethiopian politics, notes four major institutional issues: (1) the establishment of linkages with provision of assistance and guidance to rural peasant associations; (2) the commencement of training programs aimed at educating new local government administrators in the principles of Ethiopian socialism and the specific objectives of the reforms; (3) the implementation of new institutions of local self-government which are linked to central government institutions and capable of overseeing the reforms now being launched; and (4) the reorganization of central government ministries so as to create structures which are rationally related to the PMAC's social and economic goals.⁵ If these and other institutional objectives can be met then the PMAC will be in a better position to consolidate its revolutionary social and economic reforms.

Nearly all these institution-building challenges relate to the local government system. And they are linked to five major policy choices which will have dramatic effects on the process of change in rural Ethiopia. Specifically, in addition to the problems of building institutions at the local level and linking them to reorganized, responsive organizations at the national center, the PMAC must decide

⁵Personal communication relating to his ongoing study of the institutionalization of the Ethiopian revolution, November 25, 1975. The PMAC has already begun to develop policy responses to these issues.

the following: (1) whether to follow a policy of maintaining small-scale peasant farming patterns on an individual and usufructory basis or move to establish collective farms throughout the country; (2) whether to require that land be equally divided among members of peasant associations or allow present inequalities among small-scale landholders to continue; (3) whether to control the peasant associations from the top combining in them both technical land distribution and more complex development functions, or decentralize political power to the associations, establishing them as local government units, politicizing peasants and placing them fully in charge of their own destiny under the assumption that this is the only way to insure substantial long term rural development and production increases; (4) whether to provide peasants with production incentives through high farm prices and low taxes or pursue policies which keep urban food prices low and generate through land and output taxes resources needed for national development; (5) to follow the short-term politics of order in an attempt to insure steady production of food and fiber or risk economic disruptions by pursuing the radical alternatives suggested in the above choices. Decisions on these policy issues will have to be made, and whatever their final outcome they will lead to conflict in rural areas, among government ministries, and between politicized urban forces and the PMAC.

Before considering specific aspects of the challenge of institution building and center-periphery linkages, several important points must be made. First, many observers continue to hold that peasants do not want the land collectivized and since mid-1975 the military has made it increasingly clear that it views collectivization as only a long range goal. Still, as has been shown, some peasant associations under student pressure and government incentives, such as tractor plowing, credit extension and resettlement support, have moved into collective relations of production. In the end, peasant attachment to their own land, shortage of trained organizers of cooperatives, and the immediate grain shortfalls which rapid widespread cooperatization will likely initially engender, will make the choice of collectivization of rural Ethiopia a difficult policy for an insecure government to follow.

Secondly, there appears to be no agreement among rural oriented ministries on the future role of the peasant associations. It is likely that progressives in control of the Ministry of Interior would like to promote rural empowerment through decentralization of power to the peasant associations. However, military regimes are generally loath to adopt decentralized administrative approaches. This is particularly the case in Ethiopia where the present deconcentrated pattern of administration is somewhat similar to the hierarchical pattern of military organization. As noted earlier, the PMAC is showing strong signs of moving toward decentralization of administrative structures, through devolution to peasant associations, and if so its emerging policy may prove to be an exception to the general pattern of military rule of local areas. Still, many problems face such a move. For example,

present proposals by the Ministry of Interior that peasant associations undertake tax collection, maintain order, and coordinate development programs are not likely to be readily acceptable to other ministries.

Finally, the extent to which the previous local government system has been eroded remains to be seen. Should it develop that the reforms and events of the last two years have left a power vacuum at the level of local administration, then the extension of governmental functions at the local and wereda levels may become inevitable. Or should the PMAC become more involved in regional conflicts, and find its power eroded by the further withdrawal of urban based support, it might attempt to mobilize the peasantry by a single, rural based party, devolving governmental functions to the peasant associations in the process. Should these organizations be given administrative tasks it will remain to be seen whether they will be able to perform them effectively. Should the association be politicized and expanded in this manner, they may well be drawn away from the more basic task of organizing for rural development and increasing agrarian production.

ii. Local Government Reform

The general characteristics of local government under imperial rule have been described in a number of studies.⁶ In summary, rural Ethiopia prior to the revolution was controlled by a uniquely deconcentrated, yet largely autonomous system of local government embodying many elements that retarded change in the provinces. The center of this control was in the Ministry of Interior, an organization which had not changed significantly since the early 1940s.⁷ This ministry was assigned the task of administering the country's 14 provinces (teklay ghizats), slightly more than 100 subprovinces (awrajas), approximately

⁶ Berhané Gebray, L'Organisation de l'Administration Locale en Ethiopia (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University, Faculty of Law, 1969); Margery Perham, The Government of Ethiopia, 2nd ed. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969), pp. 343-366; Markakis, Ethiopia, pp. 288-323; John M. Cohen and Peter H. Koehn, "Local Government in Ethiopia: Prospects for Reform in the 1970s" (paper presented at the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Chicago, 1974); and their "Local Government in Ethiopia: Independence and Variability in a Deconcentrated System," The Quarterly Journal of Administration, IX, 4 (1975), pp. 369-386.

⁷ See: Administrative Regulations Decree of 1942, Negarit Gazeta, yr. 1, no. 6, August 27, 1942, pp. 43-53; Teklay Ghizat Administration Order of 1973, Order No. 86 of 1973, Negarit Gazeta, yr. 33, no. 1, September 12, 1973, pp. 1-18; Municipalities Proclamation of 1945, Proclamation No. 74 of 1945, Negarit Gazeta, yr. 4, no. 7, March 30, 1945, pp. 38-43. The Ministers (Definition of Power) (Amendment No. 2) Order, Order No. 46 of 1966, Negarit Gazeta, yr. 25, no. 23, July 27, 1966, pp. 131-145.

500 districts (weredas) and many variable localized units. Operating in all these local areas were field agents of ministries under an un-integrated prefectural system somewhat similar to the Italian model.⁸ Despite the deconcentrated system of local government, there were many territorial and functional conflicts of jurisdiction among Interior officials and between that ministry and other field ministries, particularly those involved in development. None of these conflicts would have been difficult to resolve if there had been a progress-oriented spirit of intergovernmental cooperation, but this spirit was rarely to be found.

During the reign of Haile Selassie, local government existed primarily for the purposes of maintaining order and extracting revenues. These functions were realized largely through the interaction of Interior's governors, the provincial police under their authority, and field agents of the Ministries of Justice and Finance. While personnel from these three ministries were found in most local government units, this was not the case with ministries designed to promote agrarian or rural development, such as Agriculture, Community Development, Education, Public Health and Land Reform. The limited expenditures for these developmental agencies resulted from the national center's lack of commitment to rural change. But even when the regime did establish rural development projects, commence self help activities, or extend innovations to rural areas it frequently found these efforts blocked or warped by the local government system.⁹

⁸ Brian C. Smith, Field Administration: An Aspect of Decentralization (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 79. Deconcentration is held to involve the establishment of a network of subordinate field offices of the national government. It brings government closer to the local level but does not involve participation. Officials assigned to these subordinate units of local government may or may not decide matters of policy or make fundamental decisions, but they are appointed from above with no input from the local citizenry. The crucial point about the Italian system is that the field agents are governed administratively by the prefect but technically responsible to their own ministry. See: Koehn and Cohen, "Local Government on Ethiopia," pp. 369-386 for the problems this division of administrative-technical control causes.

⁹ Examples of this are seen in the Chilalo region where the Swedish-backed CADU project found its efforts to improve the income and lives of peasants adversely affected by local government official's values, policies and vested interests. In particular: the courts refused to protect tenants from eviction or to enforce their legal rights against landowners; mechanized farmers were allowed to continue past practices of open tax evasion while increased peasant income was taxed; education and health personnel made no sustained effort to extend their services to peasant families; and most local governors increased the level of "voluntary" contributions required from peasants to finance self-help projects,

The PMAC has declared its commitment to agricultural growth and rural development. Moreover, unlike the prior government, it has declared its intention to mobilize the resources necessary to promote such goals. The military officers who rule Ethiopia realize that local government reform is essential to their success. Hence, before describing the reforms the PMAC is implementing or considering, it may be helpful to note some of the more salient problems of the prior system.

While the goals of the system were set by central elites who controlled the ministries, there was substantial room for local administrators to interpret orders from above, or to resist and even suppress them. In operating local government on a daily basis, these officials tended to act according to the perceived needs of the provincial elite,¹⁰ of which they were members, and their own self-interest. These officials rarely conceived of public service in Western terms and showed little concern for the great percentage of Ethiopians who were poor, unhealthy, and illiterate. Most merely performed their narrow taxation and paperwork functions while protecting their positions and seeking wherever possible to gain material advantage from their office. It may also be that low salaries encouraged corrupt behavior, such as misappropriation of budget funds, tax revenues, and self-help contributions, as well as bribes and institutionalized extortion in return for government favors.

Compounding the problem, local government officials had few development related qualifications for office. Their outlook was traditional and they lacked the education necessary to absorb the economics and strategies behind even the government's rather limited development plans. These characteristics also led to excessive formalism, delay, and chaotic record keeping. Moreover, they rarely had budgets beyond their salary and overhead requirements. Supervision of these employees was usually minimal, and they were often shifted to positions without respect for their qualifications or experience. These factors lowered morale and led to an emphasis on time-consuming formality as often reflected in unimportant clerical work. Frequently they led to outside interests in land buying and farming. In the end these employees rarely came to work on time and eschewed innovation and activity.

Personnel shortages in Ethiopia prevented the replacement of such officials. Better educated civil servants often preferred not to live

from which they rarely benefited. John M. Cohen, "Effects of Green Revolution Strategies on Tenants and Small-Scale Landowners in the Chilalo Region of Ethiopia," The Journal of Developing Areas, IX, 3 (1975), pp. 335-358.

¹⁰ On the provincial elite and their ties to land, political power and local government activities, see: Markakis, Ethiopia, pp. 73-140. John M. Cohen, "Ethiopian Provincial Elites and the Process of Change," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, XI, 2 (1973), pp. 93-97.

in rural or outlying urban locales, so more qualified persons were rarely introduced. Those educated, reform-minded men who did enter the system were frequently isolated. Those who sought to serve the urban poor or the peasant, or who fought corruption and criticized the inefficiency of government, rarely advanced. Rather they would eventually come into conflict with elements in the traditional localities and usually be transferred as a result of political pressure. If they were field agents of development ministries, their positions and uncertain lines of authority generally prevented them from having significant effect on the system, which was dominated by the administrative structures culminating in the Ministry of Interior. Other educated, progressive civil servants never faced such problems because they became co-opted by the rewards of the system.

The cumulative effect of these factors was a restrictive, self-seeking, narrowly responsive local government system. Aside from a few public services confined to towns and largely benefiting provincial elites, the system at most maintained order and collected taxes. There had been no training programs to promote more efficient government. Nor had there been attempts to involve local officials in more than token development efforts. Rather, local officials were allowed to advance themselves, block or distort the limited reforms introduced, and serve the provincial elite while extracting whatever possible from the meager incomes of peasants. In this administrative environment, the implementation of agricultural and rural development goals was highly problematical.

The need to revitalize local government administration was recognized in the mid-1960s. Beginning in 1964 with the Technical Committee on local government, there has been a movement toward a decentralized local government system which would provide the foundation for development-oriented public service in which local inhabitants could participate.¹¹ The culmination of the movement was the Local Self-Administra-

¹¹The report stated, "We find that Ethiopia has now reached the stage of development where an administration concentrated in the central government may hamper further economic and social development, and, so, that a decentralization of the administration will be of great importance to further harmonious development of all parts of the country . . . that the people's interest can . . . be expected to be raised only through a further decentralization of the central government's administration and the participation of the people in such decentralized activities, in an advisory capacity. We, therefore, feel that the decisive and executive power on the administration of the local affairs of an area should be given to the people of that area:--that means the establishment of an independent local self-government system." Gabre Mariam, et al., "Report From the Technical Committee, 1964, on the Establishment of a Local Government System," October 1964, Haile Sellassie I Law School, Archives, p. 2 and 8.

tion Order of 1966.¹² This was never officially implemented because of problems with alteration of existing tax revenues and the resistance of Parliament to a decentralized movement that had no provincial elite support or any real possibility of succeeding in many parts of the country.¹³

In order to establish the feasibility of the program, the Ministry of Interior tried to implement it on a pilot basis in several promising awrajas.¹⁴ Under this program, which began in late 1973, the central government was to transfer to an elected awraja council control over such services as education, health, public works, water supply, and community development. These were to be financed by allowing the local unit to keep certain land tax receipts and through central grants-in-aid. Decisions on local programs were to be made by an awraja council composed of representatives from the weredas and municipalities of the area, and they were to be elected by a broadly enfranchised local population.¹⁵ All decisions were subject to review by the central government and control over the awraja remained in the hands of a governor, appointed by the Ministry of Interior, known as the "awraja administrator."

The Awraja Self-Government scheme was far more complex than this

¹²The Local Self Administration Order of 1966, Order No. 43, Negarit Gazeta, 25th yr., no. 9B, 14 March 1966, pp. 33-54b. This legislation is described in: H. K. Asmerom, "Trends Towards Decentralization in Ethiopia," Studies in Comparative Local Government, I (Winter 1967), pp. 55-67.

¹³The draft proclamation entitled "Awraja Local Government Revenues Proclamation" was not passed by parliament and the entire attempt was made inoperative. This proclamation was to transfer certain tax revenues to awraja control. But under Articles 27, 34, 86-92 and 113-114 of the Ethiopian constitution, it was illegal for the patterns of taxation to be altered by any means other than a law passed by parliament in the form of a proclamation. For a variety of reasons the provincial elites and local government officials disliked the decentralization approach and their representatives in parliament affirmed that view. The legal argument behind this situation is set forth in: James C. N. Paul and Christopher Clapham, Ethiopian Constitutional Development, 2 vols. (Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press, 1967), II, pp. 451-469.

¹⁴The awraja self-government program and the complex issues surrounding it and the pilot program are described in: John M. Cohen, Local Government Reform in Ethiopia: An Analysis of the Problems and Prospects of the Awraja Self-Government Proposal, with Particular Emphasis on Rural Change, Local Participation and Potential Areas of External Assistance (Washington, D.C.: United States Agency for International Development, 1974), pp. 115-154.

¹⁵For details of the program see: Asmerom, "Trends Toward Decentralization," pp. 55-67.

brief review suggests. However sufficient description has been presented to illustrate the thrust of reform prior to Haile Selassie's deposal. Because of the events of 1974 the pilot program was never implemented fully, but its approach toward improving the ability of local units to support rural change policies is continuing to affect proposed solutions to the desperate need for local government reform in Ethiopia.

A great deal of local government reform has already occurred under the new regime. Specifically, the PMAC has removed or neutralized many traditional local government officials, and peasant associations have begun to fulfill functions of many informal local officials, such as the balabats and chika shums. The Ministry of Interior has begun to place more qualified personnel at awraja and wereda administrator posts. Unofficial criteria are said to exist based on age, education, years of field experience and technical background.¹⁶ This is a positive sign that the days of patronage appointment are over. This policy should improve administrative capacity and effectiveness at the local level. Approximately 400 of the more than 600 awraja and wereda governor posts are thought to have been filled with these new men. Rather than using the old title of "governor" the PMAC has designated the title "administrator" for these posts, an additional sign indicating that their tasks are to center more on development than the traditional functions of maintaining order and collecting taxes.

Even assuming a full commitment by the central government and these new administrators to rural change, there is little near-term possibility that personnel under their direction or field agents under other development ministries can reach more than one quarter of the rural population with direct services and programs.¹⁷ For example, the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration had a staff of only 200-300 in 1975, most of whom had less than high school education. Thus despite the fact that the Land Reform proclamation promised that an official from this ministry would be assigned to each of the nation's 550 weredas,

¹⁶The criteria for awraja administrator are said to be 30-45 years of age, B.A. degree, 10 years field experience and a background in education, health, agriculture or community development. For the wereda administrator it is 25-40 years of age, 12th grade certificate, 7 years of field experience and the same background as for the awraja administrator.

¹⁷The number and location of field agents is skewed on the basis of distance from Addis Ababa, religious or ethnic considerations, variation in the influence of provincial elites and governors, and other considerations. Hence, there are more field agents in some places than others. Manpower limitations make it unlikely that the number of trained technical personnel can be dramatically increased, a fact complicated by the expectation that Ethiopia's rural population will double in the next 30 years. Hence reliance on local people and para-professionals seems to be an obvious policy choice for an agrarian nation committed to rural development.

even this minimal goal is initially impossible to meet.¹⁸ Such manpower constraints have led PMAC policy makers to consider decentralization, reliance on peasant associations, development of paraprofessional extension activity and other possible approaches designed to expand outreach and promote agricultural growth and rural development.

It is assumed that local government reform must accompany land tenure reform since it sets the administrative environment in which agrarian inputs are delivered and rural development programs are operated. The new conditions in rural Ethiopia require reforms that (1) can end the continual interministerial disputes which block or warp developmental activities and divert time and attention from delivery systems, (2) carry out new national policies such as land tenure reform and social reorganization of the peasantry through peasant associations or cooperatives, and (3) administer the research, credit, marketing and social service delivery systems that must function in order to stimulate agrarian production. Most observers think awraja or wereda self-government will provide a solid foundation on which to solve these and other problems. However, as noted earlier, military governments are usually unwilling to decentralize, particularly in countries where the existing local government system is based on a deconcentrated pattern, as in Ethiopia. Still, the PMAC appears to recognize that existing vertical and deconcentrated patterns of administration complicate the rural change process. Several administrative reform committees are known to be considering the decentralization option. This appears consistent with the apparent attempt of the military leaders to base their non-military support for developmental progress on the peasantry. Surely land tenure reform, peasant associations and decentralization for developmental goals are compatible policies.

Most observers in late 1975 thought that the PMAC was committed to create a local government system that could coordinate the various development activities of the central ministries, stimulate local participation and even become the basic decision-making level for planning rural development and allocating change directed resources and services.¹⁹ Specifically, it was expected that the military leaders would apply the basic awraja model of self-government throughout the country. As noted earlier, the thrust of this model was to decentralize authority closer to the implementation level, move local government beyond order and tax collection functions to developmental activities, establish machinery for local participation so that peasants would have

¹⁸ John W. Bruce, "Ethiopia: Nationalization of Rural Lands Proclamation," Land Tenure Center Newsletter (January-March 1975), p. 6.

¹⁹ Based on communications with various officials in donor missions. In particular, USAID has been requested to formulate a proposal outlining the kind of foreign assistance it could provide such a strategy. SIDA officials also sense this basic policy thrust.

increased awareness of and responsibility for development work, allow locally generated revenue, particularly education, health and some land taxes, to be kept and administered for local development, and establish an administrative framework that would promote integration of services and overcome the interministerial jurisdictional problems that have plagued Ethiopian local government.

These observations are backed by the fact that the PMAC has already decentralized some functions. In particular, it has had the Ministry of Interior and other ministries delegate downward the authority to hire, promote and remove lower-level local personnel, decentralize their agriculture, water, road, education and health activities, and begin to work with the peasant associations wherever possible. Another indicator of concern is the present proposal to shift the community development functions of the former Ministry of National Community Development, now the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, to the Ministry of Interior. If this takes place, Interior is said to plan to use MNCD's former Awassa Community Development Training Center to retrain all provincial staff in strategies of integrated rural development.

The future direction of grassroots local government is unclear. It seems likely that if such institutions are to support the land and agrarian reform movements the PMAC will have to decide how to interface the activities of development ministries with peasant associations, institutionalize and utilize the zemecha student program, generate local level para-professionals to supplement the technical skills of central government field agents, and resocialize or remove much of the remaining personnel of the pre-revolutionary local government system. Since little is known about the government's attitudes toward these important issues, this section will merely conclude with a discussion of the more salient problems surrounding them.

The peasant associations present the most significant change in local administration introduced by the PMAC. In addition to the performance of land reform functions required by the proclamation that created them, they are said to be stimulating the training in self-reliance important to local awareness and to be providing a growing locus for the institutional interface needed by the technical field agents of development ministries. Still there is a significant danger that local government officials may attempt to employ the peasant associations for a wide variety of tasks before the proper institutional and training groundwork has been laid.

Evidence of this is seen in the imposition of tax collection functions described in an earlier section and in a new proclamation issued in December and reported in the December 14, 1975 issue of Addis Zemen. It turns the peasant associations into administrative bodies, charging them with security, local government and judicial duties. This proclamation, as yet unnumbered, is entitled "A Proclamation to Organize the Peasant Associations in Ethiopia." (Information on this law was sketchy at the time this study was completed.) It provides for

establishment of cooperatives in peasant association areas, and authorizes them to perform a wide range of functions. In addition to usual duties relative to sales of inputs, credit provision, marketing and cottage industry production, they are charged with such tasks as abolishing corruption, politically educating the rural farmer, promoting democracy, and providing some funds for rural welfare. The proclamation also sets the powers and duties of farmer's security forces. These are charged with protecting farmers property and crops (presumably against former landlords) and enforcing the decisions of rural courts (presumably those relating to land division and reallocation). Judicial duties of a court for peasant associations are included in the law but it is unclear as to their relationship to Ministry of Justice courts or the kinds of cases they can handle. Finally, the proclamation establishes a hierarchical set of "Revolutionary Administrative and Development Committees for wereda and awraja areas." The functions of these committees are to integrate the peasant associations into the local government system, to coordinate services and plans of development ministries at the local level and to insure peasant participation in policy decisions that affect their interests and lives.

This proclamation supports the general PMAC view that many government directed rural programs and services could be run through the associations, from agricultural extension to the maintenance of security. Toward this end, many government officials talk of training peasant leaders of these associations in the use of improved seed types, fertilizer, and new agricultural techniques, as well as in literacy, census taking, health care, cooperative formation and so on. What is unclear is whether the associations themselves are to be strengthened or whether they are merely to serve as channels for government activities and programs. That is, there has yet to emerge any clear policy statement on how to effectively turn peasant associations into the lowest level of local government administration, and little thought has been given to training peasant leaders in organizational leadership or management and administrative techniques. This is a particularly important fact given the present view that the associations are led by students who are transient and may be hampering the institutionalization process.

The peasant associations are new and untried institutions. It seems prudent not to overload them until they are firmly established. Hence, the PMAC needs to develop a careful policy as to the functions they are to perform and the uses to which development ministries can put them. On the other hand, if the central government regulates them too closely, they may cease to be responsive to local priorities, in which case local participation is likely to dwindle. This dilemma is complicated by the fact that the PMAC appears to be developing a policy to use the peasant associations as the basis of rural cooperatives, a difficult function to perform by any rural organization.²⁰

²⁰ See for example, Uma Lelo, The Design of Rural Development: Lessons from Africa (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 109-111.

In any case, if these associations can be stabilized and institutionalized they should significantly increase local government administrative capacity. Assuming this occurs, it seems clear that they will need resources such as self-help matching funds, basic medical supplies, village and home improvement materials, training opportunities, improved seeds, fertilizer and other agricultural inputs, literacy campaign materials and so on. Given the limited resources of the center, international donors could play an important supplementary role. But in any case, there will be difficult and important problems of setting priorities and phasing the use of scarce resources for reaching these simple objectives.

There is a question as to how the zemecha students can be institutionalized into the local development framework. At present the initial campaign has been extended for a year, leaving an estimated 40,000 students operating from some 450 campaign stations spread throughout the countryside.²¹ In future years it is anticipated that 15,000 students could be available for continued activities,²² a manpower figure 20 times greater than the present number of rural extension personnel currently in the field.

As has been noted, there is a substantial question about the extent to which students will be willing to cooperate with the PMAC. The initial common ground between military policies and student ideals and goals has been broken down. More importantly, the PMAC realizes that uncontrolled student activity wastes the limited time and energy of local government administrators and undermines the legitimacy of local government institutions and programs. The legitimacy problem is important, for rural development requires close cooperation between government personnel and peasant associations. If students are continually allowed to attack local field agents they may greatly compromise the capacity of local administrators to deliver needed services or manage innovative programs.

To be sure, the corruption and other dysfunctional characteristics of local government administration will not be ended quickly, and pressure must be maintained that operates in the direction of reform. But it is also necessary to insure that the structure for mobilizing change is not eradicated in the process. Assuming that the PMAC can gain

²¹A recent report noted that 57,000 senior high school and university students were in the field, that the first year of the campaign cost \$22.4 million and that the dropout rate was about 25%. "Ethiopian Students Help Official Rural Program," The New York Times, January 11, 1976, p. 2.

²²This is based on the assumption the PMAC will continue the program and utilize only 12th grade graduates and one year of additional service from university students. Work campaigns run on a short-term basis by the Ministry of Youth would add additional manpower to these efforts.

control over zemecha activities and can institutionalize their functions, then they could greatly aid the rural mobilization process. Already the zemecha organizations have served the functions of helping to neutralize provincial elites and organize peasant associations. In the future they could aid the redistribution of land and serve in a broad number of development tasks from running literacy campaigns to organizing and overseeing community self help projects.²³ For this to happen their largely uncontrolled activities will have to be ended and a specific but broadly defined set of duties be put into effect. At present the government is considering merger of the Ministry of Community Development with the Ministry of Interior, and it may be that the assignment of students to this organization will prove an effective way to coordinate their activities and utilize their energies in positive, nation building ways.

Ethiopia lacks the trained personnel essential to reach her vast rural population. A promising solution to this problem is being considered by the PMAC. It involves the use of lower-level manpower to expand the field staff of developmental and rural service ministries. These para-professionals could perform useful and effective roles if they are chosen at the local level, their tasks are limited and simple and their activities supervised. Training and upgrading would be essential if such manpower is to be productive. Whether this approach will be ultimately implemented is not known, but it seems to be an attractive solution for reaching the approximately 19 million rural people generally unaffected by governmental programs.

Finally, the PMAC will have to make the bureaucratic structures and personnel it inherited from Haile Selassie's government more responsive to the demands and problems of rural change. It has begun this process by requesting most ministries to reorganize so as to be more capable of promoting Ethiopia Tikdem. Despite this fact there has yet to be any major change in administrative structure. This is particularly true of the Ministry of Interior which is bound to receive additional responsibilities for insuring the success of the PMAC's agrarian and rural development policies.

At the personnel level, the military needs to establish a precedent of choosing ministers and their deputies for their technical abilities, as well as their political acceptability. More importantly, if the development and service ministries reduced the number of central

²³There is some question whether students can do more than politicize peasants. Harbeson notes: "The students and teachers have been expected to help the masses by instruction in nutrition, hygiene, literacy, agricultural methods, and in the creation of local self-help development schemes . . . The students were poorly equipped to instruct the rural folk in modern ways, but years of radical opposition to the regime of Haile Selassie prepared them well for their opportunity to implement the rural land reform." Harbeson, "Politics and Reform in Ethiopia," p. 12.

departments through consolidation they would not only make high level decision making more rapid and efficient but they could transfer experienced senior and middle level personnel to the talent-short rural periphery. On the other hand, too much reorganization and training at the center might be counterproductive, for the major efforts are needed at the rural level. This is because of the fact that in Ethiopia, as in most developing countries, those involved in rural transformation activities are among the least trained, experienced and paid governmental personnel. In a country about to base its future on its agrarian potential, they constitute weak links in the development process.

Certainly, the PMAC must spell out its policies carefully so that local level administrators and field agents can know what is expected of them. It is known that the government is jailing administrators who make "incorrect" decisions. Given the general climate of fear these and other PMAC actions have propagated, and the pressure from zemecha led peasant associations, many local level officials are reluctant to make decisions or take any administrative action. This pattern cripples the development process and needs to be dealt with immediately, for an effective rural administration is essential if Ethiopia is going to concentrate on rural development in the near future.

The PMAC would be well advised to charge an organization, such as the Institute of Public Administration or the Central Personnel Agency, with the task of educating rural civil servants in the principles of Ethiopia Tikdem. Beyond this they could be charged with developing a solid program for improving managerial and clerical skills at all levels of government. Moreover, there is a need for extensive redrafting of administrative guidelines and preparation of new ones aimed at attacking the numerous administrative constraints which negatively affect the government's capacity to implement development programs.²⁴

²⁴ A list of these constraints prepared for the Fourth Five Year Plan by the Institute of Public Administration include: organizational proliferation; lack of coordination across hierarchical organizations; inadequate personnel policies and practices (position classification and salary scales, evaluation of manpower needs, no government-wide training policy or program); major defects in the budgetary process (untimely allocations, insufficient allocations, unsteady cash flow, complicated procedures and reporting requirements, no advance programming, fragmented budgeting, outdated classification system); lack of a uniform or standardized system of travel regulations; inefficiencies in government-wide supply management; centralization of decision making; no incentive for rural service; no proper organization yet for social mobilization of local self-help; very poor communications; absence of systematic and continuous appraisal, reporting and response; common administrative deficiencies (disorganized filing systems, improper office lay-out, badly designed forms, lack of office equipment or working space, no systematic effort to improve administrative methods or procedures); weak programming

Most ministerial staff recognize that the present patterns of dual supervision (with administrative power held by Interior's governors and with technical control by functional ministries) hamper inter-ministerial coordination. They promote overlapping functions or costly duplication of effort, and generate serious power conflicts that are dysfunctional to the development process. At present the best solution to this problem may well be one which increases the power of Interior's awraja and wereda governors to integrate and coordinate the field agents and activities of other ministries. If the PMAC implements such an approach it will constitute a major change in existing local government patterns.²⁵ Such change, of course, will require major commitment from the center, for while the technical and service ministries recognize the problems inherent in the present structure, they are unlikely to support fully a solution which would increase the power and influence of the Ministry of Interior.

Even if progress is made in all these areas it will not ensure a more responsive bureaucracy. For new administrative structures and regulations to work, for new skills to be effectively applied to rural problems, there is a great need to resocialize local level bureaucratic personnel whose civil service orientations were formed during Haile Selassie's reign. Manpower constraints preclude removing many of these men and their behavior patterns, as described at the beginning of this section, are perhaps too established in the political culture to be easily altered. The solution to this problem may well prove to be one of the least tractable aspects of the process of building rural institutions responsive to a mobilized peasantry and central policies of rural change. The center will not be capable of supervising their widely scattered activities, and unless their penchant for corruption is terminated and their orientations shifted from personal gain to social progress, governmental effectiveness in the reform movement will be greatly hampered. It remains to be seen how the PMAC will reeducate these traditional officials to move beyond the status-quo, to delegate authority when necessary, to cooperate with other local officials, to respect technical decisions of subordinates, and to place public service above traditional principles of authoritarian command and interpersonal conflict. Presumably the mobilization and politicalization of peasant associations will be part of the solution to this problem of reorientation and reform of administrative behavior.

and planning units; personalization as opposed to institutionalization of administration; paucity of reliable statistics; inadequate evaluation; and insufficient support for administrative improvement. Institute of Public Administration, Administrative Constraints that Hamper Plan Implementation (Addis Ababa: prepared for the working Sub-Group on General Administrative Capacity and Constraints, April 1973).

²⁵ These are discussed in detail in: Cohen and Koehn, "Local Government in Ethiopia: Prospects," pp. 4-6. Cohen, "Local Government Reform," pp. 25-87.

Finally, local governmental power must be organized in such a way that security can be maintained without alienating the peasantry or blocking the reform movement. Rural progress cannot occur in an insecure setting, hence if the Ministry of Interior and other ministries are to move beyond the maintenance of order and collection of taxes, the PMAC must develop strategies that end the pockets of conflict and the general conditions of lawlessness that continue to plague the rural countryside. This may prove to be the most difficult task of all.

Agriculture and Development²⁶

1. Objectives of Land Reform

A view has existed in some quarters that land reform alone would solve problems of economic underdevelopment in Ethiopia. Such a view is counterproductive in that it leads to inflated expectations of immediate progress from the present land reform program, and diverts attention from the myriad new problems and efforts requisite to taking advantage of that program. The land reform alone does no more than create the environment within which thoughtful efforts at rural development can produce effective results. Indeed, there remain many difficult political questions, which interact with the development strategy, which themselves must be settled before rapid progress can be made. Because of the complexity of the political and economic questions and because so little is known of the short-run effects of various changes, there is no effective substitute for a highly pragmatic approach to development in which many issues are faced sequentially rather than in an initial grand design.

Three frequently encountered and highly pragmatic farmer responses to questions serve to set the right tone for this section:

-- In response to frequent questions as to their plans for the 1975 harvest and its disposal, farmers typically answered that they were now concentrating on planting the crop; but that after the planting was completed they would be able to think about what to do with the harvest. There is a pragmatism and a recursive type of decision-making behind those statements that are important to recognize in these times of great flux and few guideposts.

-- In response to questions about consumption on the private level,

²⁶The analysis which follows is based on field trips by one of the authors in mid-1974 and May 1975. These were first summarized in: John W. Mellor, "Report on Rural Development Issues in Ethiopia--Problems and Prescriptions with Special Reference to EPID and the Ada Project" (mimeographed report, Ithaca, July 24, 1974), and his "Post Land Reform and Rural Development Issues in Ethiopia" (mimeographed report, Ithaca, May 28, 1975).

farmers generally stated that they would choose first to eat better, second to clothe themselves better and that then they would see what was to be done next. It was also frequently stated that there was now less need to save because previously the primary drive for saving had been to buy land. And finally, there was heavy weight attached to publicly provided resources, emphasizing education, health clinics, and improved transport. From this set of responses one can see clearly the tremendous problems posed in meeting the new consumption needs, in trying to induce and tap savings for the requisite investment, and in meeting the institutional requirements for providing the public goods which will be so strongly demanded.

-- On the question of whether the land would continue to be co-operatively farmed or divided into individual plots, the persistent answer was "let us wait and see the results of this year's efforts along both lines." The pragmatic response of the farmers to such a complex question would well be matched by the ideologues of both the left and the right. It also suggests farmers are very much performance minded and that poor performance over the next year or so will have a major impact on them.

There are three primary objectives of land reform: (1) redistribution of income and power; (2) stimulation of agricultural production; and (3) stimulation of nonagricultural production.

Redistribution of income has two important subeffects. First, it changes the pattern of consumption. There will be relatively more demand for food and to some extent for clothing, and much less demand for the services which previously went to high income people. This has profound implications for the present urban society of Ethiopia. The economy is structured largely for the needs of a relatively small number of very rich people and not adequately structured for the needs of a large number of relatively low income people. The shift toward food in the consumption patterns resulting from this new income distribution indicates that the total urban sector is, at the moment, probably too large relative to the income base. That problem need not be serious in the long run, because as incomes rise the structure of production will shift more to the urban centers anyway, but nevertheless the details of the structure will have to change. Accommodating to these changes will be difficult for the urban population, particularly for the middle class segment. As will repeatedly become clear, land reform was not just a redistribution from the rich to the poor which left the middle classes untouched. The middle classes too will have to pay some of the price--partly in the form of reduced levels of living and partly in having to make various adjustments in social and economic expectations.

An effective redistribution of income will also change the source of savings and investment. It will now be essential that a substantial proportion of the savings and investment come from relatively low income people. The land reform has two key implications for the stimulation of agricultural production. First, it affects incentives, particularly with

respect to labor. Second, it affects the incentive to invest in agriculture and to help to develop the institutions for facilitating modern agriculture. Both of these forces can be favorable to production increase in the long run. Similarly, the land reform can be a major stimulus to nonagricultural production. This occurs through its effect on consumption patterns, which may be met with relatively more labor intensive techniques and more indigenous production, and hence fewer imports and a much greater geographic diffusion of consumption patterns.

ii. Production and Marketing Situation²⁷

Since the declaration of reform there has been widespread concern that it would effect a substantial decline in agricultural production and an even greater percentage drop in marketing. Production and marketing are of course related but raise quite different questions with very different implications. What happens to production determines the average amount of food per capita. What happens to marketing reflects the distribution of that production among geographic regions and economic classes. The level of marketing has special implications for urban supplies and hence for the political situation. The number of variables determining both production and marketing is so large and there is so little information as to their magnitudes that a high degree of uncertainty must remain as to the course of each. Still, it is possible to offer a set of policy conclusions on the basis of analysis of the two factors: production and marketing.

There is a complex cross current of conflicting elements related to land reform that affect production. First some of the factors which may depress production will be discussed and then those which may raise it will be considered. It is generally recognized that the task of planting on the previously large scale commercial farms is a major one. Fears as to successful completion of that task underlie much of the pessimism with respect to production. It now appears that a highly pragmatic approach was taken to the problem of getting production underway. This was reflected in the apparent willingness of farmers to put aside long-term questions of land rights in order to cooperate in plowing and planting. The extent of cooperation among farmers in this respect was most impressive. Time after time, 50 and more pairs of oxen could be seen working in close proximity to each other attempting to plant land which had been previously in commercial operations. Similarly, there was a major government effort to mobilize tractors and tractor drivers, often in the face of foot dragging, if not outright sabotage, by the previous landed interests who had a clear interest in poor performance.

²⁷ For the foundations of the rest of this section see: John W. Mellor, The Economics of Agricultural Development (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), and his The New Economics of Growth: A Strategy for India and the Developing World (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).

In addition, many observers felt plowing could not be completed on substantial acreages of previously planted land. Prior to the proclamation, uncertainty as to the nature of the land reform itself delayed planting. In retrospect it appears that the large commercial farmers were not going to plant in 1975 anyway, because of these uncertainties. However, the land reform decisions which made land available to smallholders and to the public sector did not take place until well into the planting season for many areas. At that time, there were probably fewer tractors available than previously, as well as greater administrative difficulty in keeping them operating under larger units of operation. In addition, large areas of land in commercial farms had already been cleared of their tenants by the commercial farmers and hence did not have tenants with oxen prepared to plow them. Nevertheless, it appears that most of the formerly commercial land that had been planted in previous years was planted in 1975 without very major delay. Given the reasonably good weather the drop in production may not have been very large. However, reports from some parts of the country indicate that very large areas were not planted and plowed, so it is extremely difficult to assess the overall situation.

Further, there were clearly some shortages of seed. Presumably some of the former owners of the commercial farms and some of the landlords maintained control of seed supplies and did not make those available for planting. As a result, there may well have been an actual decline in the quantity of seed available for sowing as compared to previous years. This was particularly serious in the cases of previously displaced tenants who returned to land and tried to farm it either individually or cooperatively. These people of course had not saved seed themselves and were not able to tap the supplies available to the ex-commercial operators or landlords. Despite indications that this was a major problem, it appears that in most areas supplies of seed were somehow managed--although not always of the high quality improved types. The problem of high quality seed will probably be exacerbated by an effort to expand the area under high quality seed as the government institutions, such as EPID, are given more power and authority to operate throughout the countryside.²⁸ Similarly, fertilizer use is said to be reduced, but perhaps more due to adverse change in price relationships and to some extent financial problems than physical scarcity.

Counterbalancing these depressing factors are some contrary forces. First, from the point of view of food supplies, a substantial proportion of the area previously planted to beans for export is now being planted to domestic food crops. This has been partly a matter of direct policy, especially on state managed farms, partly due to prudence on the part of farmers and partly the effect of a low price of beans for export. This could well be a not inconsequential factor in raising the total supply of food, and particularly the marketable surplus of food.

²⁸ See footnote 41, infra for information on EPID and its activities.

Second, the commercial farms did not universally follow high yield practices anyway. For example, in many cases the large commercial farms were not in a position to mechanize completely; nor could they manage large quantities of labor in an efficient manner. Thus in the SORADEP area substantial acreages on commercial farms were previously sown by broadcast to maize.²⁹ After the land reform proclamation much of that same acreage continued to be plowed by tractor, but was manually seeded in lines by large cooperative labor forces, with consequent expectation of higher yields. It is also likely that the cooperative approach to farming these lands will result in a greater input into weeding than previously and hence a further improvement in yield.

There has been some criticism of the attempt to farm the previous commercial farms on a cooperative basis. It should simply be pointed out that this probably represented the least radical change available for institutional organization and helps to bring much more manpower to bear than was previously possible. In this context, farmers seem to think the highest yields will be on the small plots maintained by established farmers, and that the next highest yields will be on the previously commercial farms, farmed in part by state tractors and in part by essentially cooperative labor, and that these latter would be somewhat higher than prior to the land reform proclamation because of greater labor intensity. Farmers appear to believe that the lowest yields will be on the small plots maintained by those people who were not established farmers in the immediate past, for example, tenants evicted a few years previously who had not been exposed to modern technology. One can see in these farmers' opinions an implicit backing for the institutional forms currently in use.

In attempting to balance these complex, man-made crosscurrents, the net of their effects seems uncertain and quite possibly of less importance than the weather variations frequently encountered. Thus, it may be that weather, and not the temporary disruptions caused by the government's land policy will remain the most important determinant of crop size in the immediate post land reform period. As of late 1975, just prior to the harvest, it appeared that good weather had indeed produced a bumper crop.³⁰

While production may have been roughly maintained or even increased as compared to previous years, it seems very difficult to foresee how a substantial percentage decline in marketing can be avoided.

²⁹For information of this project see: Alain Borderon, "Southern Region Agricultural Development Project (SORADEP)" (paper presented to Development From Below Field Trip/Workshop, OLC sponsored, Addis Ababa, October 1973).

³⁰Dial Torgerson, "Rebels, Marketing Problems Threaten Ethiopia's Bumper Crop," Los Angeles Times, October 28, 1975, p. 22.

The critical question in this respect is to what extent there has been a major redistribution in income as a result of the land tenure changes. It is conceivable, of course, that the redistribution has not been as radical as has been generally thought. Tenure change and redistribution of income may not have changed significantly for a large portion of the northern part of the country. In addition, actual rents collected in the feudal areas may have been considerably less than those reported. Nevertheless it still seems hard to believe that there will not have been some significant redistribution of income towards tenants, and certainly substantial numbers of displaced tenants from the former large scale commercial farms will expect and receive a substantial increase in real income. It seems inevitable that much of that added income will be consumed in the form of food, with consequent reduction in the marketing proportion.³¹

Thus, the size of drop in the marketable surplus will depend: (1) on the very difficult to estimate size of the total crop; (2) on the amount of income transfers and the marginal propensity to consume food of the peasant population; (3) on the extent to which there are available consumer goods, such as cloth or tin sheets for improved housing, and for which grain would be sold to obtain the cash for those purchases; (4) on how farmers save, for example, in the form of larger stores of grain than normal, or as cash, or other forms requiring sales; (5) and conceivably most important, on government policy with respect to taxes or charges for services and inputs, such as tractors and fertilizer, the extent to which repayment of credit is demanded and the capacity of the government to offer services to farmers such as for road building, which would attract and require cash from taxes or other forms of payment. Finally, marketings will depend upon relative prices. In the face of an unattractive price, farmers may be more likely to hold larger stocks of grain rather than make immediate sale. At present the PMAC appears to be moving toward a price policy that would stimulate production and marketing.

Although the complexities of the crosscurrents suggest great uncertainties, a number of fairly plausible assumptions suggest decline in marketings for the urban areas of 20 to 25 percent on a base of 600 to 800,000 tons. Thus, marketings could easily decline 150 to 200,000 tons creating very serious problems for the urban areas. For example, assume that initially 20 percent of the crop is marketed to urban areas; 50 percent of the crop has been consumed by rural people whose incomes now rise by 20 percent and the income elasticity of demand is 0.5-- consumption of these people then increases by 10 percent, equal to 5 percent of total production. Assume, further, that 30 percent of

³¹In India, by way of comparison, the lower two deciles of income distribution (primarily landless laborers) spend over three-quarters of increments to income on agricultural commodities and nearly 60% on foodgrains alone. For further discussion see Mellor, The New Economics of Growth, chapter VII.

consumption was in rural areas, by those who had little income change. The result of these calculations would be a 25 percent decline in marketings. If marketings were initially 800,000 tons, the decline would be 200,000 tons.

Surprisingly, in the face of these very complex forces and great uncertainty as to whether production or marketings will change significantly from the past, generation of policy turns out, in fact, not to be very difficult. If one assumes that total grain supplies needed for the major urban centers is between 600,000 and 800,000 tons, that maintaining stability in those areas is primarily dependent upon food supplies, and that such stability is essential to overall governmental stability, it would clearly be only prudent policy for the government to see to it that it has control of a significant portion of the marketed supplies. In dealing with the marketing question, a prudent government would want to gain control of 20 to 30 percent of urban supplies. In view of the increased uncertainties at the present time, it is logical to increase that proportion somewhat, perhaps to a target as high as 50 percent. In that case, it would seem advisable for the government to make plans to import 150-200,000 tons, a figure which appears to be near the upper limit of what could be handled with the existing port and transport system and thereby provide control of around a quarter of urban requirements. Such policy should perhaps be complemented by attempts to obtain another 150,000 tons through some type of tax or procurement system in the countryside. It would be left then for the other half of urban supplies to be provided through normal market forces. How well the market system works depends, of course, on the price situation and probably requires that market prices be quite attractive, as compared to to past standards, a matter to be commented on in the next section.

There is a difficult question of timing the arrival of imported supplies. If, indeed, there is a severe difficulty with marketable surplus, the problem could well be exacerbated at harvest time as the shortage becomes recognized and private stocking and hoarding increase. From that point of view it would be desirable to have supplies arriving even at harvest time. On the other hand, if the marketable surplus turns out to be greater than anticipated, the fact that storage facilities were filled with grain at the beginning of harvest and substantial supplies were arriving from abroad might substantially depress prices. To deal with these alternative contingencies perhaps the government should assume that marketings will be off substantially and store large stocks at harvest. At that time the policy for future imports could be re-examined.

It would be prudent, although perhaps administratively difficult, to be prepared to increase demand for grain if by chance marketings are higher than expected. It should be recognized that if marketings are not depressed, this will suggest that incomes have not been redistributed to the poor to as great an extent as had been expected. In that case, public programs both in urban and in rural areas for increasing employ-

ment would be very much in order as an efficient means of maintaining prices. The poor, of course, spend a very high proportion of additions to their income on food.

iii. Price Policy

The PMAC is subject to powerful conflicting forces and has appeared to vacillate on the price issue, but has shown some tendency to move toward a price policy that would stimulate production and marketing. In the analysis which follows, four policy oriented objectives will be considered: production incentives, protection of the urban poor, conserving public financial resources and effecting an efficient marketing system. As is the usual case with price policy, these objectives conflict one with the other, thereby illustrating the need for compromise in determining price policy and the need for multiple tools to deal with multiple objectives.

As for production incentives, at present it is particularly important to emphasize the farmer's incentives to produce. The incentive to use purchased production inputs, especially fertilizer, and the incentive for intensive use of family labor are somewhat different aspects of the incentive question. The incentive to use purchased production inputs and the consequently appropriate price policy depend on three factors: (1) the ratios of the average price of output to inputs; (2) the variance (or implicit risks) in these ratios, including variation in yields, in prices and in the success of technical improvements; and (3) the resistance to change among the potential innovators. Thus, the lower the output price relative to the fertilizer price, the greater the variation or risk in prices, yields and technical response. Further, the more resistant or less experienced with change are the innovators, the less incentive there will be to use purchased inputs.

It is likely that under current Ethiopian circumstances there is a powerful argument for an unusually favorable output/fertilizer price relationship. This is because the risks involved in production are somewhat high, the result of substantial variation in weather conditions, imperfectly developed product markets and hence, considerable fluctuations in prices. Perhaps most important, the establishment of a favorable price relationship seems appropriate because of the limited experiences in use of fertilizers on the part of farmers and the desire to accelerate greatly the pace of such innovation. One might argue that when risks are low and experience with fertilizer great, a fertilizer price as high as eight times grain price per unit of weight might be justified on technical grounds. For contemporary Ethiopia a more suitable rule of thumb would be more nearly five to one in that price ratio. It follows then, that the lower the output price the greater the subsidy on fertilizer will have to be, if use of inputs and related technological change is to proceed rapidly.

Incentive to use labor more intensively is an even more complex issue than that of purchased inputs. The desire, of course, is to

encourage cultivators to continue to farm the land intensively, rather than to shift crop land in net away from grain and into grazing, and to exert themselves with careful planting and weeding, all of which are laborious processes. Price policy cuts two ways on this matter. On the one hand, the higher incomes due to higher agricultural prices naturally suggests to people that they take some of that higher income in the form of reduced exertion. On the other hand, the higher price provides a higher return to exertion and gives a contrasting pull. Given present government policy, the resolution of these conflicting forces is not likely to lean strongly in one direction or the other. It should be clear, however, that what is relevant to labor allocation is the ratio of the output price to consumer goods prices. The most desirable policy would appear to be a higher grain price, to be at least substantially regained through taxes on profits or consumer goods with consequential favorable final policy effects and incentive to increase production of manufactured consumer goods.

The second major objective for agricultural price policy is to protect the urban poor and other net purchasers of food. The land reform in Ethiopia has by no means equalized incomes in the society. Since there are many poor people in urban areas, there is a powerful equity argument for trying to maintain relatively low agricultural prices to the poor, who spend the bulk of their income on food. This argument is greatly reinforced by the political context because the urban middle class, too, spend a substantial proportion of income on food and will also press heavily for relatively low agricultural prices. The important points should be made in this respect.

First, in looking after the urban poor there is a clear trade-off between the price of grain and employment. Agricultural production by peasant producers can be encouraged by providing them with favorable prices; the effect of these prices on the urban poor can be ameliorated through a vigorous expansion of employment. It is, of course, more difficult to mitigate the effect on the middle classes.

Second, and related to the first, particularly in a country with as low average incomes as in Ethiopia, major improvement in the position of low income rural people is unlikely to be achieved entirely at the expense of high income people. Some of the contribution will certainly have to be made by the urban middle classes largely through payment of higher relative agricultural prices. In the case of Ethiopia, this will occur as a result of a reduction in marketings as the rural poor increase their consumption.

The third objective of agricultural price policy is to conserve on the use of public financial resources. It goes without saying that one of the effects of the land reform and associated changes in Ethiopia will be to increase greatly the pressure on public finances for a large increase in development oriented rural services, ranging from extension programs to health and education services. At the same time, it will be difficult to maintain, let alone to increase public revenues. Agricultural price policy bears importantly on this question. The setting of

low agricultural output prices places a heavy burden on government finances from three directions. First, low output prices will encourage increased consumption at all levels and will particularly reduce marketings. As a result, prices can only be maintained at a low level in the urban areas by major imports. If the import price is some 50 percent higher than the domestic price, as was the case in early to mid-1975, then there will have to be a large quantity of imports with a large subsidy per unit and hence a very large total cost. Second, the lower the farm output price the lower the fertilizer price will have to be to encourage increased production in the future. The fertilizer subsidy is already very large. Third, the lower the farm prices, the more difficult it will be to tax the agricultural sector and bring it to pay fully for the various services received. One of the most powerful arguments in Ethiopia for relatively high farm output prices is to conserve public revenues for more crucial developmental purposes.

A fourth important function of agricultural price policy is to maintain or increase the efficiency of the marketing system. There is substantial danger that efforts to set prices below supply-demand market prices will drive the marketing system underground, resulting in even smaller scale of operation, lesser efficiency and hence wider marketing margins, and of course, consequent lower prices to producers and higher prices to consumers. It is this factor which forces a trade-off between imports and the domestic price policy and then forces a high subsidy for massive imports if the low price policy is to be made effective. It has been demonstrated over and over again in other countries as well as in Ethiopia, that private marketing systems are not nearly as inefficient as is often made out and hence that there is rarely an opportunity to reduce substantially the margin between producer and consumer by taking over the trade from private channels.³² Indeed, the usual effect of such measures is increased inefficiency and even further widening of the spread between producer and consumer prices. This does not necessarily argue against cooperative marketing or state trading, but does argue that such efforts at marketing need to be fully thought out and will require substantial administrative input and must therefore be seen in the perspective of alternative use of such resources.

On the basis of the consideration of the above four policy-oriented objectives, statements about possible price policies can be made. In setting agricultural price policy it must be remembered that prices are basically a function of supply and demand. The main regulator of supply in the long run is domestic agricultural production policy. The main regulator in the short run must be imports, and, of course, the weather. On the other side of the equation, the main regulator of demand is the distribution of income in society. Ethiopia, by administering a clear policy of greater equality of income distribution, substantially increases the total demand for food in its society.

³²See for example: Lele, The Design of Rural Development: Africa, pp. 101-115.

As a logical rule of thumb, under the present conditions, it would appear that domestic prices ought to be targeted closely to ruling international prices for grain, including at least a major share of the cost of transportation to Ethiopian urban centers. Such a price would, in many cases, be as much as 50 percent higher than the agricultural prices in Ethiopia in 1975, it would reflect the actual marginal cost of grain to society of additional grain through imports, and would reflect a high priority to increasing domestic agricultural production through effective incentives to Ethiopian farmers. The level would also minimize the need for a fertilizer subsidy and subsidy to consumers of grain. It would also provide a favorable basis for raising taxes from the agricultural sector, including levies on the farmers' associations for a proportion of output.

If the level of prices recommended here seems too high from the point of view of the poor of the urban areas then two alternatives are possible. One is to attempt to increase employment for the poor through various public works and similar programs. The other is to institute a system of rationing at subsidized prices to meet the basic needs of low income urban poor people as well as for distribution to drought stricken rural areas.

As indicated previously, within such a favorable price regime it would seem in order to tax all consumers, including rural consumers, for consumer goods including cloth and various other types of consumer durables. Such a tax provides a convenient way of providing revenues and one which is relatively progressive with respect to incomes, since food, which is the basic expenditure of the poor, would not be taxed. High profit levels in the domestic consumer goods industries could also provide a production incentive for increasing domestic production of such goods. It must be indicated again that such a policy places a heavy burden on the urban middle classes and again emphasizes that they too will have to pay a substantial part of the price for a shift to a more egalitarian society.

As a concomitant to such a price policy, major expenditure should be directed to reduce marketing margins in an effective and efficient way. This would include improving the road transport system, initiating regulation of markets, including weights and measures, gradually developing a market reporting system which would increase the degree of integration of markets over space and time, and, finally, beginning to build lower level marketing co-ops at the farmers' association level.

The relatively high level of agricultural prices recommended here would very much assist the market in moving supplies from rural areas to urban areas. Nevertheless, as indicated previously, it would be desirable for the government to maintain control of a substantial proportion of urban supplies. It would presumably do so in part through its import policy but may also make a levy on farmers, perhaps through the peasant associations. Such a levy might be in the form of a relatively fixed tax and thus would not affect production incentives. At the same time, the

environment for such a levy would be more favorable because of the higher incomes accompanying a higher price policy and it would set the tone for rural people beginning to provide the resources for economic development within which they will participate.

Finally, one should look ahead to the time when increasing production may begin to provide supplies which put some downward pressure on prices. One would hope that such production would gradually displace imports and once imports were largely displaced would then gradually bring domestic prices down to international prices at point of production rather than at urban centers in Ethiopia. If there seems to be excessive downward pressure on prices, that pressure may readily be relieved, in a country with as low an income as Ethiopia, by substantial employment creating programs which move purchasing power to the low income people who spend the bulk of their income on food.

iv. Peasant Associations

The organization of farmers for development purposes is perhaps the single most important element of the rural development process, and an important beginning has been made through the formation of peasant associations. As described earlier, peasant associations have been given a prime place in the new order of development in Ethiopia. The discussion which follows focuses on the production problems these associations face, with the subsequent section dealing with possible ways of resolving these problems.

At present the most urgent function of the peasant associations is to maintain and perhaps even increase production of the previously commercial farms specifically, and on the land within the domain of peasant associations generally. A variety of approaches has been taken to this task, and in practice, the effort to deal with the specific immediate situation appears to have been pragmatic and initially successful. In the intermediate run the peasant associations are apparently expected to handle the difficult problem of either equitable division and distribution of the farming land under the association's control or operating the land in a cooperative or collective manner if that seems appropriate. Again, the thought of farmers on these matters appears to be highly pragmatic.

In the long term, generalizing on and expanding the functions laid out by the land reform proclamation, there are four major tasks for the peasant associations. First is to modify appropriately, legitimize and provide support for the technical services and institutions necessary to development, such as credit institutions, extension programs and marketing programs. Second is to raise resources and set priorities among various social infrastructure activities, including schools, health, water systems, and so on. Finally, a fourth function of the peasant associations, as discussed above, may be to legitimize and support higher level government institutions. That function may at times be an overriding one and may influence the more technical functions which will be discussed below.

While the peasant associations are a key requisite to effective rural development, they do face several major problems. First, there is a major problem of determining the degree of separation (or amalgamation) of political and technical-economic functions within the associations. The politically optimal allocation of resources and programs may, of course, not be the one which gives the most production or even goes the furthest in meeting social welfare objectives.

Second, there is a difficult problem of choosing the optimal size of the farmers' associations. At the present time they are supposed to cover 800 hectares of land. In practice they vary from less than 200 hectares to over 1,600 hectares. These differences presumably reflect variation in traditional leadership patterns and community boundaries. Similarly, the optimal association size will differ according to the functions to be fulfilled. It seems apparent, and is sustained by observation, that most of the associations will find it necessary to divide themselves into much smaller management units for carrying on such production activities as collective plowing. On the other hand, decision and management with respect to education and health systems may well require larger units than the currently planned peasant associations. Administration of group credit programs, extension, and road building will perhaps be intermediate between these two examples. This suggests that the problem of size for the associations may resolve itself fairly practically according to the activity to be performed and that the real problem will then be one of how different size organizations developed for varying functions will be associated with each other and amalgamated into higher units. Presumably, as partially envisioned by the land reform proclamation, peasant associations will eventually pyramid upward in a meaningful way to contact with the wereda and awraja administrations, which will then provide the tie with the national government. In this regard it is important to note that as of late 1975 there were almost no institutional ties between peasant associations and the established local government structures. What coordination and interchange took place was largely facilitated by students. Whether the proclamation issued in December 1975 which recognized peasant associations as local government units will help cure this problem remains to be seen. These problems of function, operating procedure, scale and mode of integration are important long-term decisions. It would not be surprising if it proved time consuming to resolve the complex issues and hence that rural development were retarded during such an interim period.

Perhaps an even more difficult problem with respect to the peasant associations is how to deal with the fact that large numbers of farmers, perhaps more than 70 percent of the rural population, will not have access in the near future to the complementary governmental, technical and economic services which are essential to the success of the associations as development organizations. Development occurs from joining the wisdom of farmers, transmitted through their organizational structures, with the technical knowledge of modern agriculture, efficient road building, formal education, and modern medicine that are transmitted through modern government organizations and institutions. The present

limits of trained manpower, existing institutions and road systems are such that it is doubtful if as much as 20-30 percent of the rural population can be covered by such institutions at the present time. Without these complements the associations have a very limited purpose and a very limited ability to bring about development. Many associations may thus wither away or turn their energies in nondevelopmental directions.

While this may appear a counsel of despair, nothing could drive home more clearly that rural development in Ethiopia is an exercise in the allocation of extremely scarce personnel and institutional resources. For each project, the question must be raised as to whether or not it represents the best use of the personnel and institutional forces it will command and further, whether the project approach is designed to contribute substantially to enlargement of personnel and institutional resources by incorporation of such devices as training components and increased use of peasant associations and local knowledge.

v. Technical Services, Extension, Credit and Marketing

It is undoubtedly correct that the institutions and the persons providing technical services, such as extension programs for new production practices, should be and are servants of peasant associations. However, it should also be recognized that to meet farmers' objectives technical standards have to be set, and accountability and authority must therefore also carry to higher level technical agencies and ministries. This is particularly important to keep in mind if nontechnical ministries are given a significant responsibility for the peasant associations.

As indicated in the section on local government reform, there are many possible variants to a system of ties between the associations and the technical services. One variant would be for the technical services to have local managing committees comprised in part of farmers elected or appointed by the peasant associations and in part of representatives of the technical services themselves. Another variant is a farmer advisory committee from the peasant association to interact with the appropriate level of the technical service. In any case, the problem is sufficiently complex so that the answer must evolve gradually and pragmatically from within the system.

Many of the opportunities and problems of developing the technical services in relation to the associations can be seen by using extension as an example. The basic problem is how to expand rapidly national coverage with a very limited number of formally trained, technically competent personnel.³³ One possible answer based on the para-professional strategy discussed earlier is to tap village resources, using the peas-

³³It is currently estimated that the Ministry of Agriculture has in the field 400 extension agents at or covering perhaps 350 demonstration areas.

ant associations to help select panels of people who are well integrated and respected in the area. From this panel, the extension service would select the number needed for the extension program, using requisite technically oriented criteria. The extension service would provide the intensive training necessary to bring these agents up to the minimal standards for performing their work. Presumably because of careful selection from within the area much less formal knowledge and training would be necessary than for persons selected from a different background and in different circumstances. This is, of course, essentially the pattern followed by SORA'DEP. In that system the extension agents devote full time to extension and hence an increasing amount of training expenditure can be justified. Thus, as training resources become more available, and technical needs become more complex, increased training can be provided. The amount of training can be varied from place to place depending on the nature of the technical problems and hence the requirement for training. Presumably, the same agents can be carefully selected for higher level training and there is no reason why the most competent and effective agents could not be put on a longer term promotional ladder with extended periods of training at formal educational institutions as part of the forward progress.

The basis for success of such a program is that the agents being selected from rural areas can be found in large numbers and paid relatively low salaries. Thus, one lays the basis for a sustained program with a high degree of intensity, keeping down the short run costs and providing the basis for increasing intensity of training. It starts with rural knowledge, which is then supplemented by formal training, with the relative importance of the latter increasing over time. The approach has considerable flexibility built into it. However, it should be emphasized in this context that the success of an extension program, no matter how well developed internally, depends finally on the steady flow of research results from the experiment stations. Unfortunately this problem is not entirely solved in Ethiopia as yet.

It is already widely accepted that extending credit on a group basis can provide major economies.³⁴ The peasant associations can provide the organizational basis for doing that. Again, as indicated previously, it may be desirable to set up an advisory committee and subgroups within the associations to handle this important function. Indeed, for social pressure to be an effective means of ensuring repayment in a group credit scheme, the groups undoubtedly have to be much smaller than is planned for most of the present peasant associations.

The extent of effort that should be taken to develop cooperative marketing systems is difficult to set. In the face of such a difficult situation there seems no better solution than to turn to the farmers themselves to make the decisions for which they bear the burden of raising necessary resources and take the risks substantially on themselves.

³⁴See: Lele, The Design of Rural Development: Africa, pp. 97-99.

Thus it would seem logical that a peasant association (and quite possibly for proper economy, a group of such associations) form a separate, cooperative unit to decide upon the best mode of entry into the marketing system and the number of functions they wish to fulfill. It can be estimated that they would want to start initially with a market level storage system to give them an alternative to dealing with the village trader at any particular point in time. They might move from this base to other marketing activities. Clearly, such a cooperative should be related to, but separate from the peasant association if for no other reason than that the scale of operation may need to be different from that of the association. Cooperatives formed to handle village level storage may then themselves want to band together into higher level cooperatives of larger total membership to handle more extensive marketing activities. Again, it must be emphasized that it is the function of the peasant association to set some of the priorities as to the order in which things will be done and the quantity of resources which may go to them. This shifts a certain amount of development decision-making down to the level at which there is the most knowledge about the nature of the decision.

From this context, it is clear that there is much to be said for gradual expansion of storage capacity at village markets. If this could be tied to the growth of a cooperative structure for handling marketing within the peasant associations that would be so much the better. Such storage could have a multiplicity of uses for fertilizer and other inputs as well as grain. Thus if foreign donors, in particular, desire to find means for increasing physical capital investment, it would be worthwhile to develop a large number of village market related storage facilities which eventually would be incorporated into cooperative efforts and to encourage such cooperative efforts through the peasant associations. The potential for multiple uses of such storage also reduces the risks of error in such policy.

vi. Raising Resources and Setting Priorities Among Social Welfare and Infrastructure Activities

Rapid rural development and meeting of social welfare needs will require an extraordinarily large quantity of resources. There is no alternative to drawing the bulk of those resources from the rural communities themselves. It would appear that the expressed desires of farmers themselves for roads, education, and health clinics will require that quite a significant proportion of total community income be used for such purposes. There is, however, an extraordinarily difficult task of organizing farmers for raising a substantial proportion of private resources for public purposes. It seems difficult to see how this task can be accomplished unless the same farmers have considerable responsibility for deciding how these resources are expended, both so that they can insure a high degree of efficiency in the use of their funds for any particular purpose and so that the purposes can be chosen which they see as most necessary and therefore toward which they are most likely to contribute.

Undoubtedly, particularly at early stages of rural development, the peasant associations will need encouragement in raising resources and taking initiatives through centrally provided matching funds as well as physical inputs such as machinery for roads, teachers to staff schools, and technicians to staff clinics. Field discussions with farmers indicate that they understand the problem and are willing to play their role if they receive adequate complements from other sources. Providing the national leadership direction and resources will, at best, be difficult and require considerable ingenuity at the local and national level.

One of the major arguments for attempting to continue collective cultivation of some portion of the land is so that the output of that area can be devoted to public purpose. It may also be possible to establish a levy on individual members of peasant associations. It should be recognized that the more equal the distribution of assets and income among the cultivators the easier it will be to devise a sensible and equitable tax system which does not drain production incentives.

There is also an important question of the extent to which national resources will be raised from the rural sector and what proportion of the total resources raised can go to the national government. It appears that the land reform, in having placed so much of the country's resources at the disposal of small farmers and their associations, may have insured a rural orientation to development in which substantial resources raised locally will have to be spent locally.

It should be clear in this context that the question of social services is a particularly vexing one. On the one hand, farmers are already making it clear that they demand a substantial quantity of social services, certainly including improved water systems, which are expensive in much of Ethiopia, and including health clinics and schools. The country does not have the resources to meet these demands in the near future. Thus, there is a critical problem of setting priorities as to what social welfare functions will be fulfilled most immediately, the extent to which they will be given priority over production-oriented infrastructure and hence the question of trade-off between growth and welfare. It seems that these questions can only be answered by group action of farmers in which they play a responsible role of recognizing that they themselves will have to raise the resources for much of what is done.³⁵

It can clearly be seen that the critical question about the peasant associations is not whether they will succeed or whether they are a good or bad idea, but rather, what is it that can be done to increase the degree of success of their operation. It should also be clear that

³⁵ See the discussion of social services in: Lele, The Design of Rural Development: Africa, pp. 116-126.

their success is highly dependent on a very close interaction with the formal institutions of a modern society.

vii. Linkage and Multiplier Effects of a Rural Oriented Strategy of Growth

A major redistribution of income, such as that apparently induced by the recent land reform in Ethiopia, sharply changes the composition and location of demand patterns. Vigorous well-conceived efforts at rural development can then result in rapid growth along the lines of those new demand patterns. If fully exploited, these new patterns of demand can provide the basis for vigorous growth in the nonagricultural sector. It should be remembered that growth in agricultural incomes is likely to result in more than proportionate growth in the demand for nonagricultural commodities. If the nature of those commodities is such that they can be provided through domestic production then there can be effective multiplier effects on the total growth process. That is one of the major new opportunities which arises from the land reform.³⁶

Of course in the short run, the new consumption pattern swings substantially toward increased consumption of grain with resulting pressure on the marketable surplus. As growth occurs within the context of the new income patterns there is likely to be relatively rapid rate of growth in demand for nonagricultural commodities as well as for agricultural commodities besides foodgrains, such as vegetables and livestock commodities. Such commodities may be fairly labor intensive in their production.

Perhaps more important, because the new growth in demand occurs in rural areas, it provides a basis for growth in production and market centers outside of the main city of Addis Ababa. This, in turn, calls for substantial change in the transportation network. Under the old patterns of production and consumption, the transport system logically radiated from the capital. In the new situation there should be many subfoci of market and industrial development with roads and transport lines cutting circumferentially across the old spokes leading to Addis Ababa. Many new market centers should develop, each with its own radiating spokes and each connected to the other and, of course, each continuing to be connected with the capital.

It is important to meet the new demands for nonagricultural commodities. This is true in part because production of such goods can produce income and employment, contributing to overall growth in welfare,

³⁶For the theoretical background to the analysis which follows see: Uma J. Lele, Food Grain Marketing in India (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971). John W. Mellor and Uma J. Lele, "Growth Linkages of the New Foodgrain Technologies," Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics, XXVII (1973), pp. 35-55, and their "Jobs, Poverty and the Green Revolution," International Affairs (January 1972), pp. 20-32.

but also because the marketed supply of food for the urban sector is dependent on the extent to which attractive consumer goods may be obtained in trade for agricultural commodities. It is clear that in the short run one of the problems in extracting marketable surpluses from the agricultural sector arises from the structural inability of the urban sector to produce the goods and services demanded in the newly restructured agricultural sector.

The multiplier effects from demand-led growth attendant upon vigorous rural development provide a favorable environment for rapid industrial growth and can provide an environment of favorable profits providing some self generating growth. There are a number of means by which the government should encourage and facilitate such growth. Because past structuring of the economy has been inappropriate for the new needs, government can play an important role in facilitating the new changes. Probably of greatest importance is to expand greatly the road system. This calls not only for new village and farm-to-market roads of the secondary and tertiary type, but also an expansion of the primary transport system running across the old radial lines towards Addis Ababa.

Because industrial development is now so rudimentary in Ethiopia there is substantial opportunity and need for technical assistance in developing small and medium scale industry. Provision of a portion of the capital needs may be desirable in combination with technical assistance. The opportunity for rapid expansion of small and medium scale consumer goods industries in response to vigorous rural development raises a very important problem. Such industries can utilize a substantial amount of capital and they necessarily require skilled and adaptable entrepreneurship. Small scale and other characteristics of these industries lend themselves particularly well to entrance from the previously more prosperous trading communities which are often in a position to put up the needed capital and which have many of the entrepreneurial skills of particular importance in small scale industry. Thus, this sector lends itself less well than large scale industry to bureaucratic socialism as a method of management. Encouraging small private firms could be highly productive in these circumstances.³⁷ It appears that in China a system of decentralized small and medium scale industries has been developed which taps local capital resources and local entrepreneurial abilities in a flexible and effective manner. That approach in its management techniques is probably very similar to small scale private enterprise and sharply in contrast to the bureaucratic socialism of large scale public sector industry. Thus, there are alternative approaches to the opportunity to develop new industries, with significant trade-offs in time and objectives. It will become

³⁷ For an analysis of the role of small-scale industry in a labor-intensive, capital-saving development strategy see: Mellor, The New Economics of Growth, chapter VI.

increasingly important that a viable alternative, suitable to Ethiopian conditions, be chosen and pursued vigorously.

viii. Foreign Assistance

The steps taken by the PMAC during 1975 to redistribute income toward lower income rural people and provide a rural focus to the strategy of economic development have a particular relevance to the form and amount of foreign aid. This is in part because of the impact they will have on the balance of government revenues and expenditure and on foreign exchange reserves. The apparently substantial redistribution of rural land and income has sharply changed the pattern of consumption, as well as the potential sources of savings and investment. The shift in economic strategy also has changed the resource demands for development as well as the optimal types and location of institutions and trained personnel. Since the adjustments to these varied and widespread changes cannot be instantaneous there are likely to continue to be a number of structural imbalances in the country which will lead to substantial foreign trade and domestic budget deficits as well as to frictions in meeting growth targets. The rapidity with which the structural changes can be made is, of course, largely a political matter.

These points can be made simplistically with specific examples. The increase in income of the rural poor will result in a substantial increase in the demand for food, grain in particular, with resultant lower marketings to urban areas. The respective income and price elasticities are such that prices of grain in urban areas will rise precipitously--with great privation to the urban poor and politically explosive discomfort to the urban middle classes--unless imports are increased or rationing instituted. And, the volume needed of such imports is likely to be substantial relative to foreign trade earnings.

But, the grain problem is only indicative of the larger problem of inappropriate structure. On the consumption side, the urban population has been structured to render goods and services appropriate to a quite different structure of demand than that now developing. Thus, while the demand for grain will rise consequent to the land reform, so will the demand for other goods, such as textiles, of a type and quality consumed by the lower income rural people. Concurrently, the demand for certain other goods and services that depend on the income streams of the wealthy landed classes will necessarily decline--unless the effect is cushioned by deficits on trade and government expenditure account. Presumably efforts to maintain political tranquility will encourage those deficits.

It should be remembered that although the urban population appears very small as a proportion of the nation's total population, the existing urban sector is probably excessively large as well as ill structured for the immediate new needs. The almost inevitable pressures on the urban middle classes will likely create the appearance of much more national

privation than actually exists--and to the Western middle class press the appearance of general economic failure--and this despite the convergence of Ethiopian policy with the U.S. Congressional mandate on aid and Robert McNamara's Nairobi and earlier addresses calling for just such a reorientation of development efforts.³⁸ Similarly, an effort to increase investment in rural production growth will require large resources while old means of raising them may no longer be feasible. New methods of raising resources require ancillary political and institutional development which, in turn, take time.

The alternatives for dealing with these large problems are:

(1) an immense political tightening on the country which could presumably accomplish the structural changes in consumption and production patterns more rapidly by sharply reducing urban middle class income, but quite possibly also at considerable cost in reduced pragmatism of approach to the broad range of development problems and loss of breadth of contact in the society; (2) a drawing back from rural development efforts, essentially using the land reform to buy political support in the countryside, without shifting the development strategy towards rural development--a tactic perhaps ruled out by the vigorous efforts already initiated in formation of peasant associations; or (3) substantial foreign assistance to ease the burdens on foreign exchange and government budget as the needed structural changes occur and to accelerate the increases in domestic agricultural production which are the key to a longer run solution.

In the discussion which follows attention will be given to three specific forms of foreign assistance: (1) commodity aid (principally food aid); (2) capital assistance (in practice, a particular form of commodity assistance); and (3) technical assistance. In view of the virtually inevitable pressures from the chosen strategy of growth and distribution it is urgent that foreign assistance not serve to further increase imports or government expenditure or divert key personnel from the basic rural oriented strategy with its ancillary activities. This is, of course, not to argue against analysis of the specifics of the development process and the potential gains for rendering technical assistance incident to such analysis. The points to be made are generally self evident and widely recognized.³⁹ However, their common practice in the breach will be particularly costly to Ethiopia because the problem of structural change is so immense and the domestic resources so scarce. In the next few years, food aid may well be the single most useful and effective form of assistance. It will relieve a crucial foreign exchange deficit, facilitating import of other vital

³⁸ See in particular: Robert S. McNamara, "Address to the Board of Governors" (Nairobi, September 24, 1973, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1973).

³⁹ For an analysis of the role of foreign aid in a rural-oriented development strategy, see: Mellor, The New Economics of Growth, chapter IX.

commodities, such as fertilizers, and equally important, relieve a government financial constraint on rural development expenditure.

The urgency of food assistance may be stated simplistically in terms of the likely initial decline of marketings to urban centers to the extent of 150 to 200,000 tons, with consequent extreme privation to low income urban residents and pressure on the politically potent urban middle classes. Imports must surely occur in substantial quantity with extreme pressure on foreign exchange resources and capacity to import inputs vital even to future increases in agricultural production.

The problem may be seen in the more sophisticated terms of material goods imbalances consequent to a balanced shift of money income among income classes. The low income rural people who benefit from the increase in income consequent to the land reform spend a high proportion of that income on food. The high income people who lost income reduce food consumption little, if at all--but of course they do reduce consumption of other goods and services. This spreads the burden to middle income urban people who are caught between a decline in the demand for the goods and services they rendered the rich and a rise in the cost of food they purchase. The upshot of both the simplistic and the sophisticated explanation is the same--in the long run more food must be produced while in the short run imports must increase.

It should be noted that Ethiopia's exports are largely comprised of goods for which prices are highly volatile and demand is believed to be highly inelastic.⁴⁰ Thus, it is unlikely that export promotion or devaluation would increase gross earnings in the short run and the latter could severely depress gross earnings. Thus, increased food imports either require foreign aid or a reduction of other imports. In the long run, of course, export diversification and promotion will be desirable and short run problems should not completely divert attention from the long run goal.

Food aid can also relieve a critical constraint on government expenditure for rural development. Rural development requires technically trained manpower and institutions as the prime movers, large quantities of local physical resources for construction of roads, storages and so on, and substantial quantities of little or slightly trained manpower. All of these elements must be judiciously complemented with imports of a few key inputs such as fertilizers and machinery. These expenditures are largely in the public sector. Over the next few years

⁴⁰ However, the rapid rise in international coffee prices in 1975 has provided Ethiopia with greatly increased foreign exchange earnings. (Coffee comprised 58% of the country's exports in 1969.) Reports indicate that coffee production has remained in the private sector, despite nationalization of commercial farms. See Albin Krebs, "And Now Some Other Good News," New York Times, January 25, 1976, Section 3, Part 2, p. 65.

they will involve large increases in total public expenditure. In the long run the necessary resources, financial and material, must be raised domestically. In the short run, given the current political situation, the crucial development of farmers' associations is likely to be carried out more rapidly if the government can at least offer major matching grants for rural development. The sale of food aid commodities provides a potentially major increase in government revenues for these purposes.

There are potentially three dangers incident to food aid. First, it may be used to hold down or reduce farm prices of grain. The most serious consequences of such policy are fiscal: (1) it reduces government revenues from the sale of grain or increases the subsidy implicit in commercial imports; (2) it raises the fertilizer subsidy required for adequate incentives; and (3) it reduces the taxable capacity of rural people, both in the form of sales taxes on purchases, and in the form of fixed taxes on income and land. Further consequences of lower prices are reduced incentives to use labor intensive production techniques and to innovate in production practices, and a tendency to divert land to other crops and livestock.

Second, food aid reduces the pressures to raise public finances domestically. In particular this may set a precedent of inadequate attention to educating the peasant associations to the need to raise resources for rural development activities as well as of excessive subsidization from the central government. However, it is precisely because the associated political tensions are so great that food aid is so valuable in the short run.

Third, food aid may reduce the concern of the national government for emphasis on food production and rural development. However, in this context it should be remembered that a rural oriented strategy of growth is not simply a means of producing food. It has major political and economic implications that are not likely to be significantly influenced one way or the other by food aid. The price problem is perhaps best dealt with by attempts to regulate the flow of food aid and, more importantly, through employment policy which increases the demand for food so as to maintain roughly international prices plus a major portion of transport costs. The local resource problem is best handled by initiating, as a high priority for the peasant associations, provision for paying for services and for raising general tax revenues. The emphasis on rural development is best judged by comparative allocation of funds and personnel to the key elements of a rural strategy.

Turning to foreign technical assistance, it seems clear that such aid can be particularly valuable because of (1) the general scarcity of trained personnel and (2) the appropriateness of the institutions within which foreign technicians must fit. However, it must be recognized that foreign technicians have a major potential to distort allocations of resources, including domestic personnel. Thus it is extremely important that foreign technical assistance be precisely consonant with

the underlying strategy, the priorities and the time phasing of rural development in Ethiopia. In this context it should be remembered that almost any specific rural development project involves trained manpower and institutional resources and hence, even in planning stages, technical assistance has profound allocational implications.

Three thrusts of technical assistance would be very valuable to Ethiopia's rural change strategy over the next several years. These thrusts are: (1) to EPID, or some similar agency, as the key government body directly touching rural people for production increasing purposes; (2) to agricultural production research; and (3) to higher agricultural education.

The set of problems related to EPID, the Extension & Project Implementation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture,⁴¹ well illustrates the importance and dangers inherent in project selection and assignment for technical assistance. EPID is presently the basic institution for carrying agricultural development services to the farmer and peasant associations. As a conscious strategy it attempts to formulate a program, known as the minimum package approach, which allows it to spread its limited resources over as large a number of people and geographic area as possible.⁴² Despite an exceedingly thin program and a preemptive position, EPID could certainly not be described as touching as much as 30 percent of the rural population and more accurately much less than that.

The EPID program as presently practiced has a substantial and effective fertilizer distribution cum credit component, an extension component within which considerable attention is given as to how to increase its effectiveness, and a strong desire to add a substantial cooperative marketing component for which there is a significant experience. EPID is limited by (1) natural restraints on the rate at which any institution can grow; (2) personnel scarcities; (3) infrastructure

⁴¹EPID is a department in the Ministry of Agriculture charged with providing extension services, green revolution inputs and credits. Its main objective is to modernize peasant agriculture. On EPID's activities see: Extension & Project Implementation Department, Annual Report for 1973/74 Financial Year (Addis Ababa: Ministry of Agriculture, EPID publication no. 24, 1974). The CADU project on which EPID's minimum package program is based is described in: John M. Cohen, "Rural Change in Ethiopia: The Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit," Economic Development and Cultural Change, XXII, 4 (1974), pp. 580-614. For a critique of EPID see: Michael Ståhl, Contradictions in Agricultural Development: A Study of Three Minimum Package Projects in Southern Ethiopia (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, publication no. 14, 1973).

⁴²For details on the minimum package program, see: Lele, The Design of Rural Development: Africa, pp. 18-19, 203-204, and passim.

of roads which are so crucial to moving the inputs essential to a modern agriculture, and (4) at least potentially, budgetary constraints. These limits pose the serious problem of resource allocation between expanding the same program intensity over a wider area and increasing program intensity by adding activities.⁴³ There are powerful arguments for both. The problem is compounded by the increasing necessity to decentralize authority to allow conformity to highly variable local conditions. The leadership in EPID has substantial experience and is well backed by a diversity of experienced staff.

From the above, the technical assistance and rural project conclusions are obvious. One, it is difficult to conceive that any agency other than EPID, or a similar body, can set priorities effectively for programs which are to directly touch rural producers. Two, foreign assistance would be effective if this assured that budget constraints are not operative in containing EPID's operation. Third, it is equally important that foreign assistance not distort EPID's program away from the priorities as it sees them. In this context it should be remembered that even the process of formulating plans may be highly distorting in the context of scarce personnel resources.

A final point--the allocational problem for EPID is so complex, the information so scant and the total institutional environment of rural development so much in flux that at present discussion must be highly flexible and pragmatic. The conclusion seems clear. Planning, monitoring and operational personnel can be very useful to EPID if well integrated into their operation and following their priorities.

Turning to agricultural production research, foreign technical assistance can be highly effective because of (1) the importance of limitations set by a lack of such research, and (2) the generally effective domestic institutional structure with its effective absorptive capacity for increased personnel input. It is clear that in Ethiopia the stock of profitable research results on which the extension agent must trade is extremely small. This has two important effects. First, the very pace of technological change and production increase will soon be slowed, with disastrous results to the whole development strategy. Second, and perhaps most important for the long run, the extension system cannot be built as a technically competent, technically oriented service designed to teach farmers new technology unless there is a steady flow of such technology. If that stream soon dries up then the extension agents will soon be diverted, in effect, to other village activities. Having stated the urgent problem of expanding the flow of research results it should be made clear that the existing system is development in a favorable direction. It is a substantial, well integrated structure. A close working relationship appears to exist between the extension programs at ADA, SORADEP and CADU (and hopefully elsewhere as well) and the research stations in those areas.

⁴³Ibid., chapter XI.

There is also a substantial foreign technical assistance input into research, particularly from FAO. Still, a small proportion of technical assistance in research is going to the basic food crops.⁴⁴ It is this area in which time could so usefully and urgently be bought through increased technical assistance.

As for higher agricultural education, little need be added to the preceding discussion, on the lack of trained manpower as the key constraint to the pace of rural development for at least the next generation. On the one hand every effort must be made through the peasant associations and other institutions to expand the use of less formally trained rural people in development activities. Nevertheless, even at best, the lack of formally trained personnel from the agricultural college and institute remains a major bottleneck. This will of course remain so even once the educational institutions are reopened after the current effort to use students directly in implementing the present changes in the countryside. Past technical assistance has played a major role in the agricultural institutes and college. They are now built along broadly sensible lines. The question, however, is not whether they have a useful capacity, but whether foreign technical assistance can play an effective role to rural development.

Finally, it is necessary to consider capital assistance. Even though a rural oriented strategy is basically constrained by personnel and institutional factors and current budgetary expenditures, there are likely to be some "capital goods" or import based constraints that offer potential for "traditional" types of foreign assistance. There are four areas in particular that stand out in Ethiopia: roads, storage, machinery and fertilizer.

The need for village level, dry weather feeder roads is well documented. Here the major need is for quantities of machinery for such purposes as matching rural self help efforts. Perhaps equally important, a rural oriented strategy of growth fosters the growth of many major market and light manufacturing centers, arising basically from the rising rural incomes. Such centers need to be connected with each other by a high quality road system. The new need is to connect the spokes radiating from Addis Ababa to form many new transport foci. The capital requirements for such an effort are immense.

As agricultural production grows the demand for much larger storage capacity will grow more than proportionately. Some of this storage should be of modern types for control of a portion of urban food supplies. However, much more needs to be done to develop small stores located at village markets to give farmers broader options in handling

⁴⁴As recently as 1971, roughly 45% of agricultural research expenditures in Africa were for export crops, compared to 47% on food products. See: Lele, The Design of Rural Development: Africa, p. 28, n. 21.

their crops. This latter effort although requiring substantial capital investment should, as indicated above, be administered through EPID.

In the past, a significant proportion of Ethiopian crop area has been plowed by tractors. There has been a sound economic reason for some mechanization of Ethiopian agriculture, a point clouded by the social disaster of mechanization under old land tenure conditions. There is now a dual problem of importing spare parts (and developing the administrative structure for managing the tractors) to keep the larger number of existing tractors in operation. At the same time the total question of machinery for rural development, including road machinery and well drilling machinery, should be given judicious consideration.

Fertilizer is a necessary complement of production increasing technical change in Ethiopia and will require increasingly large amounts of foreign exchange for imports and government budget for short term financing. Therefore it is a prime target for foreign assistance programs which wish to focus on specific commodity items.

Thus the context of Ethiopian development provide scope for a well thought out complementary program of food, capital and technical assistance. It is crucial that such aid be complementary to the total development effort and not distorting and, therefore, that its component parts be viewed in a full and broad perspective.

PART IV

CONCLUSION

A full-blown conclusion is neither necessary nor possible. It is not necessary for the reason that the preceding discussion of the revolution, the land reform proclamation and the effects of the reform are already highly generalized summaries. And it is not possible at present to reach specific conclusions as to the direction local institution building and rural development processes will take in the post land reform period. This being the case, only a few closing remarks on the future of rural Ethiopia are in order. These are based on comparative analysis of the nature of landholdings and land reform in other low income countries.¹

It is well known that, since most less developed societies are predominantly agrarian, land rights and political power are tightly linked. Control of land, and in particular the agricultural surplus produced on that land, equals control over a critical portion of the nation's goods and services. The economic leverage thus obtained is even more crucial where, as in many parts of Ethiopia, population pressure are creating a growing labor supply and leading to shortages of arable land. Aside from providing land holders with material resources, land ownership is often associated with the less tangible assets of social status and access to positions of political leadership.

Land ownership in low income countries tend to be highly concentrated and it is not uncommon to find one or two percent of the population holding half of the agricultural acreage.² In Ethiopia, though the statistical evidence is imprecise, it is clear that, prior to the land reform proclamation, a small number of traditional rural and urban elites held the bulk of the land, especially in the private tenure areas of the south. Modernization and commercialization of agriculture tends to aggravate such disparities by enriching the landed classes, who often proceed to expand their holdings still further, while many poorer

¹The basic source materials for comparative analysis are: Elias H. Tuma, Twenty Six Centuries of Agrarian Reform (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965). Peter Dorner, Land Reform and Economic Development (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1972). See the Bibliography in Dorner, pp. 149-157.

²This pattern is evidenced most strongly in Latin America. See generally: Charles L. Taylor and Michael Hudson, World Handbook of Social and Economic Indicators, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), Table 4.14.

peasants are driven off the land to join the burgeoning rural proletariat. The expanding gulf between the rich and the poor is potentially explosive, a fact recognized by regimes from all positions on the ideological spectrum. Given these political realities, land reform is an important element in most national development strategies. In the past Ethiopia was unable to reform and its rural development potential was blocked. Reforms came just as increased instability was appearing. The question now is whether Ethiopia can maintain the rural stability necessary for agrarian based development.

Land reform is often designed to support or create a smallholder class, but may also foster development of collective or cooperative production systems. Within this range, otherwise conservative regimes may introduce impressive changes in land rights, as occurred with the break-up and redistribution of large-scale holdings in some areas of Taiwan and Iran.³ By contrast, leftist governments may backpeddle on reforms which threaten to alienate a large portion of the peasantry. This kind of response has been demonstrated in areas as widely separated by time and place as Russia under Lenin and Tanzania under Nyerere.⁴ However, as the Stalinist drive for collectivization indicates, appeasement of conservative peasant interests may be abandoned for ideological reasons and collectivization pursued even in the face of widespread resistance.

The most critical rural development decision now facing Ethiopia's PMAC is whether to move toward collectivization or confirm the pattern of equitable distribution of small-holdings that is presently emerging. The intense debate raised by this question relates to issues of revolutionary self-image and stability of political leadership. In the end, stability of leadership may decide the issue, for as Hung-Chao Tai and John D. Montgomery suggest, land reform is usually pursued by a regime to increase its power, whether by increasing its legitimacy among the peasantry or by weakening the influence of groups opposing or competing with them.⁵ It is clear that in Ethiopia both these aspects of land

³Both of these countries are shown to have had extensive redistribution of land by Hung-Chao Tai, "The Political Process of Land Reform: A Comparative Study," in Norman T. Uphoff and Warren F. Ilchman, eds., The Political Economy of Development (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 295-305.

⁴On Lenin and the New Economic Policy see: Leonard Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (New York: Vintage, 1960), pp. 208-209. On the Tanzanian decision to abandon immediate collectivization of agriculture see: Uma Lele, The Design of Rural Development: Lessons from Africa (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 155-157.

⁵See: Hung-Chao Tai, "Political Process of Land Reform," p. 296; John D. Montgomery, "The Allocation of Authority in Land Reform Programs: A

reform have been of major consideration. Reform has allowed radical military leaders to remove or isolate land-based supporters of the prior regime and to generate support not only from peasants, who constitute the great majority of the population, but from students and intellectuals who have long argued for changes in the land tenure system. The dilemma facing the PMAC is that while many of its urban supporters favor collectivization, there exists substantial doubt as to the extent to which peasants are willing to accept such relations of production. Since the PMAC needs peasant support, particularly for stability, it is likely to approach this issue with care. If evidence from other countries is considered, the short-term decision of the PMAC on this issue may well be made independently from economic philosophy.

Perhaps more interesting than the role of land reform in cementing the leadership of a national regime, however, is its direct effect in transforming rural society. Granting the peasantry greater control over productive assets and a larger share of agricultural output not only increases economic well-being and raises consumption levels among the poor, as has been noted repeatedly in this study, but may also increase their political power. The agricultural surplus, previously monopolized by the landed elite, can be channeled more easily into socially productive uses, such as expanded education and medical services. Similarly, the increased political power of the peasantry may be employed to direct a higher proportion of national resources to the rural sector. Evidence in other countries indicates these results can be achieved. The PMAC has begun to set the stage for such achievements. Whether it will succeed depends on the degree of commitment to rural development that emerges. To date, no figures on resource allocation policies are available, nor have the tax and price policies that would promote this been clearly drafted or analyzed by government policy makers.

Experience from elsewhere in the world also indicates that the impact of land reform on agricultural production depends largely on the promotion of additional programs that centrally directed resource allocation makes possible. These include agricultural research, credit, extension, and marketing services, as well as the development of new technologies.⁶ Given Ethiopia's limited manpower, financial resources and poorly developed roads it will be difficult and costly to reach significant numbers of rural population with such programs, making it

Comparative Study of Administrative Processes and Outputs," in Uphoff and Ilchman, Political Economy of Development, p. 454.

⁶For analysis of such complementary efforts in the African context, see: Lele, Design of Rural Development: Africa, passim. In Asia see: Norman T. Uphoff and Milton J. Esman, Local Organization for Rural Development: Analysis of Asian Experience (Ithaca: Center for International Development, Rural Development Committee, 1974).

unlikely that dramatic growth will occur. However, the land reform program, by creating peasant associations, may generate greater demand on the center to direct a larger proportion of national resources into such facilitative programs. The greater production incentives created by land reform then create a favorable environment for improved agricultural performance over the long-run.

By international standards Ethiopia's land reform program attempts to implement relatively major readjustments in tenure patterns. The ratio of the land ceiling to average farm size is less than 10.0, which is lower than the ratio established by land reform legislation in many other developing countries.⁷ This is because a central theme behind the PMAC's reform policies is the promotion of equality in land distribution. Of course even the most restrictive land ceiling would be of superficial importance if the law is not vigorously pursued by the authorities or if the legislation is so designed as to enable flagrant violation by larger landowners. It is for this reason, as Hung-Chao Tai emphasizes, that the strength of the regime's political commitment to land reform is one of the most decisive factors determining successful implementation.⁸ Indeed such an observation approaches tautology: without firm political commitment no program for rural change is likely to succeed, though the converse proposition may be less true. The PMAC in Ethiopia, which at present lacks widespread urban based support, has a major interest in land reform and appears to be pursuing its program with vigor. Given the highly fluid political situation it is, of course, difficult to say how firm the commitment will be over the long-run. It may well vary depending on which faction in the military ultimately gains power, whether the military ever returns power to civilians, and whether the civilians who may inherit such power are Maoists, classical Marxists, socialistic nationalists, or urban based capitalists. Indeed, the outcome of these questions also affects such issues as whether the implementation of land reform will be devolved to the local level, whether collectivized farming will be followed, and whether the conditions surrounding the reform will be stable enough to allow the production benefits the reform could generate to be realized.

An interesting variable which emerges from comparative analyses of land reform programs involves the administrative method used for implementation. According to Montgomery, programs using a "devolved" process of implementation, that is to say largely bypassing the professional bureaucracy and assigning local political leaders a major role,

⁷It has been estimated that in 1970 the arithmetic average Ethiopian farm holding was 2.5 hectares. An Ethiopian government survey in the individual tenure areas in the mid-1960s found that the average household cultivated 1.13 hectares. (The land ceiling in Ethiopia is now 10 hectares.) In Egypt and India, the average holding-ceiling ratios are 16.4 and 32.5 respectively. See Hung-Chao Tai, "Political Process of Land Reform," Table 3, p. 300.

⁸Ibid., p. 301.

produce the greatest benefits, defined as increased peasant income, security, and political power.⁹ The Ethiopian approach appears to represent an extreme form of devolution, with the peasant association assuming the major responsibility for implementation, although the government may be resistant to allowing the associations too much leeway in initiating and carrying out reforms. Nevertheless, if Montgomery's findings are correct, and if the PMAC continues to follow its policy of devolving administrative control to the peasant associations, then Ethiopia's land reform program will have a high probability of ultimately succeeding.

A final comparative point concerns the political ramifications of land reform. Huntington suggests that land reforms are initially politically destabilizing, intensifying rural unrest and interclass conflicts, but that the long range effect is toward greater stability. Small peasant proprietors tend to be a conservative force, concerned primarily with maintaining their land rights.¹⁰ Huntington's definition of land reform, of course, implicitly assumes that change will be toward individual ownership and production rather than toward a collective or communal pattern. Change of the latter type may in fact be politically destabilizing, for as much as peasants may oppose the prerogatives of a landed elite, they rarely seem to support voluntarily a program of collectivized agriculture.¹¹ However, nominally stable regimes, most notably the Soviet Union, have been able to collectivize their production systems, even if at frightful social costs. Such regimes have also continued to rely heavily on authoritarian techniques to suppress dissent and insure compliance. In any event the approach to land reform displayed thus far in Ethiopia, which appears to point towards a system of peasant smallholders organized into cooperative associations, may indeed have a long term stabilizing effect on its political system. If such stability can be coupled with the injection of resources aimed at improving peasant production, Ethiopia may be able to begin to move toward its long recognized agrarian potential. In this regard, other variables must also be considered, particularly the historical legacy of ethnic and religious conflict, the demand for popular participation and greater civil liberties, the factional divisions within the military, the basic conflict between urban middle classes and the various agricultural and nonagricultural producing groups, or the occurrence of military conflict in Somalia and Eritrea. Any of these could impede and even possibly negate the stability and progress which land reform might reasonably be expected to engender.

⁹Montgomery, "Allocation of Authority in Land Reform Programs," p. 451.

¹⁰Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 378.

¹¹For examples of this phenomenon in Tanzania, see: Lele, Design of Rural Development: Africa, pp. 155-157.